



DID YOU KNOW...

...that it's important to prioritize your financial goals?

When you look at your budget and start to think about where your money is going — or where you want it to go — think about your unique financial goals for both the present and the future.

- **Budget:** Start by determining how much money you have coming in each month, then track where it goes, whether it's spending, savings or something else.
 - Develop a list of both short-term and long-term financial goals and consider how you will achieve them.
 - With these goals in mind, set limits on what you spend each month and stick to them (don't be swayed by sales!).
 - Seek out online tools or apps to assist you in creating a budget, or create your own using Excel or another tool.
- **Emergency Fund:** Set aside money that you can use in case of emergencies. Think about a number that works for you, and that you feel comfortable contributing towards. Saving money for this purpose will reduce the risk that you'll need to use a credit card or other forms of debt, which carry high interest rates, in emergency situations.
- **Retirement:** Start by reviewing any retirement benefits you have through your employer. Very often, money can be directly transferred pre-tax from your paycheck into a retirement plan.
- **Debt:** When you develop your budget, pay attention to any debt you are carrying, and analyze the interest rates you are paying on that debt. Prioritize paying off debts that carry a high interest rate first. Typical forms of high-interest debt include credit cards and student loans.
- **Savings and Investment:** As you plan for your financial goals, think about how to save in order to get there and to make your money grow. Consider reaching out to a qualified professional to discuss the best options for you. When seeking help from a professional, be sure to ask them for a list of the services they offer, and to check their credentials with your state's consumer protection office, the state attorney general's office or the issuing agency for their professional licenses or certifications.

Considering how to make the most of your money and make it grow in the future can help you create a plan, and having a plan in place can help you experience less stress when it comes to financial situations.

Sources:

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