



Your Bottom Line

Your go-to resource for timely information about personal finance, college planning and student loan management.



You've Graduated...Now What?

Congratulations graduate! It's time to say goodbye to textbooks, teachers, and tests while saying hello to a new chapter in your life. Whether you plan to go to school, work or travel another path, it's important to be financially prepared for whatever adventures life brings.

Here are some timely tips to help you achieve financial success as you enter the next phase of your life.

- **Control your spending.** Do you think creating a spending plan (also called a budget) is too hard or unnecessary? In the coming years your financial priorities may change; learning to take control of your spending habits now will help you meet your goals in the future. Create a spending plan

by comparing your income to expenses and prioritizing your needs and wants. Taking this positive step will give you power over your financial situation.

- **Don't forget to save.** Saving should be part of your monthly budget, not something you do only if money is left over. Treat saving like a bill and pay it first. Don't be discouraged if you can't save large amounts immediately. If you must, start small and increase the amount over time.
- **Know your worth.** If you plan to further your education, research the expected salary range in your chosen field. Explore the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (bls.gov/ooh) to gain insight into

industry growth rates, salaries and which careers best fits your talents and skill set. If you plan to borrow student loans, aim to borrow no more than you expect to earn your first year after graduation.

- **Monitor your credit, protect your future.** Even if buying a home, entering the job market or applying for credit isn't in your immediate future, it's important to know that what you do with credit today can have a lasting effect on your future. Visit AnnualCreditReport.com to request your free credit report from each of the three major credit reporting agencies. Carefully review your reports to ensure that no one has used

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Student Loan Repayment Money Talks



Q&A: Financial Empowerment in Tribal Communities



Debunking a Money-Saving tip Camping for Less



Natural Pest Repellent On Our Mind



Summer Fun for Kids At Your Service



Managing Health and Wealth Summer Recipe



Partner News Calendar

your information fraudulently. If you suspect you're a victim of identity theft, follow the directions on the credit report to dispute errors and visit Consumer.FTC.gov to learn more about recovering from identity theft.

- **Disaster-proof your finances.** You may avoid thinking about negative events, but they're often a fact of life. Taking time to craft a financial preparedness and recovery plan can reduce stress and improve recovery in times of emotional or physical distress. Know where all your important information is, like birth certificates, titles, tax documents, etc. Store them a safe place like a fire-proof, water-resistant lock-box and consider making digital copies of hard to replace documents. To learn more about pre-disaster financial planning, visit Ready.gov/FinancialPreparedness.

To lessen the financial burden of an emergency, like theft, a job layoff or extended illness, work toward saving at least \$1,000 in an emergency fund. Put the money somewhere easily accessible like an interest-bearing saving account or a money market account. Ultimately, work toward building an emergency fund that could cover three to six months' worth of necessary living expenses.



Start a conversation with your friends or family about money. Ask them:

“What’s the one financial lesson you wish your parents had taught you?”

Tell us at [Twitter.com/OKMoneyMatters](https://twitter.com/OKMoneyMatters)
or [Facebook.com/OklahomaMoneyMatters](https://facebook.com/OklahomaMoneyMatters)



If you've recently graduated from college and borrowed federal student loans, here are some simple do's and don'ts to help you successfully transition into repayment.

DO:

- Understand that student loans must be paid back, plus interest.
- Find out how much you owe by contacting your lender or accessing the National Student Loan Database System (nslds.ed.gov). Use your six-month grace period to modify your budget to include your monthly student loan payment.
- Make sure your lender has your current contact information.
- Talk to your lender if you're struggling to repay. There are options to help you stay on track.

DON'T:

- Believe that you're exempt from repayment if you haven't found a job, can't afford payments or stop communicating with your lender.
- Forget about your loan payment during your grace period and commit money to other monthly expenses (rent, car payment, etc.).
- Default on your loan. Consequences of default include wage garnishments, damaged credit, revoked professional licenses and/or withheld tax refunds.
- Panic! You can successfully repay your student loan(s).

For more tips and advice on managing your student loans, visit ReadySetRepay.org.



Q&A: Financial Empowerment in Tribal Communities

Tina Pollard, Consumer Lending Coordinator

Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation

Tell us about the Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation (CPCDC).

Established in 2003, the CPCDC provides financial products and counseling services to the Citizen Potawatomi Nation (CPN) members and employees nationwide as well as Native American owned-businesses throughout Oklahoma.

