

CCU in the Know

[Presidents Message >](#)

[Saving Practices Made Easy >](#)

[Canby Branch Will Be Moving >](#)

[WINcentive Savings >](#)

[6 Ways to Get Financially Fit in 2020 >](#)

[A Personal Debt Assessment >](#)

[Identity Theft Victim Checklist >](#)

[Health Savings Accounts Explained >](#)



Why Should You Choose Co-op Credit Union?

When you choose Co-op Credit Union, you don't just join another financial institution, you become a member. Our members don't just bank with us, they are our owners who see the value in banking with a non-profit institution in many ways.

[Not a Member? Become a member today!](#)

President's Message

Thank you for being a valued member of Co-op Credit Union. I appreciate the trust you have placed in us and, in return, you have our commitment of continuously providing superior service and the products that best serve your needs.

It's hard to believe 2019 is gone and we have marched into 2020. We had a very busy year with some exciting projects. These included finishing and moving into our new building in Willmar, kicking off a remodel of our Canby office and moving to a temporary location, and doing a conversion to a new credit card processor. Thank you for being patient and understanding during all of this change the past year and into 2020.

Your credit union had a very successful 2019. Because of this success, the board of directors declared a dividend for the 4th quarter 2019 of 1.00% on share savings. You can see this reflected in the dividend posted to your share savings account on December 31st.

Our mission remains the same as we move into a new year. We are here to provide our members with financial services that contribute to their success. Our main focus is you — our members — and providing the service you need from your trusted financial partner.

I encourage you to explore the products and services we currently offer and continue to add. No matter what stage in life you are in, we likely have a product or service that you will find beneficial. From our online services to real estate and commercial loans to credit cards, we offer much more than simply checking/savings accounts and auto loans.

2020 marks Co-op Credit Union's 80th year in business. As we enter this new decade, we have many strategic priorities. Among these is to continually improve our technology and provide our membership innovative online and mobile services. Rest assured, we have a lot of exciting things planned over the coming years in that area.

I wish everyone a Happy New Year and thank you for your membership in Co-op Credit Union.

Sincerely,

Kayla Reiffenberger



Saving Practices Made Easy

It's easy to postpone starting to save for a later day, but a solid plan is key to success. By following some basic guidelines, you're more likely to achieve financial security.



Pay yourself first.

Use automated transfers to get in the habit of saving. Money will be transferred from your account without you seeing it, which makes you less likely to miss it.

Save 10% of your paycheck.

The general rule of thumb is to save about 10% of each paycheck. If that seems too high, try 5% and work your way up to saving 10% of your earnings. Add 1% every year you get a raise until you reach 10%.

Know yourself.

Examine your goals to determine which savings plan will work best for you. For example, don't invest all your money in an aggressive stock or mutual fund if you're conservative with your money. If you're saving for retirement, select a plan that will fit your financial needs down the road.

Realize that age matters.

Always take into consideration how much time you have to save for your goal. If you are a recent college graduate, you have several decades to ride out the highs and lows of the market and can take advantage of more high-risk investments. If you're only a few years from retirement, less risky investments are a better option.

See the benefit of compound interest.

The simplest way you can invest your money is to leave it alone and let it "compound" over time. You earn interest not only on what you save, but also on the dividends generated. The earlier and more you save, the more your money will grow.

Use dollar-cost averaging.

This is the process of routinely investing a set amount of money over time, rather than all in one lump sum. It's a convenient savings method, particularly for beginning investors. For example, each month transfer \$25 or \$50 from your share draft account directly into an investment vehicle such as a traditional or Roth IRA. You reduce your overall risk from market fluctuations because your money buys more shares when the price of a share is down, and your money buys fewer shares when the price of a share is up. Bottom line: You've reduced your investment risk.

Use the Rule of 72.

To figure out how long it will take for your investment to double with compound interest, use this rule: Divide 72 by the interest rate you expect to receive on an investment. For example, if your investment earns 4% interest, your money will double in 18 years (72 divided by 4 is 18).

