

Ideas for Reducing Expenses

Housing

- Rent out a room in your home
- Offer to manage the building or do mowing/shoveling in exchange for reduced rent
- Move in with relatives for inexpensive rent, offer to cook or do other chores to help out

Utilities

- Hang-dry clothes to avoid dryer costs
- Turn off lights and electronics when you leave the room
- Pull the shades and use fans instead of AC
- Review your telephone bill and make sure you are using all the services you pay for
- Consider cancelling long-distance service and use calling cards, cell phones, or the internet to keep in touch
- Cut cable or reduce your package. Cable is not a necessity
- Cancel internet and use it at the library, a friend's home, or at work during breaks
- Call your energy company and have an energy audit to learn about ways to save energy

Food

- Cut down on meals away from home. Pack bag lunches for school or work
- Cook extra meals and freeze them for a quick meal when you don't feel like cooking
- Keep an emergency stash of food at the office in case you forget a lunch or need a snack
- Concentrate on nutritious meals and avoid empty fillers.
- Drink water rather than soda
- Plan your meals before you go to the store so you're buying only what you'll eat (not what looks good)

Transportation

- Use buses, organize a car pool, or walk or bike for shorter trips
- Start looking for cheap gas when your tank is half full
- Review insurance policies to make sure your policy is the best fit for you
- Make a list of errands and run them all at once.

Clothing

- Clothing tends to be the cheapest after Easter, the 4th of July, and Christmas
- Make a list of clothing you will need soon and start hunting for sales
- Consignment, thrift stores, and yard sales can help you stretch your dollar
- Avoid buying clothes that are dry clean only or need special treatment
- Sell clothes you don't wear anymore. Use this money to buy new clothes
- Donate used clothing and get a receipt so it can be used as a tax deduction

Healthcare

- Ask your doctor to prescribe generic drugs or for samples. Ask for a 90-day supply
- Maximize your wellness by eating well, exercising, and getting enough sleep
- Look for free or reduced fee clinics in your area.

Child Related

- Ask family or a neighbor to provide daycare or exchange daycare services for someone that is working different hours than you are
- Have older children cover their own expenses (cell phone, car expenses, activities, etc).
- Contact the school to see if your child might qualify for a free or reduced school lunch
- Ask about reduced fees for after-school activities

Loans

- Compare interest rates for vehicle or personal loans and look into refinancing
- Look into consolidating student loans for a possible lower monthly payment/interest rate
- Pay extra on debts when possible to avoid finance fees

Personal Care

- Stock up on personal care items when on sale such as toothpaste and shampoo
- Exchange manicure/pedicure services with a friend to save you both money
- Choose a hairstyle that is easy to maintain yourself
- Color your own hair
- Use generic products

Gifts

- Consider giving time or coupons for services instead of monetary presents
- Draw names for holidays instead of buying for everyone
- Take turns opening gifts
- Plan ahead and look for sales well in advance of celebration
- Consider giving group gifts. One present for everyone to enjoy and share
- Instead of making monetary donations consider volunteering or donating used items

Recreation

- Use the library for free books, movies, music and internet access
- The library may also offer coupons or a list of free community activities
- Develop hobbies that save or even make money; vegetable gardening, repairing, knitting, or cooking
- Have a “nothing weekend”. Have fun without spending money the entire weekend
- Have a picnic in the park or at a free local zoo
- Host a movie night by renting a movie and making snacks
- Explore the outdoors by hiking, going on long walks, or to the beach

Miscellaneous

- Sign up for online banking to avoid needing to use extra stamps
- If your financial institution is charging you a monthly fee look at other banking options