



Survivors Workbook

Moving Ahead Through Financial Management

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Worksheet/Guidebook Connection Guide	3
Getting Started Guide	
Financial Strategies for Success	7
Groundwork	
Identifying Your Financial Fears	19
Understanding Your Experiences With Financial Abuse	21
Building Blocks	
Setting Financial Goals	25
Financial Goals and Savings Plan	26
Financial Action Plan	27
Budget Action Plan	29
Developing Your Personal Budget	30
Managing Your Debt	31
Debt Management Action Plan	32
Reviewing Expenses	34
Reviewing Debt	35
Financial Growth	
Personal Financial Success Vision Statement	39
Defining Your Financial Success	41
Career and Professional Development Action Plan	43
Planning for Retirement	45
Retirement Planning Questions	46
Determining the Value of Your Assets	47
Financial Inventory: Determining Your Net Worth	48
Estate Planning	49
Estate Planning Questions	50
Personal/Workplace Safety	
Quality of Life Assessment	53
Personal Safety Plan	55
Personal Financial Safety Plan	56
Workplace Safety Plan	58
What Have I Learned?	
Building Your Financial Know How	61
Financial Practices Quiz	64
Progress Assessment Tracking Worksheet	67

Introduction

Domestic violence survivors can use the *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management* workbook as they are learning and practicing the financial fundamentals covered in the *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management* Guidebooks 1-5.

The workbook is designed to be used over a one-year period and contains interactive worksheets that will help you gain an understanding of your financial fears, set financial goals, complete an analysis of your current financial situation, define your financial success and understand actions you need to take to build long-term financial independence.

The workbook can be used as a:

- Quick reference resource
- Chart to follow your personal financial management progress
- Tool to help you stay connected to your financial goals and practices
- Personalized financial action plan

The workbook is divided into seven sections:

- Getting Started
- Groundwork
- Building Blocks
- Financial Growth
- Personal/Workplace Safety
- What Have I Learned?
- Resources

Worksheet/Guidebook Connection Guide

Guidebook 1: *Financial Abuse, Relationships and Diverse Perspectives*

Guidebook 2: *Financial Fundamentals*

Guidebook 3: *Building a Financial Base*

Guidebook 4: *Creating Long-Term Financial Success*

Worksheet	Guidebook
Understanding Your Experiences With Financial Abuse	Guidebook 1
Personal Financial Safety Plan	Guidebook 1
Determining the Value of Your Assets	Guidebook 1
Workplace Safety Plan	Guidebook 2
Identifying Your Financial Fears	Guidebook 2
Reviewing Expenses	Guidebook 2
Reviewing Debt	Guidebook 2
Developing Your Personal Budget	Guidebook 2
Community Resources and Public Benefits	Guidebook 2
Quality of Life Assessment	Guidebook 3
Debt Management Action Plan	Guidebook 3
Financial Goals and Savings Plan	Guidebook 4
Financial Action Plan	Guidebook 4
Personal Financial Success Vision Statement	Guidebook 4
Defining Your Financial Success	Guidebook 4
Career and Professional Development Action Plan	Guidebook 4
Planning for Retirement	Guidebook 4
Financial Inventory/Net Worth	Guidebook 4
Estate Planning	Guidebook 4

Getting Started Guide

Financial Strategies for Success

Getting Started Guide: Financial Action Strategies for Success

The strategies in the Getting Started Guide will help you plan for your safety, take steps to access resources in the community, get started with basic financial management and reach your financial goals.

This guide includes goals and action plans for:

1. Financial Safety Planning
2. Accessing Community Resources and Public Benefits
3. Housing
4. Financial Planning, Spending and Saving
5. Credit and Debt Management
6. Financial Records Management and Organization
7. Career and Professional Development
8. Employment

Time-specific plans are included for each goal:

- Immediately
- Within the next 30 days
- Within the next 2-3 month
- Within the next 6 months
- Within the next 1-2 years

Work at your own pace. You do not need to complete all the action steps at once. Consider working with an advocate from a local domestic violence program for additional support. You can reach an advocate in your community by calling the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE).

Getting Started Guide Directions

1. Identify financial goal (e.g. Credit and Debt Management).
2. Review the Immediate Action Plan column for that specific goal.
3. Review the *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management* Guidebook related to that financial goal.
4. Complete the worksheets related to your goal.
5. Review the 30-day and 2-3 Month Action Plans, when you have completed the Immediate Action Plan.
6. Finally, review the 6 Month and 1-2 Year Action Plans.

Example of How to Get Started Using This Guide

1. While working with her advocate, Cheri has decided she wants to manage her credit and debt.
2. Cheri turns to the Credit and Debt Management section of the Getting Started Guide and reviews the Immediate Action Plan strategies. Cheri works to complete the Credit and Debt Management Immediate Action strategies.
3. Cheri uses the information in the Credit and Debt Management goal column to find out where she can learn more about this topic, which is covered in the *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management* Guidebook 2: *Financial Fundamentals*.
4. Cheri locates and completes the Credit and Debt Management Action Plan worksheet.
5. Cheri asks for the advice of a certified credit counselor, who she continues to talk to regularly, as she moves on to complete the Credit and Debt Management 1 Month and 2-3 Month Action Plans.

Getting Started Guide: Financial Action Strategies for Success

Review the action plans below. Use the time frames to keep you moving forward. Put a check mark in each box when you have completed an activity. Any referenced worksheets can be found in this workbook.

Financial Safety Planning					
Goal	Immediate Action Plan	1 Month Action Plan	2-3 Month Action Plan	6 Month Action Plan	1-2 Year Action Plan
<p>Guidebook Connection For more financial safety planning information, review the <i>Moving Ahead Through Financial Management</i> Guidebook 1: <i>Financial Abuse, Relationships and Diverse Perspectives</i>.</p> <p>Workbook Connection Complete the Personal Financial Safety Plan worksheet.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Contact a domestic violence hotline to discuss your safety and resource options.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gather and hide, or copy, your photo identification, passport and Social Security card, if you can do so safely.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Write down your Social Security number (SSN) and your partner's Social Security number. Store this information on an index card in your wallet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Write down contact information and account numbers for your utility companies and creditors, landlord, or mortgage company. Store this information on an index card in your wallet.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Make arrangements with a trusted family member or friend to receive your mail and other important documents temporarily.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Change ATM and credit card PIN codes to protect your personal accounts from unauthorized access.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Change passwords for your online banking, e-mail accounts and online financial accounts to protect them from unauthorized access.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Contact your creditors and utility companies to password protect your accounts (do not use your SSN).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Change your cell phone carrier or get a donated cell phone available from domestic violence programs.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Use a computer in a library or community center to search online for resources. Do not use your home computer.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research address confidentiality programs.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research the cost of renting a post office box from your local post office or from a private company (e.g. Mailboxes Etc.).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use Internet search engines to search for your name, address and current phone number(s).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research how your community handles public records to find out how much information is published on the Internet (i.e. voter records or court records).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about identity theft and how to protect your personal information from being shared.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use Internet search engines to search for your name, address and current phone number(s).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Rent a post office box for mail or access your state's address confidentiality program to protect your mail or any financial information sent to you.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Continue to search the Internet to find out how much of your contact information can be found online.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Change e-mail, online banking, online investing and passwords twice a year.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sign up for a credit monitoring service so that you can be updated about changes or unauthorized access to your credit report (i.e. Privacy Guard).</p>

Review the action plans below. Use the time frames to keep you moving forward. Put a check mark in each box when you have completed an activity. Any referenced worksheets can be found in this workbook.

