
MONTHLY EXPENSES

Housing

Rent or mortgage payments \$ _____
Electricity/gas \$ _____
Water \$ _____
Phone/Internet \$ _____
Garbage removal \$ _____
Cleaning, maintenance, repairs⁸ \$ _____

Food

What you spend at the supermarket
and/or farmers' market, etc. \$ _____
Eating out \$ _____

Clothing

Purchase of new or used clothing \$ _____
Cleaning, dry cleaning, laundry \$ _____

Automobile/transportation

Car payments \$ _____
Gas (*who knows?*) \$ _____
Repairs \$ _____
Public transportation (*bus, train, plane*) \$ _____

Insurance

Car \$ _____
Medical or health care \$ _____
House and personal possessions \$ _____
Life \$ _____

Medical expenses

Doctors' visits \$ _____
Prescriptions \$ _____
Fitness costs \$ _____

-
8. If you have extra household expenses, such as a security system, be sure to include the quarterly (or whatever) expenses here, divided by three.
 9. Your checkbook stubs and/or online banking records will tell you a lot of this stuff. But you may be vague about your cash or credit card expenditures. For example, you may not know how much you spend at the supermarket, or how much you spend on gas, etc. But there is a simple way to find out. Keep notes on your smartphone or iPad for two weeks (there are apps for that, such as DailyCost—\$0.99). Jot down everything you pay cash (or use credit cards) for—on the spot, right after you pay it. At the end of those two weeks, you'll be able to take that record and make a realistic guess of what should be put down in these categories that now puzzle you. (Multiply the two-week figure by two, and you'll have the monthly figure.)

Support for other family members

Child-care costs (if you have children) \$ _____
Child-support (if you're paying that) \$ _____
Support for your parents (if you're helping out) \$ _____

Charity giving/tithe (to help others) \$ _____

School/learning

Children's costs (if you have children in school) \$ _____
Your learning costs (adult education,
job-hunting classes, etc.) \$ _____

Pet care (if you have pets) \$ _____

Bills and debts (usual monthly payments)

Credit cards \$ _____
Local stores \$ _____
Other obligations you pay off monthly \$ _____

Taxes

Federal¹⁰ (next April's due, divided by
twelve months) \$ _____
State (likewise) \$ _____

Local/property (next amount due, divided by
twelve months) \$ _____
Tax help (if you ever use an accountant, or
pay a friend to help you with taxes, etc.) \$ _____

Savings \$ _____

Retirement (Keogh, IRA, SEP, etc.) \$ _____

Amusement/discretionary spending

Movies, Netflix, etc. \$ _____
Other kinds of entertainment \$ _____
Reading, newspapers, magazines, books \$ _____
Gifts (birthdays, holidays, etc.) \$ _____
Vacations \$ _____

Total Amount You Need Each Month \$ _____

10. Incidentally, for U.S. citizens, looking ahead to next April 15, be sure to check with your local IRS office or a reputable accountant to find out if you can deduct the expenses of your job-hunt on your federal (and state) income tax returns. At this writing, some job-hunters can, if—big IF—this is not your first job that you're looking for, if you haven't been unemployed too long, and if you aren't making a career-change. Do go find out what the latest "ifs" are. If the IRS says you are eligible, keep careful receipts of everything related to your job-hunt, as you go along: telephone calls, stationery, printing, postage, travel, etc.