

10 Tips for Financial Success

Adapted from: Nelnet's "Managing Your Money: 9 Tips to Achieving Financial Wellness"

1. Develop a Budget and Stick to it

Compile all of your sources of income and anticipate your expenses for each month or semester. Your budget will tell you how much money you have coming in, where you must spend it, and where you might be able to save a few dollars.

3. Include Savings in Your Budget

Treat your savings account like any other monthly bill by including a set amount as an expense in your budget.

5. Save for Emergencies

A good rule of thumb is to have 3-6 months of essential expenses set aside in your savings account. This will be important for any unexpected expenses or emergencies

7. Be Smart with Credit

It's easy to overspend when using a credit card, but remember, a credit card is a loan that has to be paid back with fees and interest. Also, make sure you are paying all of your bills on time and in full. Missing or late payments can severely damage your credit. Monitor your credit at annualcreditreport.com

9. Understand Your Financial Aid

Know how much money you're receiving in financial aid by visiting myfinaid.berkeley.edu. This will help determine your income in the budgeting process. Instead of borrowing the full amount offered in student loans, only borrow what you need.

2. Know Where Your Money Goes

Be aware of how you are spending your money. Keeping track of your transactions and bills will help you maintain your budget and spending as well as be prepared for emergency circumstances.

4. Plan for Major Purchases

Saving for large purchases should also be included in your budget. Breaking up the cost of the purchase into monthly savings makes large purchases more manageable without going into debt.

6. Differentiate between Needs and Wants

For each purchase you make you should determine whether it is something you really need or something that you want. Reducing spending on a few wants every month can free up extra money to save for major purchases or an emergency.

8. Protect Your Identity

Keep all personal information (account numbers, social security number, etc.) in a secure place. Shred all documents containing this information before throwing it away and avoid giving this information to anyone unless absolutely necessary.

10. Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help

There are plenty of resources available both on and off campus to help you with your finances. Visit financialaid.berkeley.edu/money-matters-101 for online financial resources or visit Cal Student Central in 120 Sproul Hall for any financial aid-related questions.