

Activity 5: Family Budgets

GRADES 3-12

CC

CC Standard Alignment:
Mathematics

GSE

GSE Standard Alignment:
Social Studies/ELA



45 - 60 min.



This activity can be paired with *Food and Life* and *Who is Food Insecure and How Access Defines What We Eat*.

Student Learning

This activity explores the relationship between household income and food security. It also identifies both community and government responses to hunger and poverty. Students will learn about the daily challenges millions of people face in this country.

Objectives

Students will have increased awareness about the gap that often exists between wages and expenses.

Students will gain a deeper understanding of the community and government responses to food insecurity in the United States.

Materials

- Copies of Family Scenarios (p. 29-38)
- Poverty Guidelines Chart (p.39)
- Potential Government Responses to Hunger (P. 40)
- Pens/Pencils
- Calculators
- Flipchart Paper or Whiteboard
- Markers

Performance Tasks

Divide the class into small groups of two or three.

Give each group a family scenario. Instructors should be sure that all ten family scenarios are represented at least once.

Each scenario will describe a household and the household's size, health states, income and expenses.

It is VERY important that the instructor is circulating during this time to make sure that groups are on task and that all group members understand the objective and have equal opportunity to participate.

Ask students to add up all their expenses and subtract these from their starting income. The amount left over is the income they can use toward food and other expenses.

After they have completed the activity, have students share different scenarios and the challenges that each household might be facing.

Share with the class that on average a person would need between \$243 and \$371 per month for food groceries.

(<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnpp/usda-food-plans-cost-food-reports-monthly-reports>)

Have the students brainstorm what other expenses a family might have. For example, diapers, cleaning supplies, car repair, etc.

Together or in groups, select one or two of the scenarios and take the amount leftover at the end of the month and divide it by 30 to determine how much money there is to spend on food per day. Then take that number and divide it by the number of people in the household to determine how much each person has for food per day.

Discussion Questions

- What insights or surprises did you experience while working with your family scenario and budget? *Facilitator Note: I wasn't able to pay all my bills, I wouldn't have enough money to keep my lights on, I don't know how I would get to work?*
 - What other necessary items would these families need each month? *Facilitator Note: Cleaning supplies, toiletries, vitamins, laundry soap and services, dental care, field trips, etc*
 - In the 1970's, a parent earning minimum wage (the federal minimum wage is currently \$7.25) could feed their children and pay for housing. What has changed? *Facilitator Note: Expenses like housing, healthcare, food and fuel have all skyrocketed. Wages have not kept up with the cost of living. An increasing number of people don't have healthcare coverage with work and*
- health care bills are now the leading cause of personal bankruptcy in the United States.*
- How could some of the government responses to hunger help the families in this activity? *Facilitator Note: Many of these families have no money left over for food and SNAP and WIC are federal programs that increase access to nutritious food. Most of these families are in working households, the Earned Income Tax Credit for low to middle income working families might help create financial stability. Families with children may be eligible for free or reduced priced meals at school. See Potential Government Responses Sheet.*
 - What are some challenges families might face trying to sign up for any of these government programs? *Facilitator Note: Families may not know about these programs or how to apply. People might not have internet access or transportation. If people are working, they might not be able to leave work to meet an appointment or to apply.*
 - What community responses to hunger might be able to help these families? *Facilitator Note: Families might visit a food pantry or a community kitchen in their region to get some supplemental food; or they might find a community-based program that provides rent assistance or help with non-food necessities.*
 - If you or someone you know needs food, how could you help? Do you know what community services are available near you? How might you find out?

Facilitator Note:

- You could contact a regional food bank to get a list of pantries and other programs in your area. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank>
- The United Way has a 211 hotline that can connect families to community services: <https://www.unitedway.org/our-impact/featured-programs/2-1-1#>
- In the metro-Atlanta and north Georgia region, the Atlanta Community Food Bank has an agency locator map: <https://acfb.org/local-impact-map> and a Text for Help system: Text findfood (all one word) or comida to 888-976-2232 to get a list of pantries near you.

your area. Share and discuss findings as a class or have students create reports.

Questions to explore:

- Where can they apply for the federal nutrition programs SNAP or WIC?
- How do you find out if they are eligible?
- What does a person need to know and/or bring with them?
- Is there a food pantry near you? When are they open?
- Would they be able to visit a pantry or apply for SNAP and not miss work?

Extension Ideas

Graph Expense

Create a pie graph to determine and illustrate the percentage of monthly income that each expense utilized.

Impact of Geography

Have students explore how location can impact a family's budget. Research cost of living in various parts of the country: e.g. Atlanta compared to New York City, San Francisco or Birmingham. Choose different family scenarios from this activity and have students determine how differences in the cost of housing and other expenses that impact the monthly budget.

