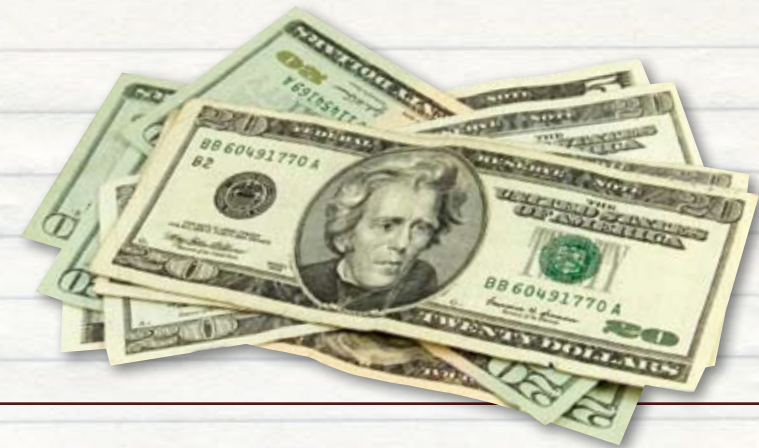


Adding *it all* up

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN OMAHA talk with TOM HOENIG, president of the Kansas City Fed, about personal finances and the economy.

PHOTO BY BOB ERVIN



Kansas City Fed committed to financial literacy for all ages

Whether it's a traveling trunk of classroom activities, free lesson plans for teachers or a family visit to the interactive Money Museum, the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City has a variety of resources for teachers, students and the public to better understand economic concepts in a fun and meaningful way.

These efforts are part of the Kansas City Fed's goal to help people of all ages and backgrounds learn how to manage their finances and make sound economic decisions—concepts that are critical to functioning in today's changing economy, says Lowell Jones, assistant vice president in the Public Affairs Department, which is responsible for the Fed's regional economic education.

"We want people to better understand how the Federal Reserve and our economy function, and what financial tools are available to them," Jones says. "Informed consumers are the backbone of a strong economy—that is why the public education role the Kansas City Fed plays is so vital. The return on our investment is immeasurable."

For the classroom

Staff members at the Kansas City Fed and its Branches in Denver, Oklahoma City and Omaha connect with both teachers and students throughout the region, promoting

financial literacy and building relationships, says Jennifer Clark, who oversees the economic education program for the Tenth Federal Reserve District.

"One of our top priorities is equipping teachers with the resources they need to share economic and financial concepts with their classes," Clark says. "Through the years, a teacher reaches hundreds of students. The Fed wants to give educators tools to teach lessons that stick with children into adulthood."

These efforts are free and include various events and workshops for educators throughout the region, ranging from the "Teacher Open House" in Kansas City to "The Consumer in Today's Economy" workshop in Albuquerque.

Teachers receive grade-specific lesson plans and classroom materials on everything from saving to economic concepts. Fed staff at some of the offices offer financial literacy lessons during classroom visits.

Longer, in-depth sessions geared toward kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers and high school students are also available. Teachers learn how to better incorporate financial and economics lessons into their curriculum, while high school students are introduced to topics such as the Great Depression and the operations of the Federal Reserve System.

Additionally, Michele Wulff, an economic education coordinator at the Kansas City

Fed's Omaha Branch and a former teacher, writes curriculum; presents workshops in the region and at national educational conferences; and develops economic education materials, including:

- "Teaching Tips" discussion questions to accompany Fed research for high school students;
- Grade-specific personal finance lesson plans and role plays on saving, the payments system and online banking;
- "Fifty Nifty" economic concept cards and teacher guide for kindergarten through sixth grade;
- "Traveling Trunk" of economic education and Federal Reserve materials and activities for classroom use.

Throughout the year, the Kansas City Fed sponsors economic education-related events for students, including the Economic Essay Contest.

"When taught early, children start to

build a foundation for better understanding economics and finances," Wulff says. "Even young students can understand basic economic concepts—that is why many of the newest resources we are developing focus on strengthening elementary-level resources for teachers to use in the classroom."

The Money Museum

The 3,000-square-foot museum is a part of the Kansas City Fed's recently built headquarters at 1 Memorial Drive in Kansas City, Mo. The exhibits, which have touch screens with video and text, appeal to visitors of all ages. Since opening in July, the museum has welcomed more than 2,000 guests.

Admission and parking are free. Guided and self-guided tours are available weekdays during regular business hours.

Highlights include:

- Seeing a portion of the region's largest cash vault and the automated vehicles moving money;

- Hands-on exhibits for young children to learn about the economy, such as creating their own currency, stepping into the role of a bank examiner and more;
- Browsing through the Truman Coin Collection, which has more than 450 coins from every presidential administration;
- Watching "The Fed and You" short film on the 12-foot-long video wall;
- Taking a look at the "Legacy Exhibit," which has artifacts dating back to the Kansas City Fed's opening day in 1914.

Student-group visits can include an age-specific, 30-minute presentation led by Fed staff. Additionally, educators can choose from a range of pre- and post-visit lesson plans for fifth-through 12th-grade classroom use. These plans are designed to help further engage students and provide instructional aid to teachers before, during or after their visit, Wulff says. Take-home activities, such as a money activity guide that includes games and fun facts, are offered for families after their tour. All presentations and materials are free.

Economic Education Advisory Council

The direction of the Kansas City Fed's economic education initiatives is determined by its staff based on feedback from members of the Economic Education Advisory Council. The council is made up of a dozen education professionals from the Kansas City metro area, including teachers from the elementary through university levels as well as youth leadership programs.

Members meet quarterly to accomplish several goals, including assessing educators' needs, strengthening partnerships, and identifying and pooling resources in support of financial literacy, says Gigi Wolf, an economic



PHOTO BY GARY BARBER

education specialist at the Kansas City Fed who coordinates the council's efforts.

"Who better to speak to the needs of students than those working with them day-to-day," Wolf says. "The council provides valuable insight on how the Federal Reserve can help prepare kids to make good economic decisions as adults."

Council member Michael Byrd knows firsthand the importance of early education. When Byrd was an officer in the U.S. Army, part of his job was to advise young soldiers with personal financial problems.

"I can't be out of money," Byrd remembers hearing, "I still have checks in my checkbook."

Most were young and had never been taught how to manage money. Now a retired lieutenant colonel, Byrd incorporates financial literacy into the Junior ROTC program that he oversees for seven high schools in the Kansas City Missouri School District. The program has 25 staff members and about 2,100 student cadets. He is assisted by the Kansas City Fed with instructional training, lesson plans and more.

"A basic understanding of functional economics is critical to any citizen," Byrd says. "The earlier children are exposed to these activities ... the more skillful they become."

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BY BRYE STEEVES, SENIOR WRITER

AREA TEACHERS ATTEND AN OPEN HOUSE at the Kansas City Fed, which provided free materials to assist with their financial education lessons.



PHOTO BY GARY BARBER

For more information on student and teacher resources, academic competitions, events and Money Museum tours, and to order free publications, visit KansasCityFed.org/TEN.

