



Financial Health & Wealth

An Initiative by The Native
Women's Association of
Canada



Native Women's
Association of Canada

L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada



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The Native Women's Association of Canada has been the national voice of Indigenous women in Canada since 1974. NWAC works to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic and political well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis women within First Nation, Inuit and Métis and Canadian societies. NWAC recognizes that the financial wellness of all Indigenous peoples is essential to achieving an independent and healthy life. Although NWAC focuses on the lives of Indigenous women and children, we recognize that the financial wellness of all community members affects women in a profound way and, as such, this toolkit and presentation are intended for all Indigenous peoples.



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Words to Know and Love

WORD	WHAT IT MEANS	WORD	WHAT IT MEANS
At-Fault Accident	You have caused an accident.	Credit	A loan.
ATM	Automatic Teller Machine, bank machine.	Credit Card	Gives you access to the loan that the bank gives you.
Balance	How much money you have in your account.	Credit Score	The number given to a person that shows how well they will be able to pay back a loan.
Bankruptcy	When you are not able to pay your debt and you must hand over ownership of your possessions to a trustee to try to pay back as much as possible.	Debt	The amount of money that you owe.
Budget	A plan for how you will organize and spend your money during that month.	Deductible	How much you need to pay before your insurance benefits start to cover you.
Capacity	How much you earn.	Deposit	Putting money into your account.
Character	The history you have with applying for and repaying loans.	Desired Expenses	The things you want to buy every month but really do not need to.
Collateral	What you own that can be signed over to the bank in case you do not pay back your loan.	Down Payment	The money you can pay out of pocket before having to use a loan.
Collision Coverage	The middle range of car insurance. It will cover both your car repairs/ medical bills and the other people's car repair/ medical bills if you are in an at-fault accident.	Employment Insurance	Money that you receive from the government after you have lost your job. Usually lasts for a maximum of one year.
Comprehensive Coverage	The highest form of car insurance. You can choose exactly what it will cover.	E-Transfers	Sending money online.
Consolidation Loan	When you join so that you have one monthly payment with less interest.	Expenses	The things you need to buy every month.
Consolidation Order	In some provinces, you can go to court to have your debt combined and have the court handle your monthly payments.	Fees	What the banks charge you for your bank accounts and credit cards.
Consumer Proposals Procedure	When you meet with a trustee and negotiate with the credit companies to pay only part of your debt or to get more time to pay off your debt.	Finances	Your money.
Contribution	How large of a down payment you can make on a loan.	Financial Needs Analysis	A look at your finances and expenses to help you figure out how much you can afford to save every month and your goals.
		Financial or Savings Goal	How much you want to save, when you want to have the money by, and how much you will put aside every month.
		Financing	Getting a car loan that you pay back with interest in a fixed time (usually 5 years).
		Income	How much you make.



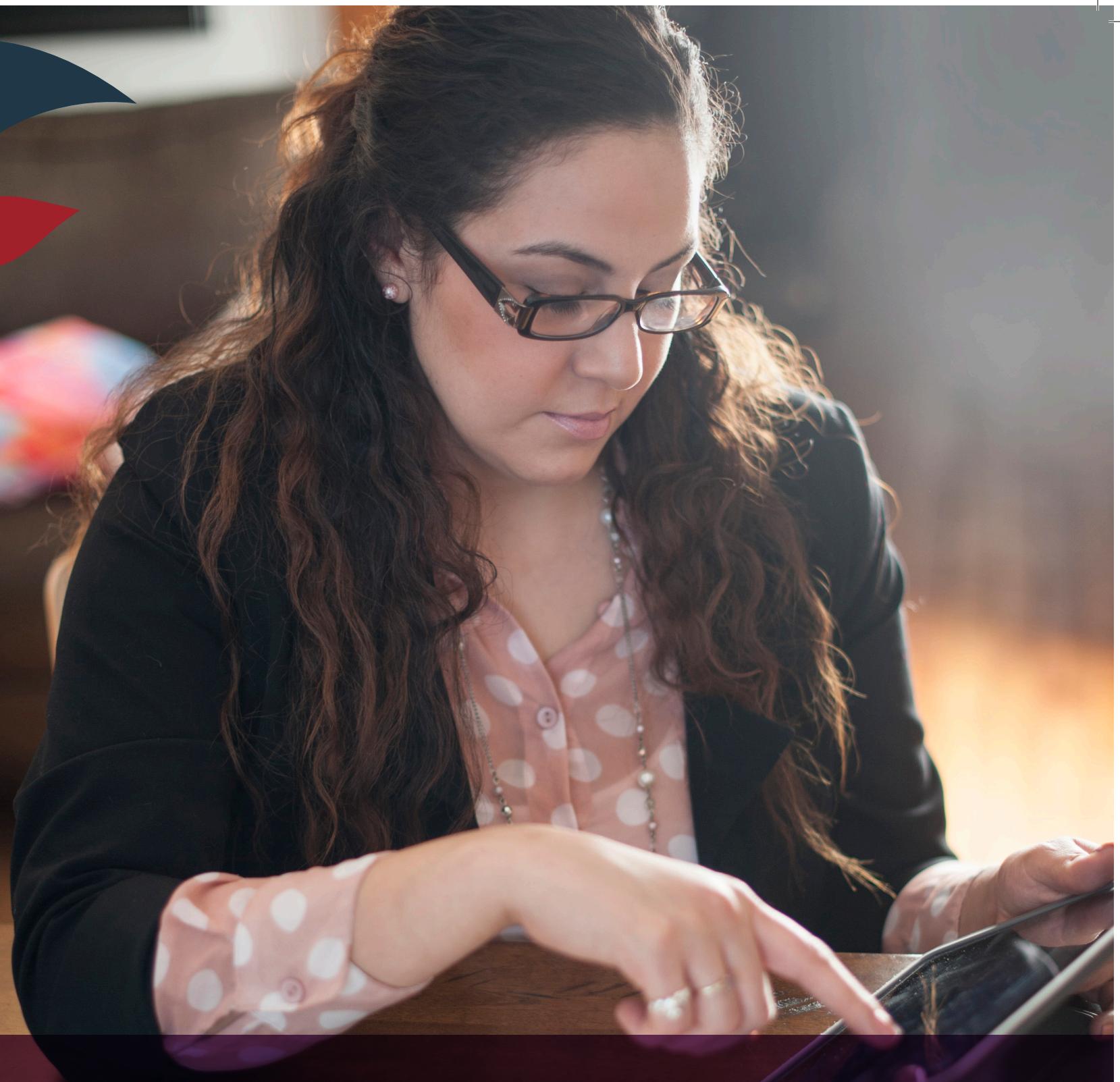
WORD	WHAT IT MEANS	WORD	WHAT IT MEANS
Income Tax	The tax that you pay on the money that you make.	Registered Retirement Savings Plan	An RRSP is a savings plan just to save for retirement.
Interest	The money you have to pay the bank when you cannot pay back your loan right away.	Secure Credit Card	A credit card that you put money onto before you start using the card.
Interest Rate	How much interest you will be charged every month.	Security Deposit	Money that you give when you are renting an apartment in case you damage anything that the property owner needs to fix after you move out.
Leasing	Renting a car long-term from the dealership.	Social Programs	Programs that are paid for by the government such as welfare.
Liability Coverage	The lowest form of car insurance.	Tax Credits	Areas you can get a tax break on or receive money if you apply.
Line of Credit	A type of loan that you can pay just the monthly interest until you are ready to make larger monthly payments.	Tax Exemptions	Areas that you do not need to pay taxes.
Loan	Money that the bank agrees to lend you with the understanding that you will pay back the money with interest.	Tax-Free Savings Account	A TSFA is a savings account that will not charge you taxes when you withdraw your money.
Loyalty Discount	A discount given to you if you sign up for more than one insurance product with the same company.	Term Life Insurance	Life insurance that only lasts for a specific amount of time.
Main Expenses	The items that you need to buy each month (rent, transportation, groceries).	Transfer	To move money from one account to another.
Minimum Payment	The smallest amount of money that you can pay on your loans each month.	Treaty Annuity Payments	Money that is agreed to be given monthly because of a treaty with the government.
Mortgage	A long-term loan that you are given to buy a house.	Trustee	Someone who is given the power to make your debt payments. They have specific legal obligations.
Over Draft Protection	A protection that you pay for every month in case you try to spend more money than is in your account.	Voluntary Deposit Payments	See Consolidation Order.
Pre-paid Credit Card	A gift card from a credit card company that you can spend in any store.	Whole Life Insurance	A life insurance policy that never ends.
Registered Education Savings Plan	An RESP is a savings account just to save money to go to college or university.	Withdraw	To take money out of your account.

