

Money matters to **people**. People matter to **us**.

# MoneyMatters

## Helping You Thrive

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Tools for your  
financial journey

### Slim Down Your Wallet

Lose weight in your wallet this year

### Small Savings

Little tips to make a big deal

### Reminders for Tax Season

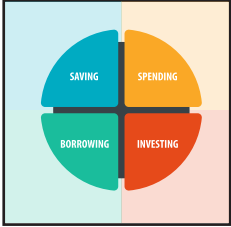
A few ideas to consider

**VISIONS**  

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**FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**

## On the Cover



**10**

**Helping You Thrive**



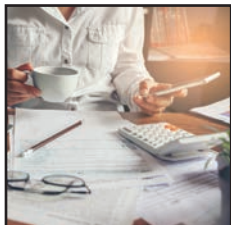
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Money matters to **people**.  
People matter to **us**.





Troy C. Fraud Dept. Assistant Manager



Visions donated \$250 to Troy's nonprofit organization of choice:

**STACHESTRONG**  
**STACHESTRONG.ORG**

## Employee Volunteer Spotlight

"Volunteering has always been important to me. From the time I was a kid, my parents taught me the importance of giving back to my community. Whether it was cleaning up a local park, helping at church, or organizing our annual midtown festival, we always looked for ways to give back and make our small town a better place to live."

### What are some ways you like to get involved?

"Since I've worked for Visions, I've had the opportunity to help out with multiple organizations across the Southern Tier, including the Broome County Humane Society, Clear Path for Veterans, and Broome County Parks and Recreation."

### Do any projects or organizations stand out as particularly important to you?

"StacheStrong has been an organization I've been very proud to work with in the last few years. I lost my mom to a primary brain tumor in 2018 known as Glioblastoma, or GBM. Having started in Vestal, NY, StacheStrong has made it their mission to flip the script on GBM by funding critical research and giving patients and their families access to the resources they need. Since they founded the organization in 2018, they have raised over \$2 million."

Something I'm really proud of being involved in is their annual 5K, offered both virtually and in person. Runners from across the country (and the world) come together to support the mission. It's a massive undertaking getting race packets ready, setting up for the event, preparing raffles, and managing race day. This year, a small team of volunteers brought the entire event together to raise over \$140,000 for brain cancer research."



**New York**  
Visions sponsored Loaves & Fishes of Tompkins County's annual Empty Bowls event. Held in Ithaca, New York, 100% of proceeds go directly to support free meals and advocacy services. Loaves & Fishes regularly serves 32,000 meals per year!



**Pennsylvania**  
We were proud to present a Denim Days donation to the LGBT Center of Greater Reading in Pennsylvania. Their mission is to create, administer, and provide services, advocacy, and support to the Greater Reading LGBTQ+ community. And, as a Denim Days donation, the funds were raised by Visions employees in exchange for wearing jeans on Fridays!



**New Jersey**  
We recently awarded a grant to the Allamuchy Board of Education and Rutherford Hall in New Jersey for their newly developed CPR and First Aid Training Program. The grant was used to purchase mannequins and AED training packets to offer life-saving CPR classes to schools, fire and rescue squads, and the community at large.



# DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT: LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

*When you think of Visions, you probably think of our frontline staff: our tellers, account specialists, even our Contact Center over the phone. But there's so much going on behind the scenes, from software to security to community outreach. Take our Learning and Development Department, for example.*

You may have noticed that we have great employees. We're proud of our talent, and a lot of that comes down to our Learning and Development team.

Their mission is to develop a highly educated and engaged staff. Which, for over 800 employees across three states, is no small feat. They pull it off, though, through training focused on building and refining skills that employees need for their immediate job duties and beyond.

That's a big focus at Visions – the continued development of our staff. So, while they train employees on how to read credit reports and manage your accounts, they also focus on growing employees throughout their professional careers.

In fact, it's almost too much to describe what they do, but we'll try. They:

- Partner with the Credit Union Executives Society for specialized classes
- Host internal development programs for existing and emerging leaders

- Hold Online Live Classes on topics that employees ask for
- Create eLearning modules to explain updates and enhancements
- Maintain a library of physical and e-books on professional development
- Host the award-winning Visions Toastmasters Club for public speaking and leadership development
- Hold Lunch and Learn sessions
- Offer coaching development training for managers ...and more!

