

Grant Approval Memo



Grantee: Junior Achievement USA
Request Amount: \$22,125.00
Project Title: Financial Literacy as a Pathway to Long-Term Stability for Vulnerable Young Alaskans
Grant Term: 7/1/2026 to 6/30/2027
Trust Staff: Tina Voelker-Ross

Staff Analysis:

- What does this project do?
This project will support Junior Achievement USA in implementing a program with partner agencies (Covenant House Alaska, Denali Family Services, Alaska Child & Family, and Southcentral Foundation) to provide structured, trauma-informed financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship programming to vulnerable youth and young adults. They will do so by adapting their curriculum to ensure the content is culturally responsive, trauma informed, developmentally appropriate, and relevant to participants at partner agencies, training the partner agency staff in implementation of the curriculum, and working with them to embed the curriculum into their programs. Partner agencies have committed to the implementation of this project with Junior Achievement of Alaska. Trust funds are for personnel, travel, supplies, equipment and other costs (program insurance and student licensing fee for 300 students).
- Who is receiving the funds?
Junior Achievement (JA) of Alaska was founded in 1973. For 54 years, Junior Achievement of Alaska has delivered financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship education to 21,000+ young people across the state. Through hands-on, experiential programming, JA equips participants with practical skills to manage money, prepare for employment, and think entrepreneurially. While JA of Alaska is in over 53 communities across Alaska, the focus of this project is Anchorage.
- Why is staff recommending this project?
Youth served in partner organizations experience homelessness, behavioral health challenges, foster care involvement, and systemic barriers that limit their economic stability. Financial capability is essential to long-term stability and independence. For many of them, financial instability is both a symptom and a driver of broader life disruption. Without access to practical financial education and workforce preparation, cycles of instability persist. Junior Achievement's evidence-based model has demonstrated measurable improvements in participant knowledge and confidence, making it well-suited for integration into youth-serving environments. A 42% improvement in knowledge and confidence within a single session is not incremental — it is transformative. This project expands access to foundational financial skills, aligns with workforce development needs, and supports prevention and long-term stability for Trust beneficiaries. By investing in curriculum modification, staff training, and evaluation, the Trust will support the development of a scalable model that integrates financial capability into existing service systems — strengthening individuals, families, and communities across Anchorage. This Anchorage-based model will serve as proof of concept for integrating financial capability education into human services settings statewide. This initial funding establishes the foundation, and the capacity building, durable materials, integrated delivery, and measurable outcomes ensures that the program will continue delivering financial skills to these vulnerable populations after the grant period concludes.

Grant Approval Memo



- Will this be a multi-year project?
This proposal is for a one-year (12-month) grant project.

Trust Five Year Funding History

No previous Trust grants

Comp Plan Identification

Area of Focus	Objective	Comments
Area of Focus 1: Early Childhood & Youth	1.5 Youth and their caregivers are connected to their communities	c. Strategy: Provide support for youth through life transitions and teach skills that prepare them for being successful adults in their home communities.

Trust Focus Area Connection

Budget Area	Strategy	Comments
Early Childhood & Youth	Early Childhood - Not associated with a strategy	

Project Description (from grant application)

For 54 years, Junior Achievement of Alaska has delivered financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship education to 21,000+ young people across the state, each year. Through hands-on, experiential programming, JA equips participants with practical skills to manage money, prepare for employment, and think entrepreneurially. Pre- and post-program evaluations consistently demonstrate measurable growth — with knowledge and confidence increasing by as much as 42% in a single learning experience.

While JA has historically served students in traditional K-12 settings, there is a critical and growing need to expand these proven programs to also include the highly vulnerable youth and young adults in Anchorage. This project will deliver adapted JA curriculum directly to individuals served by:

- Covenant House Alaska
- Denali Family Services
- Alaska Child & Family
- Southcentral Foundation

Grant Approval Memo



Young people at these partner organizations often face compounded challenges, including homelessness, behavioral health barriers, foster care placement, intergenerational poverty, and systemic inequities. For many, financial instability is both a symptom and a driver of broader life disruption. Without access to practical financial education and workforce preparation, cycles of instability persist.

Project Overview

This Anchorage-based initiative will provide structured, trauma-informed financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship programming embedded within partner service environments. Programs will focus on:

- Budgeting, saving, credit, and debt management
- Goal setting and financial decision-making
- Career exploration and workplace expectations
- Resume development, interview preparation, and professional communication
- Entrepreneurial thinking and problem-solving skills

JA's evidence-based curriculum will be delivered by trained partner staff within trusted, familiar settings — ensuring accessibility and continuity of care.