Independence and Financial Wellness

You worry about your family's physical, mental and spiritual health. You take care of yourself and make sure you and your family are healthy, safe and happy. Many people do not realize that you also need to be financially healthy. Financial wellness is understanding and managing your own money. Money is a big way that others control and influence our lives. Sometimes we need to depend on others to give us money and tell us what to do with money. Opening a bank account, understanding where your money is coming from, and saving money will help you to become financially independent and financially healthy.

What are some things that you can do to be financially independent?

- 👉 Earn your own money. There are many different ways to earn money so you do not have to depend on others. You can get a part-time job or open your own store. Selling homemade goods online on sites like Etsy is also a good way to make money if you enjoy creating products. It is surprising the amount of pride you feel once you start earning money.
- 👉 Open your own bank account so you are responsible for your own money. This way you will know exactly how much money you are making and where you are spending it.
- 👉 Check your credit score. If you are in a relationship, it is very easy for your partner to open accounts or have debt in your name. Check and see what items are on your credit score and if something is not right, follow the steps to fix your credit.
- 👉 Start building your own credit. Get a credit card and other credit building tools in your name so that you are building your credit. If you have good credit, it will make it easier for you to get a loan in the future.



The **MAIN** thing is to know where your money is going every month. Do not let other people, no matter who it is, tell you money is not something you need to worry about or that they will take care of your money for you.

Bank Accounts

Bank accounts are important and help you manage your money. Bank accounts help to keep track of your spending and to save your money. A bank account will also help you keep your money safe.

Do you already have a bank account?

YES- Great! This kit would be a great place to store any information or papers that you have from your bank. This way they will all be in one place and will be easy to find.

NO- That is all right. Here is some information to help you decide what kind of account would be best for you.

All banks have accounts that are almost the same. These can cost anywhere from \$4.00 up to \$30.00 a month. It is important that you choose the account and the bank that is right for you. Remember, all banks are a bit different; some offer free e-transfers and some do not, so it is important to look online or to go to the bank and meet with someone to know exactly what accounts they offer.

You can also set up your bank account so that it sends an alert to your phone with your balance; this can be very helpful when you are keeping track of your money.

You can also link different accounts. For example, if you have a chequing and a savings account you can link them together and automatically send money between accounts when it is payday or when one account has low funds.



Remember most banks also offer free children and youth accounts so think about helping your child start learning about saving and managing money.

There are usually three main types of accounts (some banks may have more):

ACCOUNT TYPE	COST	COST PER YEAR	SERVICES
Basic Account	Around \$4 a month	\$48 a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⌚ Around 12 transactions a month⌚ You can pay extra for overdraft protection⌚ May offer e-transfers
Average Account	Around \$10-15 a month	\$120-180 a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⌚ Unlimited transactions a month⌚ May include overdraft protection⌚ May offer e-transfers
Super Account	Around \$30 a month	\$360 a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⌚ Unlimited transactions a month⌚ Overdraft protection included⌚ E-transfers included

Think about these questions to help you decide which account would be best for you:

1. Which banks are close to your home?
2. How often do you use your debit card?
3. Do you send e-transfers?
4. Are you going to open more than one account (chequing, savings, joint-account)?
5. Do you like online banking or do you prefer to go into a branch?

If you prefer online banking, there are several banks, like Tangerine, that are completely online. These banks have very few actual sites you can visit and not many ATMs, however, their fees are usually lower.

If you only use your debit card a few times a month, a basic account will probably work for you. If you use your debit card every day then you will need an account that has unlimited transactions.

Many people decide to get a Basic Account (or free if offered by their bank) and use their credit card for all of their purchases. Then, they completely pay off their credit card every month. This can save around \$300 a year. You have to be careful, it can be very easy to overspend on a credit card and then you may not be able to pay it off completely at the end of the month and you will start to have debt.

Others decide to use cash instead of debit or credit cards. They will go to the bank and withdraw the amount of cash they have budgeted for the month. This way they will always know exactly how much they have available during the month.

