

MANAGING YOUR MONEY



Creating—And Sticking To—A Daily Budget

(NAPSA)—One of the best ways to build up your nest egg is to create a budget you can bank on. Doing so can make it easier to save for the future and can help you feel more confident about your financial situation.

A good budget lets you identify and log your monthly income and various expenses. Once you've taken basic steps to set a budget, you can identify spending habits and ways to save money. Just be aware that once you write down what you are spending, you may be surprised. Try these tips:

- You can find a number of budgeting tools and ideas on the Web. For instance, a quick search turns up budgeting tips as well as examples of budgets that have worked for other people. You can also visit mastercard.com to access a debt calculator or to download a budgeting worksheet.

- Keep track of all the money coming in and out for a few months. Then identify which expenses are necessities—rent, electric bill, etc.—and which are optional (eating out, shopping, etc.). Tracking what you spend will be easier if you make purchases with your credit card and review monthly statements.

- Set up a monthly spending budget and enter actual expenses as they occur. Notice whether you're spending more or less than



A budget can help you manage finances and meet savings goals.

you budgeted and take that into account when you set a budget for the following month.

- Once you figure out how you spend money, you can find ways to factor a savings plan into your monthly finances. Make savings a part of your necessary monthly expenses.

- Think about creating a savings goal. Save for college, a new car, retirement or any other large expense. Setting goals can make you more motivated to save.

- Stay realistic. While you may have to make some changes, it's important not to completely disregard the lifestyle you're accustomed to when setting a budget. Making changes that are too sweeping can cause you to abandon your budgeting plan.

For more information, visit www.mastercard.com.