

CENTER FOR
**ECONOMIC EDUCATION
& ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

ANNUAL REPORT
2025 – 2026



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
**LERNER BUSINESS
& ECONOMICS**

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Overview

The University of Delaware's Center for Economic Education and Entrepreneurship (CEEE) at the Alfred Lerner College of Business and Economics is pleased to report another year of success in advancing K-12 economic, personal finance and entrepreneurship education. Through a variety of programs, professional development opportunities, and student events, the CEEE equips both pre-service and in-service teachers with the tools and knowledge needed to inspire confident, informed decision-making among their students. This year, the CEEE delivered 111 programs, professional development sessions, and graduate courses, reaching 2,291 educators in both public and private schools.

The Center also hosted 9,079 students at different events and competitions. In total, 261,828 students were positively impacted. Our dedicated team of experienced educators and content experts are committed to helping teachers elevate their teaching practices, enhancing students' understanding of economic concepts and personal finance. Building on 55 years of service, we remain focused on helping educators teach economics as a vital framework for all decision-making. With continued support from our partners, we will keep empowering students to make connections with local, national, and global events that affect their personal financial futures, helping to lay the foundation for stronger, more resilient communities and economies.



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K-12 Programs and Trainings for Delaware Students and Teachers

RONNI K. COHEN BANK AT SCHOOL

This year, 42 schools launched or revived Bank At School programs, giving 22,347 students the opportunity to open and make deposits to no-fee, non-custodial savings accounts at their schools. Representatives from 25 local community banks and credit unions visited K-8 classrooms weekly to provide these banking services, helping to instill the value of saving. Bank At School has been a staple in Delaware since 1992.

ECON DINNER AND A MOVIE

This series provides educators with memorable ways to explore economics and personal finance through popular films. This year's featured movies sparked discussions on economic decision-making, market structures, incentives, entrepreneurship, scarcity, consumer choice, and personal finance. Guided by CEEE staff and guest experts, this program connected with 100 teachers, creating the potential to enrich economics and personal finance learning for 9,265 students across Delaware.

ECONOMICS COURSES FOR TEACHERS

To support teachers in their efforts to teach economics, the CEEE offers three tuition-free, asynchronous online courses each semester, tailored to elementary, middle, and high school educators. These courses, aligned with Delaware's economics standards, help teachers strengthen their content knowledge and teaching skills. This past year, 12 teachers participated, directly benefiting 784 students.

ECONOMIC EDUCATION CONFERENCES AND TEACHER AWARD PRESENTATIONS

The CEEE hosted two conferences this past year to support K-12 educators in enhancing their economics and personal finance instruction. In the fall, Econ-O-Ween provided a half-day of professional development for teachers, offering an opportunity to refresh classroom strategies. The event featured guest speakers and CEEE staff presenting practical lessons on game theory, public economics, and saving and investing. The annual CEEE's Personal Finance and Economic Education Conference returned this summer with elementary and secondary tracks that allowed teachers to select content most relevant to them. With a keynote address from Ms. Shelby Borst, William Penn High School teacher, this



full-day conference offered a deeper dive into economic and personal finance education, equipping educators with a wealth of strategies and tools to prepare for the upcoming school year. During the event, Ms. Erica Varites, a 5th grade teacher at Cooke Elementary, was honored with the Delaware Bonnie T. Meszaros Economic Educator of the Year Award for her outstanding contributions to advancing economic education. Ms. Kylee Holliday, an educator from Alexis I. duPont High School, was recognized with the Delaware Ronni K. Cohen Personal Finance Educator of the Year Award for her outstanding contributions to advancing personal finance education.

"I really enjoyed the content, but more importantly, the hands-on activities help students better understand these concepts, especially since they can be challenging and complex."

Brook Timanus, Teacher, Immaculate Heart of Mary School

ECONOMICS FOR KIDS AND ECONOMICS MODEL LESSONS

The Economics for Kids, program introduces kindergarten students to foundational concepts in economics and personal finance. Using children's books as a springboard, lessons are designed to be fun, engaging, and aligned with state standards, helping students begin their economic education early. Building on this foundation, CEEE partnered with the Social Studies Coalition of Delaware to develop and deliver Economics Model Lessons, a suite of high-quality resources for grades 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7. These dynamic, age-appropriate lessons are aligned with Delaware's economics standards and designed to support effective instruction. In total, the CEEE conducted 11 professional development sessions for 192 teachers, equipping them with complete resource kits that included interactive lessons and books to make economic concepts both enjoyable and accessible for 5,425 students across the state.