Another banking option is a credit union. A credit union is a non-profit, while a bank is a business that is trying to make money. Credit unions work a lot like banks; you can open accounts, deposit, withdraw and transfer money and get a loan, however, they are non-profit organizations and are usually smaller than a bank. They can have lower fees than banks so when researching new accounts, look into your local credit unions and see what works best for you.

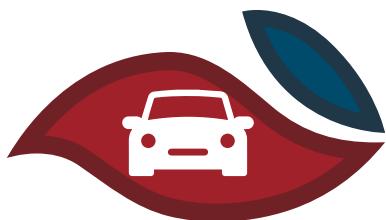
When you are signing up for a new bank account make sure you are reading everything that you are signing and ask questions if you do not know what something is for. You do not want to accidentally sign up for a service that you do not want with additional fees every month.



Insurance



Part of financial wellness is being prepared. Insurance is very important for your own protection. You need to have car and home insurance to protect yourself and your family; however, many people forget about another important insurance, life insurance.



Car insurance

In Canada, you need to have car insurance. Car insurance protects you and other drivers in case you are in an accident. When you apply for car insurance, the insurance company or bank will look at your driving history, the age and type of car you have, the area you live in, your driving habits and what kind of insurance you want. This determines how much you will pay. You can pay for your car insurance every month or in one big payment annually.

When you are looking for car insurance make sure to shop around. Banks and insurance companies will have different prices depending on where you live so do not go with the first company you call. Get a quote and call companies back with the competing rates after you have checked with other companies.

Get a loyalty discount. If you have all of your insurance with one bank or company (car, house, life insurance) you can usually get a discount. If they do not automatically give you this discount, ask about it.

Know what kind of coverage you want and how much of a deductible you can afford to pay. A deductible is a

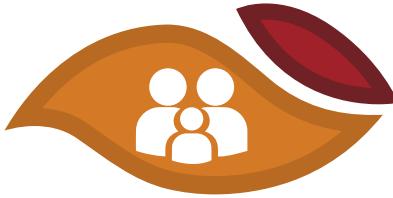
specific amount of money that you will need to pay before the insurance company will cover your expenses. If your deductible is \$100 and you get in a car accident, then you will need to pay the \$100 before your insurance will pay the rest of the money needed to fix your car.

There are three main types of car insurance: Liability Coverage, Collision Coverage, and Comprehensive Coverage.

Liability Coverage: the minimum amount of insurance coverage you can get and it is the least expensive. It does not cover a lot. If you are in an accident, where you are at fault, then your insurance will pay to repair the other person's car and the medical bills they may have.

Collision Coverage: has everything liability coverage has, but will also pay for your car and medical bills if you are in an accident where you are at fault. This type of coverage is more expensive, but it covers more. It will usually also cover the cost to fix your car and cover your medical bills if someone who does not have insurance hits you.

Comprehensive Coverage: the most expensive coverage, but it also gives you the most coverage. Comprehensive Coverage has everything the first two have and you can choose other add-ons that will increase your cost. For example, they may cover the cost to replace your car if it damaged beyond repair. They may also cover the cost of a rental car.



Home Insurance

If you are renting an apartment or a house, you need renters insurance. This will protect you in case someone breaks into your home and robs you. If someone is injured on your property and decides to sue you, it will cover their medical bills. It may also cover the cost of replacing your possessions if they are damaged in a flood or fire.

Home insurance is for homeowners and it covers all the same things that renter's insurance covers but it can also cover the cost to fix your house if it is damaged by a flood or fire.



Life Insurance

People do not like thinking about life insurance because they do not like to think about dying, but it is very important.

When a person dies, their family not only has to arrange their funeral, which can be very expensive, they also need to pay off all of the deceased's debts. Funerals can cost around \$4,500. Life insurance can help or completely pay for these expenses, depending on the policy.

Most banks and insurance companies sell life insurance and it works just like any other kind of insurance. You will talk with an insurance broker and decide what plan is best for you, how much your family will receive and how much you will need to pay a year.

Once you sign up for the insurance, you will make monthly payments for the insurance. If you pass away, your family will receive the money to pay for your funeral and any debt (money that you owe) that you may have.

Life insurance is planning for your family's future. When someone dies without life insurance, their families often struggle to pay all of the person's debts and they can lose their homes, cars and other possessions.

There are two types of life insurance, term life insurance and permanent or whole life insurance.

Term life insurance is for a specific period of time (5-30 years). You will make your payments during that time and after the time is up you will not have the insurance anymore. If you have term insurance for 30 years and you pass away after the 30 years, your family will not get any money because you are no longer insured. Term insurance has smaller payments compared to whole life insurance. You may be able to re-apply for more term insurance after you completed your term.

Whole life insurance does not end. It is more expensive than term insurance and you do not receive any more money than term insurance; however, because it never expires it guarantees your family money after you pass away.

Income

Your income is all of the money that you make in a month.



Answer the following questions to figure out what your monthly income is.

- ② Are you working and getting pay cheques? If yes, how much?
- ② Are you on Employment Insurance? If yes, how much?
- ② Are you getting money from any social programs? If yes, how much?
- ② Do you have any children? Do you get a monthly child bonus? If yes, how much?
- ② Are you getting monthly Treaty Annuity Payments? If yes, how much?
- ② Are you getting any other money every month? If yes, how much?

Now add together all of the money that you are getting to get your total income.

TOTAL INCOME: \$

Once you know your income, it is a good idea to pay yourself first. This means that you take a percentage of your total income and put it aside for the future. This will help you save for retirement or for a time in the future when your finances change.

Example:

If I want to save 10% of my total income and my total income is \$2,500 a month, I will multiply 2,500 by 0.1 to figure out how much I will put aside each month.

$$2500 \times 0.1 = \$250$$

Every month I will take \$250 out of my chequing account and put it in my savings. When I am writing my budget, I will make sure to put this in so I do not accidentally spend this money.

Expenses

Expenses are the things that you spend your money on each month. You can separate your expenses into two groups: main expenses, and desired expenses.

Expenses are the things that you spend your money on each month. You can separate your expenses into two groups: main expenses, and desired expenses.

In the table below, fill out your main expenses every month.

NAME OF EXPENSE	COST
Rent or Mortgage	
Transportation	
Insurance	
Groceries	
Total Main Expenses: \$	

Now add all of your expenses up to find out how much your main expenses are for the month.