We offer a variety of financial products and services to meet the needs of small business owners. To date, CPCDC has made 251 commercial loans totaling nearly \$24 million and 2,423 short term consumer loans worth \$3,031,439.

Although our main goal is to support small business in every stage of their development, we offer consumer lending products as well. Our consumer lending is targeted mainly to our 2400 CPN employees.

What are some of the unique services CPCDC provides?

We offer a variety of financial classes to both CPCDC clients and the public. We also offer entrepreneurial classes and individual technical assistance at both our Shawnee and Lawton branches.

Recipients of our consumer

and commercial loans receive a comprehensive one-on-one financial wellness session including credit counseling and budgeting education. Through education and reporting positive loan payments to the major credit bureaus, we aim to help our clients repair their credit and qualify for mainstream banking products. It's our hope that eventually our clients won't need us anymore.

We've also offered Individual Development Accounts (IDA) for adults and youth. For the adults the focus was on credit building, homeownership, and entrepreneurial growth. The youth IDA was strictly earmarked for post-secondary education. Participants in both programs received a 2:1 match for their savings efforts.

Who qualifies for CPCDC services?

Our consumer loan products are reserved for CPN employees, however our financial counseling is open to any current or perspective client or CPN tribal member. Credit counseling can be completed over the phone or in person and spouses are encouraged to participate.

Our commercial loan products are open to any member of any tribe as long as they reside in and their

business exists in Oklahoma. We will serve a CPN member with a business anywhere in the US. Unlike many lenders, we will fund a fledgling business.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I believe it's important for consumers to have a business relationship with a banker. That's why as a loan officer and credit counselor, my goal is to help my clients improve their credit so they can begin working with a mainstream financial institution. I'm passionate about helping people who want to help themselves. I pride myself on not doing everything for the client so they can learn from the process and develop better financial skills for their future. I'm proud to offer our loans to clients; they're a much better alternative to credit cards and our clients usually end up saving money while building their credit.

How can someone learn more about CPCDC?

For more information, visit cpcdc.org or call 405.878.4697; we'll be happy to assist you.

Eat In, Dine Out...Which is Cheaper?



One of the most commonly promoted money-saving tips is to cook at home. This is often touted as a healthier, more budget-friendly alternative to dining out. While this strategy can be cost-effective for many, it's not fool-proof. Sometimes a home-cooked meal can be very costly – especially when you factor in the value of the time spent planning, shopping and preparing meals. As with most budgeting practices, it's best to thoroughly examine your unique circumstances and implement the strategy that's best for you. Consider the following questions as you weigh your options.

- What's your family size?
- What's your palate preference?
- Do you have special dietary needs?
- How many restaurants are in your area?
- Do you have access to local coupons, ads and specials? If so, do you use them?
- Are you more likely to splurge in a grocery store or at a restaurant?
- How likely are you to eat leftovers?
- Do you enjoy meal planning and cooking?



Taking the time to consider the answers to these questions will help you come to the solution that's best for your situation. Weigh the pros and cons of your options and remember to adjust your budget based on your choices. For help crafting a budget, use the interactive calculator at OklahomaMoneyMatters.org.

Navigate Nature on a Budget

Spring has sprung and for those who enjoy the great outdoors, that means it's camping season! Camping is an affordable hobby, but one trip to an outdoor store and you'll be convinced you can't survive three days without a s'more maker and an inflatable love seat.

Here are a few tips to help you get back to nature without breaking the bank.


- **Get primitive.** The first step to cheap camping is keeping it simple. In spring and fall you can sleep comfortably without heat or air conditioning, so take advantage of primitive camp sites; they're significantly cheaper than those that offer electricity.
- **Learn from experience.** Stick to the essentials until you've gone camping a few times and discover which luxuries you can't live without. There's no need to spend money on a cast iron skillet if a hot dog on a stick will do the trick.
- **Share more.** If you're camping with a group, coordinate what you're bringing before you leave. Sharing meals and gear can save you time and money. One salt shaker is plenty for the whole group and cooking a big pot of chili is easier and cheaper than preparing individual meals.





Natural Ways to Repel Insects




Nothing puts a damper on a sunny summer day more than fighting off creeping, crawling, stinging, buzzing bugs. Here are some natural ways to defend yourself and your summertime fun from unwelcome guests.

– **Lemon and clove.** Keep flies at bay by inserting six to 12 cloves into the halves of two lemons. Place the lemons on a plate in the center of your picnic table or seating area for a pest-free gathering. 