Canby Branch will be moving back to 1003 Saint Olaf Avenue North

Effective February 24, 2020

New Lobby Hours

Monday- Wednesday: 9 AM - 4 PM
Thursday: 9 AM - 6 PM
Friday: 9 AM - 4 PM

New Drive Up Hours

Monday- Wednesday: 8:30 AM - 4 PM
Thursday: 8:30 AM - 6 PM
Friday: 8:30 AM - 5 PM

Last Day

Our last day of operation at 114 Saint Olaf Avenue will be Friday, February 21, 2020.



Save Money. Win Money.

Every \$25 saved, enters you to win \$100, \$1,000 & \$5,000!

WINcentive Savings

Prize drawings occur monthly, quarterly and annually – so the more you save, the more chances you have to win! Learn more about WINcentive

2019 Co-op Credit Union Statistics

Number of Accounts: 229 (7,601 Statewide)
Total Dollars Saved: \$251,014.78 (\$7,049,980.69 Statewide)
Average Account Balance: \$1,096.13 (\$928 Statewide)
Winners/Prizes Awarded: 31 (535 Statewide)

Ask a Member Service Representative to see how you can start saving with WINcentive Savings!

6 Ways to Get Financially Fit in 2020

About half of Americans make New Year's resolutions each January, but only about 20% of people keep them. Getting into shape and achieving financial goals are among the most popular resolutions. ([Statista.com](https://www.statista.com))



While we can't help you reach your ideal weight, we can share 6 ways to help you become financially fit in 2020:

1. Put your money on autopilot — Set up direct deposit, authorize electronic payments, and automate routine savings. Streamlining your finances with online tools not only saves time, it helps you avoid late fees and overdraft fees and makes saving easier.

2. Create a spending plan — Only about 40% of adults have a budget, according to the National Foundation for Credit Counseling. Use a free online budgeting tool, like Mint or PocketGuard, to keep track of expenses and compare it to your monthly take-home pay. See where you're spending too much and make any necessary adjustments.

3. Build an emergency fund — Not having an emergency fund is like driving without wearing a seatbelt; it's a risk that could ruin the rest of your life. More than half of Americans don't have a rainy-day fund and 40% don't even have \$400 in cash saved for emergencies. You can start small, \$10 to \$20 per paycheck, but work to save 3 to 8 months of income. To make it easier, setup an automatic transfer from your checking to your savings account.

4. Increase your credit score — Pay all bills on time, every time; pay more than the minimum; don't use more than 30% of your credit; avoid opening many new accounts in a short time period, and; keep the oldest existing credit (the longer a credit history, the better). Also, if you have parking tickets or library fines, pay them off. Debts are reported to a credit reporting agency and they can knock down your credit score.

5. Request your credit report — You want to make sure there are no errors and no one is using your credit unlawfully. Request one free credit report a year from each of the three major credit reporting bureaus by visiting annualcreditreport.com.

6. Beef up retirement funds — Make regular contributions to a retirement savings plan such as a 401(k) or IRA. If your company offers a 401(k) plan, contribute at least enough to meet the company match. If you don't, it's like leaving free money on the table. Also consider opening an IRA at your credit union.

A Personal Debt Assessment: Your Financial Life Preserver

Do you feel like you're drowning in debt? Trust your instincts.

The national average credit card debt per household is \$5,700. About 41.2% of households carry a balance on credit cards from month to month. Our reliance on plastic and other forms of credit makes life difficult for families struggling to make ends meet.

Even if you're still in shallow water, a personal debt assessment may be just the financial life preserver you need to keep your debt from spiraling out of control.

How do you know if you need a debt assessment?

Ask yourself whether you're experiencing these warning signs:

- > Do you frequently pay bills late?
- > Do you pay only the minimum due on your credit cards?
- > Do you use credit for necessities like groceries?
- > Have you ever used one credit card to pay off another?
- > Do you find yourself paying off holiday debt for several months or years?
- > Have you been contacted by creditors?
- > Do you use high-cost loans such as payday loans as "quick money" for desperate circumstances?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may benefit from a personal debt assessment from one of our Certified Financial Counselors. We can help you plan a strategy for getting out—and staying out—of debt, develop a sensible spending plan, and communicate effectively with creditors. And, if you don't know which debts to pay off first, we can help you figure that out, too.