FOUNDATIONS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY

This series connects Delaware educators with industry experts who provide current, real-world perspectives on key personal finance topics. Rather than focusing on classroom lessons, this professional learning program deepens teachers' content knowledge, helping them build the confidence and understanding needed to enrich instruction with relevant examples and practical insights. This year, we explored timely topics including

insurance, investing, and cryptocurrency, equipping educators with knowledge they can bring directly into their classrooms. The CEEE engaged 64 educators through the series, creating the potential to enhance personal finance instruction for 7,697 students across Delaware.

KEYS TO FINANCIAL SUCCESS CURRICULUM AND TRAINING

Celebrating its 24th year, the Keys to Financial Success curriculum, offered by the CEEE in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and the Delaware Council on Economic Education, continues to serve as a comprehensive, standards-aligned resource for Delaware educators. Revised this year with updated content and resources, the curriculum further supports teachers as they implement Delaware's new high school financial literacy graduation requirement under House Bill 203 (HB 203).

Our flexible training model allows educators to choose between 3 days of professional development either in Dover or Philadelphia, reaching 60 educators this past summer. To further assist educators, year-round direct support is offered to districts and schools implementing the Keys curriculum to meet the new HB 203 graduation requirements. This program equips educators with classroom-ready resources to teach essential topics such as budgeting, saving, investing, credit, insurance, taxes, housing, transportation, and post-secondary education. All Keys to Financial Success lessons remain directly aligned with Delaware's high school financial literacy standards. Research published in the International Review of Economics Education (Asarta, Hill, and Meszaros) shows that Keys improves personal finance knowledge by over 60%.

"My students rarely have opportunities to pay with cash. That basic building block of economics is missing so a hands-on competition is so valuable."

Liles Puleo, Teacher, Thurgood Marshall Elementary School

In addition to the curriculum and teacher trainings, students were encouraged to participate in two key events: the David B. Bakerian Personal Finance Essay Contest, hosted with the Delaware Bankers Association (DBA), and the Delaware Personal Finance Challenge (PFC). Two students from Archmere Academy won \$5,000 scholarships for their outstanding essays advocating for financial education. The 17th annual PFC, held in April during Financial Literacy Month, saw 431 students from both high school and middle school compete in online preliminary rounds. In the final in-person high school competition, The Charter School of Wilmington won the state competition and went on to place second nationally, with First State Military Academy earning second place in Delaware.

MEANINGFUL ECONOMICS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMPETITION (ME*)

The annual ME* competition, held in the spring, engages teachers and students in hands-on learning about economics, entrepreneurship, and personal finance. In 2026, over 477 students from 14 schools participated in New Castle and Sussex counties. Teams of third, fourth, and fifth graders tested their knowledge, perfected their production processes, and tackled problem-solving challenges, pitching business solutions to judges, many from Delaware's banking community. Students received t-shirts designed by their peers, and prize ribbons were awarded across three competitive events, celebrating first-through fourth-place winners.



MINI-SOCIETY

Since 1977, Mini-Society has introduced Delaware elementary students (grades 3–5) to economics and entrepreneurship through hands-on classroom experiences. During this program, students create a classroom economy where they take on roles such as producers, consumers, and currency creators. Last year, the CEEE hosted two professional development sessions for educators, reaching an additional 873 students. The program culminates in a Market Day, where students apply their learning in a dynamic, real-world setting.

PERSONAL FINANCE ACADEMY (PFA)

The PFA program supports economic advancement in Delaware's low- and moderate-income communities by teaching money management skills to students and offering year-long professional development for educators. In partnership with district social studies supervisors, coaches, and teachers in majority-minority schools, PFA delivers targeted instruction and ongoing support for educators. This year, the CEEE continued its One School, One Book initiative through PFA, distributing more than 371 books to students at Shortlidge Academy and Eisenburg Elementary schools. The selected title—The Ice Cream Man—helped reinforce the importance of financial literacy, perseverance, and budgeting, while emphasizing that with creativity and determination, even the smallest setbacks can be overcome.