Navigating Assistance

Individually or in small groups, using family scenarios 1, 2 and/or 7, research the steps involved for a household seeking community or government assistance in

FAMILY SCENARIO #1

Who You Are

You and your spouse have three children ages 2, 5 and 8.

One of you works for \$11/hour and one of you works for \$12.50/hour.

You both work full time and your combined monthly income is \$3,760.

You were recently diagnosed with high cholesterol and high blood pressure. Your doctor recommended you reduce sugar, fat and salt in your diet and increase fruits and vegetables.

Monthly Expenses

1. Rent (three bedroom apartment)	\$1,200
2. Utilities (electricity, gas, water and phone)	\$350
3. Transportation	\$120
4. Childcare (one in day care, two in after school)	\$900
5. Medical (health insurance plus co-pays)	\$400
6. Taxes	\$650

Total of expenses	\$
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Monthly income	\$
Minus total of expenses	-\$
Amount left over for food	\$

If you subtract the total of your expenses from your monthly income, how much money do you have left to purchase food?

- What other things would your family need to purchase monthly? (Cleaning and laundry supplies, toiletries, doctor's visits, etc.)
- Are there expenses on your list that (even before buying food) you won't have money to pay for?
- How might the health conditions mentioned above impact your family's budget?
- Which bills are the most important?
- See Poverty Guidelines Chart – is your family's income above, at or below the poverty line?

FAMILY SCENARIO #2

Who You Are

You and your spouse have two small children ages 2 and 4 and you are expecting your third child soon. You both work full time. One of you works for \$10/hour and one of you works for \$9/ hour. Your combined monthly income is \$3,040.

This pregnancy has involved significant complications, including a hospital stay and gestational diabetes.

Monthly Expenses

1. Rent (two bedroom apartment)	\$1,150
2. Utilities (electricity, gas, water and phone)	\$140
3. Transportation	\$120
4. Childcare (two in day care)	\$700
5. Medical (insurance)	\$375
6. Taxes	\$500
Total of expenses	\$

Monthly income	\$
Minus total of expenses	-\$
Amount left over for food	\$

If you subtract the total of your expenses from your monthly income, how much money do you have left to purchase food?

- What other things would your family need to purchase monthly? (Cleaning and laundry supplies, toiletries, doctor's visits, etc.)
- Are there expenses on your list that (even before buying food) you won't have money to pay for?
- How might the health conditions mentioned above impact your family's budget?
- Which bills are the most important?
- See Poverty Guidelines Chart – is your family's income above, at or below the poverty line?

FAMILY SCENARIO #3

Who You Are

You are a couple with three children ages 2, 4 and 7.

You both work full time. One of you works for \$12/hour and the other works for \$7.50/hour. Your combined monthly income is \$3,120.

Monthly Expenses

1. Rent (two bedroom apartment)	\$1,114
2. Utilities (electricity, gas, water and phone)	\$150
3. Transportation (car note, gas and insurance)	\$450
4. Childcare (two in day care, one in after school)	\$800
5. Medical (health insurance)	\$250
6. Taxes	\$290
Total of expenses	\$

Monthly income	\$
Minus total of expenses	-\$
Amount left over for food	\$

If you subtract the total of your expenses from your monthly income, how much money do you have left to purchase food?

- What other things would your family need to purchase monthly? (Cleaning and laundry supplies, toiletries, doctor's visits, etc.)
- Are there expenses on your list that (even before buying food) you won't have money to pay for?
- How might the health conditions mentioned above impact your family's budget?
- Which bills are the most important?
- See Poverty Guidelines Chart – is your family's income above, at or below the poverty line?

FAMILY SCENARIO #4

Who You Are

You are a retired couple.

You have a combined fixed monthly income of \$1,700 from Social Security.

You are both 71 years old and have been married 40 years.

Monthly Expenses

1. Rent (two bedroom apartment)	\$800
2. Utilities (electricity, gas, water and phone)	\$200
3. Transportation	\$60
4. Childcare (help w/special homecare for grandchildren)	\$200
5. Medical (health insurance and two prescriptions)	\$420
6. Taxes	\$180
Total of expenses	\$

Monthly income	\$
Minus total of expenses	-\$
Amount left over for food	\$

If you subtract the total of your expenses from your monthly income, how much money do you have left to purchase food?

- What other things would your family need to purchase monthly? (Cleaning and laundry supplies, toiletries, doctor's visits, etc.)
- Are there expenses on your list that (even before buying food) you won't have money to pay for?
- How might the health conditions mentioned above impact your family's budget?
- Which bills are the most important?
- See Poverty Guidelines Chart – is your family's income above, at or below the poverty line?

FAMILY SCENARIO #5

Who You Are

You are a 60 year-old grandmother, raising three grandchildren, ages 9, 11 and 17.

You receive a monthly disability check of \$750, a special TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) payment of \$135 and you watch two children from your neighborhood for a total of \$450/month. Your total monthly income is \$1,335.

You have multiple health issues that have placed you on disability.

Monthly Expenses

1. Rent (two bedroom apartment)	\$973
2. Utilities (electricity, gas, water and phone)	\$197
3. Transportation	\$60
4. Medical (state funded health insurance)	\$150
Total of expenses	\$

Monthly income	\$
Minus total of expenses	-\$
Amount left over for food	\$

If you subtract the total of your expenses from your monthly income, how much money do you have left to purchase food?

- What other things would your family need to purchase monthly? (Cleaning and laundry supplies, toiletries, doctor's visits, etc.)
- Are there expenses on your list that (even before buying food) you won't have money to pay for?
- How might the health conditions mentioned above impact your family's budget?
- Which bills are the most important?
- See Poverty Guidelines Chart – is your family's income above, at or below the poverty line?

FAMILY SCENARIO #6

Who You Are

You are a couple with two small children ages 2 and 4.

You both work full time for \$11.50/hour and have a combined monthly income of \$3,680.

You were recently diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes.

Monthly Expenses

1. Mortgage (small house)	\$900
2. Utilities (electricity, gas, water and phone)	\$300
3. Transportation (two cars: 1 car note, gas etc.)	\$800
4. Childcare (two in day care/receive discount)	\$650
5. Prescriptions	\$275
6. Medical (hospital bills)	\$658
7. Taxes	\$370
Total of expenses	\$

Monthly income	\$
Minus total of expenses	-\$
Amount left over for food	\$

If you subtract the total of your expenses from your monthly income, how much money do you have left to purchase food?

- What other things would your family need to purchase monthly? (Cleaning and laundry supplies, toiletries, doctor's visits, etc.)
- Are there expenses on your list that (even before buying food) you won't have money to pay for?
- How might the health conditions mentioned above impact your family's budget?
- Which bills are the most important?
- See Poverty Guidelines Chart – is your family's income above, at or below the poverty line?

FAMILY SCENARIO #7

Who You Are

You are married and have two young children, ages 3 and 6.

One of you works for \$7.25/hour (minimum wage) and one of you works for \$8/hour. You both work full time and have a combined monthly income of \$2,440.

Monthly Expenses

1. Rent (two bedroom apartment)	\$800
2. Utilities (electricity, gas, water and phone)	\$190
3. Transportation (two monthly bus passes)	\$120
4. Childcare (one in day care, one babysitter)	\$600
5. School & household supplies	\$75
6. Medical (health insurance)	\$50
7. Taxes	\$278

Total of expenses	\$
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Monthly income	\$
Minus total of expenses	-\$
Amount left over for food	\$

If you subtract the total of your expenses from your monthly income, how much money do you have left to purchase food?

- What other things would your family need to purchase monthly? (Cleaning and laundry supplies, toiletries, doctor's visits, etc.)
- Are there expenses on your list that (even before buying food) you won't have money to pay for?
- How might the health conditions mentioned above impact your family's budget?
- Which bills are the most important?
- See Poverty Guidelines Chart – is your family's income above, at or below the poverty line?

FAMILY SCENARIO #8

Who You Are

You are senior citizen.

You live alone on a fixed Social Security monthly income of \$1000.

Monthly Expenses

1. Rent (one bedroom apartment)	\$700
2. Utilities (electricity and phone)	\$95
3. Medical (health insurance)	\$185
Total of expenses	\$

Monthly income	\$
Minus total of expenses	-\$
Amount left over for food	\$

If you subtract the total of your expenses from your monthly income, how much money do you have left to purchase food?

- What other things would your family need to purchase monthly? (Cleaning and laundry supplies, toiletries, doctor's visits, etc.)
- Are there expenses on your list that (even before buying food) you won't have money to pay for?
- How might the health conditions mentioned above impact your family's budget?
- Which bills are the most important?
- See Poverty Guidelines Chart – is your family's income above, at or below the poverty line?

FAMILY SCENARIO #9

Who You Are

You are a single parent of three children ages 3, 7 and 9.

You work full time for \$7.25/hour (minimum wage). Your monthly income is \$1,160.

