



Did You Know?

Almost 60% of millionaires use a budget to manage their money.

— *The Millionaire Next Door: The Surprising Secrets of America's Wealthy.*

In this unit, you will:

- Examine your spending habits
- Know the benefits of having a spending plan, or budget
- Identify various sources of income
- Identify types of expenses
- Know the importance of saving (paying yourself first)
- Be able to construct a budget
- Examine forms of record keeping involved with budgeting and cash management
- Consider how a budget will change throughout your life

UNIT TWO

Budgeting: Making the Most of Your Money

So now your financial plan has given you a better idea of what you want to do with your money. And while it may seem hard to believe when you're looking at what your wants and needs cost, it is possible to gain control of your money—if you step up to the challenge.

The best place to start is by answering the question, Where should all my money go?

Smart money managers know exactly how much money they can count on coming in, and exactly how much money they need to spend on bills and day-to-day purchases. They also know how much they can set aside to save for their bigger financial goals. And again, it all comes down to making a spending plan, or budget.

This unit is designed to help you get smart about the money you earn and the money you spend. You will see where all your money goes, decide if that's how you want to continue spending it, and make a plan to buy the things that are really important to you.

How Does Your Spending Measure Up?

When you completed your spending log in Unit 1, were you surprised by how much you spent on certain things? And how did your spending compare with the survey results revealing what guys and girls typically spend their money on?

Tracking your spending showed you where your money is really going. But that information becomes even more valuable when you use it to create a spending plan, or budget.

A **spending plan**, or **budget**, is a plan for managing your money during a given period of time. It's not about depriving yourself of favorite things. It's about seeing all your options and making smarter choices so you can get the stuff you really want. It'll help you find more money for the important things—often just by skipping little purchases you don't care that much about.

As with your financial plan, your budget will change as your income grows and your priorities change. Right now you probably spend a lot of your money on clothes and entertainment, and maybe you're saving for a car or college. But in 10 years, you'll probably be making a lot more money. A big chunk of your income will be going toward renting an apartment or paying for a home mortgage. Your primary savings goal may be to start a business or finance your children's education.

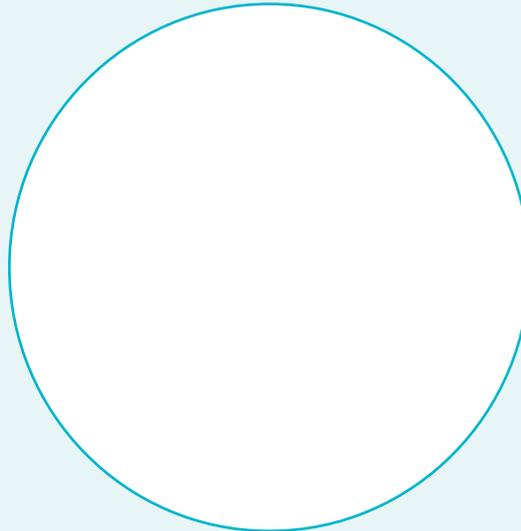
Fast forward another 10 years, you'll be earning even more. But you may still be paying for your mortgage and possibly for your children's education. At that point, your primary savings goal may be to save for retirement. Throughout all this, your spending plan can evolve to help you meet your responsibilities and achieve your goals.



Exercise 2A:

How Do You Spend Your Money?

Using your spending log from Assignment 1-3, create categories of expenses and calculate the percent you spend on each category. Then use that information to create a pie chart that represents how you spend your money. How do you think your pie chart will look a year from now? Ten years from now?



Smart Spending

Say your spending log showed that you bought a bottle of soda for \$1 every day. It didn't seem like much at the time, did it? But if you did that every day for a month, you would have consumed \$30 worth of soda. Now maybe you can't live without your daily soda fix, and you're OK with that. But maybe there's something else you'd rather spend \$30 on. Your spending plan allows you to prioritize your spending and saving.

So what happens when you don't use a spending plan? Basically, you're pretty much operating in the dark when making money decisions. You're also spending your money haphazardly—meaning that you probably end up spending more on things you really don't need. What happens is that you run out of money and have nothing left for the things that are really important to you. Or, worse, you overspend and end up in debt, something we'll talk more about later. However, a spending plan helps you avoid all this and helps you make the most of your money.

