

Activity 1: What I Need and What I Want

List your needs in the spaces below. Think of things you need (must have) to survive, like a place to live, food to eat, or clothes to wear. And, don't forget healthcare! Next, list some of the things you want (tickets to a concert, going out to dinner, or a new TV).

My Needs

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My Wants

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Remember...

Here's a good rule about money. When you are spending money, put your needs first. That's why it helps to know the difference between your needs and your wants.

Activity 2: My Money Habits

Read each line below and circle the response that sounds like you.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. I have a spending plan or budget. | Yes | No |
| 2. I track my spending every month. | Yes | No |
| 3. I pay my bills on time or before the due date. | Yes | No |
| 4. I have money in a bank or credit union. | Yes | No |
| 5. I pay my credit card balance in full every month. | Yes | No |
| 6. I know the total amount of any debts I have. | Yes | No |
| 7. I have seen my credit report in the past 12 months. | Yes | No |
| 8. I save money every month. | Yes | No |
| 9. I could pay for an unexpected expense today if I had to. | Yes | No |

Are there any NO answers above that might make it hard for you to achieve your financial goals? Take some time to think about this.

Activity 3: Smart Money Habits

Most people would say that the habits listed above are good ones to have. Make a list of any money habits from Activity 2 that you don't have now, but would like to develop. Make a promise to yourself to start right now.



Remember...

Changing your money habits takes time. Don't get discouraged.

Activity 4: Calculate My Monthly Income

In this activity you create a list of where your income comes from.

Step 1: Write down the name of each type of income you get monthly.

Step 2: Enter the total monthly amount for each one.

Step 3: Add up your total monthly income.

My Monthly Income for the Month of _____

Income Description	Amount
1. _____	\$ _____
2. _____	\$ _____
3. _____	\$ _____
4. _____	\$ _____
5. _____	\$ _____
Total Monthly Income	\$ _____

EXAMPLE: Monthly Income for SEPTEMBER

Income Description	Amount
1. Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	\$ 600.00
2. SNAP (food stamps)	\$ 150.00
3. Part-time job	\$ 200.00
Total Monthly Income	\$ 950.00

Activity 5: Track Expenses: Keep Cash Receipts

To figure out how you spend your money, you should begin by saving your cash receipts for at least one month.

Keep the receipt for anything you buy with cash in a container. An accordion file works great to keep things organized. You can also scan your receipts and store them electronically. If you didn't get a receipt then write a note to yourself about what you spent and how much it cost and file it away.

At the end of the month, gather all your receipts and sort them into categories. Make a pile of receipts for each category, such as:

- Groceries;
- Personal care items, like toothpaste and soap;
- Eating out at restaurants or take out;
- Transportation, like bus tickets, taxis, gas or tolls;
- Clothing;
- Entertainment, like movie tickets, cable, or TV/movie streaming services; and
- Health insurance co-pays.

Add up the amount of money you spent in each pile of receipts. Now that you have saved your cash receipts, move on to Activity 6.



Remember...

You can keep your receipts in a file. It's important that you keep every receipt for any purchase, not just those made with cash.

Activity 6: Organize My Cash Expenses

In this activity, you list your cash expenses and decide whether each one is a need or a want. You'll use this information later when you put together your money map.

Step 1: Name each expense category and check either need or want for the expense.

Step 2: Write the amount you spent in each category next to the item.

My Cash Expenses for the Month of _____

Expense Description	Need	Want	Amount
1. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
2. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
3. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
4. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
5. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
6. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____

EXAMPLE: Cash Expenses for SEPTEMBER

Expense Description	Need	Want	Amount
1. Personal care items from drug store	X		\$ 7.65
2. Meals eaten out		X	\$ 9.20
3. Groceries from supermarket	X		\$150.00
4. Doctor visit co-pay	X		\$ 25.00

Activity 7: Organize My Recurring Monthly Expenses

Make a list of your fixed recurring monthly expenses and decide whether each expense is a need or a want. Recurring expenses are expenses that keep happening in the same way month after month. You'll use this information later when you put together your money map.

