

EASTERN INTEREST



A Newsletter for Customers & Friends of Eastern Savings Bank!

March / April 2023

Financial Checkup: Tips to organizing your personal finances

Whether you're looking to better understand your expenses, save money, improve your credit, or all of the above, a financial checkup is a good practice to undertake at least once a year. However, there is no need to run to the "finance doctor." Just like your health, a personal self-assessment is a great place to start.

Review Your Budget

Financial success always revolves around a balanced budget. If you don't have a budget outlined, then take the time to complete one soon.

If you do have one created, then start your check up with a review of your income and expenses. Note any changes to your household income, along with any new or reduced expenses.

Know Your Debt and Spending Habits.

Assess your credit cards. Credit cards get a bad reputation, and with good reason when not used properly. But when used with discretion and a payoff plan, they are a great financial tool.

- Limit the number of cards you use.
- Know your card balance and target only using 30% of your available credit limit.
- Pay off your balance every month. If you can't payoff the full balance, pay as much as possible and have a plan set to get the balance down to zero.

Most cards likely have a variable interest rate. In our current market, interest rates are rising, which is also increasing your cards APR and the interest accrued on the balances you carry. Be aware of how much credit card debt you carry and the amount of interest you are accruing and paying.

Check Your Credit.

Stay on top of your credit score and history. Pull a copy of your report on the website annualcreditreport.com. Each of the three main credit reporting agencies are required by federal law to provide you with a free copy of your credit report each year.

Leverage Technology and Automation.

There are plenty of tech tools available to help with managing finances. While each offers unique features, one key technology function to take advantage of is automation.

- **Automate your payments.** Simplify your monthly bill payment activities. Although not all bill payments can be automated, many can. Setup automatic payments or ACH pulls for your recurring monthly expenses that have a standard recurring cost. This could include mortgage/rent, insurance, phone bill, internet bill, etc.
- **Automate your savings.** Put money aside every pay period. Once you've set your budget, review your expendable income and determine an amount to allocate to your savings. Then automate it so funds are moved to a separate savings account monthly or each pay period before you can spend it.

Check In On Your Retirement Savings

Are you saving for retirement? Experts suggest investing 10% to 20% of your income for retirement savings. If you participate in a 401k or other employer plan, review your current contribution amount. If you can afford to, raise your contribution by at least 1% and make sure you take advantage of any employer match to the fullest extent possible.

These are just a few financial checkup tips, and your assessment will be unique. Be sure to consider other things such as insurance policies, streaming and subscription services (are you using them and worth the cost), and more. Be proactive and stay on top of your finances.

Serving Our Community

Eastern Savings Bank team members were excited to get back out and support a great organization serving our communities. We kicked things off in February by volunteering at the Baltimore Hunger Project.

A group of ESB volunteers took part in a "Packing Experience" with the Baltimore Hunger Project (BHP). Our volunteers packed and sorted non-perishable food items into individual packages to be delivered to local elementary schools for food-insecure children in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. Once distributed, school guidance counselors discreetly place the packages in children's backpacks to help nourish them over the weekend. BHP distributes over 1,600 weekly meal bags and has a waiting list. To help put an end to childhood hunger, support BHP by visiting baltimorehungerproject.org.



Thank you to our ESB volunteers (listed in alphabetical order): Elizabeth Banks, Barbara Browning, Sheryl Choquette, Marc Davis, Kimberlee Dougherty, Deborah Dougherty, Mark Hamilton, Elvie Fermann, Tom Kennedy, Barbara Kuhn, Tracey Mandish, Michael Milich, Kari O'Donnell, Yvette Rowles, Joe Slovick, Chuck Solomon, Laney Star, Lynda Stewart, Andrew Trainer, Kevin Zaegel

Tax Season Tips

The Federal Tax deadline is Tuesday, April 18. If you haven't filed yet, do yourself a favor and don't wait until the last minute.

Get Your Refund Faster

Expecting a tax refund this year? Be sure to get it in the fastest, most secure manner possible – via direct deposit to your bank account.

Personal Protection Reminder

The following tax fraud prevention tip is shared directly from IRS.gov website.

The IRS reminds taxpayers to be aware that criminals continue to make aggressive calls posing as IRS agents in hopes of stealing taxpayer money or personal information.

Here are some telltale signs of a tax scam along with actions taxpayers can take if they receive a scam call.

The IRS will never:

- Call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. Generally, the IRS will first mail a bill to any taxpayer who owes taxes.
- Threaten to immediately bring in local police or other law enforcement groups to have the taxpayer arrested for not paying.
- Demand that taxes be paid without giving taxpayers the opportunity to question or appeal the amount owed.
- Call unexpectedly about a tax refund.



Enhanced Business Banking Services. No Joking About It.



ESB continues to experience a growing number of business customers turning to us for banking services. Because of this demand, our team has been working diligently to re-engineer our solutions to better serve our business customers.

We are excited to announce the launch of our enhanced business banking solutions on April 1, 2023. No fooling!

Our new and improved Business Banking Solutions include:

- *Business Checking* - An improved line-up of checking account options designed to serve varying business needs.
- *Business Savings* - An assortment of short and long-term savings tools to help businesses save for future success.
- *Digital Business Banking* - A new, robust online and mobile banking platform built to provide the on-demand digital banking tools that business operators need.
- *And more.*

Our current business customers have received communications of the new improvements to their accounts. We encourage you to stay tuned for more details and learn more about our services online following our launch on April 1.



Build Your Savings

Let us help grow your tax refund into something bigger and fuel your savings.

Stash the cash from your refund, or other funds, into an ESB Certificate of Deposit and watch it grow! Take advantage of our special certificate of deposit terms and lock in to earn a higher rate.

View current rates online at easternsavingsbank.com or visit any branch location to open your CD.



Locally Owned. Locally Operated. Locally Committed.
easternsavingsbank.com

