
37 Ways to Stretch Your Money

By Mardie Caldwell, COAP

It's not a secret that times are tough right now. Wages are stagnant while prices creep up and many of us have to choose between what we need and what we want. When trying to build an adoption budget, that becomes even more challenging! Here are ways to make your dollar go further even in a time of financial uncertainty.

Look For Alternate Sources of Income

- Learn how to sell on Ebay.
- Do you have a hobby you can make money with?
- Does your job have a particular skill that's in demand? Some teachers are also paid tutors!
- Have a garage sale.
- Do you have time on the weekend to take on a second job? Or even mow someone's lawn for gas money?
- Recycle! Turn your trash into cash.
- Barter your skills.

Make Your Money Go Further

- Shop sales, clip coupons.
- Examine your spending. Look at your cell phone plans, cable/TV bills, garbage costs, water usage, gym memberships, or other items. You can change service providers or make do with a little less.
- Look at the promotional offers you receive for various services.
- Do your shopping online to save gas and get better prices.
- Shop at a discount chain, such as Wal-Mart.
- Use the points or perks on credit cards or grocery stores to buy things you really want or need.

Can I Do With Less?

- Instead of going out to a movie, rent it or stream it on a site like Netflix or Hulu.
- Make coffee at home or work instead of hitting Starbucks each day.
- Fewer meals out. Taking your lunch to work will save a lot!
- Are you keeping up with the Jones'? Do you have to have new the latest cell phones, cars, video game systems, or TVs?

Save On Driving

- Consolidate your errands and map a circular route, rather than zigzagging across town.
- Carpool with others or take the bus?

- Are you close enough to walk or ride a bike to where you're going?
- If you're looking at new car, consider hybrid.
- Get gas in the morning and try to fill up when your tank is half full. You will lose less in fumes.
- Pay bills online.

Better Manage Current Debt

- Call credit card companies and ask for a lower interest rate.
- Consider a line of credit at a lower rate to pay off or consolidate high interest debt.
- Try to keep credit cards below your limit in case of emergency.
- If you need to make a large purchase, look for zero interest credit cards.
- If you have adjustable rate mortgage, ask for a fixed rate or a lower rate.

Look To The Future

- Set financial goals for yourself.
- Save for purchases, including vehicles, vacations, and necessities.
- Research your purchases.
- Don't short your retirement planning to live a better lifestyle now.
- Teach your children good financial skills.

Examine Your Priorities

- If you are considering adoption or infertility treatments, prioritize them over other purchases, such as cars, boats, or vacations. Time is one of the keys to success!
- Ask for help when you need it, especially for important financial priorities.
- Does your employer offer benefits you can take advantage of like adoption credits and paid maternity leave?
- Would working two jobs now make life easier in the future?

Learn more financial tips for building your family and your life at www.AdoptionFinancingInformation.com.

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