

GETTING STARTED

Setting SMART goals

Setting goals is the first step toward achieving your dreams. This tool teaches you how to effectively set goals that are SMART—meaning they are **(S)pecific**, **(M)easurable**, **(A)chievable**, **(R)elevant**, and **(T)ime bound**

SMART goals provide an easy-to-follow structure for creating goals. This helps you really break down what you want into a format that makes it simpler to plan for, track, and ultimately achieve your goals.

To create your goals, first think about your values. When your goals match up with the values that are important to you and your family, you're more likely to prioritize achieving them.

If you're not sure what your goals are, think about what you want to change in your life. See if there's a goal you can create that would help bring about that change.

It's likely there are many things you want to achieve. But if you can focus on one or two priorities that align with your values, you'll have a better chance of reaching that goal.

What to do

- **List your values** to help you think about what is important to you and your family.
- **Brainstorm a list of dreams and goals.** Remember, dreams are aspirational and usually vague. Goals are specific things you can achieve to help you reach your dreams.
- **Create a SMART goal** from one or two items on your list of goals. Write down what makes this goal specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.

A step further

After you've written down your SMART goals, take a look at the "Putting goals into action" tool to create an easy-to-follow plan for achieving your goals.

To access a dynamic and fillable version of this tool, visit <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/your-money-your-goals/tools>



Setting SMART goals based on your values motivates you to achieve them

1. Think about your values and choose which ones are most important to you.
2. List some things you'd like to change about your life and dreams you have.
3. Pick one or two items from your list of brainstormed ideas and create a SMART goal.
Make copies of the next page if you want to set more than one goal.

Which values are most important to you?

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family/friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Reputation | <input type="checkbox"/> Status |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-respect | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Happiness | <input type="checkbox"/> Spirituality | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Stability | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

What are your hopes, wants, and dreams?

Thinking about your values, write a list of things you'd like to change and dreams you have. They can be short term (less than six months to achieve) or long term (more than six months to achieve).

Things I'd like to change	Dreams I have for myself and my family

Use your list of dreams to create a SMART goal.

Remember that SMART goals are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime bound.

My SMART goal is...

To make sure your goal is SMART, write in what makes your goal specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.

SMART characteristic	Questions to ask yourself	Your answers
Specific	What will I achieve? Who will benefit from the goal? What specific thing will I accomplish?	
Measurable	How much? How many? How will I know when it's done?	
Achievable	Is this goal something that I can actually reach? Do I have the tools and support I need to accomplish this?	
Relevant	Is this something that I really want? Is now the right time to do this? Why is this goal important?	
Time bound	When will I reach this goal? Is the time frame reasonable?	