Step 1: List each expense and select either need or want.

Step 2: Write the amount you spent next to the expense.

My Fixed Recurring Monthly Expenses for the Month of _____

Expense Description	Need	Want	Amount
1. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
2. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
3. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
4. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
5. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
6. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____

EXAMPLE: Fixed Recurring Monthly Expenses for SEPTEMBER

Expense Description	Need	Want	Amount
1. Rent	X		\$400.00
2. Utilities	X		\$ 74.00
3. Telephone	X		\$ 20.00
4. Student loan payment	X		\$ 50.00

Activity 8: Organize My Credit/Debit Card Charges

In this activity you create a list of credit card and checking/debit account charges and decide whether each item on the statement is a need or a want. You'll use this information later when you put together your money map.

Don't put anything on this list that you included in your Recurring Monthly Expenses. This is the easiest of the lists to create. Your credit card and bank account statements list all of the charges.

Step 1: List each charge and select whether it is a need or want.

Step 2: Write the amount you spent next to the charge.

My Credit/Debit Card Charges for the Month of _____

Charge Description	Need	Want	Amount
1. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
2. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
3. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
4. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
5. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____
6. _____	_____	_____	\$ _____

EXAMPLE: Credit Card Charges for SEPTEMBER

Charge Description	Need	Want	Amount
1. Groceries	X		\$ 10.00
2. Birthday gift for Mom		X	\$ 45.00
3. Concert tickets		X	\$ 50.00
4. DVDs		X	\$ 26.50

Activity 9: My Personal Statement of Income and Spending

The information used to build your “Personal Statement of Income and Spending” below comes from the lists you made in Activities 4, 6, 7, and 8. This is your actual spending and actual income for one month. You will use this to create your Money Map in Activity 11.

Step 1: Copy all of the items checked “need” onto the list with the amount spent on each need.

Step 2: Total the amount spent on your needs.

Step 3: Copy all of the items checked “want” onto the list with the amount spent on each one.

Step 4: Total the amount spent on your wants.

Step 5: Add your total needs to your total wants.

Step 6: Enter the amount of your monthly income from Activity #4.

Step 7: Subtract the total of your needs and wants (Step 5) from your monthly income (Step 6) to determine your cash flow.

(Continued on next page...)

My Personal Statement of Income and Spending for the Month of _____

Step 1: My Needs

Description	Amount
1. _____	\$ _____
2. _____	\$ _____
3. _____	\$ _____
4. _____	\$ _____
5. _____	\$ _____
6. _____	\$ _____
7. _____	\$ _____

Step 2: My Total Needs

\$ _____

Step 3: My Wants

Description	Amount
1. _____	\$ _____
2. _____	\$ _____
3. _____	\$ _____
4. _____	\$ _____
5. _____	\$ _____
6. _____	\$ _____

Step 4: My Total Wants

\$ _____

Step 5: My Expenses (Total Needs + Total Wants)

\$ _____

Step 6: My Total Monthly Income

\$ _____

Step 7: My Cash Flow (Income - Expenses)

\$ _____

Activity 10: Comparison Shopping

Ready to shop? Don't forget to compare! A good way to spend wisely is to get in the habit of comparison shopping. Comparison shopping means comparing the quality, price, and convenience of the products or services you want before buying them.

As well as saving you a lot of money, comparison shopping also gives you information about what is available in your area, and allows you to use the shopping method that is most convenient and efficient for you.

EXAMPLE: Comparison Shopping for Jeans

Store:	GAP (at the Mall)	Discount Store (Marshalls)	Internet	Thrift Store
Price:	\$50	\$35	\$30	\$10
Location:	Far away	Close	My home	Very close
Hours:	Convenient	Convenient	Convenient	Closes at 4:30 p.m.
Extra Costs:	\$10 for para transit	None	\$7 for shipping	None
Other:	Fun to visit!	None	Can't try them on	Don't have my size

In the example above, we chose to buy the jeans from the discount store because:

- The jeans cost \$15 less at the discount store than they did at the mall.
- The discount store had the right size jeans, unlike the thrift store.
- The discount store is easy to get to.
- The online list price for the jeans is \$5 less than the discount store, but when you add shipping it's actually \$2 more. This price might be worth the convenience of shopping from home, as long as you don't mind not trying on the jeans first.

