

Smart About Money.org Free Financial Education Courses

Money Basics



Course Overview

How do I improve my credit score? How many credit cards should I have? Where can I get help with my debt? How much debt is too much debt?

The Credit and Debt course will help you explore:

- Borrowing and using credit wisely
- Working with lenders
- Getting help with credit card issues
- Improving credit scores



Course Overview

Our choices about how we spend money can leave us feeling either empowered or defeated. Often simple adjustments can ease stress in our daily spending and saving habits.

The Spending and Saving course will help you explore:

- Your current spending and savings habits, challenges and opportunities
- Tips for cutting spending and increasing savings
- Payment methods and record-keeping guidelines



Course Overview

Often it takes an accident, illness or disaster for us to appreciate our insurance coverage. Most of us recognize the benefit of insurance in the abstract, but when money is tight, it can seem like just another expense.

The Insurance course will help you explore:

- Specialized insurance and policies you might not need
- Your current insurance coverage and potential ways to save money
- Tips for choosing an insurance carrier

From the Course



A debt-to-income ratio higher than 20 percent can limit your ability to meet other obligations. Calculate your debt-to-income ratio by dividing your monthly consumer debt payments by your net (after-tax) monthly income.

For example:

\$400 (monthly consumer debt payments)

÷

\$2,500 (monthly take-home pay)

$400 \div 2,500 = 0.16$

Move the decimal point two places to the right to get the percentage:

Your debt-to-income ratio is 16%

From The Course

Take charge of your spending and saving by setting goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.

For example, your goal might be to save \$20 per week over the next year for a vacation. Your motivation will grow when you track and celebrate small milestones along the way.



Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time-bound

From The Course



Some things that factor into your insurance premiums, such as your age and gender, are out of your control, but there are tactics you can use to get better premiums if you are willing to make the effort. SAM's Insurance course highlights some ways to make your insurance work for you.

Whether you want to build your knowledge of personal finance or you just need a refresher, SAM's free online courses can help. Each course takes approximately 45 minutes and includes tools, worksheets and calculators. Research shows that financial education is most effective when related to a decision you are making now. Choose the course that best fits your situation or start with Money Basics to build a strong foundation.

SAM Courses



Course Overview

Choosing where and how to invest your money can be daunting when you're just getting started. How do you pick a financial advisor you can trust, and how do you pick investment products that give you returns (and risks) that you are comfortable with?

The Investing course will help you explore:

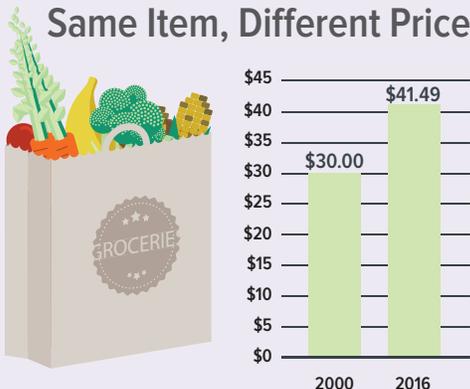
- Your current long-term savings and investments
- Your investing risk tolerance level
- Tips for choosing the right savings and investment options

From The Course

Because of inflation, the same items you purchase today will cost more in the future.

When you keep your money in low-interest savings accounts, you miss out on the interest you would earn from a simple investment account to offset this loss in purchasing power.

Same Item, Different Price



Course Overview

Whether you are looking for a new job or want to maximize the benefits of your current job, SAM's Employment course has tips and best practices to get you started.

The Employment course will help you explore:

- Your current employment circumstances
- Tips for finding a new job, understanding your pay, and knowing your rights when you leave an employer
- Information on protecting your rights and resources for handling disputes

From The Course

DECIDE Steps

- 1 DEFINE the problem.
- 2 ESTABLISH your criteria.
- 3 CHOOSE a few options that match your criteria.
- 4 IDENTIFY and compare the pros and cons of each option.
- 5 DECIDE the most logical option for your situation.
- 6 EVALUATE the results and make adjustments for next time.

Use the DECIDE steps to assess your choices when you are ready to make a change to your employment situation.



Course Overview

Something always comes up. Whether it's a major catastrophe or a minor setback, when you need money fast, tapping into your emergency fund is a lot less stressful than borrowing funds you don't have from the credit card company.

The Emergency Fund course will help you explore:

- Reasons for starting and maintaining emergency savings
- Tips for starting, using and replenishing an emergency fund
- How to set and track emergency fund savings goals

From The Course

According to a NEFE survey, 63 percent of people experienced a major financial setback in the past year, and 36 percent said they would rely on credit cards to cover such expenses.

The most common financial setbacks were:



22%
Transportation issues



21%
Housing repairs



16%
Debt payments and falling behind on bills



Course Overview

Data from the U.S. Census show that most Americans move only a couple times after age 45, but those later-in-life housing decisions can be some of the most financially challenging if you're unprepared.

Whether you are just starting out on your housing journey or you are looking to downsize for retirement, there are some basic questions to consider.

The Housing course will help you explore:

- Your current housing expenses and opportunity costs
- Tips for how to decide whether to rent or own
- Preparing your finances to rent or buy a home

From The Course



11.7x

The average person in the United States can expect to move 11.7 times in their lifetime.



9.1x At age 18, you can expect to move 9.1 more times.



2.7x At age 45, you can expect to move 2.7 more times.



Course Overview

After housing, transportation costs tend to take the biggest bite out of our monthly budgets. There are ways to save — from choosing lower-cost vehicles to adjusting insurance and trying public transportation.

The Transportation course will help you explore:

- Your current transportation expenses, challenges and opportunities
- Preparing your finances to buy a new or used car
- How auto insurance premiums are calculated and tips for lowering premiums

From The Course

Under 25		\$5,700
25 - 34		\$9,000
35 - 54		\$10,500
55 - 64		\$9,500
65 - 74		\$5,500
75 or older		\$5,100

The average annual U.S. household spends nearly 14 percent of all household expenditures on transportation, according to data from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics. This spending tends to vary with age, with the highest cost from age 35 to 54. How do you compare?



Course Overview

Many of us know what it feels like to be stressed about money, but beyond dreaming of winning the lottery, few of us ever stop to ask ourselves what it would take to feel financially well. The Financial Well-Being course uses the definition of financial well-being outlined by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to envision what it would be like to achieve long-lasting financial wellness.

The Financial Well-Being course will help you explore:

- Your own personal definition of financial well-being
- How aspects of personal finance, such as credit and debt, affect your well-being
- Habits and patterns that affect your well-being

From The Course

Financial Well-Being

[fi-nan-shuh l] [wel] [bee-ing]

1. A state of being wherein you have control over day-to-day, month-to-month finances; have the capacity to absorb a financial shock; are on track to meet your financial goals; and have the financial freedom to make the choices that allow you to enjoy life.

Definition from CFPB.