

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

“I don’t have money left over at the end of the month.”



This quick reference guide provides information and resources to guide individuals if they experience the barrier identified in the handout.

Spending Plans

Spending plans or budgets can assist individuals with managing their money for the entire month and assist them in achieving their financial goals. A spending plan allows an individual to identify their total monthly income from employment and other resources, such as public benefits. A spending plan also allows an individual to look at their total expenses for the month including housing costs, utilities, food and other household and personal expenses. The benefits of creating a spending plan also allows an individual to evaluate their needs vs. wants. Needs are the items that we must have to live, such as housing, utilities and food. Wants refer to items that are not necessary to live. An example would be eating at an expensive restaurant.

Tools and Resources from Hands on Banking®

- Create your own spending plan: bit.ly/2uD2Fbg

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Spending Diary: A tool that helps an individual understand where their money is spent each month

A spending diary is a tool that allows individuals to track their daily spending over a period of time, usually a week or a month. A person can start by writing down everything they spent money on and the amount.

For example, if they bought a coffee or soft drink and paid \$2.00 for the item, they would include that in the spending diary. It is important to do this for an entire week. It is then suggested that a spending diary be completed for a second week. At the end of the second week, compare the two weeks of spending. Encourage the individual to see if they were able to decrease their spending at all. Were there items that could be reduced or eliminated? The longer an individual can track their daily spending, the more apparent spending leaks become. This could help reduce an individual's monthly expenses so they meet their financial goals and have more money at the end of the month. For more information on spending diaries, visit bit.ly/2fGbiev.

"I took control of my money with my spending plan."

Menu Planning and Shopping List

Identifying ways to decrease expenses will help create opportunities for an individual's money to last for the month. Food expenses are considered a flexible expense as the costs each month could fluctuate. One way to keep within a designated amount for food each month is to create a weekly menu and shopping list. Having a planned menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner allows an individual to plan ahead for meals. It is also recommended that individuals shop sale items to save additional money. For more information on menu planning and to access a shopping list tool, visit bit.ly/2uDEhWW.



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Visit the Hands on Banking website: handsonbanking.org/ndi.