(Continued on next page...)

Now it's your turn! Use the blank chart below to help you comparison shop.

Comparison Shopping for _____

Store:	Store #1	Store #2	Store #3	Store #4
Price:				
Location:				
Hours:				
Extra Costs:				
Other:				



Remember...

Comparison shopping means comparing the quality, price, and convenience of what you want to purchase.

Activity 11: Complete My Personal Money Map

A money map is your most important tool for controlling your finances. It's your plan for saving and spending money. It's a good idea to make a money map for each month of the year.

In Activities 4 through 9 you figured out what your income and spending looked like for one month and created a "Personal Statement of Income and Spending."

To make a money map, simply copy your "Personal Statement of Income and Spending" (Activity 9) and make a few adjustments that reflect your plan to use surplus monies or deal with a deficit. Here's how:

- Turn the "Amount" column into your "Planned Spending" column for the next month.
- Plan your spending for the coming month by making adjustments to this column based on amounts from the previous month.
- Add one more column called "Actual Spending."
- Over the next month, use this column to record how much you actually spend.

Each month after you have recorded your spending in the "Actual Spending" column, you can then start the next month's "Planned Spending" column with those numbers. You should make adjustments to your plan for the next month to account for extra money or shortfalls.

It's very important that you not simply copy your actual spending from the month before without addressing what you really want to do with your cash flow.

On the next page is a blank worksheet that you can copy and use every month for your "Personal Money Map."

(Continued on next page...)

My Personal Money Map

Month: _____

My Needs Descriptions

	Planned Spending	Actual Spending
1. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
2. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
3. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
4. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
5. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
6. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
7. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
8. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
My Total Needs	\$ _____	\$ _____

My Wants Descriptions

	Planned Spending	Actual Spending
1. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
2. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
3. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
4. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
5. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
6. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
My Total Wants	\$ _____	\$ _____

My Expenses (Total Needs + Total Wants)

\$ _____

My Total Monthly Income

\$ _____

My Cash Flow (Income - Expenses)

\$ _____

Activity 12: What Am I Saving For?

You save money for the future. It's a great idea to create some savings goals for yourself. Some examples of things you might save for are:

- Expensive purchases like a home or an adapted van,
- Special occasions like a birthday or a vacation,
- An unexpected emergency like a broken refrigerator or a computer repair, or
- Entertainment like a movie or concert tickets.

List some things you plan to save for:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Activity 13: What Will I Do To Save?

Make a list of what you will do to save for your goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Activity 14: Protecting Myself from Identity Theft

How Can You Protect Your Identity?

- Never throw personal information in the trash, especially a public trash can. Always shred personal documents like credit card bills, ATM receipts, and bank statements. Be sure you shred items small enough that they cannot be put back together.
- Use only secure websites (look for https in the address) when you make online purchases. PayPal is a safe way to make online purchases and payments. Also, do not to conduct sensitive transactions (such as online banking, making purchases with a credit card, or filing taxes) over a public Wi-Fi network.
- Be aware of who is around and may be watching when you use an ATM.
- Be very cautious when giving out your Social Security number or financial information online or to someone over the phone.
- When you create a User Identification (ID) and Personal Identification Number (PIN) code for an account, make it something that will be difficult to guess (don't use your birthday).
- Make sure that you keep a copy of all of your account numbers in a safe place.
- If you ask someone to get cash for you with your debit or credit card, always ask for a receipt to be sure that the amount you received is exactly the amount that was withdrawn. Make sure to monitor your account by reviewing your bank statements online or when they come in the mail.

Make a list of things you can do right now to protect yourself from identity theft:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Activity 15: Get and Understand Your Credit Report

Request a copy of your credit report by:

- Going online, www.annualcreditreport.com, and ordering a report; or, by calling 877-322-8228 (toll-free).
- You can also check out companies like Credit Karma or Credit Sesame for information and a free credit score that you can track over time. Credit Karma, www.creditkarma.com, works with TransUnion and Equifax; and, Credit Sesame, www.creditsesame.com, works with TransUnion.