Total Main Expenses: \$

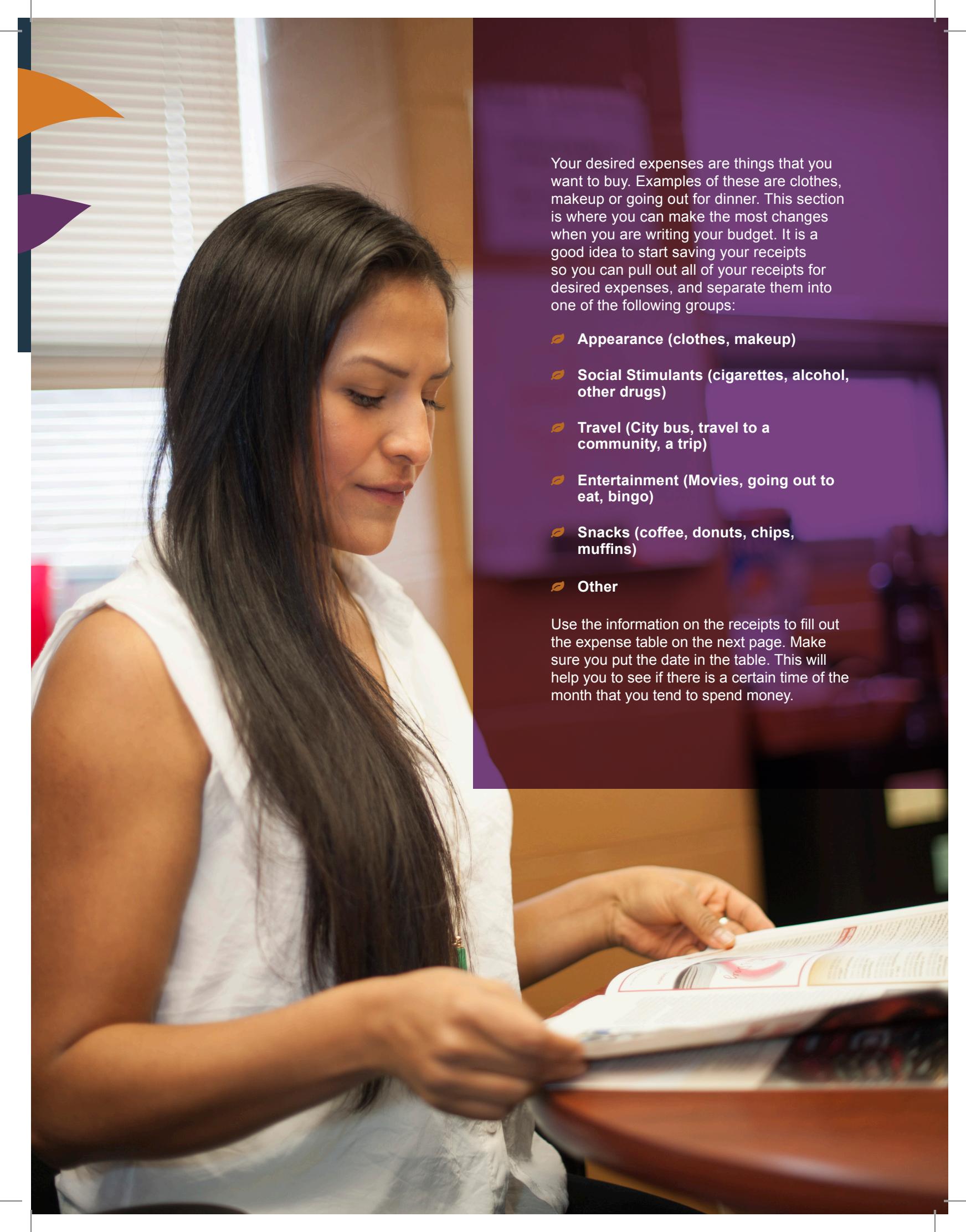


Extra main expense tables

NAME OF EXPENSE	COST
Rent or Mortgage	
Transportation	
Insurance	
Groceries	
Total Main Expenses: \$	

NAME OF EXPENSE	COST
Rent or Mortgage	
Transportation	
Insurance	
Groceries	
Total Main Expenses: \$	

NAME OF EXPENSE	COST
Rent or Mortgage	
Transportation	
Insurance	
Groceries	
Total Main Expenses: \$	



Your desired expenses are things that you want to buy. Examples of these are clothes, makeup or going out for dinner. This section is where you can make the most changes when you are writing your budget. It is a good idea to start saving your receipts so you can pull out all of your receipts for desired expenses, and separate them into one of the following groups:

- ⌚ **Appearance** (clothes, makeup)
- ⌚ **Social Stimulants** (cigarettes, alcohol, other drugs)
- ⌚ **Travel** (City bus, travel to a community, a trip)
- ⌚ **Entertainment** (Movies, going out to eat, bingo)
- ⌚ **Snacks** (coffee, donuts, chips, muffins)
- ⌚ **Other**

Use the information on the receipts to fill out the expense table on the next page. Make sure you put the date in the table. This will help you to see if there is a certain time of the month that you tend to spend money.

Expense Table

Now add together all of your expenses that are in the same category to see how much you spend each month.

