



Get a Life!

SCHOOL RESOURCE PACKET



A PROGRAM OF THE WEST VIRGINIA STATE TREASURER'S OFFICE

Letter from the West Virginia State Treasurer

Dear West Virginia Educator,

Thank you for your interest in the State Treasurer's **Get a Life** financial education program. We are excited to bring this interactive experience to your students and appreciate your commitment to preparing them for a successful financial future.

Get a Life is a hands-on budget simulation that teaches middle and high school students the importance of budgeting, financial planning, and career preparation. Students are challenged to manage a monthly budget based on randomly assigned career and family scenarios, while they navigate real-world expenses with the help of community volunteers. Along the way, students learn how education, income, and financial choices affect their daily lives and long-term goals.

Annually, **Get a Life** reaches more than 16,000 West Virginia students in 148 schools around the state. With your support, we are proud to expand access to meaningful, real-life financial learning opportunities.

In addition to **Get a Life**, the West Virginia State Treasurer's Office provides several savings and investment programs to the public. SMART529 allows families to save for higher education expenses, Jumpstart Savings allows for skilled workers to save for entrepreneurship and workforce readiness, and WVABLE provides savings and investments options for people with disabilities.

If you have questions about any of our programs, please contact our Financial Education Division at financial@wvsto.gov or call **304-558-5000** and ask to speak to one of our financial education specialists. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,


Larry Pack
West Virginia State Treasurer



WEST VIRGINIA STATE
TREASURER'S OFFICE

About the Program

What We Do

For almost two decades, the West Virginia State Treasurer's Office has empowered West Virginia students with personal financial education through its one-of-a-kind **Get a Life** budget simulation.

Targeting eighth grade middle school students, the Treasurer's staff visits more than 140 middle schools and reaches more than 16,000 students annually with this impactful activity.

During the State Treasurer's **Get a Life** activity, students are launched into the future where they have graduated high school and have full-time jobs. Whether they live alone, have spouses, or have children, all students have bills to pay! Students will travel to each station to buy homes, cars, food, and other needs and wants. They fill out ledger sheets as they shop and budget for their monthly expenses.

A unique feature of this program is that each student will have the opportunity to "go back to school" and get additional professional training to obtain an advanced degree or certification. This opportunity to "Level Up" their education allows them to earn more money and see how that changes their monthly budget.

Local community volunteers help the students make their purchases at each station and offer unique perspectives as students gain real-world experiences.

Program Highlights

- It teaches basic math skills and problem-solving techniques
- It helps students understand needs vs. wants
- Students make it competitive and have fun while learning
- Students gain skills to make better financial decisions
- Students learn how higher education will advance their career goals and family income
- Local business leaders volunteer to help create a realistic environment for the students

Since it was created in 2008, Get a Life has helped tens of thousands of middle school students. In 2009, Get a Life was part of a nationally recognized program that received an Excellence in Financial Literacy Award (EIFLE) from the Institute for Financial Literacy. In addition, it was part of a program selected two years in a row as a regional finalist for the Council of State Governments Innovations Award.

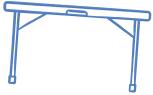


Ensuring a Successful Event



Scheduling the Event

Once the **Get A Life Presenter** has been contacted, the **Host Coordinator** and **Presenter** will work together to discuss the date, time, number of students, sessions needed, and grade level.



Facility Arrangements

For the event facilities, the **Host Coordinator** will:

- Reserve the location, such as a cafeteria or gym
- Arrange for the set up of 10 tables in a rectangular shape in the designated place with chairs at each table for volunteers
- Arrange for a seating area, such as bleachers, where students can sit at the beginning and end of the program for a brief discussion



Pre- and Post-Assessments

Students must complete the pre-assessment during a classroom lesson with their teachers a few days prior to the event. Teachers are highly encouraged to give a brief budgeting lesson covering basic money concepts and the difference between wants and needs.

