

# Top 10 Tips

## for Young Consumers



### **Open a bank account.**

- Protect your money in an insured bank or credit union. Look for official signs: FDIC (banks), NCUA (credit unions). You can also access services as you and your money needs grow.
- NYC SafeStart Account and Bank On certified accounts are affordable accounts that have no fees or minimum balance requirements.
- To open an account, you may need an adult and/or government-issued ID like IDNYC or a Non-Driver ID from the Department of Motor Vehicles.



### **Understand what you're buying.**

- Shop around for the lowest price.
- Read return policies and contracts carefully.
- Monitor subscriptions. Cancel ones you don't need.
- "Buy Now, Pay Later" are short-term loans that could mean fees and interest. Consider if a loan is worth it.
- Do research before buying used items like cars or electronics. Make sure they work and check for recalls.



### **Learn to live on a budget.**

- Know how much money you have so you can make decisions about spending and saving.
- Track money coming in and going out to avoid problems.
- Know the difference between a "need" and a "want."
- Know your money goals so you can save for them.



### **Plan early to afford college or trade school.**

- A 529 plan helps families save for higher education. Ask if your family has one or can open one.
- Check for financial assistance. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) the year before you start school.
- A school's offer of "aid" is often a mix of grants you don't repay and loans you must repay with interest.
- Make higher education a money goal. Save for expenses and student loan repayment.



### **You can start a business at any age.**

- If you're under 18, you may need an adult's help. An adult may need to form certain business types or open business accounts.
- NYC Small Business Services can help young entrepreneurs. Learn how to create a business plan, register and license your business, and get financing.
- Consider business mentorship programs. NYC Public Schools and NYC Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) run some.



### **Invest based on homework not hype.**

- Investments and investment advice are the top frauds targeting young people especially on social media.
- There are many types of investments. They include stocks, bonds, mutual funds, real estate, cryptocurrencies. Make sure you understand them. If you don't, you can be out a lot of money and fees. The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission has resources to help.



### **Protect yourself from scammers.**

- Social media is the #1 way young people have lost money to scams.
- Don't post personal or financial information.
- Beware of unexpected contacts. Scammers create fake accounts to gain trust and information. Research before you respond.
- Use trusted sites to buy online. Look for a product's picture, description, user reviews. Make sure you can contact the company.
- Review account statements for fraud. This includes payment apps, debit card, bank transfers, cryptocurrency.



### **Younger workers have special rights.**

- If you're under 18, know where, when, and how long you can work. Read *Youth Workers Bill of Rights* created by New York State Department of Labor.
- You can get a working papers application from your school's guidance office or NYC Public Schools.
- Consider employment programs run by DYCD.
- Your family may be eligible for NYC Free Tax Prep to see if you must file taxes.



### **Credit scores matter so think before you charge.**

- Using a credit card means you must repay the amount plus any interest and fees later.
- To avoid interest charges, pay your balance in full every month if you can.
- Paying just the minimum or missing payments because you can't afford them costs you more and damages your credit score.
- Your credit score uses your credit history to predict how reliably you will make future payments.
- Check your credit report every year.



### **You have renter rights and resources.**

- Under a new law, brokers who represent landlords can't charge fees to tenants. Monitor [nyc.gov/dcwp](http://nyc.gov/dcwp) for when this law takes effect.
- You can apply for NYC housing lotteries starting age 18.
- Make your first apartment a money goal and save for it. Ready to Rent offers free financial counseling if you're applying for affordable housing.

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### **Free Help and Resources:**

**AnnualCreditReport.com:** [annualcreditreport.com](http://annualcreditreport.com)

**Bank On (Accounts):** [joinbankon.org](http://joinbankon.org)

**Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC):**  
[fdic.gov/getbanked](http://fdic.gov/getbanked)

**Federal Student Aid (FAFSA Form):** [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov)

**IDNYC:** [nyc.gov/idnyc](http://nyc.gov/idnyc)

**National Credit Union Administration (NCUA):**  
[ncua.gov](http://ncua.gov)

**NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection:**  
[nyc.gov/dcwp](http://nyc.gov/dcwp) (Click Consumers)  
[nyc.gov/workers](http://nyc.gov/workers) (Workers' Bill of Rights)

**NYC Department of Youth & Community Development:**  
[nyc.gov/dycd](http://nyc.gov/dycd)

**NYC Financial Empowerment Centers:**  
[nyc.gov/TalkMoney](http://nyc.gov/TalkMoney)

**NYC Free Tax Prep:** [nyc.gov/taxprep](http://nyc.gov/taxprep)

**NYC Public Schools:** [nyc.gov/schools](http://nyc.gov/schools)

**NYC Small Business Services (Start a Business):**  
[nyc.gov/sbs](http://nyc.gov/sbs)

**New York State Department of Labor:**  
[dol.ny.gov/youth](http://dol.ny.gov/youth) (includes breakdown by age)  
[dol.ny.gov/youthworkers](http://dol.ny.gov/youthworkers) (Youth Workers Bill of Rights)

**NY's 529 College Savings Program:** [nysaves.org](http://nysaves.org)

**Ready to Rent:** [ariva.org/ready-to-rent](http://ariva.org/ready-to-rent)

**U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission:**  
[investor.gov](http://investor.gov)