



Managing Your Money

Help Is On The Way: Tips For Reaching Financial Freedom

(NAPSA)—Even in an uncertain economy, you don't have to feel alone and overwhelmed when it comes to managing your money. Help is available to guide you in getting your financial house in order. Building a strong financial foundation can reap enormous benefits for you and your family and protect you, no matter what the stock market does.

One resource, called money mentors or financial coaches, can be particularly useful. Whatever your personal financial issues, working with a certified mentor helps you create a customized plan to meet your specific needs.

To get your finances in order, consider these steps:

- **Partner With a Mentor:** He or she will walk with you through the process and give you information you need for future growth. Most mentors or coaches will assess your current financial situation by asking a variety of questions so they can develop a customized plan with specific action items for achieving your financial goals.

- **Develop a budget:** This should be the first step to getting your finances in order. Instead of budgeting only your predicted costs each month, however, think about unexpected costs as well. If you take a look at what you've spent money on over the past year, it's easier to build savings for car repairs, last-minute travel and so on into your budget so you're prepared.

- **Downsize debt:** Consider consolidating debt into one easy payment.

- **Analyze and decrease expenses:** Look at where you're



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spending money. Maybe you can get a better deal. Call utility and service providers to see if you can switch to a new plan—or compare and switch to a new provider altogether. Cut any services you're paying for but haven't used in months.

- **Create an emergency savings fund:** Protect your family from a potential job loss by establishing a "backup" fund for expenses including your mortgage, utilities and groceries.

If you're considering working with a money mentor and don't know where to begin, a good place to start is the Crown MoneyLife® Mentoring program. This exclusive program is conducted confidentially and securely online and will pair you with a certified MoneyLife Mentor to develop a customized plan that puts you on the road to financial freedom. The program includes an online assessment of your financial attitudes and behaviors and a digital toolbox featuring a library of resources to affirm, direct and inspire you on your journey so you don't have to feel alone anymore.