

Being organized is essential to living a stress-free and productive life. One way to achieve this is through budgeting. A budget is a strategic financial plan made for a specific period that keeps track of how much money you spend and what you spend it on. It measures sales revenue, expenses, costs, assets, and liabilities. Budgeting is not only beneficial for everyday people and families but also companies and organizations. The most important thing to remember about budgeting is that it results in a more organized lifestyle that keeps you accountable for your daily actions and purchases.

People from all around the world use budgeting as an efficient way to track and plan out purchases. There are different ways to create a budget and everyone needs to discover what method works for them. I decided to interview adults in the community to gain insight on their methods of budgeting and the effect it has on them. This data allowed me to analyze how common it is for people who partake in budgeting to live a more organized life. One participant revealed that he does not usually create a budget, and admitted to being stressed out when it comes to keeping track of purchases. Another participant says she prints out monthly templates to create her budgeting plan and fills in her income, savings, debt, and goals. This is just one example of the comparisons I noticed throughout the responses I received. There was a repetitive pattern— those without a budget acknowledged their lack of organization, and those with one, revealed how helpful they are in maintaining financial structure. After examining different ways people develop or don't develop a budget, it is clear that creating a consistent and effective budgeting plan results in a more organized lifestyle.

Following my observational study, I began to think of a method that would work for me. I concluded that downloading a budgeting app is the most efficient version for me. There is a variety of apps that track expenses, but the one that I decided on is called Goodbudget budget planner. Within this app, it tracks budget planning, debt tracking, and money management. Customized monthly envelopes are provided to keep records of payments and expenses that can be shared and synced with up to five devices. This will help with my organization because I can view it on my cellphone and laptop, and my parents can have access to it as well. This app also creates charts that easily display your spending habits; this will

keep me incredibly organized in the future because I can look at every transaction wherever I am since it is easily accessible and understandable.

Budgeting is necessary to maintain an organized lifestyle. As graduation and college independence nears, it is essential that I properly plan and prepare for my future expenses. With college comes an extensive amount of expenses. The transition from high school to college can be very overwhelming, and knowing how to properly budget is extremely important. Those who do not prepare for insurance, fees, and tuition often end up in debt. With a well-detailed budget, I can hold myself accountable for necessary purchases rather than superfluous things. Luckily, thanks to DECA throughout my high school years, I have experience in creating budgeting plans and cost structures. I have done several projects for DECA: one being a start-up business plan. For this, I created an app that is the solution to all pet owners' confusion. My service offered help finding animal services, monthly subscription boxes filled with treats, accessories, toys, and customized clothing, which were all easily accessible in the app. When creating this business, there were plenty of expenses to prepare for such as employment, packaging, distribution, warehouse rent, customer acquisition, app fees, and advertising. However, I also factored in the revenue through customer subscriptions, product sales, which would be high due to a researched high demand, and advertisement cost per click. With these components, I was able to create a budget to prepare for this hypothetical start-up business. This helped create an organized plan and allowed me to place first in the DECA districts competition and qualify for state. This experience has helped me immensely and will continue to benefit me as I develop a realistic financial plan for my future.

Without a budget, the next ten years would be highly stressful and financially chaotic. Contrary to that, utilizing a budget as I progress through college and the years that follow will create and maintain an organized, stress-free, and satisfying life. If I begin to use the things I have learned now, I can progressively become an expert at budgeting; this will prepare me for obstacles as I continue to shift into adulthood.