Needless to say, they put equal focus on both the “Learning” and “Development” parts of their name. It's something that Visions is committed to, which is why we have a department dedicated to it.

So, the next time that you're wowed by an employee, by all means – thank that employee! We're proud of them, and we're proud of the team that empowers them to be their best.

Want to join our team or learn more about careers with Visions? Visit [visionsfcu.org/careers](https://visionsfcu.org/careers) to #ClaimYourSeat.

Visions Federal Credit Union is an equal opportunity employer whose goal is to achieve a positive work atmosphere while encouraging a healthy work/life balance.  
M/F Disabled and Vet EEO/AA Employer.







# Veterans Expo

## Serving veterans across the region

We were proud to host our inaugural Veterans Expo on November 7th in Binghamton, NY. Held at the Visions Veterans Memorial Arena, this event brought more than 30 organizations together from across the state to offer support services to veterans and their families.

In attendance were local colleges, mental health partners, American Legions, insurance agencies, workforce assistance groups, and even a veterans' motorcycle association – each providing community support to those who have served. There was also a Mobile Vet Center from the Binghamton Vet Center, offering free counseling and resources.

Visions offered free meals to over 150 veteran attendees and even held a patriotic-themed booth decorating contest! The winner was American Legion Post 80, who received a \$100 gift card as well as a donation from Visions to the charity of their choice: the Southern Tier Veterans Support Group.



Looking ahead, we're committed to offering support services to veterans wherever they may be. Keep a lookout for next year's Veterans Expo and other opportunities as they arise.

### Visions Veterans Program

Did you know that Visions has a Veterans Program dedicated to vets and their spouses? We offer bonuses, scholarships, free financial wellness coaching, and even a patriotic-themed debit card! For every member who orders an Americana debit card, Visions will donate \$5 to a veterans support group. We donated over \$35,000 last year alone!

Learn more at [visionsfcu.org/veterans](https://visionsfcu.org/veterans).







# ALL ARE WELCOME

## Removing barriers from financial wellness

Everything we do begins and ends with serving our communities. That's because we believe in the credit union mission of people helping people – all people. We want you to have access to our financial resources regardless of the color of your skin, the religion you practice, and the people you love. We want you to feel welcome when you connect with Visions – regardless of your social status, income, or outfit. And we want you, your likeness, and your abilities reflected in our staff, communications, and news.

To ensure we're representing and caring for the diverse range of people in our communities, we've developed a strategic team dedicated to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). Because at Visions, we understand that people matter most. And we're here for you. Today and always.

### **Our Inclusion Statement and Commitment to People**

*At Visions, we condemn racism, violence, discrimination, and hatred toward any person or persons. It is in our foundation as a credit union to accept and serve all members equitably, regardless of their race, social status, or financial position.*

*This spirit of inclusion extends to our homes and our employees, too.*

*We are committed to supporting and lifting up our communities. Now, more than ever, we need to come together with a cooperative spirit to support our friends and neighbors.*

*As an employer, we do, and will continue to treat all of our employees fairly and with respect, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, and other differences. We strive to celebrate the diversity of our employees, as they are part of the fabric of this great credit union.*

***All are seen. All are heard. All are welcome.***

# Notarizations done on your time



Powers of attorney, beneficiary changes, auto title transfers – there are countless documents that could warrant a notary service. They're not always easy or free, though, but at Visions they are!

Nearly all of our offices have notaries public available. Better yet, the services are provided free of charge. And, while walk in service is always there, you can schedule an appointment with a notary online to meet with one on your schedule. That means you can stop in on your lunch break, get a quick signature, and be on your way to grab a bite to eat. Just go to [visionsfcu.org/appointments](https://visionsfcu.org/appointments) to schedule a time.