Assessing Community Resources and Public Benefits					
Goal	Immediate Action Plan	1 Month Action Plan	2-3 Month Action Plan	6 Month Action Plan	1-2 Year Action Plan
<p>Guidebook Connection For more community resources and public benefits information, review the <i>Moving Ahead Through Financial Management Guidebook 2: Financial Fundamentals</i>.</p> <p>Workbook Connection To keep your resources information organized, use the Community Resources and Public Benefits worksheet.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Get a list of resources and public benefit programs available in your city and state.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Request a copy of applications for community programs.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Get a list of required documents needed to apply for benefits (proof of identity, income, Social Security numbers for household members, etc.).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ask for a listing of eligibility qualifications.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ask for income and asset limitations documents.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ask your advocate about emergency direct assistance funding available in your community.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the pros and cons of disclosing abuse, when seeking community assistance.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Ask for assistance if you need help completing any application.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ask your advocate to help prepare you to answer questions about your finances.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Understand eligibility for most programs is based on your income level.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ask your advocate to discuss the eligibility requirements for community resources.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ask your advocate to discuss your rights regarding community resources and public benefits.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Research your right to file an appeal and obtain legal assistance if an application is denied.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about the time limitations for community resources and public benefits.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about any program or eligibility requirements you must meet to continue receiving community resources or support.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Talk with your advocate about other options if you are sanctioned and your community resources/benefits are terminated.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research health insurance options available in your community.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Research the reapplication process and limitations for community resources or public benefits available to you.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Work with your advocate to develop a plan for accessing long-term solutions to replace temporary public benefits or community resources.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss Individual Development Accounts (IDA) with your advocate.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research IDA programs in your city or state.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about self-employment and micro-enterprise programs.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Work with an advocate to develop an alternative resource plan if your public benefits or community resources are terminated abruptly.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research micro-loans and micro-lending programs.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research private resources or develop a plan to earn income to replace the community resources you are receiving.</p>

Getting Started Guide: Financial Action Strategies for Success

Review the action plans below. Use the time frames to keep you moving forward. Put a check mark in each box when you have completed an activity. Any referenced worksheets can be found in this workbook.

Financial Planning, Spending and Saving					
Goal	Immediate Action Plan	1 Month Action Plan	2-3 Month Action Plan	6 Month Action Plan	1-2 Year Action Plan
<p>Guidebook Connection For more financial planning, spending and saving information, review <i>Moving Ahead Through Financial Management</i> Guidebook 2: <i>Financial Fundamentals</i> and Guidebook 3: <i>Building a Financial Base</i>.</p> <p>Workbook Connection Complete the following worksheets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Your Personal Budget • Financial Goals and Savings Plan • Personal Financial Action Plan • Quality of Life Assessment • Financial Inventory: Determining Your Net Worth • Retirement Planning • Estate Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn strategies for dealing with your financial fears. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine where your money goes by writing down your monthly expenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Research financial institutions in your area. <input type="checkbox"/> Open your own bank or credit union account. <input type="checkbox"/> Research your partner's assets, personal wealth, debt and liabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> When saving, remember to pay yourself first. <input type="checkbox"/> Begin saving each month, even if it's just \$1 a month. <input type="checkbox"/> If you don't have a bank account, establish an account. <input type="checkbox"/> Review your monthly bills and financial statements. Contact the issuer if you have questions or disputes. Keep these statements until you receive your next statement. <input type="checkbox"/> Research ways to reduce your monthly banking fees. <input type="checkbox"/> Review your budget and make modifications, if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make an appointment to talk with a professional about insurance options. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify additional ways to save money and reduce your expenses. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop an emergency savings fund by increasing your monthly savings. <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor your checking and savings accounts regularly to protect against identity theft. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review your financial goals and budget. <input type="checkbox"/> Begin planning for retirement and begin contributions to a retirement account (e.g. 401(k) or IRA). <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase insurance to protect against financial ruin (e.g. life, renter's, homeowner's, car, or disability insurance). <input type="checkbox"/> Develop specific savings accounts for holidays, vacations and birthdays. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop an automatic saving and investing plan. Consider options such as CDs, bonds, or mutual funds.

Review the action plans below. Use the time frames to keep you moving forward. Put a check mark in each box when you have completed an activity. Any referenced worksheets can be found in this workbook.

Housing					
Goal	Immediate Action Plan	1 Month Action Plan	2-3 Month Action Plan	6 Month Action Plan	1-2 Year Action Plan
<p>Guidebook Connection For more housing information, review the <i>Moving Ahead Through Financial Management</i> Guidebook 3: <i>Building a Financial Base</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Define your housing needs (e.g. near public transportation, one bedroom, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Research temporary and public housing in your area (e.g. Section 8, rooms for rent, shelters). <input type="checkbox"/> Ask your advocate about transitional housing programs specifically for abuse survivors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about the eligibility requirements for transitional housing. <input type="checkbox"/> Research any rental assistance programs in your community. <input type="checkbox"/> Research tenant rights in your city or state. <input type="checkbox"/> If you think you have been discriminated against in housing or renting, contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): 1-800-669-9777. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Work with your advocate to find transitional or rental housing that meets your needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about how security deposits work and how to ensure that the deposit is returned. <input type="checkbox"/> Understand your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. <input type="checkbox"/> Understand the rights and responsibilities of your landlord. <input type="checkbox"/> Research the contact information for legal aid in your community to get help with any landlord/tenant disputes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about rental and leasing agreements. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about illegal evictions and your rights. <input type="checkbox"/> Take steps to manage housing-related expenses. For example, ask the gas company to put you on a budget plan so your bill won't increase during the winter months. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider getting rental insurance to protect the contents of your apartment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If you are interested in buying a home, learn about the home-buying process by attending a workshop or one-on-one counseling. <input type="checkbox"/> Research special programs for first-time homebuyers. <input type="checkbox"/> Research lenders and mortgage options. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine how much money you need to save each month for a down payment on a home. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about resolving or avoiding predatory lending.

Getting Started Guide: Financial Action Strategies for Success

Review the action plans below. Use the time frames to keep you moving forward. Put a check mark in each box when you have completed an activity. Any referenced worksheets can be found in this workbook.

Credit and Debt Management					
Goal	Immediate Action Plan	1 Month Action Plan	2-3 Month Action Plan	6 Month Action Plan	1-2 Year Action Plan
<p>Guidebook Connection For more credit and debt management information, review the <i>Moving Ahead Through Financial Management</i> Guidebook 2: <i>Financial Fundamentals</i> and <i>Financial Base</i> Guidebook 3: <i>Building a Financial Base</i>.</p> <p>Workbook Connection Complete the Debt Management Action Plan worksheet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Compile a list of all your debts. <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize and decide which debts to pay first. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not incur any additional debt. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact creditors if you are unable to pay your bills. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact a nonprofit credit counselor if you need additional assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Spend some time thinking about how much time you realistically need to begin paying off your debts. <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with your creditors by calling or sending them a letter to request extended or special payment arrangements. <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with a nonprofit counseling agency. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider debt consolidation. <input type="checkbox"/> Research strategies you can use to protect your personal information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Contact all creditors and financial institutions to authorize them not to share your personal information. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about how a name or Social Security number change will impact your credit (or access) to financial resources. <input type="checkbox"/> Correct any credit report mistakes. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a plan to pay off old debts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pay your bills on time. <input type="checkbox"/> Find out how interest rates are calculated. <input type="checkbox"/> Pay more than the minimum balance amount due on your credit cards. <input type="checkbox"/> Use your credit cards sparingly. <input type="checkbox"/> Shop around for credit cards and loans with a lower interest rate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> To get out of debt, use a portion of your savings to pay off credit card debt. <input type="checkbox"/> Order your free credit report. <input type="checkbox"/> Order a copy of your credit score. <input type="checkbox"/> Review your credit report at least once a year. <input type="checkbox"/> Always review your credit report before making a major purchase. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider getting a secured credit card.

Review the action plans below. Use the time frames to keep you moving forward. Put a check mark in each box when you have completed an activity. Any referenced worksheets can be found in this workbook.

