

LIVING ON A BUDGET - PROTECT YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM DEBIT AND CREDIT PROBLEMS

PREVENTING IDENTITY THEFT IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR FINANCIAL WELL BEING

Be sure to follow the advice of the experts. At a minimum you should:

- Never give out your banking information to sources unless you are sure that the recipient is actually who they say they are.
- Change your passwords often.
- Be wary of vishing (be cautious of any information you give) and phishing scams (never click on links in emails that you did not request).

WHENEVER POSSIBLE USE CASH OR YOUR DEBIT CARD INSTEAD OF A CREDIT CARD WHEN SHOPPING IN PERSON

This allows you to stay within your budget by not borrowing money.

IF YOU MAKE ONLINE PURCHASES, TRY TO USE A GUEST OR ONE TIME PURCHASE ACCOUNT

If you must make an account, do not save your debit/credit card information in your account. When you are required to re-enter this information, it makes the process longer and more complicated: this is good. The inconvenience of shopping will hopefully make you more aware of what you are spending, and will likely reduce or eliminate late night shopping sprees. Try to incorporate some of these strategies into your routine. Whenever possible use your debit card instead of a credit card. Many bank debit cards are now able to emulate a credit card. If you must use your credit card, transfer money on to it as soon as possible to avoid interest charges. Have a low limit credit card set aside for online purchases. This will minimize your exposure in the event that things go awry and information gets hacked.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE IN FINANCIAL TROUBLE

STICKING TO YOUR BUDGET, 'LIVING WITHIN YOUR MEANS', IS AN ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENT, IF YOU WANT TO AVOID HAVING TO BORROW MONEY ON YOUR CREDIT CARDS AND INCURRING DEBT

REMEMBER: BUDGETING IS MORE THAN CREATING A BUDGET

You must record and monitor your spending often and timely to assure that you are able to follow the plan you created.

EMERGENCIES CAN HAPPEN AT THE MOST INCONVENIENT TIMES

If you must use a credit card or line of credit, be sure to pay it back as soon as you can. Debt impacts your budget in two different ways:

1. You now need to reduce spending in some of your categories and reallocate that money into the debt category. The total expense grew, but the income hasn't. There is less of the pie to go around.

2. If you do not pay back the debt quickly, the interest on the debt will grow. Now a portion of the money that you were paying onto the debt now goes towards the interest. Over time all of the money could go to interest and the debt will never go away.

IF YOU END UP IN DEBT AND CAN'T FIND A WAY TO GET OUT FROM UNDER IT, SEEK HELP

Many organizations exist to help people with their financial concerns. Search the internet for ones in your area. But again be cautious of who you are giving your information to. Research them before you give them any information. There are many federally regulated agencies that will give you free help and assistance with your issues. One of the first steps will be to examine your budget, cut out the wants and rethink your needs. This process may also require rethinking your Income stream and working more until you get back on track. This might mean major changes to your lifestyle, but the sooner you make these changes the sooner you will be able to get back to a path that will help you reach your financial goals.

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