Call one of our Certified Financial Counselors to set up a personal debt assessment. It may be just the financial life preserver you need to keep your debt from spiraling out of control.



Cindy
Montevideo



Connie
Canby



Kim
Benson



Brad
Willmar

Identity Theft Victim Checklist



Identity theft is one of the top three consumer complaints to the Federal Trade Commission.

The FTC's annual look at its Consumer Sentinel Network database of complaints found that the agency received more than 3 million complaints overall in calendar year 2018, with 15% related to identity theft.

If you are a victim, take these steps immediately:

- › Place a fraud alert on your credit reports, ask for a free copy of your credit report, and review those reports for evidence of accounts you didn't open. Fraud unit contacts are:
 - Equifax
www.equifax.com
 - Experian
www.experian.com
 - TransUnion
www.transunion.com
- › Close accounts—including share drafts/checks or ATM cards—that have been tampered with or used fraudulently. Contact all financial institutions and lenders, credit card issuers, utility companies, and the Social Security Administration to notify them of the fraud. Follow up each conversation with a letter.
- › File a report with law enforcement and insist on getting a copy of the report or the report number.
- › File a complaint with the FTC. Visit www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0014-identity-theft for more information.

Health Savings Accounts Explained

Health-care costs in the U.S. continue to grow, topping \$3.65 trillion in 2018. To ease this burden, the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 includes a plan that allows consumers to set aside pre-tax money for current or future medical costs. Health savings accounts (HSAs) give consumers more control over their health coverage and provides tax breaks. But even though many people (including the unemployed) are eligible to sign up for an HSA, the savings program may not be the best option for everyone.

High Deductible Policy Required

The accounts must be connected to a high-deductible health policy (HDHP). For plan year 2020, the deductible must be at least \$1,400 annually for an individual plan and \$2,800 annually for a family plan. Even though higher deductibles usually mean much lower premiums, critics say HSAs are a better deal for families or individuals who have very few health problems and who can afford higher out-of-pocket costs. They may not work as well for families on a tight budget or for those who have frequent or ongoing medical issues.

Once you open an HSA, you can contribute up to the annual deductible under the HDHP, subject to an annual contribution limit set by Congress. The annual contribution limits for 2020 are \$3,550 for an individual plan or \$7,100 for a family plan. Those who turn 55 by the end of the tax year can contribute an additional \$1,000. A taxpayer covered by Medicare Part A and/or B is not eligible to contribute to an HSA. Eligibility is determined monthly, and the above amounts apply to a member who is eligible in all twelve months of a year.

Dollars Fund Broad Range of Services

You can withdraw the money tax-free and penalty-free at any time and use it to cover copayments, coinsurance, as well as a variety of medical costs, including:

- › Doctors
- › Hospitals
- › Drugs
- › Lab expenses
- › Physical therapy
- › X-rays
- › Nursing home costs
- › Psychotherapy
- › Dental
- › Chiropractic
- › Artificial limbs
- › Eyeglasses and contacts

Unlike an employer's flexible spending account that must include a "use it or lose it" rule, you can roll over money you save in an HSA from year to year.

HSAs have the potential to build large balances over years of contributions and some strong investment gains. That means participants theoretically could be able to pay for their own health care in their later years, when it is needed most. According to HealthView Services, retired couples will need to save from \$360,000 to \$415,000 to cover out-of-pocket medical expenses, not including the costs of long-term care such as nursing homes.

If you believe an HSA would be a good alternative for you and your family, consider both your financial situation and health status. Experts recommend comparison shopping, as programs and fees can vary. Co-op Credit Union offer Health Savings Accounts. Contact a professional financial adviser to find out more.

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