

Aubrey Edens

Junior Achievement of Northwestern Ohio

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Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Aubrey Edens, and I would like to share my Junior Achievement journey and explain how state funding can help other students achieve their career goals just like I did.

Before diving deeper into my future plans, I want to highlight a few of my favorite parts of Junior Achievement and the 5th Year program I participated in. First, the networking events Junior Achievement provides. I met so many interesting people and always walked away with at least one lasting connection, which has helped me not only gain professional skills, but connect with other people where it would be beneficial to them. Second, the financial classes. These showed me real ways to maximize my budget. Thanks to what I learned, I was able to open my first mutual funds investing account and I am now investing monthly. Lastly, having the independence and responsibility of living on my own was life-changing. It taught me how capable I am of taking care of myself and my environment.

We also had the chance to visit incredible companies, including The Mad Ave Group, Rudolph Libbe, The Andersons, The National Guard, Designetics, and First Solar. Along with the classes and site visits, a big part of my year was spending time at Lourdes University, where we held our Monday classes and lived on campus to gain more knowledge on independence.

Alongside all these experiences, I also completed a few internships. My first internship was at Shumaker, Loop, & Kendrick, a law firm in Toledo. While interning there, I had the opportunity to work in multiple different departments. This helped me understand all the back work that goes into a law firm, and it has really opened my eyes to what it takes to run a business.

During my second semester, I had the pleasure of having two internships. I interned at 13abc in their marketing department where I was able to go on video shoots and help with graphic and web design. Then, I joined Empowered AI, where I helped manage social media pages, create an upcoming program, and learned the basics of running a business. Although, my time at Empowered AI was cut short because I received a full-time job offer from my first internship.

I'm now employed as a full-time Legal Administrative Assistant at Shumaker, Loop, & Kendrick. I truly love it there, and working full-time is now a key part of my future plans.

I'm so grateful for all the experiences, connections, and lessons I've gained through the Junior Achievement 5th Year program— and I'm even more excited for what's to come.

Thank you for listening to my journey. I hope you consider investing in Junior Achievement in the state budget so more students across Ohio, no matter where they are located, can pursue their path to success.