Employment					
Goal	Immediate Action Plan	1 Month Action Plan	2-3 Month Action Plan	6 Month Action Plan	1-2 Year Action Plan
<p>Guidebook Connection For more employment information, review the <i>Moving Ahead Through Financial Management</i> Guidebook 4: <i>Creating Long-Term Financial Success</i>.</p> <p>Workbook Connection Complete the following worksheets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace Safety Plan • Career and Professional Development • Retirement Planning 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Provide a photograph of your abusive partner to workplace reception and security personnel.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Make arrangements with security to be escorted to and from the parking lot or to public transportation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Provide security personnel and your supervisor with a copy of your protection order.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have your telephone calls screened.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research your employer's time off policies, domestic violence policies and confidentiality policies.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Consider changing your work schedule and the way you travel to and from work.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Save threatening e-mails, voice mails, letters and gifts. If you choose to use the legal system, this evidence will be helpful if you work with law enforcement.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If you have a protection order, document your experience to help prove that your partner or ex-partner is violating that order.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Relocate your workspace to a more secure area in your office building (e.g. windowless office or different floor).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> If you do not have a job, make an appointment with a temporary employment agency in your community.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If you do not have any work experience, build your work history by volunteering or working for a temporary agency.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If you think you've been discriminated against in employment, contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): 1-800-669-4000.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Make an appointment with human resources to discuss your benefit options, including retirement plans.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research your employer's retirement plan and begin to contribute to it immediately.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Make an appointment with a financial planner for a free consultation to discuss Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA), if your employer does not offer a retirement plan.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Increase your monthly or weekly contributions to your retirement plan.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Increase your monthly or weekly contributions to your retirement plan.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If you are interested in owning your own business, contact nonprofit organizations that offer micro-enterprise programs.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If you are considering career advancement, talk with your supervisor about growth opportunities at your current place of employment or make an appointment with a career counselor.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Revise, or create, a resume and cover letter to reflect any education or skill updates.</p>

Getting Started Guide: Financial Action Strategies for Success

Review the action plans below. Use the time frames to keep you moving forward. Put a check mark in each box when you have completed an activity. Any referenced worksheets can be found in this workbook.

Career and Professional Development					
Goal	Immediate Action Plan	1 Month Action Plan	2-3 Month Action Plan	6 Month Action Plan	1-2 Year Action Plan
<p>Curriculum Connection For more career and professional development information, review the <i>Moving Ahead Through Financial Management</i> Guidebook 4: <i>Creating Long-Term Financial Success</i>.</p> <p>Workbook Connection Complete the Career and Professional Development worksheet.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> If you are a current student, research contact information protection in student directories.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If you have a protection order, contact the campus authorities to make sure that they have a copy on file.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If you would like to get your GED, research adult education classes by contacting the library or your community center.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> If you would like to get your GED, order an information packet and sample exams from your Department of Education.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Make an appointment to talk with the admissions office of a community college or local university to discuss their academic programs or continuing education options.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Explore vocational training opportunities by contacting your local community or technical college.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Research any tuition assistance or continuing education benefits your employer may offer.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Order copies of admission applications, if you would like to attend a university, community college or vocational school.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research admission deadlines and acceptance criteria.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research test preparation classes you may need to take to attend a university.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research any placement exams you may need to take, if you plan to attend a vocational training school.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Explore full-time and part-time certificate or degree programs available in your community.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research scholarship opportunities available through community programs, churches, or civic associations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Make an appointment with the college or vocational school financial aid office to discuss financial aid options.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Download a web worksheet for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): www.fafsa.ed.gov</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Research student loan options and repayment plans.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Revise your education plans as you progress in taking courses or learn about new opportunities.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Revise, update, or create a resume and cover letter to reflect any education or skill updates.</p>

Review the action plans below. Use the time frames to keep you moving forward. Put a check mark in each box when you have completed an activity. Any referenced worksheets can be found in this workbook.

Financial Records Management and Organization					
Goal	Immediate Action Plan	1 Month Action Plan	2-3 Month Action Plan	6 Month Action Plan	1-2 Year Action Plan
<p>Workbook Connection Complete the Financial Practices quiz.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create or purchase a two-pocket or accordion folder to hold mail and notices from vendors and creditors. <input type="checkbox"/> Store all mail, notices and banking information in one place. <input type="checkbox"/> Make copies of your photo identification, passport and Social Security card to store in your safe deposit box. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure that back-up copies of your essential documents are readily available for your relatives or emergency contacts. <input type="checkbox"/> Make a list of key family and business contacts (your lawyer, accountant, financial advisor, broker/dealer, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Create a list of the locations of your records and a list of file contents. <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly sort the contents of your wallet and properly discard outdated materials. <input type="checkbox"/> Photocopy the essential documents you keep in your wallet and store the copy in a safe location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create and maintain a home filing system and set a time to file important papers. <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase a cardboard file box, pocket file folders, two three-ring binders (with dividers), a shredder and a fireproof storage box. <input type="checkbox"/> Open all mail daily. Destroy junk mail immediately. Destroy mail with personal information. <input type="checkbox"/> Open bills and check them for accuracy before payment—or simplify payments by authorizing automatic withdrawals from your checking account. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a bill-paying schedule (e.g. every 15th or 30th of the month). <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase a fireproof box for, or store in a safe deposit box, important identity documents and insurance information, including passports, birth and marriage certificates, deeds, titles to property and vehicles and investment certificates. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a plan for saving and throwing out receipts for tax or insurance purposes (e.g. warranties, medical expenses, donations, travel). <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to maintain financial records by keeping the most recent statements in a file box. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about managing financial records on your computer. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about what documents need to be saved long term (i.e. three years – forever) and which documents need to be saved short term (i.e. three months – one year).

Groundwork

Identifying Your Financial Fears

Understanding Your Experiences With Financial Abuse

Identifying Your Financial Fears

Past financial experiences, societal influences and sometimes misinformation from your abusive partner play a critical role in your financial fears. Facing your financial fears and improving your quality of life starts with identifying what's keeping you up at night.

Use this checklist to identify your financial fears. Place a check mark next to any statements that match your financial fears.

When I think of my finances, I am afraid of:

- 1. Being poor and living in poverty
- 2. Losing money
- 3. Making a mistake that will cost me a lot of money
- 4. Never having money saved for emergencies
- 5. Being sued by a creditor
- 6. Having to file for bankruptcy
- 7. Not being able to afford to live on my own
- 8. Someone stealing my identity
- 9. Outliving my retirement savings
- 10. Not being able to work because of an injury
- 11. Having medical expenses I can't afford to pay
- 12. Having bad credit
- 13. Not being able to get a better paying job
- 14. Not being able to buy food
- 15. Never being able to pay off my debts
- 16. Not being able to establish good credit
- 17. Having my wages garnished by a creditor
- 18. Making financial decisions on my own
- 19. Trusting a stranger to manage my finances
- 20. Investing my money and losing it all

Strategies for Facing Your Financial Fears

Become informed. Knowledge is the key to overcoming fear and achieving economic success. Watch money-management television programs. Read about personal finances. Attend financial workshops offered by community organizations.

Identify worst-case scenarios. Ask yourself “What’s the worst thing that can happen to me in my situation?” Is the worst-case scenario something you can handle? By being aware of the worst-case scenario, you can eliminate the fear that prevents you from moving forward.

Take action. Once you’ve gathered sufficient data and information, be decisive and take action. Don’t spend hours, weeks, months or even years researching and analyzing potential financial strategies.

Moving Beyond Your Financial Fears

- The biggest financial mistake you can make is letting your fear keep you from trusting yourself enough to make decisions.
- Earning, saving and investing money starts with a plan that is built upon goals.
- Managing your finances is a lifelong process. Remember no plan is set in stone; review and change plans regularly.
- Taking an honest assessment of your attitude toward money sets the foundation for change. It’s important to check how you spend, save, or share your money.
- Trust yourself — you are capable of making amazingly smart financial decisions. Consulting a professional will keep you informed about your options, but your decision should be the one you rely on most when managing your finances.
- All people struggle to find their way financially. We are not born with financial intuition, but financial know-how can be learned.
- Taking small steps when making financial decisions is a great way to progress. Financial management should not be a giant leap into the unknown. Have a plan and keep it simple.