What Should You Do If You Find a Mistake on Your Credit Report?

If you find a mistake on your credit report, contact the credit-reporting bureau that is reporting it and give them details and copies of all supporting documents. They will tell you what documents are needed.

Follow-up with the credit agency if you do not receive a satisfactory response within thirty days from the date your letter was mailed. It is also a good idea to contact the other credit reporting bureaus, too.

The three major national credit bureaus are:

- **Equifax**, 1-800-685-1111 or www.equifax.com
- **Experian**, 1-888-397-3742 or www.experian.com
- **TransUnion**, 1-800-916-8800 or www.transunion.com

Your Follow-up:

- Did you get a copy of your credit report? Yes No
- Was all of the information correct? Yes No
- Did you receive your credit score? Yes No

Activity 16: Preparing for Independence

Review each of the items in the task categories. Place a check mark in the column to indicate if you can do the task listed. Then check the support column if you need support to complete the task and if you have that support in place.

Task		Support		
		Can Do	Need	Have
1. Food	Meal planning	_____	_____	_____
	Meal preparation	_____	_____	_____
	Safe food storage	_____	_____	_____
	Grocery shopping	_____	_____	_____
2. Personal Care and Hygiene	Shower and bathe regularly	_____	_____	_____
	Schedule hair cuts	_____	_____	_____
	Laundry	_____	_____	_____
3. Health	Determine need for medical help	_____	_____	_____
	Schedule medical appointments	_____	_____	_____
	Follow medical instructions	_____	_____	_____
	Take medication w/out instruction	_____	_____	_____
4. Housekeeping	Change bed linens	_____	_____	_____
	Routine house-cleaning	_____	_____	_____
	Call for repairs	_____	_____	_____
5. Emergency and Safety	Operate locks on doors/windows	_____	_____	_____
	Recognize the smell of gas leak	_____	_____	_____
	Extinguish fire	_____	_____	_____
	Contact police/fire by 911	_____	_____	_____
6. Transportation	Driver's license	_____	_____	_____
	Vehicle	_____	_____	_____
	Use public transportation	_____	_____	_____
	Arrange for transport	_____	_____	_____
7. Social	Ask friends to come over	_____	_____	_____
	Go somewhere with friends	_____	_____	_____
	Hobby or other interest	_____	_____	_____

Activity 17: Housing Practice Money Map

Living independently is a serious financial commitment that starts with dependable income from a job, disability benefits, and/or public supports.

As a general guide, ongoing housing expenses (rent/mortgage payments, real estate taxes, renter's/homeowner's insurance, parking, homeowner's association, and utilities) should not exceed 30% of your gross monthly income. Here is an example:

Gross monthly income: $\$2,000 \times 0.30 = \600 maximum amount per month for housing expenses

Now enter your information to find the maximum amount you should spend each month on housing:

\$ _____ $\times 0.30 =$ \$ _____
(Gross monthly income)

This is your **maximum monthly housing expenses**.

In order to get a better feel for managing your money when living independently, it's good to plan and practice! Use the blank worksheet on the next page to create your housing practice money map.

Step 1: Enter the maximum amount you should spend on housing each month in your money map under the Planned Spending column.

Step 2: Enter all of your planned needs and wants from your original money map.

Step 3: Calculate your cash flow.

Step 4: Do you have enough money to meet all of your other needs and have enough for wants? If not, revisit needs and wants.

Step 5: "Practice" living independently, at least financially. Deposit your maximum monthly housing expenses into a savings account and practice managing your other needs and wants with your remaining income. Track how you do using the Actual Spending column.

(Continued on next page...)

