

### **What should I do if my expenses are greater than my income?**

The best (and most difficult) thing to do is to find expenses in your budget that you are willing to eliminate. Things like premium cable channels, streaming or music services, and trips to restaurants are common things to either eliminate or cut back.

But what if you don't even have that kind of elbow room? What if *all* of your financial resources are already devoted to the basics (food, shelter, and clothing)?

This is a challenging situation and one that many of your peers have likely faced or are currently facing. The following lists of suggestions and government and community resources are to provide options and ideas for ways to save money, meet your needs, and help you achieve economic stability and well-being.

#### **Suggestions for cutting expenses:**<sup>39</sup>

- Share living expenses with someone. Find a housemate or move into an established shared living situation – rent will be cheaper and so will utilities.
- Move into a less expensive apartment. However, moving and deposit costs may make this option difficult.
- Seek rental assistance from local government or nonprofit organizations.
- Apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and buy all your groceries with your SNAP card.
- Sell any clothing, shoes, electronics or other items you no longer use or need.
- Find additional part-time or temporary work to bring up your income to meet your needs.

#### **Monitoring & fine-tuning your budget:**

- First month: monitor your spending weekly and check for unnecessary spending.
- Second and third month: monitor your spending bi-weekly and continue to check for unnecessary spending. Make adjustments to your spending as needed.
- Rest of the year: review your budget at the beginning of each month, as well as your income and expenses. Continue to make adjustments as needed. Most importantly, stick with your budget!<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Original material from Peerlink National Technical Assistance Center.

<sup>40</sup> "Personal Finance and Economic Empowerment." Presented by Sebastian Rodrigues and Jessica Carrol at Peerpocalypse, 2021.