Recovering From a Financial Mistake

- Closely review exactly what happened.
- Make a list of factors you could control and influence.
- Make a list of factors that were beyond your control.
- Document the lessons learned — both good and bad.
- Make a list of ways you can do things differently in the future.

Strategies for Moving Ahead

- Take the Building Your Financial Know-How quiz.
- Review *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management Guidebook 2: Financial Fundamentals*, paying special attention to the Budgeting Basics and Accessing Community Resources and Public Benefits sections.
- Complete the Developing Your Personal Budget worksheet.

Understanding Your Experiences With Financial Abuse

It is important to identify the various types of financial abuse you have experienced, especially when trying to determine financial topics you want to research or financial circumstances you want to change. Below is a list of examples used as a form of control by abusive partners.

Place check marks in the box(es) below that characterize how your partner has misused financial resources in your relationship.

Does your partner do any of the following:

- Make you feel as though you don't have a right to know any details about money or household resources?
- Steal money from you or your family?
- Force you to give access to your accounts?
- Make financial or investment decisions that affect you or the family without consulting with you?
- Refuse to include you in important meetings with banks financial planners or retirement specialists?
- Prevent you from working or attending school?
- Overuse your credit cards or refuse to pay the bills (thus ruining your credit)?
- Force you to file fraudulent tax claims?
- Prevent you from owning or using credit cards or bankcards?
- Withhold physical resources including food, clothes, necessary medications or shelter from you?
- Force you to work in a family business for little or no pay?
- Refuse to work to help support the family?
- Interfere with work performance through harassing and monitoring activities, such as frequent telephone calls or visits to your workplace?
- Force you to give up your benefit payments?
- Threaten to report you for "cheating" on your benefits so that your benefits will be cut off, even if you aren't cheating?
- Force you to cash in, sell or sign over any financial assets or inheritance you own (e.g. bonds, stocks or property)?
- Force you to agree to power-of-attorney so he can sign legal documents without your knowledge?

Safety Alert:

Before you make any decisions about your relationship or current situation consider contacting a domestic violence advocate to discuss plans for your safety and to learn about your options and available resources.

List additional financial abuse tactics your partner may have used:

Strategies for Moving Ahead

- Review *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management* Guidebook 1: *Financial Abuse, Relationships and Diverse Perspectives*, paying special attention to the financial safety planning section.
- Complete the Quality of Life Assessment in this workbook.

Building Blocks

Setting Financial Goals
Financial Goals and Savings Plan
Financial Action Plan
Budget Action Plan
Developing Your Personal Budget
Managing Your Debt
Debt Management Action Plan
Reviewing Expenses
Reviewing Debt

Setting Financial Goals

To manage your money wisely, you can set financial goals and establish a budget to help you achieve them.

What are your personal financial goals? For example, if you had \$1,000, what would you do with it? Put a down payment on a car? Set up a savings fund for emergencies? To achieve your financial goals, you'll need to manage your finances and put money aside regularly.

Financial Goal Setting Strategies

1. Decide what you want to do with your money.
2. Create a list of short-term goals.
3. Create a list of long-term goals.
4. Determine how much time you will need to meet your financial goals.
5. Research your savings options.
6. Review your progress monthly or quarterly.

Financial Goal Setting Questions

1. How much are your minimum monthly living expenses?
2. Do you have an emergency savings fund?
3. Do you want to save for a down payment on a house or a car?

Sample Financial Goals

1. I want to pay off my credit card debt in five years.
2. I want to build a three-month emergency fund.
3. I want to save for a down payment on a house.
4. I want to save to buy a computer.

Saving Strategies

1. Always pay yourself first. Place money in your savings account every month as if you were paying a bill. Investigate the convenience and safety of direct deposit.
2. Start small and build as your situation changes. Regularly saving \$10 a month will make a difference in your future.
3. A top priority should be the development of an emergency fund that equals three-six months of your current living expenses.

Financial Goals and Savings Plan

Enter your short- and long-term financial goals in the chart below. Once you have identified your goals, use your target amount and estimated savings date to determine how much you will need to save each month to reach your goal.

Example: Monica wants to save money for unplanned expenses, such as car repairs, an emergency trip home, or an unexpected medical expense. Monica knows that establishing an emergency savings fund will help her have a financial cushion. Monica's monthly living expenses total \$775 and she would like to have a two month emergency fund, so she knows that she will need to save \$1,550 to meet her goal. Review the chart below to understand how Monica calculated her monthly savings goal.

Monica's Long-term Goal

Goal/Purpose	Target Amount	Estimated Savings Date	Monthly Savings Needed to Reach Goal
Emergency Fund	\$1550	Within 18 months	\$1550/18 months = \$86/month

Personal Financial Goals and Savings Plan

Goal/Purpose	Target Amount	Estimated Savings Date	Monthly Savings Needed to Reach Goal
Short-term Financial Goals			
Goal 1			
Goal 2			
Goal 3			
Monthly Savings Total			
Long-term Financial Goals			
Goal 1			
Goal 2			
Goal 3			
Monthly Savings Total			

For more information about financial goals, saving and financial planning, review the *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management* Guidebook 4: *Creating Long-Term Financial Success*.

Financial Action Plan

Personal financial planning takes place over a lifetime. Your goals will change as your life and access to resources shift. The most important tool you have for this journey is a detailed plan that is shaped by your vision. The strategies included in this worksheet have been designed to provide you with a framework for envisioning and achieving your financial goals.

- Spend time envisioning what you want your financial future to look like after you have accomplished your goals.
- Develop a long-term financial planning mission statement.
- Prioritize your goals and actions.
- Identify topics and skills you will need to learn to accomplish your financial goals.
- Think through three alternative ways you can achieve the same financial goal.
- Identify the small action steps needed to accomplish your long-term vision
- **Make sure that your goals are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely.**
- Review and revise your action plan as you receive new information; continue to evaluate your progress.

As you begin to plan your financial goals, it is important for you to consider the following questions:

1. What actions will you take to accomplish your long-term vision?
2. How will you take action in the short term to reach your long-term vision?
3. Who or what will you turn to for support or more information?
4. Why are these goals important to you?
5. When will you take action?

Financial Action Plan Steps/Questions

Step 1: Define your financial goals for the next six months

What would you like to accomplish financially in the next three months?
What would you like to accomplish financially in the next six months?
What financial challenges do you want to address immediately?

Step 2: Defining your motivation

Why is achieving your financial goals important to you?
How do you think you will feel once you have achieved your financial goals?

Step 3: Building your knowledge to accomplish your financial goals

What information do you need to learn to achieve your financial goals?
What skills do you need to improve to accomplish your financial goals?
What financial fears do you need to address to accomplish your financial goals?

Step 4: Define what success looks like once you have accomplished your financial goals

What is a significant first step to take to achieve your financial goals?
What is an immediate action step to take to achieve your financial goals?

Step 5: Review and refine your personal financial success action plan

How can you make your plan more clear and specific?
Is your time frame realistic?
What goal or new action step would you add to your plan?

Financial Action Plan

Long-term financial goals	
Short-term goals and action steps needed to reach my long-term vision	
Immediate action steps I can take to complete my short-term goals (Choose at least four per goal.)	
Topics or skills I need to learn to reach my goals	
Resources I can turn to for help	
Target progress date	

Budget Action Plan

If you are like most people, you have a limited amount of money to buy what you need and want, so you must make careful decisions about how to spend your money most effectively.

A budget is a tool that helps you make critical spending decisions and keeps you aware of where your money goes. To create a budget, follow these steps:

Step 1: Identify your net monthly income

This is the money that comes into your household, after deducting taxes, Social Security insurance, etc.

