



## Financial Aid: Fast Facts

### Budgeting

Keeping track of all of your spending may seem like a lot of work. But if you're organized, keep good records, and use some of the following tips, you'll find it's easier than you may think.

The first step to any budget is identifying wants vs needs. It's easy to splurge and spend money on a luxury every so often, but your spending priorities should always focus on your needs instead of wants. Knowing the difference between the two is the first step in building a successful budget.

When getting ready to create a budget use the following steps:

1. Identify Income
2. List Expenses
3. Compare Income and Expenses
4. Set Priorities and Make Changes

Identifying Wants Vs. Needs

1. List items you would like to purchase
2. Label items as a need or a want
3. Prioritize the items on the list
4. Determine if the item will fit in your budget

### Budgeting Tips

- **Record and organize your actual expenses.** Have you noticed how fast your cash disappears? To get a handle on where your cash is going, use a phone app to record even the smallest expenditures such as coffee, movie tickets, snacks, and parking. Some expenses that are often ignored include music downloads, charges for extra cell phone usage, and entertainment expenses.
- **Review your spending for little items that add up to big monthly expenditures.** The daily cup of coffee and soda at a vending machine will add up. Consider packing your lunch rather than eating out every day. Spending \$10 a day eating out during the week translates to \$50 a week and \$200 a month. A \$5 packed lunch translates into a savings of \$1,200 a year. Save even more by looking for ways to manage and reduce your transportation and entertainment expenses.
- **Make your financial aid credit balance refund last.** Once the financial aid office applies your financial aid to your tuition and fees, if there's money left over, it will be refunded to you so you can use it for other education-related expenses (textbooks, rent, transportation, food,

etc.). Remember that your financial aid is supposed to help you cover your cost of attendance for the **whole semester**, so be sure to make that refund stretch over time rather than spending it all as soon as you get it.

- **Comparison shop.** Comparison shopping is simply using common sense to compare products in an attempt to get the best prices and best value. This means doing a little research before running out to buy something, especially when it comes to more expensive items. Make the most of tools like phone apps for comparing prices and value.
- **Don't spend more on your credit card than you can afford to pay in full on a monthly basis.** Responsible use of credit cards can be a shopping convenience and help you establish a solid credit rating and avoid financial problems. Consider signing up for electronic payment reminders, balance notices, and billing statement notifications from your credit card provider.

### **Need help getting started?**

American Student Assistance has the following interactive template available [here](#).

**Questions?** Visit the KCAD Financial Aid office in the Student Services office on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor or call 616-451-2787.

KCAD FINANCIAL AID OFFICE EMAIL: [KCADFINAID@FERRIS.EDU](mailto:KCADFINAID@FERRIS.EDU)

SOURCE: [HTTPS://STUDENTAID.ED.GOV/SA/PREPARE-FOR-COLLEGE/BUDGETING/BUDGETING-TIPS](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/budgeting/budgeting-tips)