Total Appearance Expenses:	\$
----------------------------	----

Total Stimulants Expenses:	\$
----------------------------	----

Total Entertainment Expenses:	\$
-------------------------------	----

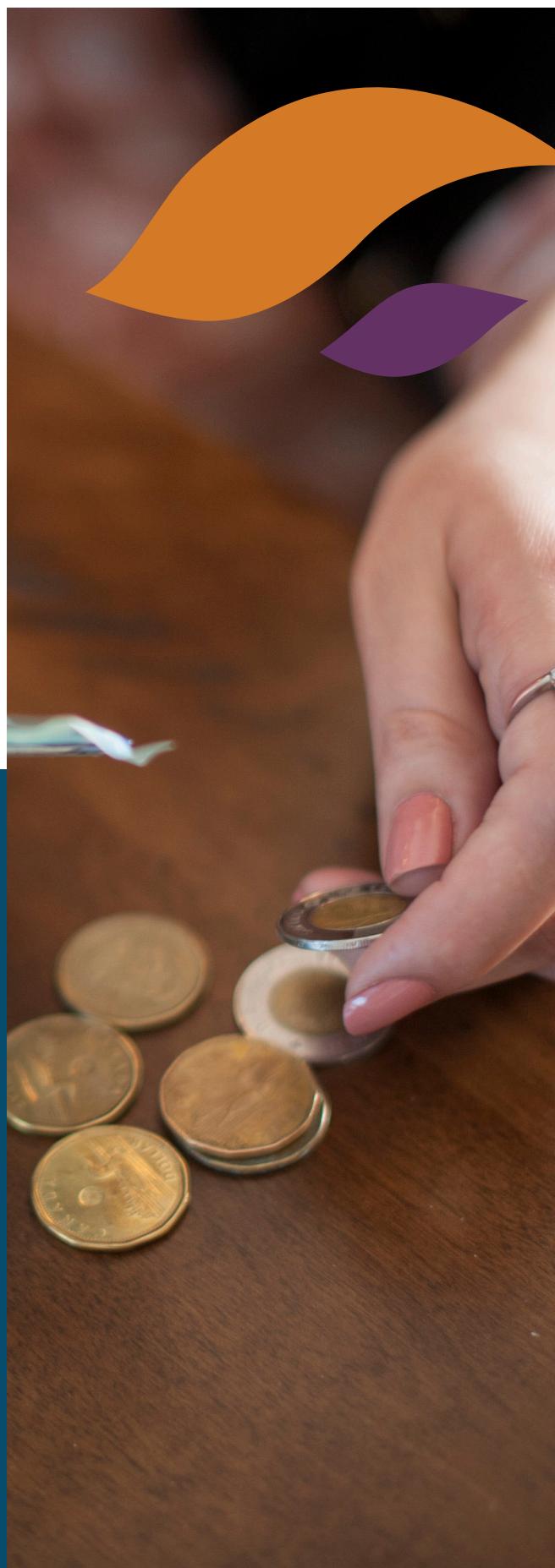
Total Snack Expenses:	\$
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Total Other Expenses:	\$
-----------------------	----

- ② Did you notice anything from your expenses?
- ② Is there an area where you can cut back or spend less?
- ② Is there a time of the month when you spend the most?
- ② Are most of your desired expenses planned or do you just buy something when you see it?

Tips for cutting spending:

- 👉 Buy off brand or no name products instead of brand names.
- 👉 Make your lunch and bring it to work instead of buying your lunch.
- 👉 Get rid of your cable or satellite. Many people pay for TV, Netflix, and the Internet. You really do not need cable or satellite TV if you have Internet; you can watch any TV show online.
- 👉 Do not go buy a coffee every day. Get a travel mug and bring one from home.
- 👉 Quit smoking. If you smoke, you probably spend at least \$1,400 a year on cigarettes. If you smoke a pack a day you spend closer to \$3,500 on cigarettes a year.
- 👉 Stop drinking pop and alcohol.
- 👉 Don't go out to eat.



Expense Table

Budgeting

Now that you have found your total monthly income and expenses, it is time to write a budget. When you listed your desired expenses, you were asked if you could cut back on them. Your budget is where you plan those changes.



In each section, you are going to list how much you will give yourself to spend each month.

Tips:

- ☞ Make sure your expenses are less than your income.
- ☞ Give yourself realistic amounts of money; for example, if you try to cut your groceries back too much it will be very hard to stay within your budget.
- ☞ You don't have to use all of your money. If you have some leftover that's great!
- ☞ Think ahead. Start putting aside money early for birthdays, Christmas, oil changes and car trouble so that you have money ready when that time of the year comes around.
- ☞ Remember to put aside and save some of your income for the future.
- ☞ A budget only works if you stick to it.

DO YOU HAVE ANY MONEY LEFT OVER?

$$\text{Total Income} - \text{Total Expenses}$$

$$= \text{Leftover Money}$$

Budget	
Income:	\$
Rent or mortgage:	\$
Home insurance:	\$
Heat:	\$
Utilities/ Power:	\$
Transportation:	\$
Savings:	\$
Phone:	\$
Internet:	\$
Television:	\$
Groceries:	\$
Gas:	\$
Appearance:	\$
Stimulants:	\$
Entertainment:	\$
Snacks:	\$
Children's activities:	\$
Birthdays:	\$
Christmas:	\$
Car maintenance:	\$
Other expenses:	\$
Total Expenses:	\$
Income:	\$
Rent or mortgage:	\$
Home insurance:	\$
Heat:	\$
Utilities/ Power:	\$
Transportation:	\$
Savings:	\$
Phone:	\$
Internet:	\$
Television:	\$
Groceries:	\$
Gas:	\$
Appearance:	\$
Stimulants:	\$
Entertainment:	\$
Snacks:	\$
Children's activities:	\$
Birthdays:	\$
Christmas:	\$
Car maintenance:	\$
Other expenses:	\$
Total Expenses:	\$



Planning



Being organized and planning ahead is a way to help you manage and save your money, especially on food.



In this section, you will find blank monthly calendars. It is a good idea to keep track, on a monthly calendar, when your main expenses are due and when you expect to get your income. This will also help you organize when the best time to make a purchase is. Do not forget if you have two main expenses close together (example: rent and car payment due close together) you can always call and have one moved to a different time in the month.

You will also find a blank weekly meal plan and grocery list. Planning what you are going to cook for the week before you go to the grocery store means that you can find the best deals, and only buy what you need. Planning will also mean less wasted food and this will help you to save money.

The Government of Canada has a website (www.canada.ca/en/services/finance/tools.html) that has different tools and calculators to help you plan how you will save your money.

It is also a good idea to have a Financial Needs Analysis (FNA) done. It can be confusing and overwhelming to start preparing for the future and ensuring all of your bills are paid. An FNA will help you look at your financial goals and your expenses and make decisions for your future. Many apps help plan and organize finances. Below you will find a list and description of some apps you might find helpful. We make no promises; you will need to choose the tools that work best for you. All of these apps may require in-app purchases for you to have access to all of the features in the app.