Step 2: Identify your monthly expenses

Monthly expenses include rent and phone bills, as well as those that occur periodically, such as car insurance and medical expenses.

Step 3: Subtract your monthly expenses from your income

The difference between your income and expenses indicates whether or not you have any money to spare. If you have extra money, you'll need to decide whether to spend or save it. If you do not have enough money, you may be able to reduce expenses or earn more money to cover shortages.

Strategies for Sticking to a Budget

1. **Develop a positive mind-set.** One of the main reasons so many people fail at budgeting is their attitude. If you think of a budget as negative and restrictive instead of a roadmap to your goals and dreams, it is less likely that you will stick with it.
2. **Develop a customized budget.** One of the most important features of a successful budget is to make sure that your budget is customized to your needs and is a realistic budget that you can stick with over time. Don't try to force your lifestyle and personal situation into a generic, one-size-fits-all budget by making sacrifices that are not realistic for you. Once you've attempted to budget and failed, the bad feelings associated with any type of failure can keep you from trying again. Instead, develop a realistic budget that you can live with long term.
3. **Don't give up.** Sticking to a budget may not be easy at first. You may be tempted to fall back into your old spending habits, but it will get easier over time. Budgeting is somewhat like dieting. It takes patience and discipline, but once you begin to see the positive results of your efforts, you become even more committed to stick with it.

Strategies for Moving Ahead

- Review *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management Guidebook 2: Financial Fundamentals*, paying special attention to the Budgeting Basics and Accessing Community Resources and Public Benefits sections.
- Review the Getting Started Guide: Financial Planning, Spending and Saving sections.

Developing Your Personal Budget

Use this chart to develop a budget.

Monthly income: _____

Monthly fixed expenses: _____

Rent/mortgage (principal, tax, insurance) _____

Condo/homeowner association fees _____

Life insurance _____

Medical/health insurance _____

Vehicle insurance _____

Car payments _____

Disability insurance _____

Household insurance _____

Other loan payments _____

Savings _____

Emergency savings _____

Other (list) _____

Monthly flexible expenses: _____

Utilities (electric, gas, water, phone, fuel oil, etc.) _____

Credit card payments _____

Auto upkeep (gasoline, oil, maintenance) _____

Food (at home and away from home) _____

Clothing _____

Household supplies _____

Medical/dental costs _____

Recreation/entertainment _____

Church donation/other charities _____

Childcare _____

Education _____

Personal allowances _____

Other (list) _____

Total monthly expenses: _____

Total income minus total expenses: _____

Managing Your Debt

If you have significant credit card or loan debt, plan to reduce or pay it off. Begin by reviewing the number of credit cards you use, the interest rate for each card and the amount you pay annually for fees. Do the same for any outstanding loans.

Debt Management Action Plan

- Step 1: Make a list of your outstanding debts.** Figure out how much you owe. Include credit cards, educational loans, home improvement loans, checking-account overdrafts, passbook loans, personal loans, rent-to-own agreements and other installment purchases. List the name of the creditor (e.g., ABC Bank), the amount you owe, the interest rate and monthly payment. Create this list using the chart that follows.
- Step 2: Prioritize and decide which debts to pay first.** Sort your list by interest rate, putting the account with the highest interest rate at the top. Start paying more than the monthly payment for debts at the top of the list, which have the highest rate of interest, and then move down the list. If you have several accounts with smaller balances, you may want to pay off bills with the lowest balance due. While this may not make the most financial sense, it will help in a psychological sense — as you'll begin to see immediate progress. Continue to move down the list. Prioritize your debt by using the chart that follows.
- Step 3: Shop around for credit cards and loans with the lowest interest rate.** Lower interest rates are available for good customers, but you must request them. Ask your credit card company if it would consider lowering your interest rate. If not, shop around for a card with a lower rate. Switching from a card with 21 percent interest to one with 14 percent could save you \$50 or more per month. If you transfer your outstanding balance from a high-rate card to a low-rate card, ask the new bank to waive the transfer fee and be sure the new low rate applies for more than a few months. Check www.bankrate.com for a list of credit cards with low interest rates.

Debt Management Action Plan

Review Step 1 of the Debt Management Action Plan. Then, using your credit statements, your credit report and loan documentation, enter the balance, interest rate and current monthly payment for your outstanding debt. Once you have completed the list, enter the total debt balance and monthly payments into the last column.

Creditor	Balance due	Interest rate	Current monthly payment
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
Total debt and monthly payments			

Prioritizing Your Debt

Review Step 2 of the Debt Management Action Plan and take the next step to becoming debt free. Reorder your list of debts, putting the account with the highest interest rate first. Continue until the list is complete. Now that you have reordered the list, consider paying off your debt in that order.

Creditor <i>(list by interest rate, from highest to lowest)</i>	Balance due	Interest rate	Current monthly payment
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
Total debt and monthly payments			

Strategies for Moving Ahead

- Order a copy of your credit report and review it carefully. You can get a free copy of your credit report by visiting www.annualcreditreport.com or by calling the three major credit bureaus directly:
Equifax: 1-800-525-6285
Experian: 1-800-397-3742
TransUnion: 1-800-397-7289
- Complete the Immediate Action Plan in the Getting Started Guide: Credit and Debt Management.
- Review *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management Guidebook 2: Financial Fundamentals*.
- Review *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management Guidebook 3: Building a Financial Base*.
- Consider contacting a credit counselor for additional support. You can reach a certified financial counselor by contacting the National Foundation for Credit Counseling:
Phone: 1-800-388-2227
Web site: www.nfcc.org

Reviewing Expenses — Personal Worksheet

Review each category and check the box that best describes your situation. If there are areas where you need additional resources or need to reduce your liabilities, work with your advocate.

	I feel pretty comfortable that my current resources will support my children and me.	I'm not sure if my current resources will support my children and me.	I need additional assistance to support my children and me.
Income — Salary, child support (through a protection order or a divorce decree), public assistance, etc.			
Savings — Money for emergencies, children's education, retirement, etc.			
Housing — Safe, affordable housing			
Insurance — Health, life, auto, disability, etc.			
Transportation — Access to public transportation or a reliable car and resources to pay for car insurance and maintenance expenses			
Childcare — Daycare, babysitting			
Other resources:			

Reviewing Debt — Personal Worksheet

Review each category and check the box that best describes your situation. If there are areas where you need additional resources or need to reduce your liabilities, work with your advocate.

	I have no problems managing this debt.	I can continue making payments but may need some assistance managing it.	I can no longer make payments and need assistance.
Car loan			
Credit card debt			
Student loans			
Medical debt			
Payday loans			
Title loans			
Loans from family/friends			
Mortgage/home loans			
Other debt			

Strategies for Moving Ahead

- Review *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management Guidebook 2: Financial Fundamentals*, paying special attention to the Budgeting Basics and Accessing Community Resources sections.
- Complete the Developing Your Personal Budget exercise in this workbook.

Financial Growth

Personal Financial Success Vision Statement

Defining Your Financial Success

Career and Professional Development Action Plan

Planning for Retirement

Retirement Planning Questions

Determining the Value of Your Assets

Financial Inventory: Determining Your Net Worth

Estate Planning

Estate Planning Questions

Personal Financial Success Vision Statement

A Personal Financial Vision Statement can be used to create your vision of financial success. A personal financial vision statement:

- Clarifies what is financially important to you
- Provides focus to accomplish your financial goals
- Helps you achieve financial success based on your definition
- Guides your day-to-day decisions
- Gives you a greater sense of meaning and purpose for managing your personal finances

Personal Financial Success Vision Statement Questions

What do you value?

What three things do you want to do with your finances?

1.

2.

3.

What type of legacy do you want to create with your finances?

What does financial security mean to you?

Visualize yourself achieving your financial goals. What will your achievement feel like?
How will your life be different as a result?

Create Your Financial Success Vision Statement

Write your vision statement as if you are already living your goals.

