

# Ultimate Guide to Managing Money in a Relationship



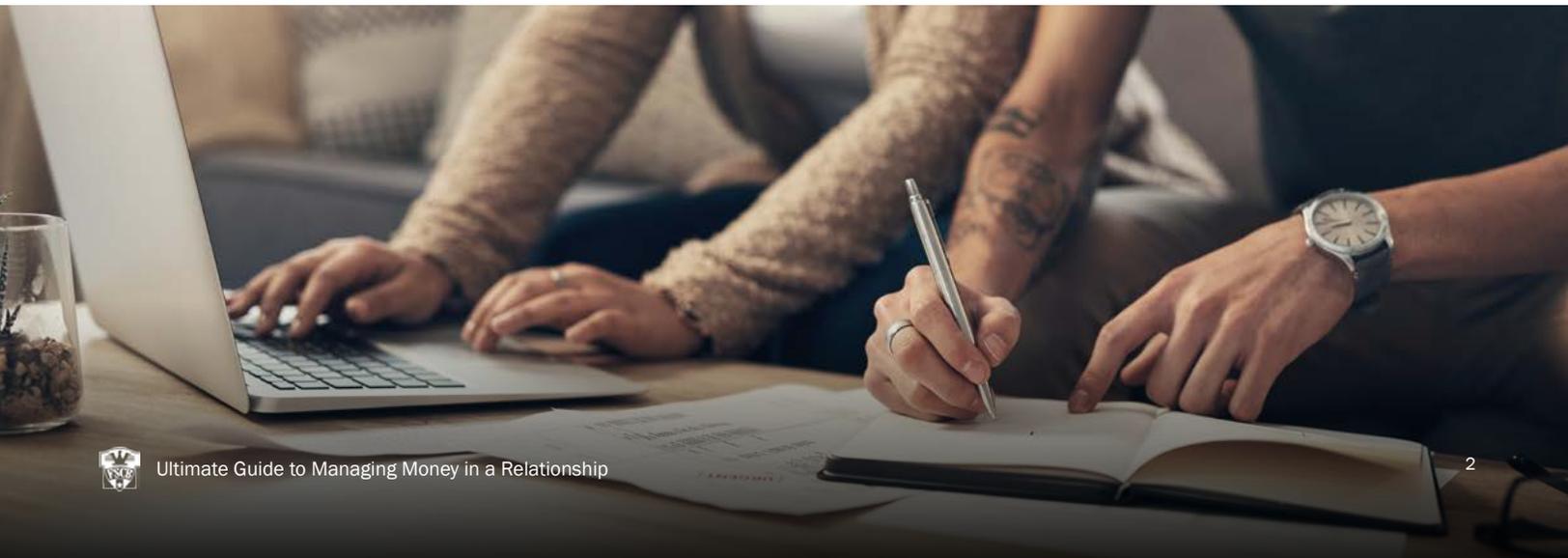
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# Introduction

Want to show your partner you love them and you're in it for the long haul?

- Share a candlelit dinner.
- Take a long walk on the beach.
- Escape for a romantic weekend getaway.
- Tell them you defaulted on your student loan.

## Wait—what?

It's true. If you and your significant other are thinking about a future together, it's time to have "The Talk."

Finances are one of those topics that couples need to discuss openly from the start. Honest communication about money matters not only builds a strong foundation for your relationship but can also protect you from any financial skeletons hanging out in your partner's credit report.

**While this might not be the moonlit stroll you were hoping for, this guide will walk you through everything you need to know about managing money in a relationship.**

# Why It's Important to Discuss Finances with Your Partner

If you and your partner choose to get married, when you say, “I do,” you are also tying the knot with your spouse’s assets—and with their debt. After the honeymoon is a really bad time to find out your husband or wife filed for bankruptcy five years ago or that they owe \$20,000 on their credit card.

But whether you’re married or not, finances can make or break a relationship. If one person makes poor financial decisions, both parties feel the consequences, whether it’s discord between you or the inability to [obtain financing for a new home](#).

The other side of the coin is that when couples communicate about money and [share common financial values](#), they are more likely to work together to build personal wealth, which increases financial stability and reduces stress.

