

25 MONEY-SAVING IDEAS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS: CERTAIN STRATEGIES FOR UNCERTAIN TIMES

Chances are that money is on your mind. Rising costs, dwindling savings and an uncertain economic forecast can all add up to a mighty financial headache. So, consider some ways to help yourself save and spend smarter!

- 1. Scholarship Search.** Keep an eye out for scholarship postings through the school newspaper, the financial aid and scholarship offices, and other campus communication sources. There's a lot of money to be found!
- 2. Update That Resume.** Have an updated resume ready so that you can apply for any scholarship at any time. Too many students lose out on free money by being unprepared.
- 3. Lock the Laptop.** Slap a lock on your laptop so you don't have to face paying for a replacement if someone steals it.
- 4. Say No to Credit Come-ons.** Don't sign up for "free" credit card offers—many credit companies prey on college students, leading to deep debt that can take a *long* time to undo.
- 5. Stay on Top of Your Credit Score.** Keep track of your personal credit score through www.annualcreditreport.com and address any discrepancies immediately. This ensures that no incorrect blips will impact the health of your credit history down the road.
- 6. Maximize Meal Money.** Maximize your campus dining plan rather than opting for costly takeout. Learn about how to pick up bag lunches, late hours that can accommodate athletic/activity schedules and more so you can meet your scheduling needs without shelling out additional money.
- 7. Clean Your Room.** Be respectful and smart in how you treat your campus residence. That way you'll avoid room damage charges when you

move out. And make time to clean your room before leaving so you don't have to pay a cleaning bill. A little bit of elbow grease will lead to extra dollars in your pocket!

- 8. Work on Campus.** Look into campus employment opportunities. You won't have any transportation costs, plus you'll benefit by networking with campus folks who may be able to help you get a job once you graduate. A positive campus recommendation is like gold.
- 9. Do Free Stuff!** Check out free and low-cost programs on campus sponsored by the student activities office, academic departments and many others. There's a wealth of great affordable stuff right outside your door!



HELPING YOUR COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

When your institution saves money, the benefits trickle down to you! So:

- Tell someone when your campus residence is too hot instead of opening a window. The energy savings make a difference!
- Unplug electronics when they're not in use. They suck up energy when plugged in—something called "phantom loads"—even if they're not turned on.
- Report any faucet drips to a residence life staff member or maintenance liaison. Many gallons of water can be wasted this way, and leaks may also lead to costlier maintenance concerns down the road.

Keep an eye out for ways to help your school. You're an important part of the money-saving equation!

a free resource from

- 10. Make It a Matinee.** If you go off campus to the movies, hit a matinee instead of a costlier evening show. Or scope out discounted movie coupons offered by AAA and other organizations.
- 11. Track Your Texts & Calls.** Watch your cell and text minutes. Are you on the smartest plan? Do you tend to go over your allotted minutes? If so, keep your mouth and your thumbs in check!
- 12. Save Energy.** Winterize off-campus apartments to save on energy costs. Plus, keep the thermostat down and the layers on!
- 13. Be Postal Wise.** Send birthday postcards or e-cards, instead of regular cards, to cut down on postage costs.
- 14. Print Twice.** Use both sides of the paper when printing, whenever possible, to conserve money—and resources!
- 15. Save Some Ink.** Print on the fast draft or black and white setting so you're not using up your ink so quickly.
- 16. Share a Ride.** Ride share during breaks.
- 17. Go Car-less.** Leave the car at home to save on parking, gas and insurance costs.
- 18. Drink Bargain Coffee.** Forego the fancy coffee drinks and brew your own cup of Joe.
- 19. Don't Rely on Takeout.** Look at your food options beyond takeout—that can become an expensive habit that adds up quickly! Buying a frozen pizza vs. ordering a delivered one can save you half the money.
- 20. Cut Restaurant Bills.** Don't order drinks and dessert when you go out to eat. Water is fine! And it'll likely cut your costs almost in half.
- 21. Wash Away Bottled Water.** Steer clear of bottled water purchases. Besides being bad for the environment, the cost doesn't make sense when you have good tap or filtered water only a faucet away!

22. Give Gifts That Count.

Think about low-cost, yet meaningful gifts that you can give friends and family for holidays and birthdays (see the box for ideas).

23. Be Closet Conscious.

Take good care of your clothes so you don't have to replace them as often. For instance, don't scald them in the

dryer. Hang up delicate items to air dry. And try to steer clear of dry clean-only items when possible—caring for them can get expensive!

24. Decrease Your Periodical Pay. Instead of subscribing to newspapers and magazines, consider reading the free content online instead.

25. Head to the Library. Get a library card for your city/town library so you can check out free DVDs, CDs and books, rather than buying or renting them. This can save you loads of media moola!

Being smart about your money choices is an important habit to get into now. So, look for options, determine your wants vs. needs and you'll soon be on the road to a positive financial future.

Low-Cost, Meaningful Gifts

- ✓ Greeting cards made from great digital photos you've taken
- ✓ Decorated school T-shirts (you can get plain shirts at craft stores in the 3 for \$10 range)
- ✓ Envelopes made from old calendar pages or maps
- ✓ Unique photo frames made from items like wooden rulers, paperclips or chopsticks
- ✓ A children's story that you have written for a favorite little friend

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