Review your vision statement to ensure that it fits with your values of how you think money should be used, spent and saved.

My personal financial vision statement is:

Strategies for Moving Ahead

- Review *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management* Guidebook 4: *Creating Long-Term Financial Success*, paying special attention to the retirement planning, asset protection and investing sections.
- Review the Getting Started Guide Career and Professional Development section for additional ideas.

Defining Your Financial Success

Not everyone has the same vision about how money should be spent, used or saved. When developing a plan for managing your finances and moving toward financial security, it is important to define your vision of financial success.

- Does financial success mean that you have money to buy anything you ever needed or wanted?
- Does financial success mean having enough money to live a luxury retirement lifestyle?
- Does financial success mean that you own property and have money saved up for emergencies?

It's important to define what financial success means to you.

This worksheet will help you understand what you are working toward as you develop plans to manage your finances.

Financial Success Strategies

1. Determine your financial values by answering the questions below.
2. Identify what financial success means to you by completing the following checklist.
3. Create a personal financial vision statement based on your own values, goals and definitions of success.
4. Create a financial success vision statement you can refer to as you learn more about personal financial management.

Determining Your Financial Values

What are three important reasons to save money?

What are three important ways you think money should be spent?

What are three ways that you think money is wasted or used carelessly?

Defining Your Vision of Financial Success

Place a check mark next to all statements that match your vision of financial success:

- Not living paycheck to paycheck
- Having three to six month of living expenses saved
- Being free of credit card debt
- Having a fully funded retirement fund and retiring comfortably
- Owning my own home
- Being able to pay all my bills when they are due
- Not relying on credit to purchase things that I want or need
- Having a plan for how I will save and use my money
- Having a good credit score
- No longer struggling to make ends meet
- Owning my own car
- Having life insurance and an estate plan
- Sending myself or my children to college
- Having the money to buy anything I could ever want or need

List other ways you would define financial success:

Career and Professional Development Action Plan

In order to reach your professional goals, you need to have a clear plan and vision. Understanding your professional strengths and what you are most passionate about are the building blocks necessary to identify your career choices.

Career and Professional Development Strategies

1. Spend time envisioning where you are and where you are going in your career.
2. Determine your career priorities and when you want to reach them.
3. Create a list of your skills and resources. Ask your family and friends for their input.
4. Create a list of how you would like to grow in terms of leadership and practical skills, such as writing, public speaking, or technology.
5. Set specific goals for three month, six month and one-year time frames.
6. Consult a career advisor and friends to discover new opportunities.
7. Talk with your current employer about growth opportunities and specific skills needed for those opportunities.
8. Write down your vision of where you want to be once you have reached your goals.
9. Research specific career fields, skill and education requirements.

Complete the questions below, focusing on where you want to be and what you can accomplish in the next year:

Passions

List what issues or activities excite you and bring you joy:

Career Fields

The types of fields that interest me are: (e.g. healthcare, education, social service, government, environmental, technology, or construction).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Field Research

To find out more about my current field or other career fields that interest me, I will research the following:

- Position options and descriptions
- Skills requirements
- Education requirements
- Volunteer and internship opportunities
- Professional associations
- Current and past areas of research
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

Education Goals

When considering your educational goals, it's important to think about personal achievement, as well as researching how much education is required for your career choice.

Based on my research, I will need to pursue the following:

- General Equivalency Diploma (GED)/high school diploma
- Professional certification
- Technical or vocational training
- Two years of college (associate degree)
- Four years of college (bachelor's degree)
- Six years of college (master's degree)
- Seven/eight years of college (advanced graduate degree)

Growth Areas

What current skills can you improve?

What three specific skills will you need in the future (e.g., public speaking, communication skills, writing skills, or organizational skills)?

Personal Strategy

List three things you can do immediately to complete your educational goals or pursue a job in your chosen field (e.g., join organizations related to your career choice; prepare for graduate school admission tests; do more research).

Planning for Retirement

A retirement plan is a savings strategy designed to provide you with an income or pension after you are no longer working. Retirement plans can be set up by employers, insurance companies, accountants, the government or other institutions, such as employee associations or trade unions. Following are some of the ways you can save for retirement.

Retirement Planning Strategies

1. Determine where you are financially — look closely at your spending, cost of living, debt and liabilities.
2. Determine how much money you need to retire comfortably.
3. Determine your retirement goals — what does perfect retirement mean to you?
4. Work with a professional to decide how to achieve those goals.
5. Talk with your employer about retirement benefits.
6. Review your Social Security benefit.
7. Remember to review your plan, as your life changes.

To calculate your retirement needs, consider the following questions. Document your response in the following chart:

How long will your retirement last?

When do you plan to stop working? Will you retire early or are you planning to work at least part-time as long as you can? How long will your retirement last? How long are you likely to live? (The Social Security Administration estimates that a 65-year-old woman can expect to live another 17.5 years.)

How much will a dollar be worth?

During times of inflation or rising prices, you'll need more income to support your current lifestyle. When calculating how much money you'll need for retirement, assume inflation rates of three to four percent per year.

How much will you spend?

What type of retirement do you envision? Do you plan to stay in your current home? Do you plan to retire to a beach community in Florida?

Retirement Planning Questions

Answer the questions below to help you plan for your retirement and while working with a financial planner. Answering these questions will help guide your understanding of the areas you need to focus on when planning.

Question	Response
Do you have an employer sponsored retirement plan?	
When do you plan to stop working?	
Are you planning to work at least part-time as long as you can?	
What type of retirement do you envision?	
Do you plan to stay in your current home?	
Do you plan to relocate to a different state?	
Do you want to travel when you retire?	
Do you have disability insurance coverage just in case you need to retire early due to a disability or illness?	
How do you anticipate your expenses changing when you retire?	

Determining the Value of Your Assets

When you are considering ending financial responsibilities shared with your abusive partner — especially in situations where assets need to be divided — it is important to know the value of your assets. This assessment is very important when determining your net worth or planning your estate.

Tips to Determine Asset Value

- Real estate agents can help determine the value of your home or rental property. Estimates for real estate should be as close to market value as possible.
- Collectors and appraisers can help determine the worth of antiques, art, furniture, or heirlooms.
- The Kelly Blue Book can help determine the value of your car(s).
- Financial planners can help determine the value of stocks and bonds, along with projecting future value.
- The Internet can be a good place to compare and research the value of electronics and other personal property.
- Library reference sections may have buyer guides available as a resource to determine the value of certain items.

Use the chart below to document the value of your personal items and property. Once you have estimated the value for each category, total the amount to obtain the value of your assets.

Asset	Value
Home	
Real Estate Investment Property	
Car(s)	
Savings	
Stocks	
Bonds	
401(k)	
IRA	
Mutual Fund	
Annuity	
Insurance Policies	
Electronics	
Furniture	
Heirlooms	
Antiques	
Art	
Total	

Financial Inventory: Determining Your Net Worth

Fill in the blanks below. Value means fair market value: an appraisal based on an estimate of what a buyer would pay a seller for any piece of property. To determine your net worth, subtract your liabilities (what you owe) from your assets (what you own).

Assets		Liabilities	
Description	Value	Description	Value
Cash (on hand)		Mortgage/Rent	
Savings		Investment Property Mortgage	
CD		Auto Loan	
Money Market		Bank Loan	
Stocks		Student Loan	
Bonds		Co-signer of Loans	
Mutual Funds		Credit Card Debt	
Pension		Utility Bills	
401(k)		Debts Owed	
IRA		Other Liabilities	
Annuities			
Life Insurance			
Home			
Real Estate Investments			
Vacation Property			
Other Investments			
Automobile			
Furniture			
Art, Antiques, Collectibles			
Clothing, Jewelry			
Money Owed to You			
Inheritance/Gifts			
Other Assets			
Total Assets		Total Liabilities	
Net Worth			

Estate Planning

An estate plan will preserve your assets after you die. An estate plan can protect your assets and provide financial stability for your survivors. If you die without an estate plan, legal problems will delay the distribution of your assets.

