

Zero Based Budget Template

1. Calculate Your Income

Calculate your total income from all sources (See Helpful Hint #1 & #2)

Income Source #1	<input type="text"/>
Income Source #2	<input type="text"/>
Income Source #3	<input type="text"/>
Income Source #4	<input type="text"/>
Total Income	

2. Calculate your fixed expenses

These are items where the amounts typically remain the same and aren't easily changed

Mortgage/Rent	<input type="text"/>
Property Taxes/Rental Insurance	<input type="text"/>
Electricity	<input type="text"/>
Water/Sewer	<input type="text"/>
Vehicle Insurance	<input type="text"/>
Child Care Expenses	<input type="text"/>
Total Fixed Expenses	

3. Budget Your Variable Expenses Based on Your Priorities

Depending on what you identify as your financial priorities, you may choose to complete that section first to ensure it is top priority:

a. Do you want to pay off debt quickly? (Helpful Hint #3)

Vehicle Loan Payment	<input type="text"/>
Credit Card Payment	<input type="text"/>
Personal Loan Payment	<input type="text"/>
Total Debt Payments	

b. Are you looking to increase your savings? (Helpful Hint #4)

Emergency Fund Contribution	<input type="text"/>
Retirement Contribution	<input type="text"/>
Vacation Contribution	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>
Total Contribution to Savings	

c. Are you trying to determine your budget for variable expenses?

(Helpful Hint #5 & #6)

Phone & Internet	<input type="text"/>
Groceries & Food	<input type="text"/>
Entertainment	<input type="text"/>
Donations	<input type="text"/>
Gifts	<input type="text"/>
Fuel/Transportation	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>
Total Variable Expenses	

4. Calculate the difference

Total Income	<input type="text"/>
Fixed Expenses	<input type="text"/>
Debt Repayment	<input type="text"/>
Saving Contributions	<input type="text"/>
Variable Expenses	<input type="text"/>
Total Expenses	<input type="text"/>
Balance (total income - total expenses)	

If your balance is negative- revisit to your priorities in Step 3 and see where you can decrease your expenses. If not, is there any way to increase your income?

If your balance is positive- return to your priorities in Step 3 and allocate. This means you may be able to repay a loan even quicker or bump up your retirement savings!

5. Zero Balance

Congratulations! When you reach a zero balance all your earnings are accounted for. Knowing exactly where your hard earned money is going will allow you to make even better financial choices!

6. Monitor & Adjust (see helpful hint #7)

Make sure to continually monitor your budget to ensure it is working for you and adjust as required.

Helpful Hints

- #1** Make sure you use the same timeframe throughout the spreadsheet. Is it easier to make a bi-weekly budget because that's how often you get paid? If so, make sure to calculate the bi-weekly equivalent for expenses that are paid monthly or for a different period of time.
- #2** Budgeting when you have irregular income is a little more difficult but even more important. Consider using the lowest amount of income you usually make, so you budget to spend no more than your income during your lowest-earning months. That means in months you earn more, you'll have extra money to spend on fun things, put in your savings or use to pay off debt.
- #3** There are many different approaches to paying off debt. You can choose to tackle the highest interest rate loan first, ensuring that you pay the minimum amount of interest possible or you may choose to tackle the smallest loan first-gaining momentum and confidence to tackle the larger ones. Do what works best for you.
- #4** Consider opening a separate savings account for each savings goal. Having a separate place to collect funds towards your goal will keep that money separate from your day to day spending and give you a sense of accomplishment as you see your savings grow!
- #5** If debt repayment and building your savings are important to you, consider budgeting for those priorities first and then skipping to Step 4 to determine what remains for the variable expenses. However, a budget is only useful if it's realistic so it's important to budget for leisure activities too!
- #6** Take a look at bank statements and/or receipts (if you mostly use cash) for the past 3 months to determine how much you usually spend for each expense category.
- #7** Your financial institution is here to help you- reach out if you need assistance or financial advice!