

Helpful tips and strategies

THE TAX MOMENT

What do you do with your tax refund? Most people already have it mentally spent before they even receive it. Instead, consider maximizing your refund by saving it for a rainy day, paying down debt, or getting closer to your financial goals. Why not use it for all three? Save all or part of your refund at one of our tax sites and enter to win \$100!

Does your W-4 need an adjustment? The W-4 is a form you fill out at work when you start a new job. It lets the IRS know what you plan to put on your tax return the next time you file. What you put on your W-4 will also determine how much is taken out of your paycheck for taxes. Ensure that your W-4 is filled out correctly to avoid any surprises at tax time.

CREDIT

When was the last time you checked your credit report? The Federal Trade Commission estimates that 1 in 5 credit reports has an error on it. A big part of being in control of your finances is staying in the know about your credit report. You can request a free copy of your report from each of the three

major credit bureaus (Transunion, Equifax, and Experian) every year. Visit www.annualcreditreport.com to get started.

You can also get access to your FICO score for free by signing up for CEP's Project Money program or by visiting a Credit Geek at an upcoming Money Action Day!

BANKING

A good bank account can help you keep your money safe, track your spending habits, and even earn interest. CEP partners with Illinois banks to provide you with access to high-quality account options at our tax sites.

Not sure which bank would be the best for you? Look to NerdWallet or Bankrate for help comparing accounts.

MONEY MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Are you always on your smartphone? Use your time on your phone more productively by downloading one of these FREE money management mobile applications:

- Clarity Money
- Daily Budget
- Mint

CEP recommends these easy-to-use apps if you have goals to improve your budgeting, savings, spending habits, credit building and more!

LIKED OUR TIPS?

Give yourself time to put them to practice by joining the **Project Money** program today!