

The Road to Financial Freedom



Back To School Budget Basics



According to the [National Retail Federation \(NRF\)](#), parents will spend over \$600 preparing one child for the new school year. There are many ways to save money on back-to-school shopping. Here are a few ideas.

Make A List

According to the NRF, over 70% of parents allow their kids to influence their spending. Avoid impulse buys and stay in control of your budget by making a list of necessities and sticking to it.

A good place to start would be your child's teacher. "Open House" or "Welcome Back" events for parents and students prior to the start of the school year are good places to find out what the teacher recommends.

Use Social Networking And The Internet

Follow favorite brands and stores on social media. In addition, try to comparison shop online before you purchase. Knowing what you need, who has the best deals and how much it should cost will help you save money. Also, sites like [DealNews.com](#) can send users an email alert when coupons or sales for a sought-after item are available.

Follow your favorite retailers on websites such as [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), and sign up for deals and coupons offered by them via email and texts. Use those coupons in conjunction with sales to save the most money. Encourage your child to watch for coupons and sale days at their favorite stores as well.



Buying Supplies

Before making purchases, check to see if you already have items your child will need for the upcoming school year. Items such as rulers, pencil boxes, calculators and backpacks can be reused if they are in good shape. Check your junk drawer for extra pens and pencils in good, usable condition.

Remember, dollar stores offer a variety of affordable back to school supplies. In addition, local thrift shops and sites like [Freecycle.org](#) may have what you are looking for in gently-used condition.

If you belong to a warehouse club, check to see if any back-to-school items can be bought in bulk. Then split the purchase between yourself and other parents for the best savings!



Buying Clothes

Before purchasing anything new, consider hosting a Clothing Swap Party. Invite friends and other parents who have children the same age/size/ gender as you do. Organize a day when everyone can get together and bring their unwanted, gently used clothing.

Try to set a minimum number of items for each guest to bring. For example, suggest attendees bring in 10 pieces of clothing so they can leave with 10 different items.

Before your Clothing Swap Party, take time to go through your child's closet to see what still fits and is in good shape from last year.

Begin by creating an inventory sheet. Remove everything from your child's closet and have him/her try on clothing that may not fit. If the item fits and is suitable for the coming school year, feel free to put it back in the closet and log it on the inventory sheet. If it doesn't fit, donate it or add it to your Clothing Swap Party.

Remember that you can create more outfits if you mix and match. Keep this in mind as you go through your child's



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For Young Adults: A Few Facts About Credit



If you are beginning college this fall you may have considered getting a credit card. A credit card can be a valuable financial tool, if you want to build a good credit history. However, it may turn into a debt trap if you don't practice good money management.

Here are a few ways to avoid credit pitfalls.

Charge Only What You Can Pay Each Month. A generous credit limit can make you feel like you have free money just waiting to be spent. However, charging up to your limit on credit, can hurt you financially.

Avoid Big-Ticket Purchases. An exception may be if an emergency arises, but you must still be prudent. In addition, always be aware of your current interest rates and balance.

Be sure to pay your bills on time each month to avoid unnecessary late fees and possible late reports to the credit bureaus.

Try free online services such as Mint.com or basic spreadsheet software to set up an organized system of bill payments.

For Parents: Making Your Child An Authorized User On Your Account.

If you are a parent of a soon-to-be college student and want to help him/her become more financially responsible, consider making your child an authorized user on your account. This will allow you to monitor your child's spending.

More Credit Card Management Tips

- Do not charge more on your credit card than you can pay in full each month. If for some reason you are unable to pay off your credit card bill one month, avoid using it again until the balance returns to \$0.

- Research cards that you apply for. Some rates are negotiable and companies will even offer perks, such as a year without interest, for students.


- Refrain from applying for cards that charge annual fees.

- If you are prone to impulse buying, consider interest before purchasing.

You may not make that purchase if you know exactly how much interest you could end up paying for something you 'think' you need.

- Avoid using your card to get cash advances. This usually results in additional fees and interest.