Students must also complete the post-assessment following the event. The **West State Treasurer's Office** will send a link to your school contact. Pass it along to the participating teachers for them to provide to their students. Students submit online, and results go straight back to the Treasurer's Office (so teachers don't have to collect anything!).

The data collected from these assessments helps measure the success of the activity and is instrumental in helping to improve **Get a Life** for future events.



Recruiting Participants

The **Host Coordinator** will work to ensure principals, teachers, and students are familiar with the **Get a Life** program and are able to adjust the school schedule to allow students to attend the event for **1.5 hours each session**. The **Get a Life** activity works best when there are **no more than 80 students per session**.



Teacher/Staff Evaluation

Please have one teacher or staff member fill out the survey shortly after the program to share his/her feedback.

Teacher input is crucial—it helps improve future **Get a Life** sessions and highlights what worked well.

Who's Who?

- » The **Get a Life Presenter** is a representative from the West Virginia State Treasurer's Office who guides the activity.
- » The **Host Coordinator** is a representative from the host school who works with the **Get a Life Presenter** to make arrangements for the event.

Social Media Tips

- » Share a post a week before the event to build anticipation and soon after the event (within a couple of days) while excitement is still high.
- » Keep the description of the activity short and clear: "Get a Life is a hands-on budgeting activity that shows students what real-world finances look like."
- » A student or teacher quote can make the post more personal and relatable.
- » Close by encouraging volunteers to stay connected for future events, including the school's contact email.

Please contact the **Get a Life Presenter** with any questions.



A PROGRAM OF THE WEST VIRGINIA STATE TREASURER'S OFFICE

Volunteer Information



Getting Volunteers

The **Host Coordinator** will recruit **16-20 volunteers** to work at the stations. Parents, community leaders, and local business owners are good resources. Some student leaders, such as high school honor society members or other leadership groups, could work a few tables, but adult volunteers are best.



Volunteer Sign-In

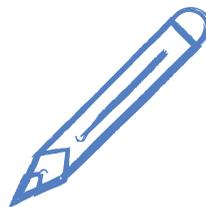
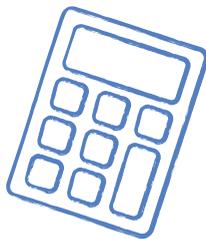
The **Get a Life Presenter** will have volunteers sign in and will train the volunteers when they arrive 30 minutes before the student session begins.

The Role of School Staff

The **Host Coordinator** will provide one staff person who will remain in all the **Get a Life** sessions. The hosting school will also provide teachers/staff who will help by roaming the space, helping students with math questions and supervising behavior concerns that might arise.

Presenter Arrival

The **Get a Life Presenter** will arrive one hour before the first session and will bring clipboards, pencils, handouts for students, calculators and signs for tables. It is up to each school to decide if they are allowing students to use the calculator on their cell phones.