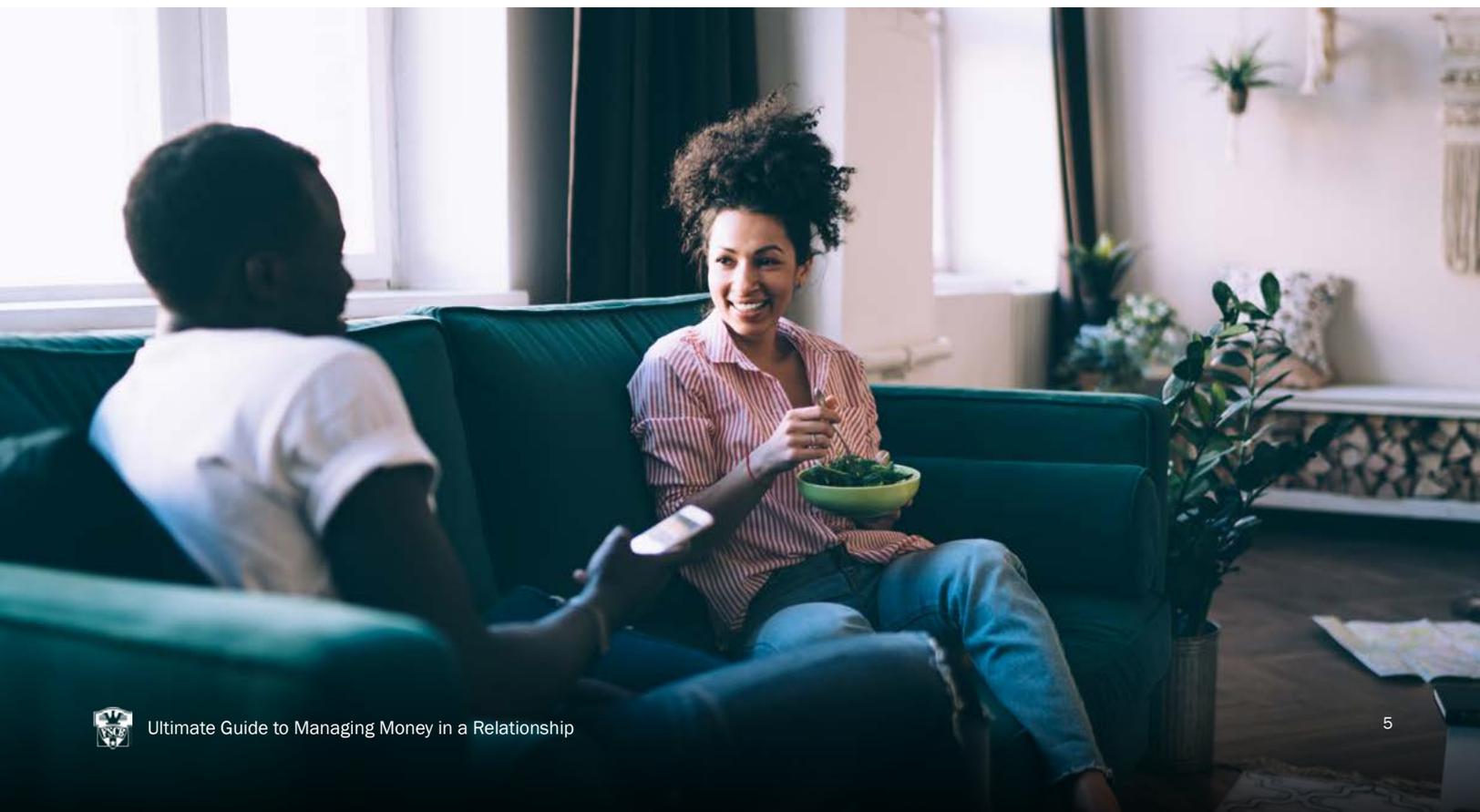


# When to Talk About Finances

Technically, there is no “bad” time to talk about financial matters. Well, you might want to wait until after Thanksgiving dinner at your mother’s, but, in general, the more often you talk about money in your relationship, the easier the conversation becomes.