Estate Planning Action Strategies: The strategies below offer several ways for you to protect your estate. *Please note that it is important to consult an estate planning attorney or a financial advisor to discuss your options and to understand state laws related to taxes or probate.*

- 1. Review your financial inventory worksheet.** This will help you have a full sense of your assets and personal property, such as real estate, investments, antiques or heirlooms. Your financial inventory should be kept in a secure place, such as a safe deposit box, fireproof safe, or on an external hard drive, if you have an electronic version.
- 2. Reassess your net worth each year.**
- 3. Establish a will.** This is usually the largest component of an estate plan. Without a will, the laws of your state will determine who receives your property. If you don't designate a legal guardian for any dependents or minor children, a court will decide who will raise them. Without a will your family may be left with no control over your assets.
- 4. Establish a trust.** This can hold virtually any kind of tangible or intangible property and can be as flexible as needed to meet your objectives. Some trusts are established to avoid probate or reduce future estate taxes. Others are designed to provide for minor children.
- 5. Designate powers of attorney.** This document clearly states your wishes about how to handle your healthcare and property, and who is responsible for carrying them out if you are unable to communicate.
- 6. Purchase life insurance.** Life insurance can provide the cash your family may need to pay federal estate taxes after your death. It is important to designate primary and secondary beneficiaries, which should be kept up to date as life circumstances shift.

For more information about estate planning, review the *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management Guidebook 4: Creating Long-Term Financial Success*.

Estate Planning Questions

Below are specific estate planning questions an attorney or financial representative may ask in an attempt to help you plan ways to protect your assets.

	Yes, No, N/A
1. Do you have a will?	_____
2. Is your will up to date?	_____
3. Do your children or spouse have a disability?	_____
4. Are your children all over the age of 18?	_____
5. How many times have you been married?	_____
6. Does your family or your spouse's family have a history of debilitating illness?	_____
7. Do you have a current estate plan?	_____
8. Have you reviewed your net worth within the past 12 months?	_____
9. Have you completed any tax planning?	_____
10. Do you have life insurance and do you know the cash value and policy owner?	_____
11. Do you have disability and long-term health care insurance?	_____
12. Do you feel your family could survive on your insurance benefit for 20 years, if added to your other assets?	_____
13. Have you planned for medical care in the event of critical or serious illness?	_____
14. Do you have a durable power of attorney?	_____
15. Does your medical power of attorney or living will reflect your current wishes?	_____
16. Do you have a trust?	_____

Personal/Workplace Safety

Quality of Life Assessment

Personal Safety Plan

Personal Financial Safety Plan

Workplace Safety Plan

Quality of Life Assessment

Your quality of life and standard of living may change if you choose to leave an abusive partner. It's important to consider how your living situation will change financially on both a short-term and long-term basis. Once you have identified changes to your living situation, you can work with a domestic violence advocate to obtain referrals to community resources that can assist you.

Review the action plan suggested below. It is important to discuss safety planning with a domestic violence advocate because your safety may be at increased risk while attempting to leave an abusive partner.

Quality of Life Action Plan

1. Contact a local domestic violence advocate to plan for your safety. If you do not know the number to a program in your community, you can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233.
2. Calculate your monthly living expenses on the following chart.
3. Identify what resources you may not be able to access if you choose to leave your abusive partner, such as bank accounts, insurance, housing and transportation.
4. Identify family and friends you can turn to for support.
5. Research public and private community resources you can turn to for assistance, such as food banks, public housing and legal aid.
6. Designate a place where you can have your mail and important documents sent.
7. Contact your creditors or utility companies, if you get behind on your bills and cannot pay them.
8. If you are planning to relocate to another city, research public support and cost of living in that location.

Strategies for Moving Ahead

- Complete the Quality of Life Assessment worksheet.
- Review *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management Guidebook 2: Financial Fundamentals*, paying special attention to the Budgeting Basics and Accessing Community Resources and Public Benefits sections.
- Complete the Developing Your Personal Budget worksheet.
- Review *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management Guidebook 1: Financial Abuse, Relationships and Diverse Perspectives*, paying special attention to the financial safety planning section.

How much money do I need to meet my basic needs on a monthly basis?

Monthly Expenses

Food	\$ _____	Rent/Mortgage	\$ _____
Prescription/Medical Costs	\$ _____	Utilities	\$ _____
Transportation	\$ _____	Phone	\$ _____
Childcare	\$ _____	Other	\$ _____
Total	_____		_____

If I leave my partner, I may not be able to access the following resources:

- Checking Account
- Savings Accounts
- Apartment/House
- Car/Truck
- Childcare
- Insurance
- (Other) _____
- (Other) _____

My housing options might be:

- Move in temporarily with family or friends
- Get my own apartment
- Public/subsidized housing
- Emergency domestic violence shelter
- Domestic violence transitional housing program
- Hotel/extended stay facility

I may be able to get support from the following friends and family:

I can have my mail and other important information sent to:

- Post office box
- A family member's house
- A friend's house

Personal Safety Plan

When making life changes, consider talking with a domestic violence advocate to address concerns for your physical safety. Complete your own financial safety plan, using the following strategies:

Safety Plan Guidelines

1. Consider contacting an advocate at a community domestic violence program for support and to learn more about your options. If you don't have the number for your local program, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233.
2. Don't use your home computer to search for help or to learn more about your options. Your partner can monitor the sites you visit on the Internet and who you contact via e-mail. Go to a library, community center or trusted friend's house to do that research.
3. Talk with a domestic violence advocate about how you can protect your financial assets and resources.

The five most important documents to have when you leave:

1. Photo identification
2. Birth certificate
3. Social Security card
4. Insurance contact information (i.e., car and health insurance)
5. Vehicle registration, if you own a car

4. Be strategic and discreet when researching. Carefully hide the information you collect. Be aware of traps your partner may set to signal that someone has been looking through his possessions.
5. If you cannot get access to your birth certificate or Social Security number, you can use your driver's license or state identification card to request a copy of your birth certificate or Social Security card at a later date.
6. You need only the most recent copy of your bank, investment or credit card statements.
7. If you cannot find paper copies of documents, request an electronic copy be sent to a private e-mail account that you have set up with a new password.
8. Don't worry if you can't access your utility or other monthly expense records. Your most recent bank statement will provide information about monthly expenses.

Resource alert

- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
- National Network to End Domestic Violence: 1-202-543-5566
- Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community: 1-877-NIDVAAC (643-8222)
- Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services: 1-206-726-0093
- Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence: 1-415-954-9988, ext. 315
- Alianza (National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence): 1-800-342-9908

For more information about financial safety, review *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management Guidebook 1: Financial Abuse, Relationships and Diverse Perspectives*.

Personal Financial Safety Plan

Review the financial safety plan below and use the check boxes to personalize this chart to your specific situation.

Financial Safety Plan	Personal Plan
Gather and hide your photo identification, passport and Social Security card, if you can do so safely.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Write down your Social Security number and your partner's Social Security number on an index card or the back of business card, which should be stored in your wallet.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Write down phone numbers for your utility companies and creditors. You can store this information an index card or the back of business card, which should be stored in your wallet.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Write down credit account numbers or get a copy of your most recent credit statement.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Document contact information for your landlord or mortgage company. You can store this information an index card or the back of business card, which should be stored in your wallet.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Contact all three credit bureaus and activate a fraud alert on your credit report. This will require the credit bureau to contact you immediately before any credit lines are approved.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Change all ATM PIN codes and online banking passwords.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Change all passwords for online banking, e-mail accounts and online financial accounts.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Open a post office box for mail or access your state's address confidentiality program to protect your mail or any financial information sent to you.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate

Financial Safety Plan	Personal Plan
Contact your creditors and utility companies to password protect your accounts (use a numerical password and do not use your Social Security number).	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Change your cell phone carrier or get a prepaid cell phone. (Donated cell phones are sometimes available from domestic violence programs.)	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Research address confidentiality programs.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Search the Internet to find out how much information is available about you online (use name, address, and phone numbers).	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Change all e-mail, online banking, online investing passwords.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Change ATM and credit card PIN numbers.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Create pass codes for all your utility accounts.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate

For more information about financial safety, review *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management Guidebook 1: Financial Abuse, Relationships and Diverse Perspectives*.