You learned in Unit 1 how your values affect your needs and goals. When you're getting ready to create a spending plan, it's even more important to know what your values are. Everyone has them, but everyone does not value the same things equally. For example, if you suddenly received \$50, what would you spend it on? Would your best friend spend it the same way? What about your brother or mom? Every person you ask would probably spend it differently because she or he has a different set of values.



Exercise 2B: Values and Spending Chart

Think about the choices you would make if you were given \$50 to spend. This will reflect what is important to you. By knowing what you value, you can design a personal spending plan that will fit your values and financial goals.

Assignment 2-1: How Am I Doing?

Compare your spending log from Unit 1 with your financial plan. How well do your current spending habits represent your financial goals? What do you think will happen if you don't create a spending plan? And what do you think will happen if you do create one?



Expense	Matches Goals (Yes or No)	Adjustments Needed

Part 1 of the Equation: Income

Before we talk about income, we need to take a look at **cash flow**. Cash flow refers to the money you have coming in, as well as the money you have going out. **Income** makes up the first part of the equation—it is any money you receive. Obviously, income is money you earn from a job. But it can also be your allowance, a check for your birthday, money from selling your stuff, and even interest you earn on your savings account.

If you have a job, you probably were surprised when you received your first paycheck! Most likely, it was for less than you expected because your employer subtracted money for a number of items before writing you the check. These items are called payroll deductions.

For most people, taxes are the biggest deductions. Taxes are fees that support government programs and are required by law to be applied to income, property, or goods. Government programs may be run at the local, state, or federal level, which is why you'll usually see more than one level of government listed on your pay stub. All of these taxes pay for a variety of services we use, such as road maintenance, public schools, armed services, and retirement income for the elderly.

The four most common tax deductions on a pay stub are federal income tax, state income tax, Social Security tax, and Medicare tax. A person who owns a business typically also pays a self-employment tax.



Part 2 of the Equation: Expenses

So now that you understand more about the income part of cash flow, it's time to talk about the expenses part. **Expenses** are what you spend money on—your needs and wants. There are essentially three types of expenses:

- 1 **Fixed expenses** cost the same amount every time. Your parents' mortgage (home loan) is usually a fixed monthly payment or fixed expense. A car loan is also usually a fixed monthly payment or fixed expense. You typically know exactly how much is needed each month for a fixed expense. For example, a person might pay \$250 every month to pay off a car loan.
- 2 **Variable expenses** fluctuate in amount, so you usually have more control over how much they'll be. Food is a variable expense because eating out more or less frequently will change the amount you spend. You can probably predict that a variable expense is in an approximate range of spending. For example, groceries may cost \$100–\$200 per week for a family depending on what kinds and the amount of food purchased.
- 3 **Periodic or occasional expenses** are ones you don't pay every month, and can be either fixed or variable. For example, some people pay their car insurance (a periodic expense) every six months instead of every month. But paying for auto repairs is an occasional and variable expense—you only pay for repairs when something happens to your car, and the expense will vary depending on what kind of work is needed.

However an expense is classified, you should consider and plan for how you will pay for your expenses. A budget can help you plan ahead so you are able to pay your expenses and have money available for what is important to you.



Exercise 2C:

What Type of Expense Is It?

Categorize the expenses shown in the table below as fixed, variable, or periodic.

Description	Fixed? ✓	Variable? ✓	Periodic? ✓
Groceries			
Piano lesson fee			
Cable TV bill			
Magazine subscription renewal			
Car loan payment			



Assignment 2-2: My Fixed and Variable Expenses

Use your spending log from Unit 1 to create a list of your personal fixed, variable, and periodic expenses.

Fixed Expenses	Variable Expenses	Periodic/Occasional Expenses

In Unit 1, we talked about how your financial goals need to align with your values. But your spending should also align with your values—and your financial goals. When you look over your list of expenses, do they match your values and goals?



Did You Know?

- The average person spends money three times a day.¹
- Putting aside every coin you touch usually results in saving about \$50 a month.²
- A \$5 sandwich usually has less than \$1 worth of ingredients.²
- If you purchase a soda a day for a year, you will have spent approximately \$365.

¹ Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension and Money 2000™ and Beyond Web site

² “Check It Out, How Can You Achieve Your Financial Dreams?” PNC Directions, Vol. I, 2003.

The Most Important Expense

Saving is an all-important part of reaching your financial goals. Remember the exercises you did in Unit 1 to figure out how much you needed to save each week or each month to realize each financial goal? Saving those amounts should become another “expense” you include in your budget.