– **Peppermint.** Peppermint oil acts as a repellent to most insects, especially ants, mosquitoes and fleas. Dab concentrated peppermint oil on skin, clothes or shoes, or dilute oil to spray over a broader area (like around your picnic blanket). If applying directly to skin, wash with soap and water as soon as you return indoors, because the oil may cause skin irritation if used in large quantities. 

– **Rose geranium.** To ward off ticks on both pets and people, place a drop of this essential oil in strategic locations before going outside. For pets, place a drop between the shoulder blades and at the base of the tail. For humans, try a drop on the insides of wrists and behind the ears. 

– **Lemon, lime and orange.** Spiders taste through their feet and they dislike the taste of citrus. Mix any citrus juice with water in a spray bottle. Use it on your countertops, in cabinets, doorways or on windowsills to combat eight-legged intruders. 

On Our MIND

What's on the mind of OKMM staff? This month communications specialist Michelle Van Swearingen talks about cost-effective alternatives to cable.



It's no secret that the steadily rising cost of cable and satellite television can be considered a big ticket item when you're budgeting for monthly entertainment. In an effort to save money, my family gave up extended cable packages three years ago and we don't miss it one bit.

We believe that entertainment is important, so we tend to spend a great deal of time enjoying outdoor activities in lieu of sitting on the couch. However, we still carve out TV time for our favorite shows and sports programming.

Here are some of the money-saving alternatives we explored as a substitute to large (aka costly) cable packages:

- **Streaming video.** There are many streaming video subscription options that conveniently allow you to enjoy both television programming and movies. Subscription providers like [Hulu.com](https://www.hulu.com), [Netflix.com](https://www.netflix.com) and Amazon Prime's instant video service ([Amazon.com/Prime](https://www.amazon.com/Prime)) offer great trial deals and an incredible amount of content. However, there's a downside. Unlike cable, you won't get to experience live programming in real-time and you'll need a high-speed Internet connection to access these programs.
- **Basic packages.** If you only purchase the first few cable channels, or opt for the most basic plan available, you'll potentially shave quite a bit off your entertainment budget. While nixing the specialty channels means that you'll miss out on some fan faves like reality television and cooking shows, you'll still get a nice bang for your buck. Even the most basic packages allow you to receive weather updates and news broadcasts from your local TV affiliates and access to the major network channels like ABC, NBC and CBS.
- **Get out of the house.** A major worry for those considering ditching their cable company is how they'll watch the big game. Admittedly, if you're a sports enthusiast, losing easy access to your favorite sports channels could be tough. It wasn't easy for us either, but we learned to make the best of it. When our favorite team is playing and it promises to be an exciting game, we go out to a local pub or restaurant and make a date of watching the game together. We get to enjoy the big game, good food and quality time together while staying within our budget.

Summer Fun for Kids

Your children may be ready to enjoy the lazy days of summer, but what about you? If you need some summertime inspiration, check out these ideas for keeping your kids entertained and occupied without breaking the bank.

- **Turn up the creativity.** Keep coloring and craft supplies handy. Encourage your kids to put on a play or create a “reading nook” with sheets and pillows. Let them pick out a fun recipe and help you make it. Encourage them to learn a new skill, like knitting or playing the guitar. If they simply can’t go without playing a video game, make sure it gets them moving (dancing, exercise, etc.) or thinking (puzzle or strategy games).
- **Enjoy the great outdoors.** Send them on a nature scavenger hunt in the backyard. Invest in sidewalk chalk, a jump rope and a hula-hoop. Have your kids plant a garden and tend it themselves. Let them play in the sprinkler or have a picnic on the back porch. While they’re outside burning energy and absorbing vitamin D, don’t forget to apply sunscreen!
- **Visit local attractions.** Zoos, museums, theaters, activity centers and more often offer special kid-friendly activities during the summer months. If your budget allows, invest in a season pass to your local pool or bowling alley. If money is tight, play at the park and join the library’s summer reading program.
- **Set up camp.** Going to summer camp is a traditional rite of passage in many families. If you want to continue (or start) this tradition, do some research to find the camp that best suits your child’s interest and your pocketbook. With camps that focus on academics, sports, art, music, animals, science, cooking and more, there’s an option for everyone. When choosing a camp, consider your child’s level of independence. Is she ready to spend the night away from home for a week? Would he prefer to participate in a day camp instead? If going away to camp isn’t the right fit for your child, look into programs that offer one-day classes.

For more summer fun ideas, check out the *Summer Camps and Activities Guide* at MetroFamilyMagazine.com.



