



Budget Manager

Imagine your ideal life. Are you traveling, spending time with family, or able to splurge on things you want? The way you manage your money can help make your goals a reality. How you spend, save, and share money also impacts your well-being and long-term happiness. Now is a good time to look at your values, explore your money habits, and practice being a good budget manager.

Steps

1. Find out how your budget reflects your values
2. Learn how to track your spending
3. Find ways to earn money for you or your troop
4. Explore how to make money decisions
5. Set a goal for how you'll give back

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll be able to make informed money decisions that reflect my values and know how to track my spending.



Before you get started:

Whenever you work on a budget, group your money decisions into three categories:

Spend: for things you need or want to buy right now

Save: for things you need or want later

Share: for money to help others, from donating to a charity or buying school supplies for children at a shelter

Values That Impact Spending Habits

Beliefs and attitudes about spending and investing can make a difference in financial planning. What's important to you and what do you believe in? For example:

- Shop locally
- Support minority-owned businesses
- Buy environmentally responsible products
- Reduce unnecessary consumption
- Invest in socially responsible companies
- Spend only what you can afford
- Plan to build wealth
- Always track your finances
- Budget to live debt free
- Build an emergency fund
- Set aside money for sharing

Step 1: Find out how your budget reflects your values

Your budget is more than just a way to track your money. Your spending habits reflect what you value. If an active lifestyle is important to you, you may want to budget for a bike or running shoes. If your troop wants to save for a hiking adventure, you may choose to use your Girl Scout Cookie™ earnings to plan a trip. If you value socially responsible businesses, that's where you'd spend or invest money. When you know what you value, it becomes clear where to invest your time, energy, and resources. Do one of these choices to find out your values, then create spend-save-share goals based on what you discover.

Choices—do one:

Create a troop values list. With your Cadette friends, decide what your core troop values are when it comes to spending money. See “Core Values” and “Values That Impact Spending Habits” for inspiration. Prioritize at least four. Rank them in order of importance to the group. Then look at how your group handles its cookie earnings. Now that you've established your values, are your troop goals aligned? Is there something special you could see putting money toward in the future? Travel? Community service? You don't need to plan just yet, but it helps to collect thoughts about future spending plans.

Make your own values list. Decide where you'd like to spend, save, or share. Maybe there's a purchase you want or need to make, a charity you'd like to donate to, or a troop trip you want to help save for. Then group your list into categories: must have; nice but not necessary; and not really important. See “Core Values” and “Values That Impact Spending Habits” for inspiration and come up with four of your top values when it comes to money. Do your spend-save-share goals align with your values? Share your list with family or friends to talk about your values and how you'd like to use your money.

Find out how other people budget. Talk to three adults about how they make choices when it comes to spending money. You can talk to them individually or invite three adults to your next meeting for a panel discussion with your troop. What were their goals? How did their values impact their spending decisions? Find out if they ever changed their priorities and how that affected their budget. Then make a statement of your values using “Core Values” and “Values That Impact Spending Habits” as inspiration.

Step 2: Learn how to track your spending

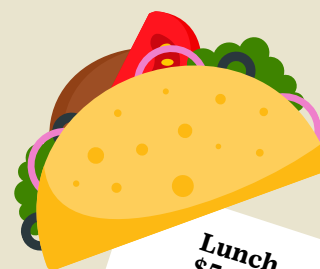
Do you know where your money goes? By tracking your money, you can start spending wisely. When you track your spending, you can adjust spending habits, create and stick to a budget, and make sure you're putting money toward your goals.

Choices—do one:

Create a spreadsheet. With your troop, create an income and spending report based on your cookie earnings. Start with everything you earned (or plan to) with your cookie business. Then track how much you spent (or will spend) on your goals. Find out if your troop has receipts and bank statements for the money you've spent. Ask a financial expert to give you feedback on your spreadsheet and make changes. Then plan for when you'll regularly update your income and spending report.

Explore by using online tools. Look for online budgeting tools to track your spending, such as an app or spending report through a bank or other financial institution. Practice inputting your earnings (real or imagined) and what you might spend on a daily or weekly basis. Separate your spending into categories, such as clothing, food, transportation, hobbies, and entertainment. Prioritize your wants and needs. Are your values reflected in your spending? Is there anything you can cut back on to put more towards saving for a long-term goal?

Create a tip sheet on how to track spending. Get at least three tips from an accountant or financial advisor about the best ways to track your spending. Find out how to come up with your goals, identify your spending patterns, and track your progress. Learn how to prevent fraud by regularly tracking your accounts. Put your tips together to share with peers and show how keeping track of your finances can help your future.



