

Benefits & Payroll Liaison Branch Workforce Relations Division

Week 1 Challenge: Set Your Goals

Daydreaming about your goals can be exciting. It can also be daunting if you aren't sure how you'll achieve them - that's where planning comes in. Most financial worries stem from lack of planning, not money. It's easy to understand the importance of financial planning when you think of bigger goals, like buying a new car. But it's also important to recognize that nearly every life goal requires some financing. For example, what if your goal is running your first 5K? Even that can add up—new sneakers, a training program, entry fees for a race, can easily cost you a couple hundred dollars. Here are a few steps to get you started.

1. **Write down your goals.** Include every goal you can think of; every practicality, creature comfort and fantasy you can imagine. Note: Be specific. For example, instead of listing "travel," write down where you want to go. Giving your goals a clear picture will make them easier to plan for, and ultimately help you feel motivated to achieve.

2. **Divide your goals into three lists.**

Immediate (within 3 years): Such as buying a car, beginning a hobby, or saving \$1,000.

Intermediate (in the next 3-7 years): Such as having a child, taking a vacation or getting married.

Long-term (in 7+ years): Such as saving for your child's college education, retirement or supporting aging parents.

3. **Prioritize your goals.** For this challenge, focus on your #1 goal in each category. Tackling all your goals at once may feel overwhelming, and may be unrealistic. Selecting and achieving one goal can keep you motivated and focused on achieving the others.

4. **Research and reflect.** Start to think more specifically about what you want, what's available and what you think you can afford. For example, if your goal is to buy a car, think about what type you want, what type you need, do you want to buy new or used, etc. Where possible, identify and price out all associated costs with your goal so that you can accurately plan and save.