

# Financial Checklist For New College Graduates

## Organization and Security

- Get organized from the start
- You'll store most documents electronically but consider a paper copy of all legal documents and contracts as a backup. Store in [lockable fire safe box](#)
- Know [how long to keep documents](#)
- Items to keep in fire safe box; copy of wallet contents, passport, social security card, pink slip for car, sentimental items, copy of critical prescriptions, lease agreements, contracts, other legal documents. Take this box with you if emergency i.e. "Grab It Box"
- Follow [Good Cyber Security Habits](#)
- Prepare your [Health Care Directive](#), Will, and Financial Power of Attorney just in case you can't make decisions because of an accident

## Money Attitudes and Goals

- Take a ["money personality"](#) quiz to recognize and understand your emotional triggers around money
- Read ["Your Money or Your Life"](#) by Vicki Robin and Joe Dominguez
- Have written one and five year goals. See [Golden Rules of Goal Setting](#)

## Student Loan Repayment

- Determine your grace period (usually 6-9 months).
- [Estimate your payments](#)
- Consider consolidating your loans
  - If you have multiple student loans, you may be able to combine them into one loan with a fixed interest rate and only pay a single monthly payment
- Student loan interest deduction
  - You may be able to deduct some or all of your student loan interest on your federal tax return
- If you find you are unable to make the monthly payment, contact your lender immediately
  - Apply for a deferment, forbearance, or cancellation of your loan
- Even if you're paying off student loans, save a portion of income every month

## **Saving**

- Build emergency cushion with goal of having 6 months of living expenses saved
- Push your savings target to just outside your comfort zone. If you only save what you think you can it will likely not be enough
- Open a [Roth IRA](#) as soon as possible
- Participate in company 401K Plan as soon as possible. Always contribute at least enough to receive company match. Choose the Target Date Retirement Fund to start

## **Investing**

- Keep it simple. Build a core investment portfolio on low cost index mutual or exchange traded funds, then expand to other investment options if you are intrigued with investing and willing to put in the necessary study time
- Open brokerage account at TDAmeritrade or Vanguard
- Pick a low cost balanced fund to start i.e. Vanguard Target Retirement Fund or Vanguard STAR to keep things easy and uncomplicated
- Read [“Playing the Winner’s Game”](#) by Larry E. Swedroe
- If you want to learn more, read [“The Four Pillars of Investing”](#) by William Bernstein
- And if you want to learn more, read [“The Intelligent Investor”](#) by Benjamin Graham

## **Credit**

- [Check your credit report](#)
- Read [“Good Credit”](#) by John Ulzheimer
- Commit to paying off credit card debt
- Pay off credit cards monthly

## **Insurance**

- Auto insurance; liability limits 50,000/100,000
- Health insurance; if possible stay on parent’s policy until 26
- Renters insurance; not very expensive
- Disability insurance; initially through work but later will need to purchase more
- Life insurance; once someone is depending upon you then you’ll need to purchase