Hopefully, these discussions will start as soon as it’s obvious things are getting serious and that your finances are invariably going to be intertwined. But, preferably, they should happen before that point.

It’s important to keep the conversation flowing and to check in at regular intervals. But you’ll also want to decide together which life events will trigger a review of your collective financial health—for example, before making a [large purchase such as a car](#) or a house or when you’re thinking about adding another family member.



# How to Begin a Conversation About Money

Whether it's your first conversation or your 50th, talking about finances isn't always easy. Here are a few ways to set the stage for a discussion about money in your relationship that results in solutions—not someone sleeping on the couch.



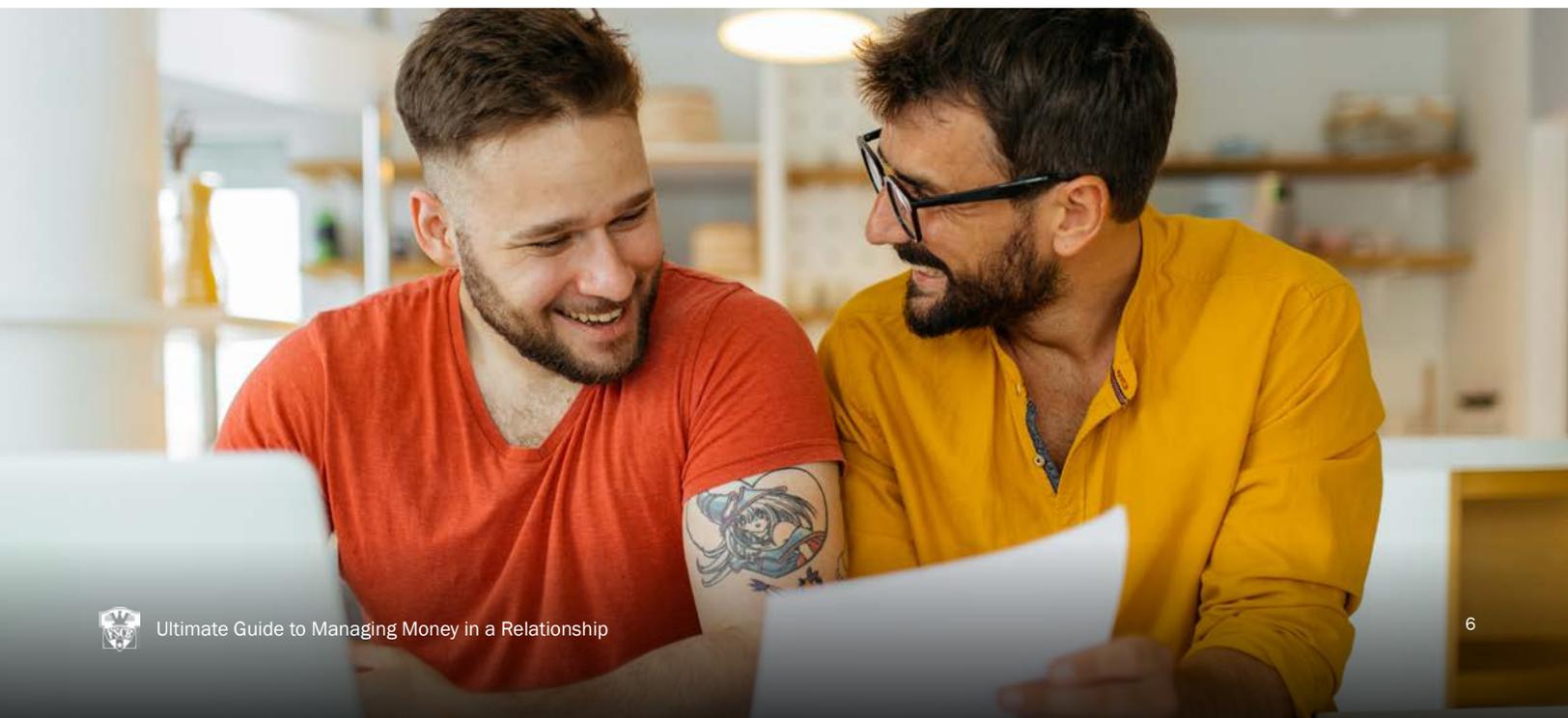
## Create a safe space.