Refrain From Multiple Credit Cards. Keep in mind that credit cards often come with tempting perks and offers. However college students who are ready for a credit card should be selective in choosing which cards to apply for. Remember if you get too many credit inquiries, that can drag down your credit score.

Try to stick to one major credit card. Retail store cards may not be the wisest choice if you want to avoid high interest rates or unnecessary purchases. 



What We Do, What We Don't Do

It is easy to assume that UCAN and your settlement company perform the same tasks.

However, their roles do differ. UCAN specializes in consumer advocacy issues. For example, we assist with collection calls, threatening messages, or any other collector harassment that you may be receiving. Your settlement company handles any questions regarding your debt settlement program, negotiations, or financial inquiries.

Below is a detailed list of UCAN services and functions.


What We Do

- As our valued client, we can provide you with comprehensive information regarding the debt collection process.
- We communicate directly with collectors in an effort to cease abusive practices.
- With your help, we track illegal and unfair collection practices and preserve any such evidence for your benefit.
- In situations where there is an identifiable and concrete instance of collection harassment, UCAN can send the matter to an attorney network for possible legal action against the collector.
- UCAN offers an informative web site located at ucan.net. This site contains useful and relevant information concerning consumer advocacy issues.

What We Don't Do

- UCAN is not a law firm.
- UCAN does not file lawsuits on behalf of clients.
- UCAN does not assist clients with credit reporting problems. For example, we do not have the authority to remove false information from a client's credit report.
- UCAN does not assist clients with general consumer law issues such as unethical car dealers or retailers, housing issues, etc.
- UCAN cannot stop ALL creditor/collector phone calls. However, we can offer helpful techniques to alleviate much of the call volume you may receive from collectors.

We hope this information helps you become more familiar with our role in your debt settlement program.

You may contact UCAN at 1-877-462-8226. We are available Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. EST and Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST. Our FAX number is 1-877-895-7577. 

Spare Change

Be Cautious On Social Media

Here are just a few ways that dishonest people can compromise your social media accounts.


Account Hijacking. Thieves can hijack an account simply by sending out an email that looks like an official message from a social network site you use. Avoid responding to any emails that ask you to enter personal information such as your Social Security number or bank account details. Once you enter your information, your account becomes vulnerable.

Viral Videos. If you click on one of these videos and are asked to update

your video player or do anything unusual, refrain from doing so. Instead, type the name of the video into Google. If it doesn't contain a YouTube link or a legitimate site it may be a scam.

Who Viewed Your Profile? According to idtheft.about.com, approximately 30% of all scam links on Facebook use the "Who Viewed Your Profile" scam. Keep in mind that there is no way for an app or link to show you who has visited your profile or unfriended you, so avoid falling for this scam.



Geo-Stalking. Thieves can use GPS technology of social media to locate a target. Be sure to keep your location settings turned off. 

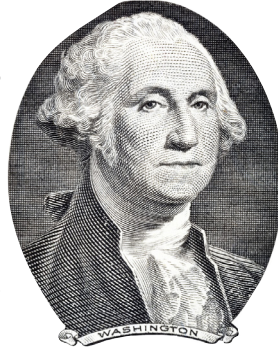
Who Said That?

Financial Quotes From The Founding Fathers

The founding fathers of the United States of America had much to say regarding personal finance. Try to match the following quotes with the speaker.

1. "The circulation of confidence is better than the circulation of money."

- Elizabeth Monroe
- Richard Nixon
- Alexander Hamilton
- James Madison



2. "Good company will always be found much less expensive than bad."

- Peter Sellers
- John Jay
- George Washington
- Abigail Adams

3. "A penny saved is a penny earned."

- John Adams
- Alexander Hamilton
- John Jay
- Benjamin Franklin

4. "All the perplexities, confusion and distress in America arise not from the defects of the Constitution, not from want of honor or virtue, so much as from downright ignorance of the nature of coin, credit and circulation."

- George Washington
- James Madison
- Benjamin Franklin
- John Adams

5. "There are two ways to conquer and enslave a country. One is by the sword. The other is by debt."

- Thomas Jefferson
- James Madison
- John Adams
- Alexander Hamilton

6. "An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest."

