

**Topic: Money Management**

**Activity: Budgeting**

*Developed by Refugee Assistance & Immigration Services (RAIS), Catholic Social Services, Anchorage, AK*

### Objectives

- ✓ Clients will be able to recognize the different vocabulary words associated with different expenses in the U.S. and learn to budget their expenses for a month.
- ✓ Clients will practice counting money and paying different bills monthly.

### Lesson Time

90 minutes

### Materials

- Play dollar bills and coins, enough for each client to receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and for the trainer to have some to make change; ensure each client can receive at least one of each bill and coin denomination
- Monthly Household Expenses Worksheet (included), 2 per client; large version (on flipchart, board, or PowerPoint projector) for use during the lesson
- Writing implements, 1 per client
- Markers for flipchart or board
- Optional: Calculators

### Practice

#### Part 1

- Introduce clients to the orientation process and be sure each client has signed in.

#### Part 2

- Distribute each dollar and coin denomination to each client. Review the dollars and coins. When you say the name of the dollar or coin, ask clients to hold the appropriate denomination up.
- Next, practice asking clients for an amount of money (e.g., \$6.16; \$31.25) and assist them in showing you the appropriate amount.
- Focus on the client trying to find the answer without showing examples.

#### Part 3

- Distribute a Monthly Household Expenses Worksheet and writing implement to each client. Show clients the large version of this worksheet.
- Ask, "How much money do you receive a month in assistance/RCA?" Wait to see if clients know the appropriate answer.
- Give each client the amount of RCA that they receive each month. Explain that this is how much money they have each month. They receive the money at the beginning of the month and will not get more until the end of the month. (\$514 a month for RCA.)
- Clients write the amount they receive at the top of their worksheet.

#### Part 4

- Review the Monthly Household Expenses Worksheet.
- Ask, “How much do you pay in rent?” Using the large Monthly Household Expenses Worksheet, show clients where the appropriate box is and write in an amount. Clients write the amount *they* pay in the box on their individual worksheets.
  - This amount will be different for most clients.
  - Be sure to show the dollar symbol and decimal.
- Say, “It is time to pay your rent. Please count out the amount of money you need and pay your landlord.” Clients count out the money and give the trainer the appropriate amount of money. (The trainer may need to provide change.)
- Say, “Now it is time to pay your utilities like electricity (flicker the lights), water, etc.” Show clients where the appropriate box is on the worksheet. Write in an amount. Clients do the same based on what *they* pay. Clients then count out the money and give the trainer the appropriate amount of money. (The trainer may need to provide change.)
- Continue in this manner with all of the items listed on the Monthly Household Expenses Worksheet.
  - It is OK for clients to put a crazy amount we would disagree with. Let them do what they think.
  - It is OK to offer a suggestion if they have no idea.
  - It is OK if the client runs out of money. The purpose is for them to realize the small amount of money they are working with and to learn and observe where and how they can make changes in the budget to be successful.
- Collect any remaining money from clients.

#### Part 5

- Ask clients what happened with their budgets. Ask what items are “key” or the biggest necessities. Circle these items as they come up on the large Monthly Household Expenses Worksheet.
- Tell clients that the group will try budgeting again and try to stay within their monthly budget.
- Distribute the second Monthly Household Expenses Worksheet and RCA amounts to clients.
- Review the worksheet as before, asking participants to write in amounts and paying money to the trainer (who may need to provide change). Encourage clients to ensure they have enough money for essential items (those circled on the Monthly Household Expenses Worksheet). This time, discuss and include food stamps and other assistance in the budget. Offer suggestions and ask for input from clients.
- Have clients brainstorm some ideas on how to save money. (e.g., Are there free clothing banks? What resources are available to help me lower my costs? What are the most important parts of my budget (rent, food)?)

# Monthly Household Expenses Worksheet

Refugee Cash Assistance: \_\_\_\_\_

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Rent</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Utilities</b></p>
 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Personal Hygiene</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bus Pass</b></p>
 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Food</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Telephone/ Phone Cards</b></p>
 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Laundry</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Clothing</b></p>
 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Medical Costs</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cleaning Supplies</b></p>
 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Travel Loan</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Education</b></p>
 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Entertainment</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Savings</b></p>