Lunch
\$5



Carnival Ride
\$2



Fun Socks
\$8



Smoothie
\$3

Words to Know

Brainstorm: A fun word that means coming up with new ideas and different ways to solve a problem.

Budget: A plan for what you need and how much money you'll need to spend.

Consumer: A person who purchases goods and services.

Consumer advocacy: Actions taken by people or organizations to protect consumers.

Dividends: A sum of money a company pays its shareholders regularly out of its profits.

Earnings: Money you make in return for work or service; unearned earnings can be gift money.

Empathy: When someone understands or can share the emotions and feelings of another person.

Expenses: What you spend money on, like food, clothing, or sporting equipment.

Feedback: What someone thinks of your ideas.

Goal: What you plan to do with the money you earn.

Income: Money you receive from different sources. Earned income is money from a job, tips, or your business. Unearned income comes from interest in a savings account or investments like stocks, bonds, or other investment income. You may pay taxes on both earned and unearned income.

Investment: Putting money in things like stocks, bonds, and real estate—anything that can help money grow.

Needs: The things you must have to stay healthy and be safe, like clothing, housing, and medical care.

Recruitment: Getting someone to join something like an organization or workplace.

Savings: Money that is not spent and has been set aside to use later.

Spending report: A way to track money spent on goods and services for different time periods.

Spreadsheet: A way to collect and analyze data; this usually looks like a grid of rows and boxes.

Stocks: A way to invest in a company by buying shares. If the company does well, the investor receives dividends.

U.S. savings bond: A long-term investment option backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government.

Value: The worth or importance of something.

Wants: The things you would like to have but can live without.

Word cloud: A collection of words in different sizes that convey a concept, message, or theme. The larger the word, the more important it is.

Step 3: Find ways to earn money for you or your troop

Every budget starts with income, whether from birthday gifts or a small business, such as lawn mowing or selling homemade soap. Explore ways you or your troop can earn money to meet your goals.

Choices—do one:

Brainstorm with your troop. Host a session and write your goals on a large piece of paper. Find out how much it will cost to meet your goals and how your cookie earnings can help. Then brainstorm other ways your troop can earn money. Are there income-generating ideas you can get started on now? Maybe a bake sale or service your troop can provide? If so, make a plan and set deadlines.

Interview a local business owner. After you explore ways to earn money, find a shop or business related to your goals. It might be a pet supply store, bakery, or retail store. Find out how the owner got started and get tips about inventory and customer relations. Does the business have a website and do online sales? Share your idea for how to earn money with the business owner to get feedback and improve your plan.

Explore earning opportunities and trends online. Come up with five possible ways to earn an income right now. Target one job or business idea you feel most excited about. Look at related career and earning trends to find out how your job or business goals today match future opportunities. Write one or two sentences about what you want to do. If it's a small business, who will be your customer? How will you deliver your product or service? Talk to family members and friends about your idea and get feedback to make your plan even better.

Core Values

What you value in life can shape your financial plan; here are some to inspire you. Make sure to add your own.

Achievement	Knowledge
Balance	Leadership
Challenge	Learning
Community	Pragmatism
Concern for others	Reliability
Creativity	Responsibility
Dependability	Security
Efficiency	Social responsibility
Entrepreneurship	Service
Environmental stewardship	Stability
Fearlessness	Success
Growth	Status
Happiness	Trustworthiness
Health	Wealth
Honesty	Wisdom

Step 4: Explore how to make money decisions

Spending money can be daunting, especially when you're faced with a lot of choices. There are ways to make informed decisions: You can comparison-shop to find the best prices. You can read customer reviews online and investigate the seller and the product—what is the seller's return policy and customer service record? Is last year's cheaper model just as good as the current one? What are other organizations the seller supports and are they aligned with your troop's values? Find ways to make informed spending decisions.

Choices—do one:

Compare prices for troop purchases. One of your troop's goals may be to take a trip or to host a celebration. With your troop, make a list of all the costs associated with your goal. Then search for different options, group rates, and coupon codes for your purchases. Use a search engine to filter and compare products. Find out if other troops have made similar purchases and reach out to them for reviews of their experiences.

Seek out discounts. Bargain hunting can be satisfying, especially when you can get good value for your money. Many websites and stores offer discounts, especially around holidays. You might find items reduced during certain times of the year, such as bargains for winter clothes in March. Some stores do price matching, where they match their price with their competitors. Other stores offer discount codes you can get online. Come up with an item you want and find at least three ways you can get it at a discount. Read a blog about how to avoid paying full price for anything.

