

Barrier Breakers

A FINANCIAL HEALTH INNOVATION COMPETITION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

March 20, 2026 - Kent State University - \$20,000+ in Prizes

The Challenge

Teams of 1-3 students choose a real barrier to financial health - transportation costs, housing affordability, healthcare access, financial literacy, or a local issue - then research it and build a solution. Any format works: app prototype, policy proposal, video, curriculum, or community program.

Three Ways to Compete

1. Demo Day

Top team per track gives a 5-minute pitch. Biggest cash prizes and scholarships.

2. Innovation Gallery (All Students Can Compete!)

Students not presenting on stage can still compete! Present your solution 1-on-1 with judges in a science-fair style setting. Flexible format - poster, laptop, demo.

3. Knowledge Track

Financial literacy quiz on your phone. Open to all attendees - no prep required.

For Teachers & Administrators

- No limit on teams per school.
- AI tools encouraged (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude).
- Winning schools receive grants.
- EVERYONE IS WELCOME: Bring entire classrooms, family members, and non-competing students.
- Make it a field trip: We provide breakfast, lunch, and parking for all attendees.

Timeline

Feb 27: Applications due

Early March: Teams notified

March 20: Competition at Kent State

Prizes

Demo Day 1st Place: \$2,500 cash + \$2,500 Kent State scholarship + school grant. 2nd-5th place receive \$500-\$1,500 cash plus matching scholarships. Innovation Gallery and Knowledge Track prizes also available.

Ready to apply?