SMARTER MONEY LIFE
powered by FORUM Credit Union

KNOWING WHEN TO SEEK FINANCIAL HELP



Everyone faces times when financial advice is necessary. It might be because you are experiencing a negative financial event or it could be that you are embarking on a new journey like homeownership. It is always important to understand when you should seek advice and where you might be able to find the advice you need.

TIMES WHEN YOU SHOULD SEEK HELP:

DEBT FEELS UNMANAGEABLE:
- You're missing or delaying payments
- You rely on credit cards for essentials or your balances keep growing

CASH FLOW PROBLEMS:
- Regular overdrafts, frequent late fees, or dipping into savings to cover monthly bills
- No emergency fund (or less than one month of expenses) and no plan to build one

MAJOR LIFE EVENTS:
- Family changes such as marriage/ divorce or having a child
- Buying or selling a home
- Receiving an inheritance or approaching retirement

TAXES GET COMPLICATED:
- New side income or self-employment
- RSUs/stock options, big withholding changes
- Selling property/crypto or large, unexpected tax bills/penalties

INVESTMENTS & RETIREMENT:
- You're not sure how much to save, which accounts to use, or how to invest
- Market swings cause enough stress that you're tempted to "do something"

CREDIT OR COLLECTION ISSUES:
- Credit score drops, credit denials
- Calls/letters from collectors, lawsuits, or wage-garnishment threats

URGENT RED FLAGS – SEEK HELP IMMEDIATELY:
- You've received an eviction, foreclosure, utility shutoff, tax levy, or garnishment notice
- You're considering high-cost loans (payday/ title) to cover basics
- You've been sued by a creditor or served court papers

LOW OR NO-COST RESOURCES:
- Your credit union's financial wellness team
- Employer benefits: EAP, retirement plan advisors, or financial wellness programs
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) for eligible taxpayers
- Cooperative Extension programs in your state for budgeting/financial education
- Local nonprofits sometimes host free planning clinics

QUICK SELF-CHECK:
If you say "yes" to two or more, it's time to talk to a pro
- I can only afford minimum payments on my debts
- I've had overdrafts or late fees in the past three months
- I don't know my monthly surplus/shortfall or my exact debt balances
- I'm not saving regularly for emergencies or retirement
- I have no written plan for my top money goals
- I'm worried enough about money that it affects my sleep or relationships

FORUM® CREDIT UNION

Your savings federally insured to at least $250,000 and backed by the full faith and credit of the United States Government
NCUA National Credit Union Administration, a U.S. Government Agency
EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY