



2026 National Personal Finance Challenge Rules and Eligibility

The Rules and Eligibility, and General Structure (team composition and student eligibility) apply to all students participating at both the State and Final levels of the competition. The competition structure applies to teams advancing to the National Personal Finance Challenge Finals. For specifics about the state competition format, please contact your local State Challenge coordinator.

A. GENERAL STRUCTURE

1. Team Composition

- a. Teams shall be comprised of three (3) or four (4) members. It is encouraged to compete in teams of four members.
- b. All members of a team must be from the same public school, private school, community organization or club, or afterschool program. Therefore, students from different schools are eligible to be on the same team, if they are all part of one of the groups mentioned in this section. Home-based high school students may join teams of any of the groups mentioned in this section or may start a team with other home-based high school students in their county, school district, or within a twenty-mile radius of each other.
- c. The state championship team may reconstitute the members of its team prior to registering for Nationals. At least two original team members must participate in the National competition. However, students must meet the general student eligibility conditions and have competed in the National Personal Finance Challenge.

2. Student Eligibility

- a. Students must be currently enrolled in a high school or home-based school or educational institution from the state they are representing.
- b. All teams must have a coach who is an associate (e.g. employee or volunteer) of the team's school, school district, organization, or program,

- who is fit to accompany students, should the team advance to the National Finals.
- c. Students may participate each year they are attending high school.

3. **Rules Committee**

- a. There shall be a rules committee composed of at least five (5) representatives from the Council for Economic Education (CEE) and affiliated council or center representative(s) appointed by CEE.
- b. The rules committee shall be responsible for rules compliance at the National Finals. All decisions of the rules committee and judges are final.

B. **CONTEST FORMAT AT THE STATE LEVEL**

1. To register for your state competition or more information visit: bit.ly/cee-npfc
2. State Competitions take place during the school calendar year.
3. Each state participating in the National Personal Finance Challenge will identify a state champion, who will represent the state at the National Personal Finance Challenge Finals.
4. The organization running the state-level competitions will be responsible for all aspects of the state-level competitions.

C. **CONTEST FORMAT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL**

1. State winners will advance to the in-person National Finals, taking place from May 31st to June 1st, 2026, in Atlanta, GA. Teams will be notified of their advancement via email no later than April 28th, 2026.
 - a. The Council for Economic Education **will cover the cost of lodging and group meals for the National Finals teams, which includes team members and one coach.**
 - b. **Up to three rooms will be reserved per team:** one (1) room for the coach and one (1) room for a single gender team; or one (1) room for the coach and two (2) rooms for a mixed gender team. **Any additional rooms will be arranged and covered by the team or the team's school.**
2. **Please note that teams are responsible for arranging and covering their own transportation to and from the National Finals.**
3. The **National Finals** will be held in-person. The Finals will be a case study presentation where teams will be given a fictitious family scenario. Teams will have **75 minutes** to prepare their plan and then present their plan to a panel of judges who will score the team on personal finance content knowledge, teamwork and presentation skills.
4. During and after preparations for presentations:

- a. Once all students have completed their presentations within the 75-minute timeframe, those waiting to be called for their presentations may not practice, rehearse, or review their materials.
- b. While laptops are open, students are prohibited from using any form of social media or messaging applications.
- c. Students must use a **blank template** from Google Docs, PowerPoint, or other presentation software. These templates must contain no pre-inserted materials, information, or text. All templates must remain completely blank.
5. The time limit will be a maximum of **8 minutes to present to the panel of judges**, and there will be **seven (7) minutes for questions and answers**. Judges will determine overall place in the national competition to determine teams moving on to the **Round of 16 quiz bowl** of the competition. The decision of the judges is final.
6. The judging panels will score their teams and the teams with the highest scores within each of the groups will advance to the Round of 16 quiz bowl.
7. The Quiz Bowl Rounds begin with groups of four teams facing off in an oral quiz bowl covering topics in personal finance.
 - a. All teams will begin the First Round Quiz Bowl with a score of zero; 15 questions will be read. In the case of a tie for first place, up to three additional questions will be read, and only in the case of a continued tie will the score from the Case Study Round be used as a final tie breaker. Once a winner is announced, there are no appeals, and the judge's determination is final.
 - b. In the quiz bowl Round of 16, teams compete to move on to the Final quiz bowl round and to be awarded 1st place-National Champion, 2nd, 3rd and 4th place. The top scoring team from each group will move on to the final quiz bowl round.
 - c. The Quiz Bowl Round is an oral quiz bowl covering all topics in personal finance with a total of **20 questions**. Please note, teams will not buzz in.
Throughout the Quiz Bowl:
 - d. Teams will need to determine one member to serve as the spokesperson.
 - e. To respond, the team spokesperson will be responsible for having: A white board and a black marker on which to write their answers.
 - f. After the judge reads a question, each team will have 20 seconds to confer, and the team spokesperson will write down their answer on their white board.
 - g. Once the team's answer is complete, the team spokesperson will place their white board face-down on their table. Once their whiteboard is face-down on the table, that is the final answer, and the team spokesperson may not pick up the whiteboard again.

- h. Once all teams have indicated they are done, or the 20 second time limit has expired, a judge will prompt each spokesperson to hold up their answer, so it is visible until they are called upon. The spokesperson must hold the whiteboard up so it is visible to the judges until the end of the round. One at a time, each spokesperson will say the answer out loud. The verbal answer must match the written answer. If they do not, the written answer will be the one judged. After all teams have displayed and stated their answers, the judges will announce which (if any) answers are correct.
- i. If any team has not finished before the 20 second limit, the timekeeper will announce that 20 seconds have passed. At that time, teams must put their marker down and hold their whiteboard up so it is visible or else that team will forfeit that question.
- j. A scorekeeper will announce scores so that the Quiz Bowl teams can clearly hear them.
- k. In the event of a tie after 20 questions, up to three (3) additional questions will be read.
- l. If, after a tiebreaker question, only one team has answered correctly, that team will be declared National Champion.
- m. If more than one team answers the question correctly, only those teams that answered correctly will be given another tiebreaker question, with the same rules applying at the completion of that question.
- n. If there continues to be a tie score after the three tie-breaker quiz bowl questions have been read, then:
 - a) The team with the highest score from the Round of 16 will be declared the winner.
 - b) If the scores from the Round of 16 are also tied, the winner will be determined based on the scores from the Case Study Round.
 - c) If there is still a tie after the Case Study Round, co-champions will be declared.
- o. A student may contest an answer only BEFORE the emcee has moved on to the next question. "Moving on to the next question" is defined as beginning to say the first word in the next question. If a student contests, the judges may listen to the team's reasoning and consider it. Once the emcee has moved on to the next question, no more appeals regarding that question will be accepted. Once a winner is announced, there are no appeals against any rulings, and the judge's determination is final. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- p. Use of Support Materials. The use of books, notes, calculators or other support materials including but not limited to the internet and AI is not allowed during the competition.

- q. The winners of the National Personal Finance Challenge will be announced at the close of the in person National Finals.
8. Prizes at the National Finals
 - a. First place: \$2,000 for each team member.
 - b. Second place: \$1,000 for each team member.
 - c. Third place: \$500 for each team member.
 - d. Fourth place: \$250 for each team member.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NATIONAL PERSONAL FINANCE CHALLENGE? CONTACT US:

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