1. **Shoeboxed Receipt Tracker:** this free app allows you to store, organize pictures of your receipts, and put your expenses into categories. If you buy things online you can also auto-archive receipts from Gmail and track your mileage data. You may have to pay to use some parts of this app.
2. **Key Ring:** in the credit card section, it talks about why it is not a good idea to sign up for store credit card. However, store loyalty cards are great. Anything that will give you points (that you cash in) just for doing the shopping you normally do is a wonderful thing. The free Key Ring app lets you store all of your loyalty cards on your phone so you do not have to dig through your wallet or worry about leaving it at home. You can also receive coupons from your favourite stores on the app.
3. **Buxfer:** this free app lets you create budgets and bill reminders.
4. **Mint:** several different sites recommend this free app. It is very helpful for organizing bill payments. It puts together information from all of your different accounts so you are able to see what you owe and how much cash and credit you have available as well as your debt. You can set bill reminders and receive a free credit score. Mint will also give you suggestions for how you can reduce your fees, cut your spending and save money every month.
5. **Home Budget:** this app is just like Mint; however, it is not as automatic. To use this app you manually enter your spending. This means you will be able to reflect on your spending and really see for yourself the areas you can change. This app has a free lite version or you can buy the full app for \$6.99.
6. **Balance Checkbook - Personal Capital:** this is another free finance-tracking app like Mint. It will help you track your spending, create a budget and you can even pair with an advisor who can give you advice.
7. **Goodbudget:** this free app makes it easier to stick to your budget. It will help you create your budget, save for expenses, and make sure you are meeting your goals.
8. **Spending Tracker:** this free app lets you record and track your spending, look at your spending on bar graphs and you can set your budget amount to make sure you are not going over budget.
9. **Hellowallet:** this free app is also available online so you can manage your finances from your tablet or computer instead of downloading the app. This app will help you figure out how much you should be saving for emergencies. If someone in your family loses their job or becomes sick and cannot work, you want to have some money saved to help you pay the bills. Hellowallet will look at your expenses, lifestyle, and earnings and recommend a savings goal.



Calendar

Month:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Notes:

Calendar

Month:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Notes:

Calendar

Month:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Notes:

Calendar

Month:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Notes:

Weekly Meal Planning

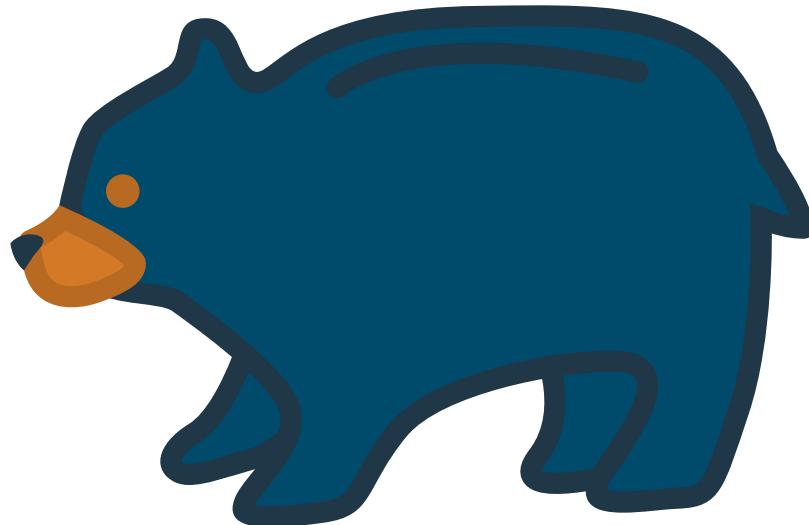
MONDAY	GROCERY LIST
TUESDAY	
WEDNESDAY	
THURSDAY	
FRIDAY	
SATURDAY	
SUNDAY	

Saving



Now is the time to start saving. We mentioned in the income section the importance of putting some of your money aside each month. You do not want to start saving too late or it will be difficult to reach your goals. You may not be close to retiring now, but you want to be able to retire when you want to and not have to wait until you have enough money.

When you were writing your budget, there was room to plan for smaller purchases like Christmas or birthdays. With the money that you have left over, you can save for larger things such as home repairs or starting a small business starting a business. Setting up savings accounts can help with these larger expenses. You might also want to start saving for your retirement.





Saving for large purchases:

For a large purchase, like a car you will need to save up for a down payment. You can always open up a savings account with your bank. This will be an account that you transfer your money into and you leave it there until you have enough for your down payment.

You may also want to consider a Tax Free Savings Account (TFSA). Many different investment accounts will charge you tax when you go to take the money out, a TFSA will let you save up to \$5,000 a year and take the money out whenever you need it. You can make an appointment at your bank to talk about TFSA's.

If you are saving for a large purchase in a savings account, have a savings goal. A savings goal is how much you need to save and when you want to have the money saved by.

Saving for school:

If you or your children are thinking of going to college or university, you may want to open a Registered Educational Savings Plan (RESP). These savings accounts are just for school and the money can only be taken out for schooling (if you open an RESP for your child and they do not go to college or university you get your money back). If you decide to open an RESP for your child, the government will add 20% of what you put into their account up to \$500 a year until your child turns 17. There are education grants available if your family has a lower income. Make an appointment to speak with someone at your bank to find out more about RESPs.

Saving for retirement:

If you are interested in starting to save for retirement, you will need to plan. When do you want to retire? Will you be getting any other money during your retirement (pension, Treaty Annuity Payments)? Make an appointment to meet with someone from your bank to talk about your options. They may suggest that you open a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP). These accounts let you save just for retirement and will let you take out money after you retire.

Savings Goal

DATE:	
Amount you want to save:	
How much you will save a month:	
When will you be done saving:	

DATE:	
Amount you want to save:	
How much you will save a month:	
When will you be done saving:	

DATE:	
Amount you want to save:	
How much you will save a month:	
When will you be done saving:	

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DATE:	
Amount you want to save:	
How much you will save a month:	
When will you be done saving:	

Scholarship and Grants for Indigenous Students

If you or your children are thinking of going to school here is a list of some helpful scholarship sites. College and university are not cheap and scholarships and grants are a great way to help pay for education.

1. Windspeaker scholarship guide
www.ammsa.com/community-access/scholarships
2. Indigenous bursaries search tool
www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1351185180120/1351685455328
3. Scholarships, bursaries and awards for Aboriginal students
www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/eppp-archive/100/200/301/inac-ainc/scholarships-e/sbaas_e.pdf
4. Aboriginal learning links
aboriginallearning.ca/scholarshipsbursaries/
5. Learning Communities: bursaries and scholarships
www.learning-communities.ca/resources/bursaries-and-scholarships
6. Aboriginal Student Awards
www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/Documents/Aboriginal%20Student%20Awards%20Print%20Copy.pdf
7. Scholarships Canada
www.scholarshipscanada.com/
8. Inspire: bursaries, scholarships and awards
indspire.ca/for-students/bursaries-scholarships/
9. Government of Canada: Student Grants
www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/education/grants.html

Credit

To understand credit cards, car loans, and mortgages, first, you need to understand your credit score.

