



Calendar of Financial Tips

January

This New Year, make a resolution to create a budget and stick to it. Budgeting can be a simple and straightforward process, and with commitment, can be a rewarding experience for all family members. Find a budgeting worksheet online to get you started — a good one can be found at www.accelservices.org. Periodically evaluate this spending plan to be sure it is helping you meet your needs and your goals!

February

Whether you're looking for immediate financial security or plan to build a retirement nest egg, it's an excellent time to focus on savings. Start today by setting aside a certain percentage of your salary to an emergency fund. It doesn't have to be a large percentage, as long as it's something. Small amounts really do add up fast.

March

Information in your credit report directly impacts your ability to obtain a credit card, buy a car or home, rent an apartment, or get a job. If you haven't checked your credit report in the past year, it's time to take another look. Visit www.annualcreditreport.com for a free copy of your credit report.

April

As you organize your documents in preparation for tax day, you may be dreaming about spending your tax refund on a trip or a new TV. Think twice! Make the most of your tax refund and get closer to a fit financial future by using your refund to pay down your credit card bills, set up an emergency fund, pay extra on your mortgage, service your car, or fund your children's education.

May

It's hard to believe, but that senior is going to graduate soon. Once commencement is done and over, it's time for the graduation party! But no need to break the bank to send that grad off in style. Provide the new graduate with laundry essentials, college food staples, a magazine subscription, or movie passes.

June

Planning to travel this summer? Vacations don't have to be expensive to be memorable and fun. Keep your costs down and stretch your travel dollars by booking your trip early, traveling light to avoid checked bag fees, slowing down to improve your gas mileage, and renting a cabin or campsite rather than a hotel room.

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July

Midway through the year is a great time to take stock of your financial situation. Check your expenses against your budgeted amounts — are you on track? Consider your budgeting amounts — can they be adjusted? Where can you save? Setting new budget goals and making sure you're on track is a key step in becoming financially fit.

August

Students aren't the only ones who'll need to pull out the pens, paper, and calculators for the back-to-school season. Parents who want to keep back-to-school spending under control should consider doing the same. Take this opportunity to teach your kids about smart money habits such as comparison shopping and sticking to a solid spending plan to avoid overspending.

September

Take time this month to organize your financial documents. Create a system that works best for you as it will make the job of managing your financial life easier and more efficient. Organize necessary records and file them in envelopes, storage boxes or notebook binders. Shred and discard the papers that are no longer needed.

October

Each year, millions of Americans are affected by identity theft. Minimize your risk by managing your personal information both online, and when you are out and about. Don't carry your social security number with you, use smart passwords, update your virus protection software regularly, shred unneeded documents, and consistently monitor your billing statements and credit report.

November

During the holiday season, keep in mind that while using credit cards to purchase gifts can be tempting, they can result in a "holiday hangover" in January, when the bills come due. Plan for purchases in advance, shop around, and pay cash!

December

Resolve to strengthen your finances to get through any tough times that may be ahead in the next year. Review your budget to find ways to reduce or eliminate expenses, avoid taking on new debt, start (or add) to a rainy-day fund, and consider adjusting your withholding if you consistently receive a refund from the IRS.

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