



How to Survive a Layoff or Job Loss

Corporate cutbacks, downsizings, and layoffs are a fact of life. What can you do financially if you are a victim of a layoff? Hopefully, you have a family budget and have your expenses in-line with your income. You now need to review your expenses again and quickly slash all you can. If you haven't prepared a budget, you have to now. Think of your situation as being time rich and money poor. Cook in instead of eating out, walk

instead of driving to nearby destinations. Make sure you and your spouse agree on everything financially.

Here are some other suggestions:

- ✓ **Apply for unemployment insurance quickly.** Make sure you are aware of all your benefits.
- ✓ **Look for appropriate part-time work, and treat your job search as a full-time job.**
- ✓ **Trim unavoidable bills.** For example, look for cheaper rates on long distance, lower your heating and cooling bills, and avoid impulse items at the grocery.
- ✓ **Track your spending.** Make sure you track expenses. Set a budget and stick to it.
- ✓ **Avoid the temptation to use credit cards.** This debt can mount up fast.
- ✓ **List your creditors and call them.** Let the companies you owe know that you are laid off. Many have plans or programs that you may qualify for. This is especially important if you think you might miss a payment in the near future. They want to help you.
- ✓ **Consider credit counseling.** Make sure you choose a reputable firm or you may end up in more trouble than when you started.
- ✓ **Be over-prepared if you work in an industry that is prone to layoffs or downsizings.** If you know it happens, you can and should prepare.
- ✓ **Have a savings account to fall back on, and live within your means.**

Consumer Credit Counseling Services at www.apprisen.com

Columbus Housing Partnership is a private, nonprofit organization founded in the belief that a decent and affordable home is the cornerstone of family life and a healthy community. CHP provides quality, affordable housing and related services to low and moderate income households in Columbus and the surrounding area. Through its activities, CHP is a partner in building communities and enhancing the lives of its residents. If you are facing foreclosure or having trouble making your mortgage payments, call 614/221-8889 x100 or visit www.chpCanHelp.org for free assistance.



Family Fun on a Budget



Looking for ways to economize? If you're like many parents, you're re-thinking your household budget and cutting back on unnecessary expenses. Fortunately, you don't need a lot of money to treat your kids to some family fun. All you need is a little imagination!

Here's one idea: make a family movie—starring your kids! Have them write a simple script, create costumes, and rehearse. Catch it all on video, and then let them invite their friends over for a special screening... and don't forget the popcorn!



www.iMom.com



Tips for Wiser Spending

- ◆ **Delay purchases:** when you're tempted to buy something, wait a week and ask yourself if it still seems important.
- ◆ Consider if you **need an item or if you want** the item.
- ◆ **Visit your local public library** to borrow movies, books, and magazines.
- ◆ **Barter your own services or talents** in exchange for lessons for your children: piano, dance, karate, etc.
- ◆ **Shop resale stores** for bargains.
- ◆ **Cut transportation costs** by using public services or riding a bike.
- ◆ **Go to local beauty/barber schools** for less expensive services.

www.ToughTimes.Illinois.edu (Adapted)



If funds are tight, don't let fear and worry get the best of you. Educate yourself on options, and turn to trusted experts for advice. Lots of resources are available for answers to your financial questions and concerns. Consumer Credit Counseling Services provides Quick Tip sheets on banking, budgeting, credit reports and credit scores, dealing with debt, financial self help, insurance, loans, managing credit cards, mortgages, and planning for retirement. They can be found at www.apprisen.com. With sound planning and careful spending (and professional services, if necessary) your family can get back on track.



Family Activities: “Staycation” Ideas

Everybody’s watching their budget these days, and rightly so. But families still need to enjoy time together during the summer break. So what’s the alternative to a pricey vacation? A “staycation” — having a great time right in your own hometown, or close by! And, even though you won’t be getting far away, *sometimes just a change of scenery is all the boost you need!*

Start planning now, and you can create a fun lineup of activities that your children will look forward to. First, if you can venture out a little bit, grab a map and look at all of the travel possibilities within a two-hour drive. Next, do a little research on the destinations you see. Type the names of nearby cities and towns into a search engine and investigate what they have to offer. Also keep your eyes open for coupons to local attractions you might not have visited. Here are some ideas to help you keep it interesting:

- 1) **Visit a nature center**, or wildlife rescue or refuge center.
- 2) **Camp out** – you can do this at a campsite in your own area, or you can even have a camp out in your backyard.
- 3) **Sign up for a workshop or activity you can do as a family.** Look into cooking lessons, tennis lessons, or walking tours.
- 4) **Let your kids choose their dream destination and then go there – without leaving home.** Decorate a room in the style of that country or city. Watch a movie shot on location. Eat the food of that locale. Try to learn a bit of the language.
- 5) If you have friends who are also taking “staycations,” consider **trading houses with them for the weekend.**
- 6) **Enlist the help of grandparents and other relatives.** Let your children spend a few days away from home, and see if you can join them on the weekend.
- 7) **Join a country club or community pool.** Some clubs in smaller cities offer membership for as little as \$50 a month. Consider it an investment in keeping your kids active, this summer. Call around to see if you can find "summer only" specials.
- 8) **Take the train.** Many railway carriers offer short trips of an hour or two. Pack a lunch and enjoy the scenery with your kids.
- 9) If you have a beach, lake or river nearby, **check the paper or internet for bargains on rentals.** Since fewer people are traveling this summer, you might be able to get a great deal.
- 10) **Visit a local art museum with your kids.** Once they’ve seen the paintings, sculpture, photography and other creative works, give them some drawing paper, some modeling clay or a camera and let them recreate their own favorites at home. Then create a gallery in your family room, featuring their finished works of art.

Visit www.iMom.com for more “Staycation” ideas.



“How can I be romantic when money’s tight?” many guys ask. “I can’t afford dozens of roses or expensive dinners or diamonds,” they complain.

Actually, a shortage of money can be a *good thing* when it comes to romance. Why? Because it forces you to be more creative, to give more of yourself, to spend time instead of money. Love *never* dies because of money, but it *often* dies because of boredom and neglect.

Gregory J.P. Godek, author of *1001 Ways to Be Romantic* and *10,000 Ways to Say I Love You*. Visit www.1001WaysToBeRomantic.com

How does the stock market affect your marriage?



It’s no surprise that marriages are facing more challenges than ever in today’s uncertain economy. But don’t let tough times drive a wedge between you and your spouse. Your best weapon in the

war on financial stress is communication. A recent article in *Success* magazine said that “couples tend to fight about what was spent, rather than their underlying fears about money.” Say your spouse made an expensive purchase. Are you angry about what they bought, or is the real issue your fear about whether your job is secure, or if you’ll have enough to pay for your kids’ college education? ***Open up to your spouse about financial fears and then work together to resolve them.***

www.FamilyFirst.net