A **credit score** is a number that tells credit card companies, banks, car dealerships and anyone else who lends you money that you will be able to pay back the money you borrow. If you show that you can be responsible and make your credit card payments or loan payments on time, then you will have a good credit score and it will make it easier for you to get a loan in the future. Some banks, like RBC, will allow you to check your credit score online or you can check the Transunion website to see your credit score. It is important to make sure that you know what accounts are on your credit score and to make sure that someone has not stolen your identity and opened accounts in your name.

*Remember: when you are applying for a loan (mortgage, line of credit, car loan) or a credit card they will look at your credit score and see what your credit history looks like (this is called character). If you have not shown in the past that you will pay back your loans then you will not have a good credit history. Banks and credit companies will also look at how much you earn (this is called capacity) to see if you will be able to pay back the money you borrow and if you can make a down payment (this is called contribution).

It is a good idea to save money up before you go apply for a loan. The last thing they will look at is collateral. This means they will look at what large items you own (like a house or a car) and what they are worth in case you cannot pay your loan back.

At times, people who borrow money for a car loan or a mortgage or who have too much debt on their credit cards are unable to pay back the money that they owe. In these cases, the banks may repossess (or take back) the property that was bought with the money that they lent you. This can also mean that the individuals have to declare bankruptcy.



Bankruptcy is a process that people who are not able to pay back their debts go through. This process will affect your credit score for many years. Some people think that bankruptcy is the easiest option, but it has many long-term consequences. You need to think about this decision before you start the bankruptcy process.

If you are having a hard time paying off your debts you can try to consolidate your loans. This means that you put all of your loans together so that you are only making one monthly payment. You may also get a lower interest rate so your monthly payment will be less. Make an appointment with your bank to talk about a debt consolidation loan.

If you live in Alberta, Saskatchewan or Nova Scotia, you can start a Consolidation Order or a Voluntary Deposit Service to help you make your payments. This court order puts all of your loans together. The court decides how much your payments would be. You will make your payments to the court and they will make sure the money is sent to make your payments.

If you owe less than \$250,000, you can start the Consumer Proposals Procedure. You will work with a trustee in bankruptcy to come up with an offer to pay the banks and credit card companies a percentage of what you owe or give you more time to pay off your debt. Your payments are made through your trustee and they use the money you send them to make your payments. The good thing about this process is you get to keep all of your assets (house, car), you will not have your wages garnished (take part of your pay cheque to make your payments for you) and you will not have to declare bankruptcy.

If you are still not able to pay off your debts then you will have to declare bankruptcy. When you declare bankruptcy you have to sign over all of your assets over (house, car) to a trustee in bankruptcy who will sell or use them to pay off your debt.

How to improve your credit

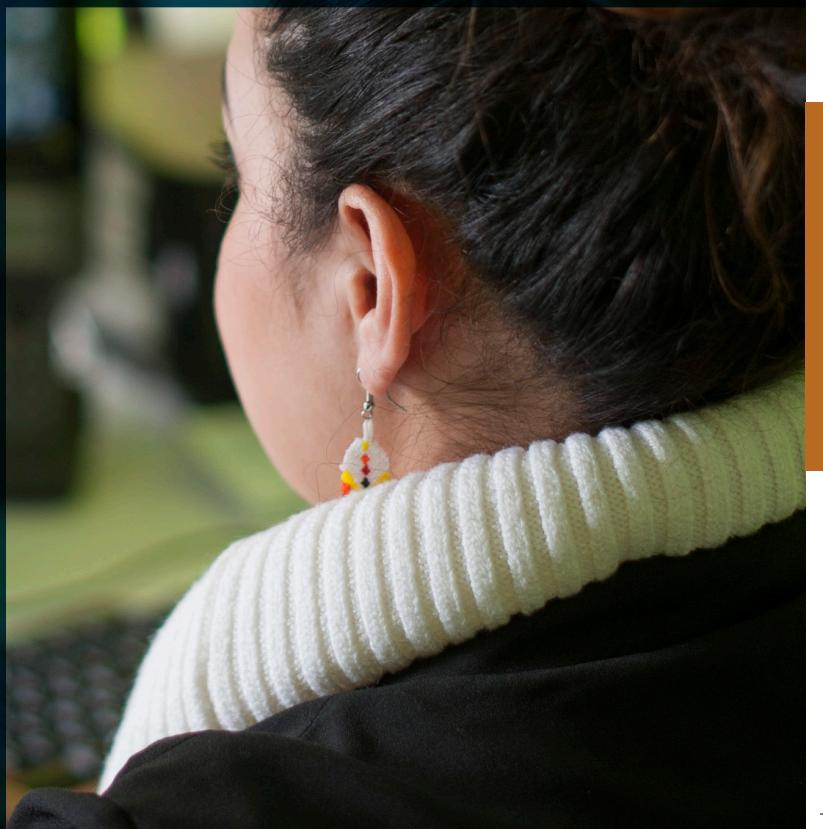
If you want your credit score to improve you cannot ignore it, it will take time and a plan.

- ➲ Stop using your credit cards they are only making the problem worse.
- ➲ Look at your budget and start finding ways to cut your spending.
- ➲ Write a new stricter budget and follow it!
- ➲ Consider all of your options; make an appointment to talk to a bankruptcy trustee to find out which option would be best for you.

We make no promises with any company but we do encourage you to contact the following two companies who provide free services:

- ➲ *InCharge Debt Solutions (1-800-565-8953
www.incharge.org)*
- ➲ *Credit Counselling Society of Canada
(1-888-527-8999 www.nonmoredebts.org)*
- ➲ *Other places you can contact are the Government of Canada, the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC) or the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy.*

- ➲ Use a secure credit card. A secure credit card is not a pre-paid Visa or MasterCard; pre-paid cards will not help you to improve your credit score. To get a secured card you must give the credit card company a small amount of money. You can then spend up to that amount each month and at the end of the month, you are expected to pay back the money. By doing this, you are showing that you are able to make regular monthly payments on time. If you do not pay back the money at the end of the month the credit card company will keep the original amount that you gave them and close the account. Make an appointment to talk to someone at your bank about a secure credit card.
- ➲ The best thing you can do is keep your debt small and to make your monthly payments on time. This will stop you from needing to consolidate your loans or declare bankruptcy.



Credit Cards

A credit card is a line of credit (or a loan) from a credit card company. They lend you money and you use the card to buy items with the understanding that you will pay back all of the money that you use PLUS interest.