Money is a hot-button issue for many people. To ensure your financial conversations are productive, set ground rules to help you stick to the topic, have equal time to talk, and manage your emotions.



## Ease into the conversation.

Don't blindside your partner by dumping all of your bad financial management history in their lap at once. Try mentioning specific issues in passing, then set a time to sit down and unpack them together.





### **Acknowledge the topic can be uncomfortable.**

Sometimes the best icebreaker is calling out the elephant in the room. Starting the conversation with, “I’m very anxious about talking to you about this,” can actually decrease the tension and set the stage for a more open conversation about money and your relationship.



### **Be kind but also be honest.**

Busting in with accusations blazing is not going to set the right tone for this kind of conversation. Remember that you care about the person you are talking to and that you are looking for solutions, not a fight.

# Important Financial Topics Couples Need to Discuss

Everyone comes from a different financial background that shapes their attitudes about money as well as their spending habits. These differences may be minor, or they may be so significant that the relationship is destined to end up on shaky ground.

To determine where you and your partner are financially compatible and where your attitudes about money diverge, there are a few topics you should discuss sooner rather than later:

- Financial history
- Spending “personalities”
- Debt
- Short- and long-term financial goals
- [Making major purchases](#)
- Paying bills and splitting expenses
- Personal spending money
- Account logistics
- Resolving disagreements about finances

You don't need to talk about all of these things on this list in one sitting, but you do need to talk about them. Being transparent about existing debt, saving and spending habits, and expectations for how household finances will be shared is essential to a healthy, trust-based relationship.

# How to Make Financial Decisions That Work for Both of You

Compromise is fundamental in a relationship, especially when it comes to money. An uneven balance of financial decision-making power inevitably leads to resentment and animosity.

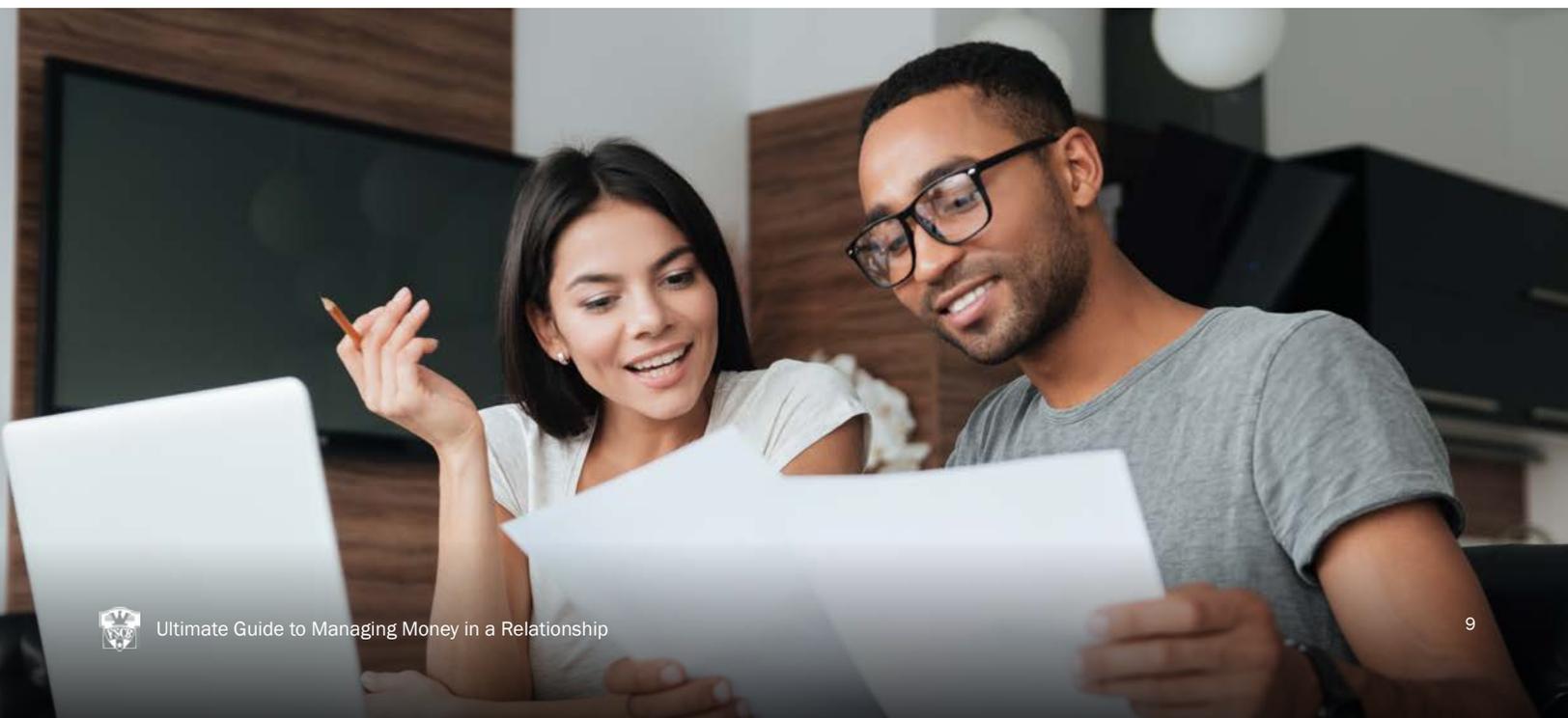
Here are a few ways to create an even playing field where both partners feel heard and respected.



