

Strategies for cutting expenses

This tool focuses on ways to decrease spending or uses of cash and other financial resources. Not all of these may apply to you. Check the ideas that may be an option for you, and use this as a plan for getting more information or resources.

Strategies list

Cut back on regular (recurring expenses).

 This might work	Expense	Strategy	Estimated savings
	Television	Check with your provider about lower cost plans or discontinue cable.	
	Internet	Check with your provider about lower cost plans.	
	Phone	Check if you qualify for a “Lifeline” phone rate. ³⁴	
	Cell phone plan	Review prepaid or fixed call plans. Check if you qualify for a “Lifeline” phone rate. If you’re using a smartphone, check to see if there are cheaper data plans. Keep track of your data usage to make sure you don’t go over your limit.	

³⁴ For more information on Lifeline phone rates, see <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/lifeline-support-affordable-communications>.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This might work	Expense	Strategy	Estimated savings
	Insurance	<p>Check to see if you can get a better rate with other companies or if moving all insurance coverage to one company will save you money and for other discounts. If you have a young driver in the home, ask about a good student discount.</p> <p>Increase the deductible on auto, renter's, or homeowner's insurance to lower the premium payment.</p>	
	Home energy expenses	<p>Check to see if you're eligible for energy assistance, weatherization programs, a discounted rate from your utility, or other incentives.</p> <p>Find ways to save on energy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turn off and unplug unused electric appliances. ▪ Insulate and use weather stripping around doors and windows. ▪ Set thermostat higher in summer and lower in winter. 	

Get rid of regular (recurring) expenses.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This might work	Expense	Strategy	Estimated savings
	Online video membership	Consider using a pay-per-use rental service.	
	Discount store memberships	If you don't use them regularly, or they're not saving you any money, consider eliminating them.	
	Gym membership	If you don't go regularly, consider canceling it.	

Avoid fees.

 This might work	Expense	Strategy	Estimated savings
	Financial services fees	<p>Review your financial services accounts. Are you paying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ To cash your checks?▪ Maintenance fees on checking or savings accounts?▪ ATM or overdraft fees?▪ Annual fees for credit cards? <p>Could you switch to a no-fee or lower-fee account?</p>	
	Late fees	<p>Pay bills and fines like parking tickets on time. Parking tickets and other fines cost more if you pay them late.</p> <p>Renew your license and registration on time.</p> <p>Return library materials on time.</p>	

Other strategies

 This might work	Strategy	Helpful tips	Estimated savings
	Negotiate a new due date for bills to make them easier to handle in cash flow.		
	Avoid eating out; cut one meal out per month.	<p>If you buy lunch at work, consider bringing lunch instead.</p> <p>If you have children, identify the restaurants that have “kids eat free” nights.</p>	
	Avoid buying fountain drinks and coffee out.		

 This might work	Strategy	Helpful tips	Estimated savings
	Use coupons.		
	Buy second hand furniture or clothing.		
	Do not buy or rent DVDs or CDs.	Visit your local public library. To avoid late fees, return the items by the due dates.	
	Buy items you use in bulk if they are cheaper that way.	Look at the price label for cost per serving. Sometimes larger quantities don't actually save money.	
	Maintain your car.	Get regular oil changes and keep tires inflated. This can save on fuel and prevent major repairs.	
	Other:		

Total reduction in spending for one month: _____

Once you have identified strategies for cutting your spending, adjust your cash flow budget. See *Module 5: Getting through the month*.

This tool is included in the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's toolkit. The CFPB has prepared this material as a resource for the public. This material is provided for educational and information purposes only. It is not a replacement for the guidance or advice of an accountant, certified financial advisor, attorney, or otherwise qualified professional. The CFPB is not responsible for the advice or actions of the individuals or entities from which you received the CFPB educational materials. The CFPB's educational efforts are limited to the materials that CFPB has prepared.