Interest means that you will be paying back more than you spent. You are charged interest every month, so the longer it takes you to pay back the money you borrowed, the more money you will have to pay.

When you apply for a credit card, they will tell you what your interest rate will be. The higher your interest rate the more you will need to pay.

For example, if you owe \$2,000 on your credit card, you might be charged about \$30 in interest for the month.

Remember Credit cards are a way for credit card companies to make money! Credit card companies make most of their money off the interest they charge you. You need to be careful how you use your credit card.

Credit cards can be helpful. They let you buy bigger items that you might not have all of the cash for and make payments on your credit card to pay it off. Credit cards also help you build your credit score. When you keep the debt of your credit card low and make your monthly payments on time, you will improve your credit score.

TIPS:

- ➲ Credit cards are NOT free money! People make this mistake all of the time. People do not keep track of what they are spending and buy very expensive items. This results in huge credit card debt that is hard to pay off.
- ➲ If you are using your credit card every day instead of your debit card, make sure you can pay off your balance at the end of the month.
- ➲ Just like with bank accounts, you need to do your research to decide which credit card is best for you. You will need to pay a service fee every year for your credit card and cards that are attached to a points program (like Aeroplan miles) are more expensive every year. So think carefully about which card is best for you.
- ➲ You do not need multiple cards. Multiple cards will make it easier for you to build up credit card debt and it will make it harder to pay off all your credit cards. Having too many credit cards can also lower your credit score.
- ➲ Be careful with store credit cards (like HBC). Yes, you will get more points, but they usually charge you more interest so you will be paying more for whatever you buy.
- ➲ You NEED to pay more than your minimum payment every month. Minimum payments are mostly the interest fee, so you are only lowering your credit card balance a little bit. Credit companies want you to owe them money so they can collect interest payments from you. If you pay more than the minimum payment, you will pay off your credit card faster and end up paying less interest.

Car Loans



When you are ready for a new car, you have a couple of options: new or used, leasing or financing. Like with everything else it is important to have a plan to make sure you get the right car for you and your family.

Think about this:

- ① Do you want a new car or a used car? New cars cost more but used cars do not have warranties so if anything breaks on your car you will need to pay for it to get fixed.
- ② How many people will be driving in the car at one time?
- ③ Will you be driving mostly in a city, on the highway or in a small town?
- ④ How much can you afford to pay every month for the car and insurance? The bigger the car the higher the insurance will be.
- ⑤ Do you need a car with 4-wheel drive?
- ⑥ Do you have a down payment saved up?

Now start looking at what options fit your needs. Look online to check what other people have said about this car.

Once you have a few options, test drive the cars and make sure you are comfortable driving the vehicle.

If you have decided to buy a new car, you have two options: you can finance the car or you can lease the car.

Financing means that you are getting a loan from the car dealership or a bank to buy the car and every month you will make a payment to pay off your debt. This payment will include the interest that you need to pay



for borrowing the money. These loans are for a fixed time (usually 5 years) so you will know when you will be finished paying for the car.

Financing a car means you will have higher monthly payments than if you were leasing; however, in the end, you will own your car.

Leasing a car is different because you are not working towards buying the car. It is almost as if you are renting the car for a long time. You will still need to make monthly payments to the car dealership, but these payments will be smaller. At the end of your term (usually 5 years), you will need to return the car to the dealership or buy the car

as a used car (this is a large, one-time payment). There are conditions for a lease, for example, you will need to keep the car in good condition or you will need to pay extra when you return the car. You will also have a certain number of kilometers that you can drive each year, if you put too many kilometers on the car you will need to pay extra when you return the car. This means you may not be able to take the car on long trips unless you want to pay for them.



Housing

If you are thinking of moving into a new home, you have two choices, will you be renting or buying?

If you are renting make sure you think about how much your monthly insurance, power, and utilities will be for the area that you are moving to. You will need to save up money for a security deposit and some landlords may ask for a first and last months rent. Many landlords will also ask for references, proof of your income (pay-stub) and they might check your credit score to see if you are someone they can trust to pay the rent on time.

If you are thinking of buying a house, make sure you have your money in order before looking at houses. Make an appointment at your bank to talk to someone about a loan or a mortgage. Almost no one can go buy a house by himself or herself, it is too expensive, so you will need a bank to help you. When you go meet with your banker, they will look at your income and your credit score and they will decide how much money they will loan you. The loan should be your budget and will give you an idea of what houses you should be looking at.

Do not forget that you will have to pay a down payment for the house yourself. In Canada, the smallest down payment you can make is 5%, but many people save 10% so that they owe the bank less money.

For example, if you were looking at a \$50,000 house with a 10% down payment, you would multiply 50,000 by 0.1 to find out what your down payment is.

$$50,000 \times 0.1 = \$5,000$$

When looking to buy a house, there are many expenses you need to think about. You will need to have money to pay your property taxes (off reserve), your lawyer or notary fees, and your moving fees. Make sure that you have planned all of the expenses that you will have to pay so that you know the price range of houses that you can look at.





Income Taxes



Did you know that only 45% of Aboriginal people in Canada qualify for tax exemptions? In order to qualify, you need to live and work on a reserve and you need to be recognized as a status Indian under section 6 of the Indian Act. Even if you live on a reserve, you may not be completely exempt from taxes. If you own a business and it works or has customers off reserve, you may still need to pay taxes on the income your business makes. If you work off reserve, you still need to pay your income taxes.

In the case where you are exempt from paying your taxes, you should still file your income tax return. Even though you do not pay the taxes, you could still be eligible for tax credits. For example, if you are tax exempt but have children, you may be eligible for the Canadian Child Tax Benefit. If you file your tax return, you may be able to get some money back from the government.

Tax forms can be a bit confusing if you have never filled them out. A great program to use is TurboTax. You can buy it online and download the program to your computer. It can walk you through the process and will tell you what numbers and information are needed in each section. This program usually costs about \$20 per claim.

The Canada Revenue agency also partners with community organizations to offer free tax help and clinics to low-income families. Go to the website below to find a tax clinic near you.

www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/community-volunteer-income-tax-program/tax-preparation-clinics.html

Many banks also offer help filling out your tax return. They may charge for these services but they will know all of the tax credits that you can apply for and will help you get the most money back.

Other resources and information:

Indian Act

laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-5/page-2.html#docCont

Canada Revenue Agency- Information for Aboriginal peoples.

www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/aboriginal-peoples.html







Financial Health & Wealth

An Initiative by The Native
Women's Association of
Canada