Write a product review. With an item you want in mind, read five customer reviews and three professional reviews. A professional review could be from a magazine you trust, a consumer blogger, or a website. Find out if the product does what it says. Are there lesser-known brands with the same features? You can also check ratings on consumer advocacy sites like the Better Business Bureau. Then practice writing a product review for something you already own. Describe the product and write a balanced description of what you like and don't like about it. Does your product offer good value? Would you recommend it? Share your review with friends or your family.



Step 5: Set a goal for how you'll give back

Think of three things that are important to you. There are websites that list charities, nonprofit organizations, and causes for inspiration. Make sure the charities and organizations are reliable. Check out the tips in the “Charity Checkup” box to guide you. Find out what you can do with your money and time to help others and add it into your budget and financial planning—and to your values.

Choices—do one:

Team up with your troop. As a group, decide on giving goals for your cookie business earnings. Brainstorm ideas about how you'll help, including volunteering, donations, and projects. What can you do to help your cause and how will you do it? Come up with a task chart for projects and volunteering. Then create a budget for your shared goal. How much do you want to save to serve your community? What other ways can you use the money for the cause? For example, you might buy supplies for an animal shelter or donate for a new swing set at a park. You might also volunteer your time but need to use some of your funds to buy supplies for your service. For example, you may need to buy gloves and bags if you're helping pick up trash at a park.

Volunteer to decide how to share your time, skills, and money.

Volunteering is a great way to discover the needs of an organization. Help at a food pantry or walk dogs at a local shelter. While there, ask the administrators what their needs are and how donations, money, and volunteers might help. Once you have information, plan for how you can support the organization. If you plan to donate, how much will you need to save?

Get inspired by a professional. Talk to someone who works at a nonprofit or service organization. Find out how donations help the organization, how fundraising works, and how decisions are made about using money. What is the organization's action plan? What do they hope to accomplish? Write all the words and phrases you hear during your talk, such as resources, plan, incentives, recruitment, skills, empathy, action, and canvassing. Look at an example of a word cloud online. Then, to keep you inspired, create one with the words and phrases you heard. Use what you learn to decide and plan for how you or your troop will help your community.



Charity Checkup

Before you support a charity or organization, find out if it's reliable, effective, or legitimate. Search for free online sites that analyze charities and nonprofit organizations. Find information, like how donations are allocated for administrative services and how much goes directly to the cause. You can also check the charity or organization's website for their annual report or to find information about how they meet goals and measure success. Look for the statement that the organization is a 501(c)(3), which means it is a nonprofit that is registered with the government.



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Volunteer's Guide to the Budget Manager Badge*

Find tips and ideas to help guide your troop through this badge.

To get Cadettes started: Write the meanings for spend, save, and share (from the activity description) on a whiteboard or large piece of paper.

Step 1: Find out how your budget reflects your values • 30–40 minutes

Ask: How does the way you spend money reflect your values?

Share: Your budget is more than just a way to track your money. Explore your values, then consider your short- and long-term goals and how you'd spend, save, and share your money. Do your goals match your values?

Choices—do one:

- **Create a troop values list.** Share “Core Values” and “Values That Impact Spending Habits” with Cadettes for inspiration. As they brainstorm their troop values, capture their ideas. Have them prioritize four values and rank them in order of importance. Ask them to write their spend, save, and share goals for cookie earnings to see if they're aligned with their values and collect ideas about future spending plans.

Materials: whiteboard or large paper, markers, “Core Values,” “Values That Impact Spending Habits”

- **Make your own values list.** Share “Core Values” and “Values That Impact Spending Habits” with Cadettes for inspiration. Give them index cards to write four core values and ten things they do to spend, save, and share money, then place the spend/save/share goals cards under one of the four core values. Do their goals match the values they've identified? Encourage them to share their values and goals with family or friends.

Materials: index cards, pens, paper, “Core Values,” “Values That Impact Spending Habits”

- **Find out how other people budget.** Share “Core Values” and “Values That Impact Spending Habits” with Cadettes for inspiration. Divide Cadettes into research teams to find one profile about a money-earning adult. Suggest they use search topics like “how I achieved my money goals,” or “inspiring financial stories.” Have each group

share their findings about that person's goals, values, spending habits, and budgets. Then have them write their personal spend-save-share goal on a piece of paper based on the values they identify with.

Materials: computers, smartphones, or tablets; paper; pens; “Core Values;” “Values That Impact Spending Habits”

Step 2: Learn how to track your spending • 30–40 minutes

Ask: Do you know how much money you spend each week?