Funding Purpose and Need

Specific funding is requested to support three core components essential to serving these vulnerable populations effectively:

1. Curriculum Acquisition and Modification

While JA's curriculum is proven, adaptation is required to ensure content is culturally responsive, trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, and relevant to participants navigating housing insecurity, recovery, or reentry. Funding will support:

- Modification of lesson materials to reflect real-life scenarios faced by participants
- Simplification and redesign of materials for accessibility
- Integration of culturally grounded examples and language
- Printing, materials production, and participant workbooks

2. Staff Training and Capacity Building

Partner staff will be trained to deliver JA programming with fidelity while incorporating trauma-informed practices. Funding will support:

Grant Approval Memo



- Professional development sessions
- Training materials and facilitator guides
- Ongoing coaching and technical assistance
- Staff time dedicated to implementation

By embedding financial literacy and workforce skills within organizations already serving vulnerable individuals, this project increases efficiency while maximizing impact. Participants will gain:

- Increased financial confidence and decision-making ability
- Improved employment readiness
- Clearer pathways toward economic self-sufficiency
- Reduced financial stress and long-term risk of instability

For individuals experiencing homelessness, behavioral health challenges, or family disruption, these skills are not optional — they are foundational to recovery and independence.

JA's 54-year track record in Alaska demonstrates that when participants engage in experiential financial education, measurable learning gains follow. A 42% improvement in knowledge and confidence within a single session is not incremental — it is transformative. With proper adaptation and support, these outcomes can extend to some of Alaska's most underserved populations.

Why This Investment Matters Now

Alaska continues to face workforce shortages, housing instability, and rising costs of living. Vulnerable populations are disproportionately impacted. By investing in curriculum modification, staff training, and evaluation, funders will enable a scalable model that integrates financial capability into existing service systems — strengthening individuals, families, and communities across Anchorage.

This project represents more than a class. It is an intentional effort to break cycles of instability by equipping participants with lifelong economic tools.

Junior Achievement of Alaska stands ready to leverage its five decades of experience to ensure that every participant — regardless of circumstance — has access to the skills needed to build a stable and self-directed future, and lead choice-filled lives.

Grantee Proposed Evaluation Measures (from grant application)

JA will administer pre- and post-evaluations to measure gains in financial knowledge, confidence, and workforce readiness. Funding will support:

Grant Approval Memo



- Data collection tools and analysis (Goal: Increase pre- and post- tests 25% after each lesson)
- Outcome reporting (program surveys that detail the perceptions, attitudes, and behavior changes after taking the course)
- Continuous improvement adjustments based on findings (feedback from program facilitators, participants)
- Anticipated Impact (Goal: 300 young people in transition)

Proposed Project Performance Measures (developed by the Trust)

How much did you do?

- a. Number (#) of unduplicated Trust beneficiaries served during the reporting period, broken down by primary beneficiary category and by partner organization.
- b. Number (#) of staff trained during the reporting period. Please list the name, title when available, and organization of each staff member trained.

How well did you do it?

- a. Provide a narrative describing the timeline, activities, successes, challenges, and lessons learned during the reporting period. Be sure to address the activities and process for adapting the Junior Achievement curriculum to ensure the content is culturally responsive, trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, and relevant. Additionally, include information regarding how each agency will embed the curriculum into their programs.
- b. Number (#) and percentage (%) of participants completing the Financial Literacy for Young Adults program during the reporting period.
- c. Using pre/post survey data, the number (#) and percentage (%) of participants who increased their knowledge of curriculum topics (financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship).
- d. Number (#) and percentage (%) of participants satisfied with the level of information they received while participating in the program.

Is anyone better off?

- a. Number (#) and percentage (%) of participants who reported an increase in self-confidence and decision-making ability as a result of participating in the project.
- b. Three statements from participants describing how they will use the knowledge gained from participating in financial literacy and work readiness skills in the future.

Grant Approval Memo



Sustainability (from grant application)

From the outset, this project is designed not as a one-time intervention, but as a capacity-building investment that embeds financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship education directly into the service models of our Anchorage partners.

1. Train-the-Trainer Model and Internal Capacity Building

Initial funding supports staff training so that program delivery expertise remains within each partner organization — Covenant House Alaska, Denali Family Services, Alaska Child & Family, and Southcentral Foundation. Once staff are trained and curriculum modifications are complete, these organizations can continue delivering programming with minimal ongoing cost. This approach ensures sustainability beyond the grant period by reducing reliance on external facilitators and creating internal champions, who have already self-identified by requesting programs during the 2025-26 school year.

2. Durable Curriculum Modifications

Grant funds will support the upfront cost of adapting Junior Achievement’s curriculum to be trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and accessible for vulnerable populations. Once these modifications are complete, the customized materials can be reused across cohorts, significantly lowering long-term implementation costs. Future expenses are limited primarily to reproduction of materials and light refresher training.