STUDENT & COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

COHEN BANK AT SCHOOL

22,347 Young savers empowered

FOUNDATIONS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY

7,697 Learners reached

TEACH CHILDREN TO SAVE DAY

6,664 Elementary students engaged

PERSONAL FINANCE ACADEMY

5,635 Individuals connected

ECONOMICS MODEL LESSONS

5,393 Economic thinkers cultivated

SIEGFRIED YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM® (SYLP)

685 Future leaders inspired

IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAININGS

286 Teachers prepared

ECON DINNER AND A MOVIE

100 Instructors equipped

CEEE CONFERENCES

85 Educators energized

IMPACT²⁰²⁶report

CENTER FOR
ECONOMIC EDUCATION
&
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

REACH

111 Trainings held

2,291 Teachers taught

261,828 Students reached

AWARDS

CEEE

Albert Beekhuis Center of Excellence Award

Amy Krzyzanowski

Lerner College Alumni Award of Excellence

Kylee Holliday

Ronni K. Cohen Personal Finance Educator of the Year



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

LERNER BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

STUDENT EVENTS

9,079 Students engaged

- InvestWrite Essay Contest
- Meaningful Economics (ME*) Competition
- Personal Finance Challenge
- Personal Finance Essay Contest
- SYLP
- Teach Children to Save Day Poster Contest
- The Stock Market Game

PRAISE

98% Will recommend our professional development to others

98% Report that our professional development improved their content knowledge

PROGRAMS BY GRADE LEVEL

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Economics for Kids
- Mini-Society
- Ronni K. Cohen Bank at School
- Teach Children to Save Day

SECONDARY SCHOOL

- Keys to Financial Success
- Personal Finance Classroom
- Siegfried Youth Leadership Program®
- SYLP Economics Summer Camp

K-12

- Economics Courses for Teachers
- Econ Dinner and a Movie
- Economics Model Lessons
- Econ-O-Ween Mini-Conference
- Personal Finance Academy
- Personal Finance & Economic Education Conference
- Professional Learning for In-Service Teachers

HIGHER EDUCATION

- Master of Arts in Economics and Entrepreneurship for Educators

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- Radio America
- Robinhood
- Sallie Mae Bank
- Shore United Bank
- SIFMA
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- Sussex County Government
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- The Rockefeller Trust Company (Delaware)
- The Siegfried Group
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- UD Department of Finance
- YourMoney101
- Wells Fargo
- Wilmington Trust
- WSFS Bank

SIEGFRIED YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM® (SYLP)

In partnership with The Siegfried Group, Horn Entrepreneurship, and Junior Achievement, the SYLP offers Delaware secondary students a platform to explore leadership and personal development. This year's events welcomed 685 students and teachers, and provided students with motivational talks and guidance on leadership. Speakers Eddie Cortes challenged students to see themselves as leaders in a rapidly evolving digital world, while Nicki Joiner helped students practice decision-making in real time, encouraging them to think bigger about their futures and make meaningful choices.

"Doing the actual simulations and activities and showing how each grade level builds on the next really helps."

Heidi Miller, Teacher, Maclary Elementary School

THE PERSONAL FINANCE CLASSROOM

This comprehensive professional learning series supports Delaware's secondary educators in delivering high-quality, standards-aligned personal finance instruction. Developed to reinforce Delaware's high school Financial Literacy standards and to assist educators with the upcoming implementation of HB203, the program combines current content, classroom-ready strategies, and real-world applications across seven essential topics: decision-making and careers, budgeting, saving and investing, banking and credit, risk protection, post-secondary education, and housing and transportation. Through seven professional learning sessions, the CEEE equipped 130 educators with practical resources and engaging instructional approaches, creating the potential to impact 14,256 students across Delaware with meaningful, real-world financial literacy education.

SYLP® ECONOMICS SUMMER CAMP

In July 2026, the CEEE hosted the fourth annual SYLP Economics Summer Camp at the University of Delaware. The one-week residential camp introduced high school students to the economic way of thinking, featuring speakers and activities that emphasized critical decision-making and real-world applications. Students gained valuable insights into economics and learned how informed choices are key to navigating future challenges.



STOCK MARKET GAME

Now in its 44th year, the Stock Market Game (SMG) engages students in grades 4-12 in an online simulation of global markets. Last year, 2,741 students formed 857 teams guided by 94 teachers. Students managed a hypothetical \$100,000 portfolio, building skills in research, math, and critical thinking. Before the game, teachers received training on the role of financial markets in business growth and how to navigate the SMG platform. Participants also had the chance to join InvestWrite, a national competition challenging students to write about stock market investment strategies.