Share: One of the best ways to control expenses is by tracking your spending. Start by establishing how much money you take in or earn each month or year, then track how much you spend.

Choices—do one:

- **Create a spreadsheet.** Reach out to an accountant or financial expert to give the troop feedback on their spending report and make changes. You could also help Cadettes go online to find a simple spending report they can use. Share receipts and bank statements with your troop if you have them. Ask them to decide how they'll update their troop spending report.

Materials: computers, smartphones, or tablets; paper; pens; calculators

- **Explore by using online tools.** Cadettes can work in groups by having each team imagine an annual income and estimate their monthly expenses. Ask them to share their spending reports with the group.

Materials: computers, smartphones, or tablets (optional); paper; pens; calculators

- **Create a tip sheet on how to track spending.** Use your network to reach out to an accountant or financial expert to talk to Cadettes about best practices for spending. Share the purpose of the step and activity ahead of time. Encourage Cadettes to ask questions and take notes while the guest is talking. After the session, they can work on their tip sheet alone, in pairs, or as a group.

Materials: paper, pens

*Detailed choice activities, meeting tools, and additional resources and materials can be found within the Volunteer Toolkit on my.girlscouts.org.

Step 3: Find ways to earn money for you or your troop • 20–30 minutes

Ask: What are ways you earn money now or ways people can earn money?

Share: Every budget starts with earnings. Explore ways you or your troop can earn money to meet your goals.

Choices—do one:

- **Brainstorm with your troop.** As Cadettes brainstorm goals and ways to earn money, capture their ideas. Then have them find out how much their ideas would cost. Ask them to vote on any income-generating ideas they'd like to get going now. Then have them come up with a task chart with responsibilities and deadlines to get those ideas started.

Materials: whiteboard or large paper, markers, paper, pens

- **Interview a local business owner.** Use your network to connect the troop with a local business owner. Encourage Cadettes to ask questions and share any money-earning ideas they have with the guest to get feedback.

Materials: paper, pens

- **Explore earning opportunities and trends online.** Divide Cadettes into research teams. Each group will look at career trends, find one job idea, and make notes about the training or education they'd need and the earning potential. Then have them share their choice and get feedback from the group. Make sure one of the career trends is in mathematics, science, engineering, and technology.

Materials: computers, smartphones, or tablets; pens; paper

Step 4: Explore how to make money decisions • 20–30 minutes

Ask: Have you ever had to decide about a purchase?

Share: Spending money can be daunting, but comparison-shopping and reviews can help you make an informed decision. You can also investigate the seller and the product—what is the seller's return policy and customer service record? Is last year's cheaper model just as good as the current one? Find ways to make informed spending decisions.

Choices—do one:

- **Compare prices for troop purchases.** Have Cadettes brainstorm their troop goals and make a list of costs associated with them. Then have them break into teams to comparison-shop their goals—cost and reviews—then report back to the group. Encourage them to look for group rates or discount codes to help meet their goals.

Materials: computers, smartphones, or tablets; markers; pens; paper

- **Seek out discounts.** Cadettes can work alone or in pairs to search for discounts for their items, then share their findings with the group. Encourage talk about items they may have purchased at a discount.

Materials: computers, smartphones, or tablets

- **Write a product review.** Break Cadettes into research teams to decide on one item and find customer reviews online. They can write their product reviews alone or as a team, then share with the group.

Materials: computers, smartphones, or tablets; pens; paper

Step 5: Set a goal for how you'll give back • 20–30 minutes

Ask: If you could take action on something right now, what would it be?

Share: Think of three things that are important to you. Then research support groups or organizations related to those things. Find out what you can do with your money and time to help others and factor it into your budget.

Choices—do one:

- **Team up with your troop.** As Cadettes brainstorm their giving goals, capture their ideas. Have them vote on a goal for giving that they like the best and that aligns with their values, and then create a budget for it.

Materials: paper, pens, whiteboard or large paper, markers

- **Volunteer to decide how to share your time, skills, and money.** In advance, find out what giving organization or issue is important to the group. Then arrange a field trip or virtual meeting with a staff member or administrator associated with that cause. Ask the guest to share their organization's needs and talk about fundraising. Afterwards, have Cadettes come up with a plan for ways they can support the organization and how much they'll need to save.

Materials: paper, pens

- **Get inspired by a professional.** Use your network to connect the troop with someone who works at a nonprofit or service organization. Guide Cadettes to ask questions from the activity description and come up with more of their own. Encourage them to write words and phrases they hear during the talk. After the guest has finished, share a word cloud sample with Cadettes and have them create their own.

Materials: paper, pens, sample of word cloud printout

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