My Housing Practice Money Map

Month: _____

My Needs Descriptions

	Planned Spending	Actual Spending
1. Maximum monthly housing expenses	\$ _____	\$ _____
2. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
3. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
4. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
5. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
6. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
7. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
8. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
My Total Needs	\$ _____	\$ _____

My Wants Descriptions

	Planned Spending	Actual Spending
1. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
2. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
3. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
4. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
5. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
6. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
My Total Wants	\$ _____	\$ _____
My Expenses (Total Needs + Total Wants)	\$ _____	\$ _____
My Total Monthly Income	\$ _____	\$ _____
My Cash Flow (Income - Expenses)	\$ _____	\$ _____

Activity 18: My Housing Needs and Wants

When identifying a place to live where you will be independent, safe, and content, carefully consider what you need vs. what you want (those things that can be flexible). For example, if you are employed, maybe living within five miles of your job with access to public transportation is a need. A want might be living within five miles of a movie theater.

	Need	Want
Location: (city, town, neighborhood)		
Distance to: Job		
Family and friends		
Health care facilities		
Pharmacy and grocery store		
Entertainment		
Public Transportation		
Type of property: (apartment, townhouse, etc.)		
Number of bedrooms:		
Number of bathrooms:		
Accessibility:		
Amenities: Parking		
On-site laundry		
In-unit laundry		
Community area		
Other:		
Assistance accepted: (vouchers, subsidies, etc.)		

Activity 19: Comparison Shopping for a Home

Once you have identified what you need and what you want in a home, it's time to go see what's out there.

Unit Comparison	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
Location:			
Type of Property:			
Bedrooms:			
Bathrooms:			
Accessibility:			
Amenities:			
Other:			
Utilities Included:			
Assistance Accepted:			

Cost Comparison	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
Security Deposit/ Down Payment:	\$_____	\$_____	\$_____

Compare to Amount I Have Saved: \$_____

Monthly Rent/ Mortgage Payment:	\$_____	\$_____	\$_____
Utilities (not included):	\$_____	\$_____	\$_____
Other:	\$_____	\$_____	\$_____
Total Housing Expenses:	\$_____	\$_____	\$_____

Compare to My Maximum Monthly Housing Amount: \$_____ (from Activity 17)

Activity 20: Fund the Assistive Technology I Need

Assistive technology (AT) devices and services are items that help people with disabilities be more independent and live life the way they want to live it.

The federal definition is more formal and states, “Assistive technology includes any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. An AT service directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.” (P.L. 100 – 407)

Examples of AT are:

- An adapted vehicle with a ramp, lowered floor and hand controls that makes it possible for a person who uses a wheelchair to get out into the community, visit friends, or go to work.
- A computer or iPad that helps a person who has a learning disability do well in school.
- A hearing aid that helps make it possible for a person who has a hearing loss to communicate with friends.

What are the devices or services you need and possible funding resources?

Device	Possible Funding Resource
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

My Road to Financial Independence Checklist

A big part of being more financially independent is having a personal financial file. This file should contain anything you might need to be established as an adult, allowing you to open a bank account, to build credit, and to help you get the services you need to live independently. You will need to create a system that works for you. Here are some suggestions:

Government Supports and Services

- Investigate your eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) www.ssa.gov/ssi/.
- Explore your eligibility for Home and Community-Based Services waiver programs ("waivers"):
 - <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Disabilities-Aging/Pages/Alternatives-to-Nursing-Homes.aspx> or
 - <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/about/DHS-Information/Pages/Waiver-Information.aspx>.
- Register with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) if you're interested in working or need help keeping your job at <https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/ovr/Pages/default.aspx>.

Identification

- Have a copy of your Social Security card.
- Obtain a driver's license or a non-driver's identification card.

Finances

- Establish a relationship with a bank or credit union (obtain a debit card).

Responsibilities

- Register to vote (age 18).
- Register for Selective Service (if male) <https://www.sss.gov/register/>.

Your Information

- Gather healthcare and community services information onto a USB flash drive and keep it with you. Be sure to include:
 - Personal identification information,
 - Health insurance policy number,
 - Doctors' and specialists' contact information,
 - Prescriptions,
 - Durable Medical Equipment (DME) vendor contact information, and
 - Service coordinator/case manager/supports broker contact information.