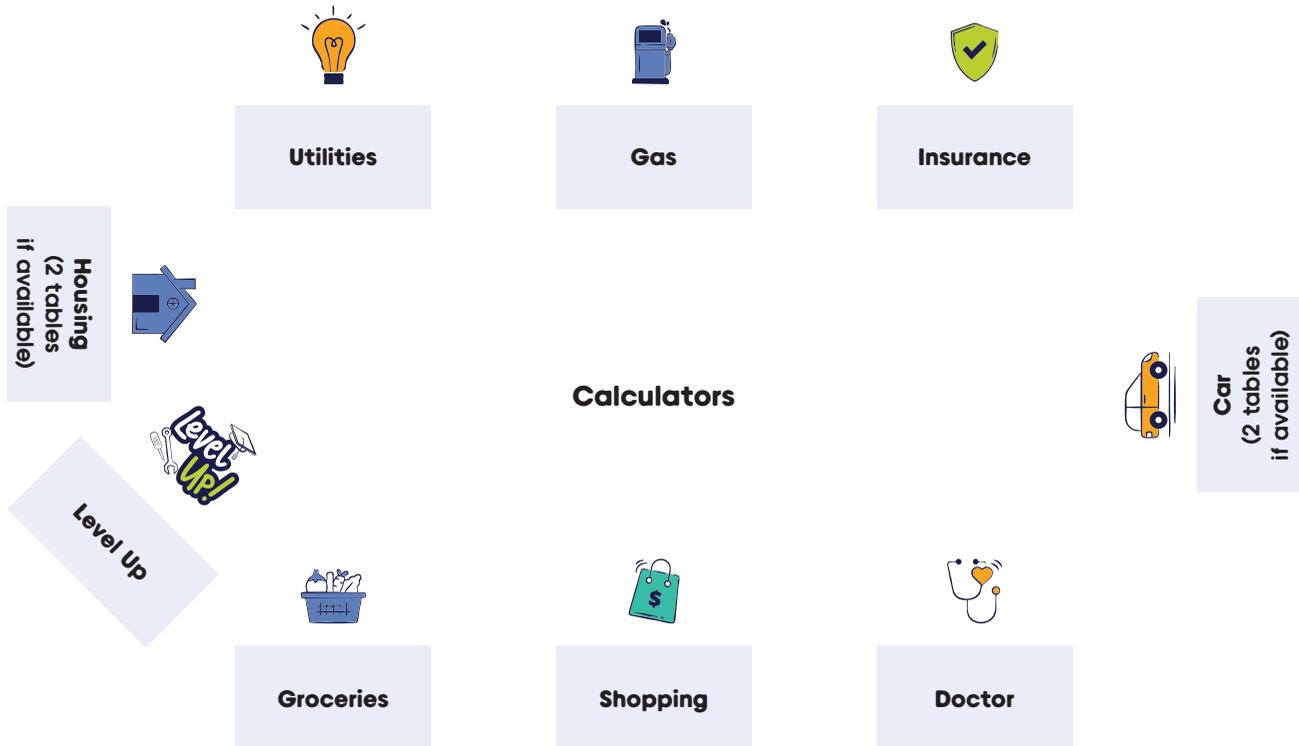


Best Practices for Finding Volunteers

- » Contact the WV Treasury early to schedule the program.
- » Invite business partners and financial institutions.
- » Ask volunteers to bring a coworker or friend.
- » Invite Board of Education members and the Superintendent.
- » Ensure all volunteers comply with district and school visitor policies.
- » Recognize volunteers publicly and offer small tokens of appreciation.
- » Invite PTO/PTA to support volunteer hospitality (breakfast/snacks).
- » Use high school honor students or student council members only as a final option.



Table Setup



Level Up

Use money saved in your SMART529 or Jumpstart Savings Accounts to further your education and level up your career. A representative from the State Treasurer's Office will staff this station.



Housing

Students will visit this station to meet friendly agents to help them with all their housing needs.



Cars

Students will visit this station to meet friendly car salespeople to care for all their transportation needs.



Insurance

Students will visit this station to meet friendly Insurance agents to take care of all their insurance needs.



Utilities

Students will visit this station to receive all their energy needs as well as optional services including cell phone services, cable and satellite TV service, internet, and streaming services.



Groceries

Students will visit this station to receive all the groceries needed for their household and plan for eating out with their families.



Shopping

Students will visit this station to receive all their luxury needs.



Gas

If you have a car, you're not going anywhere until you "Fuel Up" at the gas station.



Doctor

The doctor and his/her friendly staff will do everything in their power to take care of your medical, dental, and vision needs.



The Green Reaper/Lucky Leprechaun

He/she is the embodiment of life's little surprises: the flat tire, the broken window, the leaky roof, or winning the lottery!



Get a Life!

Financial Skills for the Real World

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Your school is hosting a Get a Life event!

Get a Life is successful because of our community members and local business leaders. For every event, volunteers work at one of the nine Get a Life stations around the room to help students make their monthly purchases. Whether you transform into a car salesperson, a realtor, or a grocer, you are helping students learn to stick to a monthly budget.

Visit wvtreasury.gov/citizens/financial-education to learn more about the Get a Life program!

**Contact your school to sign up
or to learn more about volunteering!**