Every financially savvy person knows that the secret to doing this is called **P.Y.F.**, or “**pay yourself first.**” Basically, whenever you receive money, you should immediately put a certain amount into an account that you will set aside to use later to meet a long-term financial goal. You might even choose to use this P.Y.F. fund to grow more money. You will learn more about this in the investing unit.

You will always have to make tough choices about how you spend your hard-earned money. But having P.Y.F. money in your budget makes it more likely that you’ll reach your short-term and long-term goals because you’re consistently saving for them. It doesn’t take much to start, and as you’ll see, your money starts to

add up quickly. When you pay yourself first, you don't even miss the money, because it's like you never had it in the first place. So why not begin today by saving just 10 percent, or one dime from every dollar you get? (P.Y.F. is also a good way to have an emergency fund. It's true that money being saved for other things is tapped to meet a pressing need, but that's part of the reality of budgeting.)

The easiest way to do this is to ask if your employer would electronically deposit your paycheck for you. If so, you can usually arrange for a certain percent of your check to automatically go into your savings account each time you're paid, and have the rest go into your checking account. The bonus is you never have to worry about picking up your paycheck. The money will just show up in your account on payday.

If your employer doesn't provide automatic deposits, ask your bank or other financial institution for an automatic savings deposit form. Once you fill this out, the bank will automatically transfer a certain amount of money from your checking account to your P.Y.F. account once a month.

Your financial goals are the most important expenses you have—treat them that way! If you don't, you'll be tempted to spend your money on other things, especially those variable expenses like food, clothing, and entertainment. Paying yourself first helps ensure that you're able to pay for the things that are really important to you in life.



Exercise 2D: Saving to Meet Goals

The Simpson family wants to buy a new refrigerator for the kitchen. Mr. Simpson has visited several stores and estimates that it will cost around \$700 to buy and install the type of refrigerator the family wants. If their goal is to buy it in six months, how much do they need to save each month?

$\$700 \div 6 =$

The Mencias want to buy their oldest daughter a computer to take to college next year. They've shopped around and think they can get a good desktop computer with all the software and a printer for about \$1,100. With 15 months to save, how much do they need to set aside each month?

$\$1,100 \div 15 =$

Assignment 2-3: Saving for My Goals

Use your personal financial plan from Unit 1 to identify how much you need to save each month or each week to meet your SMART goals.



SMART Goals	Total Amount Needed	Amount to Save Each Month or Week
Total to Save for Goals	\$	\$

The 411 on Creating a Budget

Do you remember the five steps of the financial planning process from Unit 1? They are:

- 1 Set SMART Goals
- 2 Analyze Information
- 3 Create a Plan
- 4 Implement the Plan
- 5 Monitor and Modify the Plan

Well, creating a spending plan, or budget, works the same way. You have to set SMART goals and analyze information like your spending log before you create a plan. Then you have to implement the plan and monitor and modify it to make sure you stay on track.

A budget is an important part of achieving the goals you set in your financial plan, because you can build the amount you need to save into your planned expenses. It's also a critical tool in managing your spending. Most people have a limited amount of money—a budget helps prioritize spending so you can maximize what you have.

Building a Budget

So how do you create your budget or spending plan?

- 1 First, decide the time frame for tracking your income and expenses. Will it be weekly or monthly?
- 2 List all the money you have coming in. It's helpful to break it down into categories—such as work, allowance, and “other” for gifts of money, or money you make from selling your stuff. Then total all your income.
- 3 You need to make categories for each of your expenses. Don't forget to include P.Y.F.! If you divide your expense categories into fixed and variable, it'll be easier to see which ones you can adjust, if necessary. Remember, you should have a category for everything you regularly spend money on. Then total your expenses.
- 4 Subtract your total expenses from your total income. If the number is negative, you need to go back and adjust some of your variable expenses until the number is a zero. If it's a positive number, you may want to think about adding some to your P.Y.F. line so you can reach your goals a little faster!
- 5 Step back and look at your budget and your financial plan. Do you need to tweak it to bring your spending plan more in line with your financial goals?

Jackson's Monthly Budget	
Estimated Income:	
Paycheck (after taxes)	\$2,100
Interest Earned	50
Total Estimated Income:	\$2,150
Fixed Expenses:	
Savings (P.Y.F.)	\$500
Car Payment	325
Rent	750
Cable TV/Internet	75
Estimated Variable Expenses:	
Utilities	150
Food	200
Gas	100
Periodic Expenses:	
Car Insurance (\$300/6 months)	50
Total Expenses	\$2,150
Total Income	\$2,150
- Total Expenses	2,150
	\$ 0

Assignment 2-4: Build a Budget

Use the data provided to outline a personal budget for Jessica. Make sure that Jessica's total expenses don't exceed her total income.



