

Ten ways to trim expenses

Budgeting is not always easy to do, especially when you have a limited income. Monitoring your money and planning ahead can improve your life no matter your financial situation. Try some of these tips to make budgeting work better for you:

1

Take care of housing and utilities

- Be sure to make housing and utilities payments on time – you do not want to put your living situation at risk
- Request to have utility bill due dates moved to a different date of the month if it will align better with when money comes in
- Turn off and unplug unused electronic appliances
- Insulate and use weather stripping around doors and windows
- Set your thermostat temperature higher in the summer and lower in the winter

2

Reduce grocery expenses

- It's easy to overspend on groceries, look for opportunities to trim costs
- Consider going to more cost-friendly stores
- Buy generic instead of brand name

3

Take advantage of promotions

- Look for coupons and sales
- Shop at stores that offer price matching

4

Use a shopping list

- Use a shopping list to help you avoid impulse shopping and spending money on items that you don't need
- After you make a shopping list, stick to it!

5

Meal prep

- Meal prep to avoid buying ready-made food
- Dine at home more often to save money and eat healthier
- Consider joining cooking clubs and community dinners if they are available in your community

6

Review your cell phone plan and usage

- Check to make sure you actually use all of the features on your cell phone, you may be able to switch to a cheaper plan
- Consider cancelling your landline if you already have cell phone service

7

Reduce entertainment costs

- Eliminate subscriptions for cable TV and gym memberships if you're not using them fully
- Consider a less expensive video streaming service, or access free entertainment online

8

Use your public library

- Rent DVDs and books at the library for free
- Ask your library about free seminars and courses
- Go to free recreational events and story time

9

Check out local community activities

- Check out free events hosted by local recreational and community centres
- Bring your young children to early child and family centres for free drop-in programs
- Consider joining a social group for a chance to organize playdates and network with other parents and guardians

10

Trim a little from many expenses

- It may be difficult to cut out some expenses entirely – look for opportunities to trim back a little from many different expenses
- For example, it might not be possible for you to completely eliminate eating out, but maybe you can eat out one or two times less per week
- Every little bit helps!