



# GOOD CENTS

Dedicated To Serving Our Members Since 1963

## SAVE THE DATE



### ECU Credit Union

60th Annual Meeting

Details to follow

## Holiday Closings

### New Year's Day

Monday, January 1st

### Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 15th

### President's Day

Monday, February 19th



Download our app today!

Online Banking is always open! Twenty-four hours a day access to your account. Download our app: ECU Credit Union Mobile and you can deposit a check from anywhere on your phone!

## BRANCH LOCATIONS

### Fairways Branch

8250 Bryan Dairy Road, Ste. 150  
Largo, FL 33777  
727.471.1330

### Houston Branch

16597 I-45 South  
Conroe, TX 77385  
936.270.7040

### Orlando Branch

8201 Chancellor Road  
Orlando, FL 32809  
727.471.1345



## Happy New Year

Out with the Old, In with the New

## Saving Money When There's Not Much to Save

Many Americans struggle financially, living paycheck to paycheck, hoping they have enough to cover all their monthly bills. Life is easier if you have a cash cushion or an emergency fund, but how do you save when there is not much fat in your budget?

First, you need to find out where your money is going. Start by tracking all your spending for 30 days. Everything, even a pack of gum, should be noted using any tracking method you prefer – a notebook, your smartphone, an online spreadsheet, whatever works best for you. Then categorize each expense. Start with these essentials:

- Rent/mortgage
- Utilities
- Food
- Transportation to get to your job
- Healthcare – prescriptions and co-pays

These five are priorities that must be paid each month. Everything else, like clothing, cosmetics, gym membership, etc., are areas where you can cut back and save a little. Here are a few other saving suggestions:

**Entertainment** – Look for low-cost ways to have fun.

- If you have a streaming service, discontinue it for a few months. For example, a service that costs \$25.00 per month means you're spending \$300 per year – that's a month's worth of groceries.
- Get a library card to check out movies and video games instead of renting them.
- Listen to podcasts. There are over a million to choose from on all subjects.
- Learn a new language or start a new hobby. Here again, the library can be your friend by providing free resources.

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Are you missing a little **jingle** in your pocket after the holidays?

ECU Credit Union offers a **low interest rate** credit card and **fee free** balance transfers!

Visit [ecucreditunion.com](http://ecucreditunion.com) to find your **Jingle!**



Federally insured by NCUA



# the LAST Word

No one ever injured their eyesight from looking on the bright side of things.



## Looking for a new way to streamline bill payments? Try Bill Pay

For banking that's never been easier, we bring you Bill Pay - a smooth, convenient and secure way to manage your bills. With its easy-to-navigate interface, staying on top of your finances from one central location is simple and hassle-free.

### Reasons you'll love Bill Pay:

- ✓ **Have it all in one** - Find, manage and pay all your bills from one centralized location.
- ✓ **Trust it's secure** - Have peace of mind knowing your information is stored in one secure place.
- ✓ **Bank from anywhere** - Pay your bills online and from our mobile banking app.
- ✓ **Get assistance** - Prompts guide you to what's most important like upcoming payments.
- ✓ **Stay in control** - Schedule automatic payments for money that moves on your terms.
- ✓ **Add bills fast** - Quickly and easily locate and add new billers

Log in online or with your mobile banking app.



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**Food** – Try to spend no more than 11% of your take-home pay on food.

- Shop for generic store brands instead of name-brand items. Many generic versions can be up to 60% cheaper.
- Use coupons and download your grocery store's app for more deals.
- Buy vegetables in their natural form. Prewashed and cut vegetables can be twice as expensive.
- Buy only what you know you can eat in a week or two, to avoid throwing away food. Use a free meal-planning app to help you shop.
- Cook at least 75% of your own meals instead of ordering from restaurants.

**Energy Bills** – Changing habits can save you a lot of money.

- Use a toaster oven, slow cooker, or other small appliance instead of the oven.
- Wait to use the dishwasher until it's full before using it and turn off the heated dry setting.
- Unplug unused appliances and power strips to avoid phantom loads.
- Turn off lights when you leave a room.

**Credit Card Late Fees** – Missing a payment due date comes with a heavy price.

- To avoid late fees and protect your credit score, set up automatic payments to pay at least the minimum payment by the due date.
- If you can't pay your bill in full each month, then use the card only for emergencies.
- If your credit card has a high interest rate, look for one with a lower interest rate. Check out the rates at ECU Credit Union.

By cutting costs even just a little and putting those savings into an account, you will be able to pay bills with less worry and even save for fun trips or a special gift.

## WHAT MAKES UP YOUR CREDIT SCORE?

-  Payment History
-  Credit Age
-  Credit Utilization
-  Mix of Credit
-  Inquires



## Why is understanding and improving your Credit Score so important?

- A good indicator of financial responsibility
- More likely to get approved for a loan
- It saves you interest over time

Use these tools to your advantage and enroll in **Credit Score** in your online and mobile banking for **FREE** today!

