



CONSUMER CREDIT
COUNSELING SERVICE
of Lutheran Social Services

Resolutions Revisited

Resolutions are not just for New Years Eve...

How often do you revisit your New Year's financial resolutions? Weekly? Monthly? Quarterly? If you haven't made much progress **it's never too late to get started**. Here are five tips to help you focus on your goals along with some money saving strategies that will assist you.

Be honest and realistic...

No matter how sincere the intention, it may not be realistic to eliminate all your revolving debt this year. Nor is it possible for most of us to build an emergency savings fund of three to six months worth of living expenses in one year. Make a resolution that is realistic and be honest with yourself about what you can and will do.

Break your goal into manageable pieces and devise an action plan to reach it....

A zero balance for revolving debt is a **realistic** goal if you break it into **measurable** pieces over a **time period** you can manage. For example, you can plan to scale down your debt, one creditor at a time. A plan will help you focus and keep you on track when you have the urge to splurge.

Write down what you want to accomplish...

It's not good enough to say, "I resolve to save money and eliminate my debt." Write your plan down. Here is an example of how to scale down your debt.

1. List your creditors, balances and minimum payments beginning with the smallest balance owed.
2. Make on-time minimum payments to all.
3. Focus as much extra money as you can to creditor one.
4. When creditor one is paid, add that full payment to the minimum payment of creditor two.
5. Continue that pattern, focusing on your lowest balance account, until all creditors are paid.

Save room in your overall plan for periodic and unexpected expenses...

Plan and save for periodic expenses such as gifts, car insurance and repairs so you don't add to your debt while trying to eliminate it. If you have to deviate from your goals to fund an unexpected expense, be flexible and go right back to your plan as soon as possible.

Make your goals a priority, while being flexible...

In order to accumulate savings or eliminate debt, you will have to consider **needs versus wants**. Look for expenses you can cut back or could do without for a while. Try some of the money saving strategies listed on the reverse side of this tip sheet.

**For more information, contact Consumer Credit Counseling Service.
Call us at (605) 330-2700 or (888) 258-2227(CCCS), or check us out at
www.lsssd.org.**

Money Savings Strategies

Financial Basics

- Pay Yourself First. Have your savings automatically deposited from your paycheck or checking account.
- Review insurance coverage and deductibles annually.
- Shop with a list to avoid impulse purchases. Plan each trip in advance.
- Use extra paychecks, overtime, bonuses and tax refunds strategically.
- Give yourself a cooling off time before you purchase. Go back and buy items the next day if it is a need.
- Avoid optional fees for services such as credit report monitoring or income tax refund anticipation loans.
- Track your daily spending. Set and stick to a limit.
- Save your change. It all adds up.

Finding Extra Money for Resolutions

- Review cable services and look for options to reduce monthly charges.
- Use the library for internet services.
- Eliminate buying coffee or food on the go.
- Take lunch to work or order from the dollar menu three or more days a week.
- Don't add convenience items to your fuel bill. Pay outside and stay outside.



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