



Use this **budget** tool to see how much you make and spend each month.

- 1 List your income
- 2 List your expenses
- 3 Subtract your total spending from total income to build your budget

Month of _____

Type of income	Amount gained
Job	
Government program	
Disability benefits	
Financial support	
Other income	
Total income this month	

Type of spending	Amount spent
Housing (rent or mortgage)	
Utilities (gas, water, electricity, sewage)	
Groceries + other supplies	
Health expenses	
Transportation	
Education + childcare	
Cell phone	
Internet + cable	
Service animals + Pets	
Debt payments	
Other spending	
Total spending this month	

Build your budget

_____ - _____ = _____

Total income this month

Total spending this month

If your income is more than your expenses, you have money left to save or spend.

If your expenses are more than your income, look at your budget to find expenses to cut.

Use this **spending tracker** to consider what is important to you.

- 1 Get an envelope to collect your receipts.
- 2 Use the table to sort your spending into the categories below. Don't forget about bills you share with others.
- 3 At month's end, total up each category.

This month's spending:



Cell phone



Debt payment



Eating out



Education + childcare



Entertainment



Groceries + other supplies



Health expenses



Helping others



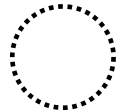
Housing + utilities



Pets



Transport



Other

1												
2												
3												
4												
5												

Category totals:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total spending for this month:

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Debt worksheet

What to do:

To make a debt reduction and elimination plan, use the debt worksheet with the person you serve. The debt worksheet can also help someone get on track with paying their debts on time. The goal with the debt worksheet is to get all of the information about debts someone owes in one place.

Start by helping someone brainstorm all of the debts they owe. You can also recommend reviewing their credit report to identify debt that is current, in collections, or resulting from judgments.

What to say:

“Making a plan to pay debt regularly, reduce debt, or get rid of debt starts with getting a clear picture of what you owe and who you owe money to. The debt worksheet is designed to help you get all of this information in one place.

Be sure to include debts owed to friends and family, credit card companies, banks, and other businesses. Include amounts you owe for court-ordered child support payments. Also include amounts you owe to local, state, or federal government for things like property taxes, student loans, and back income taxes. For each debt, you will need to know:

- The person, business, or organization you owe money to
- The amount you owe them
- The amount of your monthly payment, which includes the principal, interest payments and any fees you may owe
- The interest rate you are paying and other important terms.














To complete this worksheet, you may need to get all of your bills together in one place.”

To access a dynamic and fillable version of this tool, visit: www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/your-money-your-goals/companion-guides/



Use this **debt worksheet** to see all your bills and plan what you owe

- 1 List all the debts you have.
- 2 Fill out the table to see your total monthly debt payment.
- 3 Circle any debts in collections.

Debt type	Monthly payment amount	Monthly due date	Interest rate (%)	Amount outstanding	Payoff date or goal	Notes (including any fees)
 Assistive Technology loan						
 Auto Loan						
 Back Child Support						
 Credit Card Debt						
 Friends & Family						
 Medical Debt						
 Past-Due Fees & Fines						
 Mortgage or Past-Due Rent						
 Payday loans						
 Student loans						
 Other						
 Other						
 Other						



Total Monthly Payment Amount:

Tool 3:

Reducing debt worksheet

There are two basic strategies to reduce your debt: the highest interest rate method and the snowball method. Look through the pros and cons for each method and decide what works best for you.

Highest interest rate method

Focus on the unsecured debt with the highest rate of interest, and eliminate it as quickly as possible, because it is costing you the most. Once it is paid off, focus on the next most expensive debt.

PRO	CON
You eliminate the most costly debt first. In the long-run, this method can save you money.	You may not feel like you are making progress very quickly, especially if this debt is large.

Snowball method

Focus on the smallest debt. Get rid of it as soon as possible. Once you have paid it off in full, continue with the payment, but now dedicate it to the next smallest debt. This way, you create “a snowball of debt payments” as you eliminate each debt. How? You keep making the payments, but you are redirecting them to the next debt as each debt is paid off.

PRO	CON
You may see progress quickly, especially if you have many small debts. For some people, this creates momentum and motivation.	You may pay more in total because you are not necessarily eliminating your most costly debt first.

Debt reduction worksheet

Step 1: Pick your debt reduction strategy:

- Highest interest rate method:** List your debts from highest interest rate to lowest.
- Snowball method:** List your debts from smallest to largest in terms of the amount you owe.

Step 2: In the column labeled Extra Payment, list the extra payment you will dedicate to the payment of debts until you have it paid off.

Step 3: When this debt is paid off, allocate the entire payment (monthly payment + extra payment) you were making to the next debt on the list.

Lender	Total amount borrowed	Amount still owed	Monthly payment	Extra payment	Payment due date	Date paid off in full

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My credit spending rule to live by

“Use cash when it’s under \$20.” Sometimes it’s hard to apply advice you hear in articles or books—or even from friends and family—to your own circumstances. Don’t feel discouraged. You can decide on your own personal rule to live by that works for your financial situation. Small changes to the way you use your credit card could help you take more control of your credit card debt.

Instructions: Use this worksheet to create your own personal rule to live by that helps you meet your goals for controlling credit card spending. Breaking your goals into small actionable steps may keep you from feeling overwhelmed. Writing down a goal can make you much more likely to stick to it.

Just like lane markers on a highway, your money rules to live by are guidelines that keep you moving in the right direction. You might have to speed some things up, slow down others, or change lanes from time to time, but your money rules can help you reach your financial destination.

This worksheet is part of a series that focuses on common rules to live by that may help you make good financial decisions in your life. To read the research that helped inform this worksheet, and find out how other consumers think and feel about common advice they hear, visit consumerfinance.gov/adult-financial-education.

Continue to the next page to get started >

About us

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau regulates the offering and provision of consumer financial products and services under the federal consumer financial laws, and educates and empowers consumers to make better informed financial decisions.

Learn more at consumerfinance.gov

My credit spending rule to live by

Step 1: Look at last month's credit card bill

Circle on your bill all the times you swiped your credit card for less than \$20. Small costs can add up over time, so consider paying cash instead. And, interest and fees can add about 20% more to the cost of an item for average credit card customers (unless you pay your full balance off every month).

- Count up the number of times you used your credit card for a purchase under \$20:
_____ times.
- Add up the total you spent on these small purchases:
\$ _____
- List the times and places you used your credit card for small purchases:

- On the list above, circle the times when you could have paid cash instead.

Step 2: Create a rule to live by to help you control your credit card debt

- Decide when and where to pay cash more often.
Examples: "I will pay cash for morning coffee" or "I will pay cash once a month for taxis, transit, parking, or gas" or "I will pay cash after 8 p.m. on weekends."
- Write down your rule below, sign this worksheet, and keep it where you can see it.

I will pay cash instead of swiping my credit card: _____

Step 3: Make a promise to yourself—and take action on your rule

- I will use my unique rule to live by to help me achieve my credit goal.

(sign here)