Workplace Safety Plan

You are entitled to be safe in your workplace. Following the plan below may help to ensure that safety.

In addition:

- Research your employer's:
 - Confidentiality program
 - Time-off, extended-leave or vacation policies
 - Workplace safety and security policies regarding provisions for domestic violence victims
 - Disability policies
 - Workplace domestic violence policies
- Be discreet when disclosing personal details to an employer or colleague
- Research your state's unemployment insurance policy. If you must leave your job due to domestic violence, you may qualify for a benefit.

Personal Workplace Safety Plan

Review the workplace safety plan below and use the check boxes to personalize this plan to your specific situation.

Workplace Safety Plan	Personal Plan
Provide a photograph of the abuser to security personnel and reception.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Make arrangements with security to be escorted to and from the parking lot or to public transportation.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Provide security personnel and your supervisor with a copy of your protection order.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Have your telephone calls screened.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Consider changing your work schedule and the way you travel to and from work.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Save threatening e-mails, voice mails, letters and gifts to document your partner's or ex-partner's behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate
Talk with your supervisor about relocating your workspace to a more secure area (e.g. on a different floor, away from windows, or away from main entrance).	<input type="checkbox"/> I will consider using this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> It is not safe for me to use this strategy <input type="checkbox"/> I will discuss this strategy with my advocate

For more information about workplace safety, review *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management Guidebook 2: Financial Fundamentals*.

What Have I Learned?

Building Your Financial Know How

Financial Practices Quiz

Progress Assessment Tracking Worksheet

What Have I Learned?

Building Your Financial Know How

Directions

It is important to prioritize your financial interests as it relates to your situation.

Read each statement listed below. Using a 1-4 scale, rate each statement. Write down the rating that most accurately describes your level of interest in front of each statement.

1 = Critically important to me

2 = Very important to me

3 = Somewhat important to me

4 = Less important to me

Financial Planning and Budgeting			
Rating	Statement	Rating	Statement
	I want to get a better understanding of my own financial situation.		I want to learn more about developing a spending plan and sticking to a budget.
	I want to learn more ways to track how much I owe and how much I spend.		I want to learn more about how to calculate my living expenses.
Debt Management and Credit Repair			
	I want to learn more about managing my debt and talking with creditors.		I want to learn more about rebuilding my credit and correcting errors on my credit report.
	I think I may be a victim of identity theft and I want to learn more about what I need to do.		I want to learn more about predatory lending, such as payday lenders.
Saving and Investing			
	I want to learn more about my investing and saving options.		I want to have a better understanding of the stock market and how to follow market reports.
	I want to learn the difference between money market accounts, mutual funds and other savings accounts.		I want to learn more about how to decide which bank or credit union is right for me.
Community Resources			
	I want to learn more about community resources I can access as an immigrant or refugee woman.		I want to learn about community resources that can help me find jobs in non-traditional fields such as electric, plumbing, construction, or carpentry.
	I want to learn more about community resources that can help me in emergency situations.		I want to learn more about community resources that can help me with temporary and transitional housing.

What Have I Learned?

Financial Protection and Estate Planning			
Rating	Statement	Rating	Statement
	I want to learn more about protecting myself and my family from financial devastation.		I want to learn more about 401(k)s, IRAs, Roth IRAs and other retirement accounts.
	I want to learn more about how to determine how much insurance I need.		I want to learn more about setting up wills, trusts, and other important estate planning resources.
	I want to learn more about homeownership.		I want to learn more about starting my own business or becoming self-employed.
	I want to learn more about paying for my education or my child(ren)'s education.		I want to learn more about investing my savings.

Building Your Financial Know How — Scoring

Directions

Review your answers for each of the financial categories and pay special attention to statements you scored with 1's or 2's.

Below is a detailed overview of how each number translates to your interests and action steps.

1's: Any areas where you placed a one indicates the topics you are most interested in studying. Consider reviewing these topics first.

2's: Any areas where you placed a two should be prioritized within the next 30 days after you have worked through your top priorities.

3's: Any areas where you placed a three should be prioritized in the next two to three months.

4's: Any areas where you placed a four are lower priorities and should be pursued in the next six months to a year.

Determining Your Interests

Now that you have completed this exercise you should have a good understanding of the topics you want to review immediately and within the next 30 days. **Use the space below to record the topics you want to learn more about immediately and over the next month.**

Topics to review immediately

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Topics to review within the next 30 days:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Want to Learn Even More?

Step 1: Review the Getting Started Guide in this workbook for specific financial action strategies you can apply to build a solid financial future and address some financial challenges.

Step 2: Review the *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management* guidebook overviews to get more detailed information about the financial topics discussed in the assessment.

Financial Practices Quiz

Learning to manage money successfully may seem like an overwhelming task. However, it's important to have an understanding of your current financial practices.

Answer the questions below by choosing the answer that best describes your current situation:

Financial Fundamentals

I keep copies of important financial documents in a safe place.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I am familiar with all of my partner's financial holdings and assets.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I have the ability to access and manage the money I earn.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I have enough personal income to pay for all my expenses.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I am aware of local organizations or resources that can help me take control of my financial situation and improve it.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I regularly review my bank statements to make sure that my account records match the statements.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I have a written budget plan for spending and saving my money, and I stick to it each month.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

Credit

I take steps to prevent my abusive partner from using credit in my name.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I have established my individual credit history, and I pay my bills on time.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I take steps to prevent identity theft by my abusive partner by guarding my personal information and shredding documents that list my account numbers.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I compare offers from credit card companies before applying for credit.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I use banks and credit unions instead of check cashers, payday lenders, pawnshops, rent-to-own stores, etc.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I pay more than the minimum on my credit card(s) each month.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I request and review a copy of my credit report at least once a year and prior to any major purchase.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

Saving and Investing

I have savings and investments in accounts that are in my name.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I save money regularly.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I have an emergency fund that covers at least three months of my living expenses.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I contribute regularly to a retirement plan, such as a 401(k) or an IRA.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I put money into different types of investments to reduce financial risk.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I have a plan to save for long-term goals, such as paying for my children's education, saving for homeownership and starting a business.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

I have an estate plan (will, power of attorney, assignment of legal guardianship for children, etc.) that I regularly review and update.

- Almost Always Sometimes Rarely

What Have I Learned?

Scoring

Give yourself 1 point for each Rarely answer. You earn 2 points for each Sometimes answer. Give yourself 3 points for each Almost Always answer. Total your score for each section.

Financial Fundamentals Score: _____

Credit Score: _____

Saving and Investing Score: _____

16 points or more

Congratulations! You manage money very well. Briefly review Guidebook 2: *Financial Fundamentals* and Guidebook 3: *Building a Financial Base*.

If you feel comfortable with your financial situation, focus on long-term strategies, such as homeownership, retirement planning and investing strategies by reviewing Guidebook 4: *Creating Long-Term Financial Success*.

11-15 points

You are doing a fair job of managing your money. Guidebook 2: *Financial Fundamentals* and Guidebook 3: *Building a Financial Base* can help you increase your money management skills.

If you need additional information, contact a local organization that provides financial education training. You're moving in the right direction!

10 or fewer points

Don't despair if your score is not as high as you would like. The information in the Guidebooks 1-4 can help you begin to take control of your finances. Review the material carefully and consider working with a local organization that can provide further training and specialized assistance to improve your money management skills.

Progress Assessment Tracking Worksheet

Date	Resource Description	Section/Subject	Actions Completed	Steps for Moving Ahead



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