

# MANAGING YOUR MONEY



## Wall Street Worries: How The Headlines Affect You

(NAPSA)—The headlines you see every day remove all doubt: These are challenging financial times. Even if your money isn't heavily invested in the financial markets, the concern surrounding government "bailouts" and investment firm bankruptcies isn't a confidence booster. Don't let the media frenzy make you feel hopeless. Instead, let it motivate you to take control of personal finances.

The following tips from Consumer Credit Counseling Service (CCCS) of Greater Atlanta can help Household CFOs—those in charge of family finances—prevent their own personal recession:

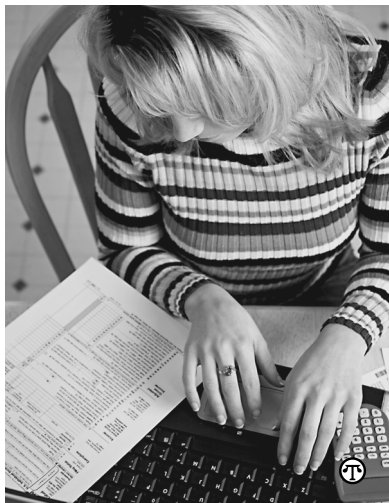
**1. Save—Start—or add to—an emergency fund.** Having three to six months of living expenses in savings is a good financial safety net.

**2. Pay Down Your Debts—**Start with unsecured debts such as credit cards and then tackle secured debts like car loans and mortgages.

**3. Consider Refinancing—**Worried that your adjustable-rate mortgage will skyrocket? Contact your lender and refinance to a fixed rate or ask if you qualify for a modified loan term. If you don't qualify for a fixed-rate loan, focus on paying down debt.

**4. Control Spending—**Prices are rising faster than your income, so try to:

- Use coupons, but only on items you would buy anyway.
- Save gas by consolidating your errands into one trip.
- Buy in bulk, and bring your lunch to work.



**Experts offer tips on how those in charge of family finances can cope during tough economic times.**

- Forgo lottery tickets. Your money is better spent on essentials, savings and eliminating debt.
- Call utilities to check that you are paying their lowest rates or get on their budget plan.

"It's easy to get overwhelmed by what's happening on Wall Street and get discouraged about your own financial situation," said Mechel Glass, CCCS director of education. "You can't control the economy, but you can control your own spending and saving habits to get through these hard times."

To learn more about how to secure a solid financial foundation, access a collection of listen-on-demand classes and live "webinars" at [www.CredAbilityU.org](http://www.CredAbilityU.org).