Jessica is a senior in high school. She earns \$8 an hour working approximately 25 hours a week at the local grocery store. About 30% of her pay is deducted for taxes. Jessica also earns approximately \$15 each month in interest on savings.

Jessica still owes money on her used car (\$235 a month), but she doesn't pay rent because she lives with her parents. She is responsible for the following expenses every month: cell phone (\$35–\$45), gas (\$40–\$60), and auto insurance (\$50 a month). Jessica likes to play video games and listen to music, so she frequently buys games and music. Jessica typically buys her own clothes and electronic gadgets, but she also receives gifts from her family for special occasions.

One of Jessica's short-term goals is to take a trip to visit her grandparents right after graduation. She expects this to cost \$1,000, and she has already saved \$500. A long-term goal is to attend college over the next four to five years at the local state school. So far she has set aside \$7,000; she also has applied for several scholarships.



Assessment 2-1: My Personal Budget

Use what you have learned in this unit to create your own personal budget for a week or a month. Be sure that your total expenses don't exceed your total income.

Keeping Track

Getting organized is easy. It simply requires some filing folders or an accordion file to sort your financial documents. For now, each type of document should get its own folder or slot. Later, you may want to break these categories out by employer, bank, or company name. Documents you should keep and organize include:

- **Checking account statements.** Balance your checkbook every month when your statement arrives. This way you can catch things you may have forgotten to record (like ATM withdrawals or debit card transactions). File away all statements, keep them for a year, and then shred them.
- **Savings and investment statements.** We'll talk more about savings and investment options later. But for now, you should know to always check these statements when you receive them, and then file them away.
- **Pay stubs.** Employers do occasionally make a mistake, so you should definitely check your pay stub when you receive it. But it's also good to save it until you file your taxes. At that point, check the last pay stub of the year against the W-2 you receive from your employer. If the information matches, you can shred the previous year's pay stubs. (If it doesn't match, ask your employer for a corrected W-2 form.)

- **Tax documents.** Keep copies of all the W-2s you receive, as well as tax documents for any checking, savings, and investment accounts. A W-2, also called the Wage and Tax Statement Form W-2, is the earnings summary you should receive every January from each employer you worked for the previous year. It shows your gross income and taxes withheld during the year. You will need this form to file your income taxes by April 15 every year, so be sure to save it until you're ready to file your return. You should also keep copies of your completed tax returns (Form 1040) for at least seven years.
- **Insurance statements.** We'll talk more about insurance in a later unit, but if you're paying for car insurance, keep a copy of the "declarations" pages. These pages contain important information about your policy, such as how much coverage you have and any deductibles you have to pay. You should also keep the premium notices sent by your insurance company (after paying them promptly!) for a year.
- **Loan and credit card statements.** If you have a car loan, your loan statement usually will show how your loan payment was applied toward your loan balance—the amount applied to reduce your interest, and the amount applied to reduce your principal. Credit card statements usually show your purchases, payments, finance charges, and current balance. Again, if you notice an error or a charge you didn't make, you can clear the matter up more quickly when you have good records. Keep copies of all agreements for loans and credit cards for as long as you have the account. Also, keep your monthly statements for a year, and then shred those too.
- **Receipts and warranties for big-ticket items.** Anytime you make a big purchase—whether it's a computer, a bike, electronics, or even car repairs—hang on to your receipts. If you get a warranty booklet or owner's manual, keep that as well. This documentation can help you get an item fixed or replaced if you ever have a problem with it.

Ask a parent or other adult to share tips on how he or she organizes financial records.

Staying on Track

A variety of methods are available for making sure you stay on track with your budget. Talk to your parents or other adults about strategies they have found to help them stick to a budget.

The Envelope System

The simplest way to stay on track with your budget is to label envelopes with each of your expense categories. When you get money, distribute it among the envelopes based on the expense amounts in your budget. When you need to spend money, simply withdraw cash from the appropriate envelope. When the envelope is empty, you're either done spending in that category, or you have to move money from another envelope into the appropriate one. If you also note on the envelope each time you add or remove money, as well as the date, amount, and reason, it will be easy to see where you underspent or overspent and, more important, **why**.

