



August 20, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT: Daniel J. Forte
617-523-7595
dforte@massbankers.org

Back-To-School Money Management Tips

BOSTON, August 20, 2020 – This year will be very different for incoming and returning college students throughout Massachusetts and New England. Many schools are offering remote classes, while others are utilizing in-person or hybrid learning models with social distancing and other public health precautions required. However you attend college this year, the Massachusetts Bankers Association has a few tips to help you manage your finances during these challenging times.

Overall Money Management

- **Budgeting**

Establishing and managing a budget is always a good idea. A great way to start is to understand all your sources of income: money from a job, savings, financial aid, scholarships, private loans, and funds from your family. If you track and record all your spending during the first month of school, you can use the first month of expenses to create projections through the end of a semester, or school year. In tracking your expenses, you may notice certain habits you can change to reduce your costs. Try to strike the right balance between entertainment spending and mandatory spending (textbooks, academic apps, etc.).

For additional information, take a look at these articles:

- [Top Budgeting Apps - Updated for 2020!](#)
- [Get Your Spending Under Control - August 2020](#)
- [Budgeting During the Global Pandemic](#)

- **Credit Cards, Debit Cards and Other Bills**

As a student just beginning your financial life, it's important to learn about credit. Using a credit card or a debit card can be a good way to establish a positive credit history that will be a benefit throughout life. In addition, you'll find that a credit card can be very valuable in an emergency. Under federal law if you are under 21 years of age and want a credit card you must demonstrate income, savings or have a co-signer to obtain a card.

Remember, credit cards may have higher interest rates and penalties if you don't pay on time. These costs can be onerous if you overuse your credit card and balances may be difficult to pay down without steady income and responsible management of your funds. A poor credit score could hamper your ability to buy a car, rent an apartment, own a home - or even get a job.

If you receive a card, it's very important that you check your statements carefully or monitor your account online and report any discrepancies immediately to your bank. Especially in an age of remote learning and social distancing, cable and internet bills, cell phone data plans and streaming service subscriptions can run up expenses quickly. It's essential to work within a budget and monitor your finances at least once per month. Almost every bank and credit card company offers online account access or an app for your phone or tablet, making it easier than ever to check your spending and current balances.

- **Obtain a Free Credit Report**

To protect your credit score, you should review your credit report once a year and look for inaccuracies. You can get it free once a year by going online at www.annualcreditreport.com

Important Banking Tools

- **The Checking Account**

All college students should have a checking account. Work with your parents or a trusted friend or family member to figure out what works best for you. Some students open a joint account with their parent or parents, which gives them the flexibility to make funds transfers when necessary. As joint owners of the account, this arrangement also allows a parent to view all transactions online and foster conversation to adjust saving and spending accordingly.

- **The Debit Card**

Nothing beats a debit card for convenience. It's how students pay for the late-night coffee when cramming for a test, and how you can grab some quick cash at the ATM before heading out for the night with friends. Many bank debit cards can be used in your phone's mobile wallet for contactless payments and some banks are even issuing contactless debit cards that can also be used at these terminals. If you do need to get cash, use your own bank's ATM or the "cash back" feature when you make a purchase at a grocery or convenience store.

Also, if your bank is a member of the SUM ATM Program, you can avoid other bank surcharges by using another bank's ATM that is also in the SUM Program. For more information on the SUM ATM Program, please visit: [The SUM ATM Program](#)

- **Online Banking**

Online banking is convenient for monitoring your accounts and paying bills. Most personal business is done online today, so managing your funds, tracking expenses and paying bills through online banking is easy.

- **Mobile Banking**

Mobile banking is an excellent way to check balances, deposit checks, pay bills and monitor transaction history. The vast majority of banks now offer mobile banking, where you can get up-to-date, real-time information about your accounts. Very convenient and smart for budgeting!

Always remember, spending a little time thinking about finances each month will make your college days — or experience in the working world — just a little less stressful, especially during these challenging times. And always remember, wear a mask and be safe!

The Massachusetts Bankers Association represents approximately 135 commercial, savings, cooperative, and federal savings banks and savings and loan associations with approximately \$380 billion in local assets, 72,000 employees across Massachusetts and New England, over 2,000 banking locations, more than 4,500 ATMs, and donate more than \$105 million annually to social agencies and charitable organizations across the Commonwealth. For more information, visit www.massbankers.org.

#

Massachusetts Bankers Association
 One Washington Mall, 8th Floor
 Boston, MA 02108
 P: 617-523-7595 F: 617-523-6373
www.MassBankers.org
 Facebook.com/MassBankers
 Twitter: @MaBankersAssoc



[Unsubscribe or update your email address.](#)

Massachusetts Bankers Association | One Washington
 Mall, 8th Floor | Boston, MA 02108-2603