## Create a budget you can agree on.

Setting a budget doesn't mean you can't spend money—it means you spend it on things that are necessary first, such as bills and savings, then you allocate what's left to the nice-to-haves. Working together to budget for the extras that are important to each partner makes budgeting feel less restrictive and helps you stick with it.

[Get Started Now - Read Our Complete Guide to Budgeting](#)





### **Set ground rules for spending.**

If one of you is a spender and the other is a saver, you may be in for some uncomfortable conversations. Setting some basic rules for spending, such as both partners having to agree on purchases of more than \$100 or making no more than two trips to the coffee shop each week, help reduce money-related conflict in a relationship.



### **Don't bully or guilt your partner into making a decision.**

No one should feel coerced into making a major investment or financial decision. If your partner is uncomfortable with a large purchase, press pause and use facts rather than guilt to try to change their mind.



### **Ensure both partners have equal say and equal power in financial decisions.**

It's not uncommon for one partner to bring more salary, assets, or financial expertise to the relationship. But this shouldn't affect the decision-making dynamic. Decide how to divide bills, expenses, and other financial responsibilities in a way that is equitable.

# How to Create Shared Goals for the Future

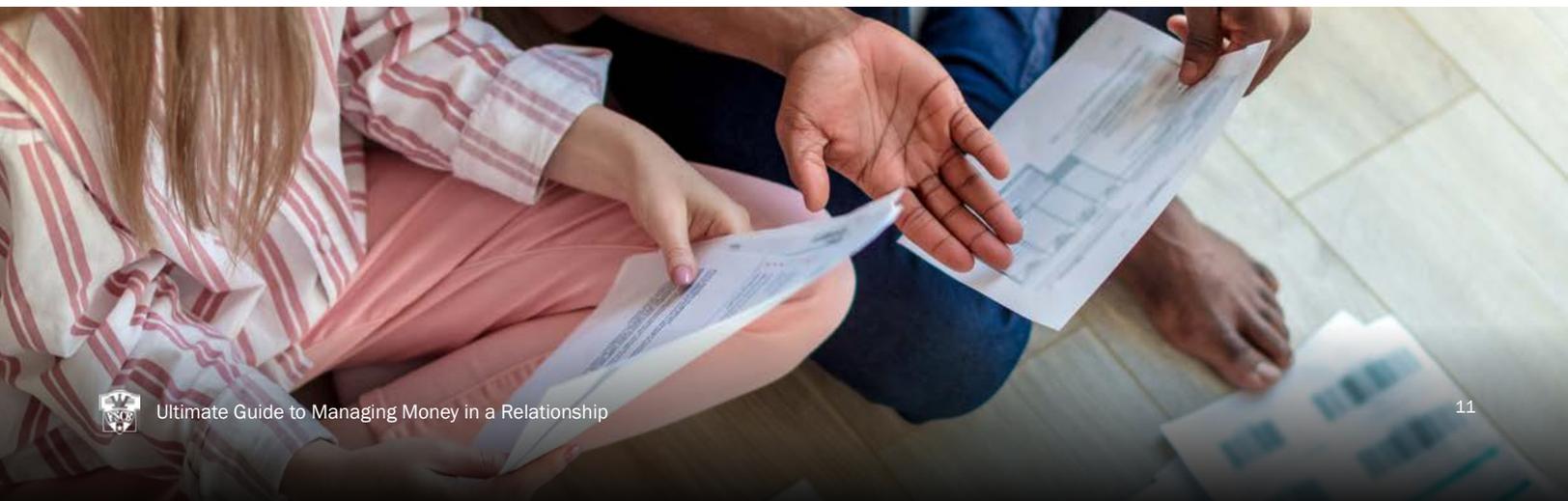
If you are invested enough in your relationship that finances are a consideration, you are probably [planning for your future](#) together. But contrary to what The Beatles would have you believe, you're going to need more than love to make those plans a reality.

