12 Month Money Map

Build a sample monthly plan using $3,000 take-home income

A strong plan connects take-home income, obligations, savings, debt, and future goals.

Build a sample monthly plan using $3,000 in take-home income.

Essential expenses

Flexible expenses

Debt payments

Savings and emergency fund

My next action this week

Small goal: This month, I will automate one savings transfer and review all three credit reports.

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Money and Credit Foundations

Definitions, budget formula, and good-credit habits

Key Definitions

Cash flow:	Money coming in compared with money going out.
Emergency fund:	Money reserved for unexpected necessary expenses.
Debt-to-income ratio:	Monthly debt payments divided by gross monthly income.
Utilization:	Credit-card balances divided by total credit limits.
APR:	The annual cost of borrowing, shown as a percentage.

Budget Formula

Take-home income - Expenses - Debt - Savings = Money left

Example: $3,000 - $1,800 Expenses - $400 Debt - $500 Savings = $300 left

Fun fact: Payment history and amounts owed are major parts of common credit-scoring models.

Good Credit Profile Checklist

- [ ] All accounts are paid on time.
- [ ] Revolving utilization is kept low, with a goal below 10% when possible.
- [ ] Credit reports are checked for errors, unfamiliar accounts, and hard inquiries.
- [ ] Balances, APRs, minimum payments, and due dates are understood.
- [ ] Applications for new credit are intentional and limited.
- [ ] Identity-theft tools such as fraud alerts or freezes are used when needed.
- [ ] Borrowing fits the monthly budget and repayment plan.

One checklist item I will work on:

Are You Ready for Adulting?

Check what is true today and identify your next step

Adulting does not mean having everything figured out. It means building the skills, systems, and support you need one step at a time.

INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

- [ ] Do you currently have income from a job, business, benefits, or another reliable source?
- [ ] Do you have a plan for finding work or increasing your income?
- [ ] Do you understand your pay stub, taxes, and take-home pay?

BANKING AND SAVING

- [ ] Do you have a checking account or another safe account for everyday money?
- [ ] Do you have a savings account?
- [ ] Are you currently saving part of your income?
- [ ] Are you building an emergency fund?

PLANNING AND RESPONSIBILITY

- [ ] Do you have a monthly budget or spending plan?
- [ ] Have you set at least one SMART goal?
- [ ] Do you know your bill amounts and due dates?
- [ ] Do you keep your ID and important documents in a safe place?
- [ ] Do you understand your credit report and how to protect your identity?
- [ ] Do you know who to ask for help when a financial decision feels confusing?

Affirmation: Remember, it is not about perfection - it is about progress. One small step can change your direction.

My first adulting step:

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Build a SMART Goal

Turn a general goal into a clear action plan

A SMART goal explains exactly what you want to accomplish, how you will track it, and when you plan to finish.

S - Specific

State exactly what you want to accomplish.

What exactly will I do?

M - Measurable

Choose a number, amount, or result you can track.

How will I measure progress?

A - Achievable

Make sure the goal is realistic with your time, income, and resources.

What makes this possible for me?

R - Relevant

Connect the goal to your needs, values, or future plans.

Why does this goal matter?

T - Time-bound

Set a clear deadline and checkpoints.

When will I complete it?

SMART Goal Example

I will save $600 for an emergency fund by putting $50 from each paycheck into savings for the next 12 paychecks.

Write your complete SMART goal:

My first action and the date I will do it:

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