3. Integration into Existing Service Frameworks

Rather than operating as a stand-alone program, financial literacy and workforce readiness lessons will be embedded into existing case management, residential programming, and youth development schedules. By aligning with required life-skills components already present within partner organizations, this initiative becomes part of standard service delivery rather than an “add-on.”

4. Ongoing Data and Outcome Reporting

Through pre- and post-evaluations administered by Junior Achievement of Alaska, partners will be equipped with measurable outcomes demonstrating impact. Documented gains — historically as high as 42% in a single learning experience — will strengthen future funding proposals and allow partners to integrate the program into broader funding streams, including workforce development, behavioral health stabilization, and youth transition grants.

5. Diversified Funding Strategy

Following the initial implementation phase, sustainability will be supported through:

- Modest program cost-sharing among partner organizations
- Inclusion in future foundation and corporate sponsorship proposals
- Workforce development and economic stability grant opportunities
- Individual donor engagement tied to demonstrated outcomes

Grant Approval Memo



Because the core infrastructure — curriculum, training, and evaluation systems — will already be in place, future funding requests will focus on scaling and replication rather than redevelopment.

6. Long-Term Vision for Expansion

This Anchorage-based model will serve as a proof of concept for integrating financial capability education into human services settings statewide. Demonstrated success will position Junior Achievement of Alaska and its partners to pursue broader, multi-year funding opportunities that expand access while maintaining cost efficiency.

In short, initial funding establishes the foundation. Capacity building, durable materials, integrated delivery, and measurable outcomes ensure that the program continues delivering life-changing financial skills long after the grant period concludes.

This is not a temporary program — it is a long-term investment in economic stability for Alaska’s most vulnerable individuals.

Who We Serve (from grant application)

The partners who are requesting services that would benefit from this grant are below:

Covenant House Alaska partners with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to support youth experiencing homelessness by expanding access to housing stability, behavioral health services, and life-skills development that promote long-term self-sufficiency.

Denali Family Services collaborates with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to provide therapeutic foster care, behavioral health treatment, and family support services that stabilize vulnerable children and strengthen family systems.

Alaska Child & Family works in alignment with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to deliver residential treatment, education, and behavioral health programs for youth with complex needs, advancing recovery and long-term well-being.

Southcentral Foundation partners with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to provide integrated, culturally grounded health and wellness services that support Trust beneficiaries in achieving stability, resilience, and self-determination.

Estimated Numbers of Beneficiaries Served Experiencing (from grant application)

Mental Illness:	125
Substance Abuse	65
Traumatic Brain Injuries:	10
Secondary Beneficiaries (family members or caregivers providing support to primary beneficiaries):	200
Number of people to be trained	15

Project Budget (from grant application)

Grant Approval Memo



Personnel Services Costs	\$1,800.00
Personnel Services Costs (Other Sources)	\$11,000.00
Personnel Services Narrative	Trust funds will contribute to personnel costs for JA staff to implement the project. Other funds: JA is budgeting \$11,000 for in-kind personnel costs to prepare for "train the trainer" sessions, provide ongoing support for program, pre and post tests and feedback surveys, create end of program report.
Travel Costs	\$1,350.00
Travel Costs (Other Sources)	\$0.00
Travel Costs Narrative	Costs to and from sites for training and ongoing program support within the Anchorage area
Space or Facilities Costs	\$0.00
Space or Facilities Costs (Other Sources)	\$5,000.00
Space or Facilities Narrative	The cost of the facility where these classes will take place with the volunteers, students, and with the JA staff for training. The non-profit partners are providing this to support this project.
Supplies Costs	\$10,950.00
Supplies Costs (Other Sources)	\$0.00
Supplies Narrative	Cost to print and prepare 30 program kits with enough materials for 10 students within each kit. Kits will contain games, maps, lesson plans, workbooks, take home activities for parents, and junior journals for students to document their learnings through the duration of the course, will also cover the costs to modify the programs to align with the individual service providers
Equipment Costs	\$5,475.00
Equipment Costs (Other Sources)	\$0.00
Equipment Narrative	Instructor "Train the Trainer" materials for 15 teachers including lesson plans, modifications, and training time.
Other Costs	\$2,550.00
Other Costs (Other Sources)	\$0.00
Other Costs Narrative	Program insurance and student licensing fee for 300 students

Other Funding Sources (from grant application)

Grant Approval Memo



JA personnel in-kind	\$11,000.00
Partner Organization facility in-kind contribution	\$5,000.00
Total Leveraged Funds	\$16,000.00