

Housing Programs & Services

NEWSLETTER

The 50/30/20 budget fix

How much should you spend on housing? groceries? Here is a rule of thumb - the 50/30/20 budget. Here's how it works:

You start with your after-tax income.

That's your gross pay minus any income tax, Social Security, Medicare, and disability taxes. If your employer deducts other expenses from your paycheck, such as 401k contributions, health insurance premiums and union dues, add those back into your net pay to get your after-tax income.

You aim to limit your "must-have" expenses to 50% of that after-tax figure.

"Must-haves" include all the basic expenditures you really need to make each month: housing, utilities, transportation, food, insurance, child care, tuition and loan payments.

Your "wants" can consume 30% of your after-tax pay.

Vacations, gifts, entertainment, clothes, eating out and other expenses are all "wants." Some bills you pay might overlap the two categories. For example, basic phone service is a must-have. But features such as call waiting or unlimited long distance are wants. Internet access and pay television are two other expenditures that can feel like must-haves but usually are wants.

Savings and debt repayment make up the final 20% of your



budget.

To achieve financial independence and minimize the chances of disaster, you need to get rid of debt, save for retirement and build your emergency fund. Any loan payments you make above the minimum belong in this category, as do contributions to your retirement and emergency funds.

But here are some places most people can tweak:

- **Food.** You've got to eat, but most of us could trim our grocery bills without too much effort. Plan your meals, cook from scratch, use up leftovers, clip coupons.
- **Utilities.** You want the lights to stay on, but the air conditioner doesn't have to blast 24/7.
- **Transportation.** More carpooling and public transportation, less time alone in your car. Your car payment could be what's killing you.
- **Insurance.** Higher deductibles can help reduce your premiums, as can shopping around and taking advantage of all available discounts. Ditch insurance you don't need, such as life insurance if you don't have financial dependents, or collision and comprehensive coverage on a clunker.
- **Ditch the contracts.** Once your cell phone contract is up, consider switching to prepaid or pay-as-you-go service.

Article adapted from Liz Weston, MSN Money.

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Notable News

On October 26, 2013, the city participated yet again in the annual Rock n Roll Paint a Thon. This nationwide volunteer event helps low income elderly and disabled homeowners paint the exterior of their homes. Throughout Apache Junction, four homes were painted by civic minded groups including the Apache Junction High School Student Council and National Honors Society, Pinal County Adult Probation, Apache Trail High School, Mountain View Lutheran Church and many area residents who simply wanted to volunteer. If you are interested in volunteering next year or you may think you would qualify to have your home painted, contact Heather at (480) 474-2635.

Calendar

- November 11—Veteran's Day, city offices are closed
- November 28—Thanksgiving Day, city offices are closed
- December 25—Christmas Day, city offices are closed
- January 1—New Years Day, city offices are closed
- January 20—Martin Luther King Jr. Day, city offices are closed



Programs

Free Tax Preparation

The City of Apache Junction and the Apache Junction Public Library, in collaboration with the Internal Revenue Service and AARP Tax Aide are offering a free tax preparation E-filing site in Apache Junction for ALL residents. The location for the free E-filing tax preparation site is the Apache Junction Public Library, 1177 N. Idaho Road, beginning February 1, 2014. Reservations are required and can be made at the Library's service desk or by calling 480-474-8555 after January 1, 2014. Reservations will be taken on a first come, first serve basis.

Looking to buy a home in AJ?

Pinal County has received grant funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist potential homeowners with down payment and closing cost assistance as well as funding to make improvements to the home. Homes available for this program must be foreclosed, bank owned, or short sale properties within a designated Apache Junction neighborhood, other restrictions apply. For additional information about the pro-

gram and whether you may qualify, contact Patricia Farnsworth from Pinal County Housing at (520) 866-7234.

Housing Rehabilitation Funding Available

The City of Apache Junction has funding available for homeowners within the City of Apache Junction city limits. Funding is available to make improvements to owner occupied homes where one of the occupants is either elderly, under the age of 18, or disabled. Improvements can include, but is not limited to, electrical, plumbing, roofing, heating and air conditioning, and ADA accessibility improvements.

Homeowners may obtain an application either:

- 1) online at www.ajcity.net/rehab;
- 2) by phone at (480) 474-2635; or
- 3) by picking one up at City Hall 300 East Superstition Blvd in the Development Services Building

Funding is available on a first come first serve basis, so applicants are advised not to wait. For more information call (480) 474-2635.

Busy Bee Home Maintenance Tips

Know Which Breaker to Turn Off

When you finally get around to putting in that dimmer switch, you won't want to be stumped by a poorly labeled breaker box. Ditch the pencil and paper chart—you're not changing your wiring anytime soon. Instead, write directly on the metal next to each switch with a fine indelible marker. Have a friend plug lamps into all the sockets in a room and tell you via cell phone which ones go dark when you flip a switch. Then, be specific ("sofa and window walls only" or "kitchen minus fridge") when you jot it down.

Stem a Flood—and Save Your Wiring

As a safety measure, you should know where your main water and electrical shutoffs are. The water shutoff will be near where the water enters the house. Look for a metal wheel or a flat handle like a paddle. Or check outside for a mini manhole cover—the shutoff may be there. The main electrical switch will be in or near the main box. On an old fuse system, it may be a big lever or a handle that pulls out a whole block. On a modern breaker box it will be an isolated switch near the top of the box. Flip it to keep the circuits (and you, too) from getting fried.

Bee's Wishes



If you have a question or comment about anything written in this newsletter, please contact:
City of Apache Junction
Housing Division
300 E. Superstition Blvd.
Apache Junction, Arizona 85119
Phone: (480) 474-2635
Fax: (480) 474-5102
TDD: (480) 983-0095
www.ajcity.net
hpatel@ajcity.net
Monday to Thursday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

RESOURCES

Sometimes finding money to buy groceries is difficult. There is help!

Apache Junction Reach Out Food Bank—Ph: (480) 983-2995

St George Roman Catholic Church—Ph: (480) 982-2929

Salvation Army—Ph: (480) 982-4110

St. Vincent de Paul Church

Central Christian Church—933 North Lindsey in Mesa

Dominion Christian Center—6134 E. Main Street, Suite 8 in Mesa

The Center—2066 W. Apache Trail

HOUSING PROGRAM PURPOSE AND GOALS:

1. Eliminate health and safety hazards in homes;
2. Benefit low to moderate income residents; and
3. Improve neighborhoods and encourage stability.



Housing Funnies

That's not what I meant when I asked you to carve it!

Happy Thanksgiving