



<http://www.stephaniesarkis.com>

### **Create a Monthly Budget**

Consider using the following worksheet to determine your monthly budget. If your income varies a lot from month to month, get your yearly income amount from your last tax return. Divide that amount by 12 to get your monthly average. If you pay your car insurance every six months, divide that payment by 6 to get your monthly payment. Remember that this budget is just a guideline. Feel free to add or delete items as you see fit. Consult with a financial professional before making any major financial decisions.

Income:

Work \_\_\_\_\_

Work 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Support \_\_\_\_\_

Other Income \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Total Monthly Income:** \_\_\_\_\_

Fixed Expenses:

Car Payment \_\_\_\_\_

Rent \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Internet \_\_\_\_\_

Electricity \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Tuition \_\_\_\_\_

Car Insurance \_\_\_\_\_

Health Insurance \_\_\_\_\_

Donations/Tithing \_\_\_\_\_

Medications \_\_\_\_\_

Fuel/Gas \_\_\_\_\_

Groceries \_\_\_\_\_

Clothing \_\_\_\_\_

School Supplies \_\_\_\_\_

Computer/Software \_\_\_\_\_

Club/Activity Fees \_\_\_\_\_

To Savings Acct \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Fixed Expenses:** \_\_\_\_\_

Flexible Expenses:

Restaurants \_\_\_\_\_

Snacks \_\_\_\_\_

Cable TV \_\_\_\_\_

Vacation/Trips \_\_\_\_\_

Concerts/Music \_\_\_\_\_

Event Tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Gifts \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Flexible Expenses:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total of Fixed + Flexible Expenses** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Income – Total Expenses =** \_\_\_\_\_

This is the amount of money you do/don't have left over at the end of the month.

If you have money left over at the end of the month, congratulations! That is quite an accomplishment. If you don't have credit card balances to pay off, consider putting at least some of that surplus money into a savings account each month - even if it is just \$5 or \$10.

If you have a negative number left over at the end of the month, it's okay – at least now you know. First look at your flexible expenses – gifts, for example. Consider doing a gift exchange with your friends where you draw a name and only have to buy one gift. To save money on food

expenses, bring your lunch to work. If going out to lunch with coworkers is an unwritten rule at your workplace, order water and an appetizer instead of a full meal. To save money on your cable bill, cut out premium channels and reduce the number of channels on your subscription.

If you've adjusted your flexible expenses and you still aren't able to come out on the positive side at the end of the month, look at your fixed expenses. Could you be paying less for car insurance? Call your insurance company and see if they have any special discount programs available for full-time students. If your rent or mortgage is too high, consider living with a roommate or rent out a room in your home to reduce costs.

Make sure you are paying at least the minimum amount on your credit cards each month. One of your financial goals should be to pay off those cards as soon as possible. Remember, many financial costs, including credit card interest rates, can be negotiated. All you have to do is ask.

Finally, review your budget every few months to make sure you are on track. Using money management software, such as Quicken, or online money management sites, such as Mint.com, can help you create a budget and show you what you are spending money on each month.

Consider having a trusted friend or financial specialist show you how to set up money management software or accounts.