The earlier you and your partner get on the same page about what that future looks like and how you're going to finance it, the more options you'll have later on.

Start by communicating your personal goals, and really listen so you understand your partner's personal goals as well. Then, discuss how those goals fit into your shared long-term vision.

Once you have the full picture of what you want your future together to look like, set actionable, measurable goals and document a strategy for reaching those goals. Be sure to set progress milestones and check-ins; otherwise, you won't have any reference for how far you've come and what you still need to do.

And don't forget to check in regularly to review and reinforce your goals so you can keep each other focused and accountable.



# Tips for When You Don't See Eye to Eye on Finances

No matter how strong, healthy, and committed your relationship is, you aren't always going to agree on every financial decision. Fortunately, if you and your partner keep those money-focused conversations flowing, there are ways to navigate the disconnects that inevitably occur.



## Communicate openly.

You and your partner won't be able to find common ground if you aren't completely open and honest with your opinions and why you feel the way you do about the issue.



## Define and evaluate your financial values and pain points.

This needs to be an ongoing dialogue that begins early in your relationship and is allowed to evolve over time. However, it isn't fair to your partner to move the proverbial goalposts without telling them.





### **Acknowledge financial imbalances.**

If you don't address financial imbalances head-on, your relationship will suffer. If one partner makes significantly more money or tends to have more control over the finances, work together to find a practical way to make your financial relationship equitable.



### **Remember that you are partners.**

At the end of the day, you and your partner are in this together. If you want to build a strong foundation for a long-term relationship, compromise, logic, and communication are your best resources.



### **Get help from a financial professional.**

Don't be afraid to admit you're in over your head. An [experienced financial advisor](#) can help you and your partner work through your differences in opinion and find the best way forward.



# Nothing Says Romance Like Good Financial Management

Navigating money in a relationship can be complicated, but with the right mix of honesty, respect, and uncomfortable conversations, couples can work together to build a strong financial foundation.

To learn more about improving your financial health and how budgeting makes it possible, download ***A Complete Guide to Budgeting*** for tips on creating—and sticking to—a personal budget.

[Download Now](#)



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## About First State Community Bank

Whether you're seeking a line of credit, a personal loan, credit card transfer options, or financial counseling services to improve your money management, we're committed to helping you set and reach your financial goals.

Since 1954, First State Community Bank has been a leading financial resource to residents and businesses across the state of Missouri. First State Community Bank has built its reputation on an unyielding commitment to delivering the best possible service to customers and partners, from the Junior Savers who open an account with \$1 to those applying for multimillion-dollar commercial loans. Our mission is to help our customers achieve financial success on their terms, whether that means buying a new home, starting a business, or planning for retirement. We are here to help you reach your financial goals today and into the future.

**Learn more by connecting with the FSCB team  
to see how you can get started today.**

**[Get in Touch at FSCB.com](https://www.fscb.com)**