The Tally System

In this method, you keep a tally of your spending categories and save your receipts. Then at the end of the day or week, you enter the amounts on the receipts below the amount budgeted for each category.

Track With Your Checking Account Register

You can also use a checking account register to track all your income and expenses as you write checks and withdraw money. As you spend cash, make a note of what and how much you spent in the payment/debit column so you can track every dollar you spend.

The Budget Spreadsheet

If you're handy with computer spreadsheet software, you can also create a worksheet with all your budget information. Each time you receive or spend money, enter the amount in the appropriate cell for that category and update the totals.

Personal Finance Software

If you're ready to get more advanced, software programs can help you monitor your budget. They also can help you track money in various accounts, as well as provide summaries of your loan and credit card balances.



The Living Budget

Budgets are not meant to be written in stone because each element of your budget will change over time.

Certainly, your income will change. At some point, you will probably get a full-time job. If you get paid a salary, your income will become a lot more predictable. But some professions, like real estate agents, make commissions instead of a salary or wage. In other words, they only get paid when they sell something. You might get income from various investments you own. If you ever write a book or invent a new product, you also might get royalties—income based on the number of your books or products that actually are sold. And eventually, when you retire, your income will probably be a combination of withdrawals from your retirement savings and Social Security checks.

Savings goals, too, will change. Right now your biggest financial goals are probably a new car or a post-high-school education. Later, you might want to think about saving for your own home. Maybe you'll decide to go to graduate school. Then there's the huge financial goal of saving for retirement. And in between, you also may want to save for your children's college education or a vacation home.

Of course, spending habits will definitely change too. It's funny, but the more money you make, the more you tend to spend. That's because your needs grow—bigger apartments, bigger houses. And your wants grow too—nicer cars, more exotic vacations. And if you want to have children, be prepared to spend a lot more. The USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) estimates that a two-parent family spends more than six figures to raise one child from birth to age 17.¹ (And this doesn't include the cost of college!)

So updating your spending plan should become a regular part of your money management to keep pace with your changing income, goals, and spending habits.

¹ "Expenditures on Children by Families, 2005." U.S. Department of Agriculture, Publication 1528-2005. The amount ranges from \$139,110 for a family with income less than \$43,200, to \$190,980 for a family with income between \$43,200 and \$72,600, and \$279,450 for a family with income higher than \$72,600.

Exercise 2E:

Jessica's Budget Needs Adjusting



Using the information provided, recommend changes to Jessica's budget to reflect the changes in her life.

After graduation, Jessica was promoted at work and now earns \$10 an hour. She will work full time during the summer before going to college after September 1.

Adding It Up

Just as a financial plan makes for a smoother journey through life, a budget or spending plan helps you make the most of your money. You can more easily achieve the goals you set in your financial plan.

By now, you should appreciate the importance of having a spending plan and how to create one. You should have a better idea about the types of income you can earn—and the taxes that you automatically have to pay. You also have a handle on the different types of expenses you have and how to adjust them to fit your budget.

Last—but *definitely* not least—you learned about the importance of paying yourself first in order to make your financial goals a prominent part of your spending plan. Put that money away, and you will be thankful.

Next, we'll talk about what to do with the money you're setting aside for your goals. But if you haven't completed Assessment 2-1 yet, make sure you go back and do that first.

For more tips, tools, and articles about budgets, visit hsfpp.nefe.org.



Unit Assessment 2-1: My Personal Budget

Competency:

Prepare a personal budget.

Directions:

Use what you have learned and practiced in Unit 2 to create your own personal budget.

Review your financial goals and preview the Required Criteria to plan your activities to develop a personal budget.

Include the following information in your budget:

anticipated income, savings, and expenses for one week or month based on your current situation

an explanation of how the budget supports each of your personal financial goals

Required Criteria	Status	
1. Income is listed by source	complete	not complete
2. Budget includes savings (P.Y.F.)	complete	not complete
3. Expenses are listed in appropriate categories: fixed, variable, or periodic	complete	not complete
4. Budget is balanced so total income equals total expenses	complete	not complete
5. Budget contains realistic data for your current situation	complete	not complete
6. Budget includes label with title and date	complete	not complete
7. You indicate how the budget supports each of your personal financial goals	complete	not complete
8. [optional] Budget is prepared using spreadsheet software	complete	not complete

Feedback:

Score _____/50

Name _____

Date _____