- George Washington
- John Jay
- Abraham Lincoln
- Benjamin Franklin

7. "Never spend your money before you have earned it."

- Thomas Jefferson
- Alexander Hamilton
- John Adams
- James Madison

8. "To contract new debts is not the way to pay old ones."

- Arthur St. Clair
- Thomas Jefferson
- George Washington
- John Adams



Answers On Page 4

Tips To Help You Avoid ATM Skimming

According to a report by [Kiplinger](#), Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) "skimming" fraud has reached an all-time high. "Skimming" takes place when thieves use malicious card readers called "skimmers" to collect personal data from a card's magnetic strip.

Typically, ATM skimmer devices are smaller than a deck of cards and are placed over the existing ATM card reader. In addition to the skimming device, thieves strategically place a hidden camera on or above the ATM number pad. This allows them to record personal identification numbers (PINs). Fake PIN pads can also be installed over the actual keyboard to capture the PIN directly, bypassing the need for a camera.

According to [FICO Card Alert Services](#), non-bank ATMs account for 60% of compromises. However, any ATM can be targeted.

Here are a few tips to help you avoid becoming the victim of ATM skimming:

- Avoid using unattended, non-bank ATM machines or machines in low-traffic areas.
- If you plan to attend a special

event, try to withdraw cash from your bank or an ATM you know you can trust rather than waiting to withdraw money from an ATM at your destination.

- Inspect ATM machines to see if any attachments or cameras have been installed above or in the vicinity of the PIN pad.

- Check to make sure that the area of the card slot is tightly attached. If the card slot has been dislodged, is loose or has fallen off, avoid using the ATM. In addition, check for the presence of double-sided tape, glue or pry marks around the card slot of the machine. Thieves use double-sided tape on most skimming devices so they can be removed quickly.

- Cover the PIN pad with your hand as you enter your PIN number. Always assume someone may be watching.

- If you suspect ATM skimming activity has taken place at a particular location, contact the bank or venue management and/or local law enforcement.



Budget Basics

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clothes. Remember that consignment shops and gently-used apparel resale stores carry designer labels and brands at a fraction of the cost.

In addition to offering stylish clothes for less expensive prices, consignment shops may also take your child's clothes and turn them into cash upon resale.

Teach Financial Literacy

As You Shop

Try to use back to school shopping as an opportunity to help your child learn the value of a dollar.

If you have an older child or teen, encourage them to set aside a portion of their allowance or paycheck for back to



school expenses. Work with them to develop a realistic budget and list of necessities. Assist them in making good financial choices.

If you have a younger child, you can still help them learn financial basics.

You may want to give them a list and, as you shop with them, allow them to check off items as they make their selections. At the same time, try to stress to your child that he/she must obtain approval from you to purchase each item they choose.



Make It A Game!

Let them know if you have any money left over once you have necessities crossed off your list, they 'win' a special item of their choice equal to the amount of money remaining from the allotted funds. 🎮

Answers To 'Founding Fathers' Quiz (Page 3)

1. James Madison; 2. George Washington; 3. Benjamin Franklin; 4. John Adams; 5. John Adams; 6. Benjamin Franklin; 7. Thomas Jefferson; 8. George Washington



Company Announcements



Secure Document Upload

Quick. Convenient. Secure.

Century has added an efficient, new feature to our MyCentury client portal. The secure document upload feature allows you to quickly and easily send your program documents to our team while logged into your portal. This eliminates a step of mailing or emailing the documents and they are placed safely into your MyCentury program page.

Approving Your Settlement Offers

Did you know you can approve your settlements online? Managing your settlement offers online is an easy way to keep your program progressing efficiently, without having to contact us directly. The MyCentury portal has been updated and you can log on to it from the homepage of the Century website at centuryss.com.

If there is a settlement awaiting your approval, you can review the details and approve it immediately. If you haven't set up your MyCentury portal account yet, please do so as soon as possible. You are able to access your current account details on your MyCentury portal 24/7!

Keep in mind, the sooner you respond to our settlement offers, the sooner we can act on your behalf and get you on the road to financial freedom quicker!



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