



CITY YEAR MILWAUKEE

FINANCIAL PRO-TIPS

Living on the AmeriCorps national stipend doesn't have to break your budget. Milwaukee's affordable cost of living, the free events provided through TeachTown's Key to the City, and enrollment in FoodShare and energy assistance help CMs maintain a good quality of life. Following are tips from CMs about how they stretched their stipend during service.

FINANCES

- Have a budget and stick to it!
- If you are moving to Milwaukee, save receipts from your move. You can claim the costs of moving when filing your taxes.
- Download a mobile banking app
- Make sure you change your billing address if your bank mails you notifications

BILLS: COME UP WITH A SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR YOU! CMS RECOMMEND...

- "The first pay check of the month is the 'fun' pay check (ie. buying new clothes, taking a lyft instead of the bus, going out to dinner, movies, bowling). The second is for rent and utilities. Be aware of this so that you aren't in trouble when the bills start coming in."
- "Each one of my roommates has a bill we are in charge of. This way one person keeps track of one bill; they tell us how much we all owe and when the bill is due. It makes it far less overwhelming. Definitely create a system early on so it becomes routine."
- "Save parts of each paycheck for upcoming rent and bills to avoid using all of one paycheck on rent and utilities."
- "Sign up for automatic payments so you never have to worry about paying a bill late."

LIFE & FUN

- Become a member of the Urban Ecology Center for \$35 a year. You can check-out camping gear, kayaks, bikes, snowshoes, and other outdoor equipment for free!
- Look into AT&T or Time Warner for internet. They have an online payment option and a \$30 plan that provides good internet!
- If you have a license but do not have a car, consider getting a Zipcar account.
- Save a percentage of each paycheck (no matter how big or small) for savings.

FOOD

- Most CMs do not need to use their stipend to purchase food because the \$200 provided through FoodShare goes a long way.
- With some planning, it IS possible to eat healthy and spend \$50 per week!
- Farmers' markets also accept FoodShare.
- Go grocery shopping at least once a month and make large purchases. Going often and making small purchases will end up costing more.
- Some CMs split food with their roommates based on 2 week intervals, others kept cost down by making family dinners together.
- Make a shopping list before you go to the grocery store
- Sign up for a "Pick n' Save" or "Metro Mart Fresh Perks" membership card
- Prepare one big meal a week