Photo provided by Southwestern Oklahoma State University

At Your Service

Freshman Orientation

Are your students’ financial goals unclear? Do they need help focusing on their financial future? If so, Oklahoma Money Matters can help by providing free personal finance education during your freshman orientation workshops, seminars or events.

We provide incoming freshmen and transfer students relevant, applicable information and materials to help them make wise financial choices during their college years and beyond. We’ll teach them about different budgeting methods, practical ways to save, how to manage credit and avoid identity theft, and how to borrow student loans wisely.

We also offer instructional resources that can enhance the financial education you’re already providing in the classroom, including interactive money management tools, self-paced learning modules, newsletters and podcasts. Plus, we offer train-the-trainer workshops for campus staff and student leaders.

To discuss adding financial education to your freshman orientation program and check OKMM staff availability to teach a workshop on your campus, contact us at 800.970.OKMM (toll free) or OklahomaMoneyMatters@ocap.org.



Effectively Manage Health & Wealth

It's been said "without your health, you have nothing," so kudos to anyone who makes long-term health and wellness a priority. Implementing lasting lifestyle changes can seem overwhelming; however, there are many budget-friendly ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Check out these tips for successfully managing health and wealth.

- **Doctor appointments, prescriptions and supplies.** Before each doctor appointment, make a list of all your questions and concerns. You may think you'll remember everything you want to talk about, but in the fast-paced medical world, it's easy to let something important slip by. It's better to go in prepared; otherwise you may forget something and have to make a follow-up appointment, incurring the expenses that go along with it. When talking about prescriptions and supplies, ask your doctor if generic medications are available and appropriate for you. Generic options often have the same effect as name brand medications, but cost significantly less. If a suitable generic isn't available, ask about samples, cost-effective refill options or subscription services that might be available for necessary medications and medical supplies.
- **A healthy diet.** While it may be tempting to shave dollars off your food budget, investing in healthier foods can do a great deal for your overall well-being. Many experts agree that it's best to shop the outer aisles of the grocery store, avoiding overly processed items and focusing on whole foods like fresh produce and lean meats. Maximize your food budget by planning your meals around items that are on sale, using coupons, and shopping at stores that offer price matching. And remember, buy only what you can use relatively quickly – spoiled food is a common budget buster.
- **Exercise.** Luckily, this is the cheapest wellness issue to tackle. You can exercise your way to better health, absolutely free. Aerobic exercise (walking, jogging and jumping jacks) and strength training (push-ups, sit ups, squats and lunges) are beneficial types of exercise that require no special equipment to achieve desired results. If you prefer a workout method that's more interactive, there's a wide variety of free exercise videos available on websites like [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and [Self.com](https://www.self.com).

Don't let cost concerns prohibit your efforts to work toward a healthier you. For more tips on healthy eating and fitness, explore the resources at [Health.com](https://www.health.com).

Crisp Cucumber Salad

Yields 2 ½ cups

- 2 cups finely chopped, seeded, peeled cucumber
- ½ cups finely chopped, seeded tomato
- ¼ cups chopped red onion
- 2 tbsp. minced fresh parsley
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and chopped
- 4 ½ tsp. minced fresh cilantro
- 1 clove garlic, minced or pressed
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 1 ½ tsp. lemon juice
- 1 ½ tsp. lime juice
- ⅓ tsp. ground cumin
- ¼ tsp seasoned salt

In a small bowl, combine the first seven ingredients.

In another bowl, combine the sour cream lemon juice, lime juice, cumin and seasoned salt. Pour over the cucumber mixture and gently toss.

Serve immediately with chips.



Partner News and Events



Member Meeting:
Wednesday, June 25
11:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.
Oklahoma City

Visit OklahomaJumpstart.org or
email OklahomaJumpstart@gmail.com for more details.



Oklahoma's Promise Application Deadline
Monday, June 30
Visit OKPromise.org for more information.

Have News to Share?

Let us feature it! Do you have a contest, educational workshop or other personal finance event you'd like us to highlight in a future edition of the newsletter? Send a note to mneal@ocap.org today; space is limited.



Oklahoma Money Matters (OKMM) is a personal finance education program that helps K-12 schools, higher education campuses, businesses and community partners develop or expand educational services that empower Oklahomans to make positive financial choices.

OKMM is an initiative of the Oklahoma College Assistance Program and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Visit us online at
OklahomaMoneyMatters.org.

To ask questions or share comments regarding this newsletter, call 800.970.OKMM (toll free) or email OklahomaMoneyMatters@ocap.org.



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