Monthly Expenses

1. Rent (two bedroom apartment)	\$700
2. Utilities (electricity, gas, water and phone)	\$150
3. Transportation	\$120
4. Childcare (3 year old in a Head Start Early Learning Center)	\$0
5. Taxes	\$100
Total of expenses	\$

Monthly income	\$
Minus total of expenses	-\$
Amount left over for food	\$

If you subtract the total of your expenses from your monthly income, how much money do you have left to purchase food?

- What other things would your family need to purchase monthly? (Cleaning and laundry supplies, toiletries, doctor's visits, etc.)
- Are there expenses on your list that (even before buying food) you won't have money to pay for?
- How might the health conditions mentioned above impact your family's budget?
- Which bills are the most important?
- See Poverty Guidelines Chart – is your family's income above, at or below the poverty line?

FAMILY SCENARIO #10

Who You Are

You are a single parent of three children ages 3, 6 and 7.

You work full time earning \$10/hour and your monthly income is \$1,600.

Monthly Expenses

1. Rent (one bedroom apartment)	\$717
2. Utilities (electricity, gas and water)	\$80
3. Transportation	\$60
4. Childcare (one in day care, two in after care)	\$650
5. Taxes	\$150
Total of expenses	\$

Monthly income	\$
Minus total of expenses	-\$
Amount left over for food	\$

If you subtract the total of your expenses from your monthly income, how much money do you have left to purchase food?

- What other things would your family need to purchase monthly? (Cleaning and laundry supplies, toiletries, doctor's visits, etc.)
- Are there expenses on your list that (even before buying food) you won't have money to pay for?
- How might the health conditions mentioned above impact your family's budget?
- Which bills are the most important?
- See Poverty Guidelines Chart – is your family's income above, at or below the poverty line?

POVERTY GUIDELINES CHART

Family Size	Monthly Income	Yearly Income
1	\$1063	\$12,760
2	\$1,437	\$17,240
3	\$1,810	\$21,720
4	\$2,183	\$26,200
5	\$2,557	\$30,680
6	\$2,930	\$35,160
7	\$3,303	\$39,640
8	\$3,677	\$44,120

2020 Federal Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia U.S
Department of Health and Human Services, January 2020.

aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines

POTENTIAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSES SHEET

Note: These responses are specific to Georgia. If in another state, please check your state's eligibility criteria as it varies some by state.

Scenario #1

Potentially eligible for:

- SNAP (formerly food stamps)
- Medicaid for 1-year-old & 4-year-old
- PeachCare (Georgia Only)
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
- Energy assistance (if available)
- EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit)
- Child Tax Credit
- Reduced Price School Meals
- Medicaid for 2-year-old, 4-year-old & 7-year-old
- PeachCare (Georgia Only)
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance (if available)
- TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)
- EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit)
- Child Tax Credit
- Free School Meals

Scenario #2

Potentially eligible for:

- SNAP (formerly food stamps)
- Medicaid for 2-year-old, 4-year-old & pregnant mother
- PeachCare (Georgia Only)
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
- Energy assistance (if available)
- EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit)
- Child Tax Credit
- Reduced Price School Meals

Scenario #3

Potentially eligible for:

- SNAP (formerly food stamps)
- WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)

Scenario #4

Potentially eligible for:

- SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)
- Medicaid
- Energy assistance(if available)
- TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)
- Aging Services
- CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program)

Scenario #5

Potentially eligible for:

- SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)
- Medicaid for 9-year-old, 11-year-old & 17-year-old
- PeachCare (Georgia Only)
- Energy Assistance (If available)

- TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)
- Aging Services
- Free School Meals

Scenario #6

Potentially eligible for:

- Medicaid for 2-year-old & 4-year-old
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
- EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit)
- Reduced Price School Meals

Scenario #7

Potentially eligible for:

- SNAP (formerly food stamps)
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
- Medicaid for 3-year-old & 6-year-old
- Peachcare (Georgia Only)
- Energy assistance
- EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit)
- Child Tax Credit
- Free School Meals
- TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)

Scenario #8

Potentially eligible for:

- SNAP (formerly food stamps)
- Medicaid
- Energy assistance
- TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)
- Aging Services
- CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program)

Scenario #9

Potentially eligible for:

- SNAP (formerly food stamps)
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
- Medicaid
- Peachcare (Georgia Only)
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance (if available)
- TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)
- EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit)
- TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
- Free School Meals

Scenario #10

Potentially eligible for:

- SNAP (formerly food stamps)
- WIC for 3-year-old
- Medicaid for 3-year-old
- Peachcare for 6-year-old and 7-year-old (Georgia Only)
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance (if available)
- EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit)
- TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)

It is important to recognize that being “potentially eligible” does not mean that people will have easy access to these benefits. Applying for these benefits is time consuming and often requires taking time off of work. Additionally, applicants may not meet all eligibility requirements.