TEACH CHILDREN TO SAVE DAY

In April, the CEEE and the Delaware Financial Education Alliance brought financial education to over 6,664 third- and fourth-grade students during Teach Children to Save Day, a program that has run continually since 1998. With the help of 261 volunteers from local banks and businesses, 269 classrooms across Delaware received lessons on saving, using the children's book *The Great Investo and His Friends Penny and Saveroo in: The Magic Tool Kit*, by Greg Koseluk of the Delaware Bankers Association.



"I got a different perspective on economic ideas with data, and it will help me be more mindful in the future with checking certain things on apps and actually taking the time to read through terms and conditions."

Student, Hodgson Vo-Tech High School

AFTER-SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The CEEE's after-school professional learning sessions help teachers bring timely economics, personal finance, and entrepreneurship topics into the classroom. This past year, educators participated in virtual and in-person workshops through programs such as The State of the Economy, Family FinLit Fun Night, and K-5 Content for Confidence. These sessions provided current economic insights, expanded teachers' content knowledge, and shared practical strategies for making economic and personal finance concepts meaningful and relevant for students.

In addition to after-school programming, the CEEE partners with schools and districts to deliver customized in-service professional development tailored to local instructional needs. Available in half-day, full-day, school-wide, or district-wide formats, these trainings include lesson demonstrations, vertical alignment of K–12 economics and personal finance curriculum, resource identification and development, and customized support to strengthen classroom instruction and meet district goals. This year, the CEEE provided in-service professional development to 286 teachers, extending the impact of these trainings to an estimated 21,240 students throughout Delaware.



MAEEE Degree Program

In June, 16 educators from nine states returned to campus for their second summer of intensive coursework and collaboration. Their final projects are designed to expand economics and financial education, reaching thousands of students annually. To date, over 540 educators from 39 states and 15 countries have earned the MAEEE degree.

Beyond K-12 Programming

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE COLLABORATION

The CEEE partnered with the University of Delaware's College of Education and Human Development to deliver guest lectures in social studies methods courses for pre-service teachers. These sessions focused on introducing future educators to the principles of economics.

ECONOMIC FORECAST

In 2026, the CEEE and NFP co-hosted the Economic Forecast, offering valuable insights into how the current economic climate is impacting local businesses. The event featured expert speakers, including Dr. Patrick Harker, Rowan Distinguished Professor at The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania; Michael Farr, Chairman of FarrCrest

Capital, LLC; and Leland Vittert, Host of On Balance at NewsNation. A panel discussion, moderated by Farr, explored key economic issues. Speakers discussed trends and implications related to inflation, monetary policy, economic growth, labor market resilience, consumer confidence, and market uncertainty. During the event, Micheal Farr received the 2026 James B. O'Neill Award, recognizing his outstanding efforts to ensure that individuals gain the economic and financial knowledge they need to thrive in the future.

FURTHER WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

The CEEE, in partnership with the Delaware Council on Economic Education, continues to support Delaware.money, a web-based portal connecting Delaware residents with financial learning resources, tools, and local events.

PUBLICATIONS

Over the past year, CEEE associates have published model lessons as well as research articles and pedagogical resources. These publications contribute to the ongoing development of effective teaching strategies in economics and financial education.

"The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Undergraduate Economics," (with L. Ahlstrom and C. Harter), *AEA Papers and Proceedings*.

"Chalk and Talk" 30 Years Later: Insights from a Seventh National Survey on Teaching Undergraduate Introductory Economics," (with L. Ahlstrom and C. Harter), *The American Economist*.

"How the Language Skills of Test Takers Contribute to the Gap in Personal Finance Knowledge Between Young Adults With a Migration Background and Those Without One," (with R. Happ and S. Heidel), *Annual Review of Vocational and Economic Education Research*.

Ten revised, adapted and newly authored Kindergarten Economics Model Lessons designed to span a total of twenty 30-minute class periods, (with the Social Studies Coalition of Delaware).

Keys to Financial Success (Version 5), (with the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia).

"I was spending an entire semester on economics and I wanted to make sure I was doing right by the students and teaching them strong content. That pushed me to apply to the MAEEE and it was through that program that I gained confidence in my economics knowledge."

Elizabeth Bear, Teacher, Cab Calloway School of the Arts in Wilmington

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To prepare K-12 educators in economics, personal finance, and entrepreneurship by providing dynamic, standards-based professional development and resources.

To see students graduate as informed and productive citizens, contributing to their own prosperity and to the well-being of the world.

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