

MONEY MANAGEMENT



Give Yourself An Instant Raise

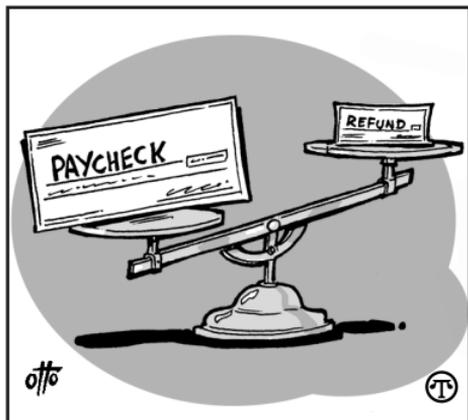
(NAPSA)—Americans can put more money in their pocket right away, just by taking control of their paychecks. This is good news for the nearly 100 million Americans who are living paycheck to paycheck.

Here are five things you can do to maximize your paycheck:

1. Increase the number of dependents you claim. Remember, if you get a refund of \$1,000 or more, you've overpaid your taxes substantially. Getting a large refund is like giving the government an interest-free loan with your money. It's better to have your taxes withheld closer to what you owe each paycheck. You can change your W-4 at anytime. Use the W-4 assistant at Nation.alpayrollweek.com for help to update your W-4 form.

2. Take advantage of flexible spending accounts (FSAs). Flexible spending accounts help employees save up to 35 percent on everyday expenses. Two popular types of FSAs can save you money on daycare, summer camps, elder care, doctor's visits, dental expenses—even aspirin. Talk to your payroll department to sign up.

3. Use transportation reimbursement incentive programs. Offset train, bus, and parking costs by paying with



It's better to put more money in your pocket now, than to wait for a large refund at tax time. See Tip No. 1.

pretax dollars.

4. Use direct deposit. Budget better and maximize savings while saving on trips to the bank. Direct deposit can automatically fund separate accounts for current expenses, long-term savings and even vacation planning.

5. Use 401(k) plans to save for retirement. The theory here is to pay yourself first. That money you set aside now will create a more comfortable lifestyle for you in retirement. If your company matches your 401(k) contributions and you are not using it, you are giving up “free money.”

To learn more, visit www.nationalpayrollweek.com.