NEW MEXICO 4-H

Aggie Next Step

Saving Smart



Post Secondary Pathways

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AGGIE NEXT Soar Prosper Empower Thrive
Post Secondary Pathway Program

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Saving Smart

Lesson Focus

Saving money isn't just about having more money – it's about having more choices. In this lesson, participants will explore why saving matters, how everyday spending decisions impact future opportunities, and how even small savings can help prepare for unexpected situations. They will also reflect on their own habits and create a simple plan for saving.

Supplies

- Worksheets
- Handouts
- Pens/Pencils

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- **Explain** why saving money is important for both short-term and long-term goals.
- **Distinguish** between needs, wants, and future needs.
- **Describe** the purpose of a rainy-day fund.
- **Create** a simple, realistic saving plan.

Preparation

Review lesson materials and determine which worksheets and handouts you will use for the lesson. Print enough assessments, worksheets, and handouts for each participant.

Activities

1. Have participants complete the *Pre-Assessment*.

2. Discuss in pairs or small groups:

Q: If you suddenly had $500, what would you do with it?

Options: Spend it all; Save some, spend some; Save most or all.

Follow-up questions:

Q: Explain your choice.

Q: What would Future You say about that choice?

(The purpose of this activity is to surface natural instincts and start the "future self" connection.)

3. Think-Pair-Share: Why Save?

Participants independently brainstorm reasons saving money matters, discuss their ideas with a partner, and then share during a whole-group discussion. Record key ideas on the board or chart paper. (e.g., lose a job unexpectedly, travel, car breaks down)

Q: What would you do without savings?

Q: What changes with savings?

Q: How much money would realistically help in each situation?

4. Distribute ***Needs, Wants, & Future Needs*** and review. Instruct participants to complete the chart, explaining their thinking when necessary. Use these additional discussion questions to further the discussion:

Q: Which category is hardest to say no to?
Q: Which category is easiest to ignore?
Q: Which one affects your stress level the most later?
Optional: Move two items you thought were Needs into Wants and explain why.

5. Distribute ***Rainy Day Fund***. Introduce the term "rainy day fund" and allow time for participants to complete individually or in pairs.

6. Distribute ***Simple Saving Plan*** and allow participants time to complete individually in class or as homework.

7. ***Exit Ticket*** – Depending on time, this can be done as a class discussion, as an individual worksheet, as homework in class, or during the following class.

8. Have participants complete the *Post-Assessment*.

Reflection

Saving money is a skill that builds freedom, security, and options for the future. Even small changes in how you spend today can make a big difference for Future You.



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Extensions

Ask students to write a short letter to their Future Self (2-3 paragraphs) reflecting their savings goals. They should include one thing they are saving for, one habit they will change to help save, how a rainy day fund could help with unexpected expenses, and words of encouragement or advice. Students can share their letters voluntarily or keep them private.

Differentiation

Content Support: Provide a completed sample of the *Simple Saving Plan* as a model, so students understand expectations before creating their own plan.

English Language Learners: Allow students to respond verbally or with bullet points, rather than full sentences, when appropriate. Pair students with a supportive peer for discussions and collaborative activities.

Provide sentence starters such as:

1. Saving money is important because…
2. One thing I want to save for is…because…
3. A rainy-day fund helps when…
4. One habit I could change is…

Processing Time: Provide additional think time before students respond or share.

Advanced or Early Finishers: Ask students to research average costs of common emergencies (car repairs, phone replacement, cracked screen repair, medical copays, new tire) and determine how much a rainy-day fund should include.

Have students calculate how long it would take to reach their savings goal using different weekly or monthly amounts.

Ask students to create a poster, infographic, or short reflection explaining how saving small amounts now can impact their future financial independence.

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Resources

Optional Videos

Note: Please preview all videos before showing them to students to ensure they are age-appropriate, relevant, and aligned with your classroom needs.

The Importance of Saving at a Young Age
https://youtu.be/vdZhtUa7tIA?si=EQH7jDNaAcdXXxtk

Cash Course: The Right Way to Save Money | Kids Shows
https://youtu.be/EYVEJZ890dQ?si=X_JAe6kS3GCQ3x5F

How to create a rainy day fund
https://youtu.be/Dlswa8f5Klo?si=0Y46K2ShHydVh-LI

NM Standards:

NM PED Standards: Career and Technical Education (CTE):
3.1.1: Employ critical thinking skills to solve problems and make decisions

NM Social Studies Standards – Financial Literacy (Grades 9-12)
Econ.46 Explain how and why people make choices to improve their economic well-being
Econ.47 Compare the costs and benefits of saving
Econ.51: Prepare a planned saving strategy

Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) Standards: Career Ready Practices (CRP):
CRP-3: Attend to Personal Health and Financial Well-Being

Optional ELA Alignment (Grades 6-12)
SL1: Participate in a range of conversations and collaborations