## Introducing: DocuSign Remote Online Notary

Can't make it in person? No problem. DocuSign Remote Online Notary is a simple, secure process that lets you have

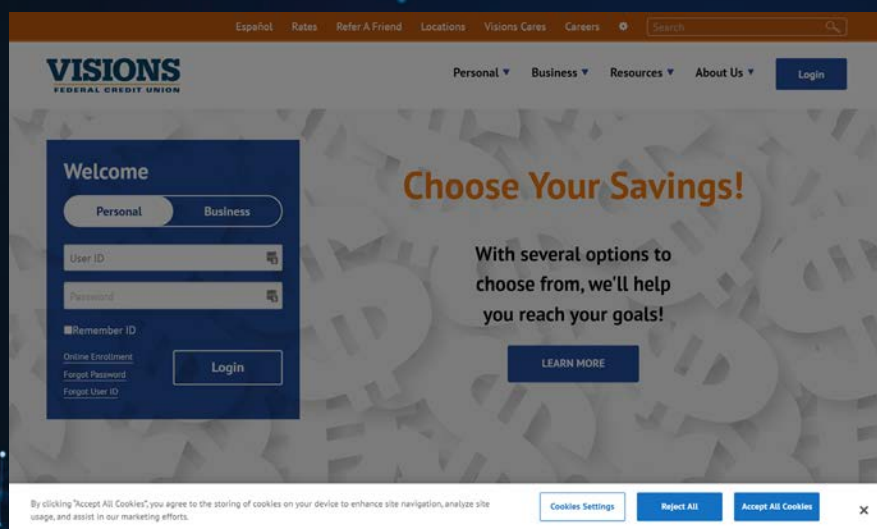
certain documents notarized online. Just schedule a session and Visions will take care of the rest.

**Learn more about our notary services and schedule a DocuSign Remote Online Notary session at [visionsfcu.org/notary](https://visionsfcu.org/notary).**

# DIGITAL COOKIES

Whether it's in branch or online, your privacy is important to us! Our website, like many others, tries to provide an interactive and informative experience. One way we accomplish that is with a technology called "cookies".

These aren't just sweet treats, though. These pieces of technology can help us deliver personalized experiences, keep track of what our users are most frequently looking for, and offer a consistent browsing visit. That being said, we understand that some of our website visitors may not want to consent to some or any of those things. That's why – like many other websites you visit – we're now asking for explicit consent before we place any non-necessary cookie on your device. This will provide our visitors and members with the best possible experience. We think that's pretty sweet.





# SECURITY

As TV and radio ads focus on the newest fads to improve health, fitness, or family life, don't become overly distracted from your financial wellness. Increased use of credit cards and online purchases through the holidays and new year can make consumers more vulnerable to unsecure websites, scams, and identity theft. Take time to review your information security and strengthen your defenses with the following pointers.

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## **Review your account activity**

Digital banking and eStatements provide a free and convenient way to check your transaction history on a regular basis. Scan your accounts frequently for unauthorized transactions – especially after a season of spending.

## **Report unfamiliar charges**

If anything seems unusual or unauthorized, immediately notify us. We can take corrective measures and make sure the right steps are taken to prevent it from happening again.

## **Only use cards on secure websites**

When using a credit or debit card online, make sure the web address starts with “https” and displays a secure padlock icon.

## **Use secure payment methods like ACH or Bill Pay**

In search of personal information and account numbers, fraudsters can steal checks from the mail. Then, once they have your details, they can forge fraudulent checks written in your name. Instead of mailing personal checks, use secure electronic transfers.

## **Don't trust unknown callers**

It's best to ignore unexpected calls from an unknown source. Scammers like to use tried-and-true methods like phone calls, texts, and emails. Your personal information should remain private – not shared with unknown parties.

## **Update your security measures**

Especially for those who might have fallen victim to identity theft or fraud in the past, drop old habits and commit to new security precautions so it doesn't happen again.

## **Stay informed**

By reading articles about cybersecurity and identity theft, you're a step ahead. You can also access free identity theft protection when you log into digital banking and select IDnotify™ by Experian®. For additional resources, tips, and articles, head to [visionsfcu.org/security](https://visionsfcu.org/security).

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Fraudsters will always be around, working to obtain the information and resources they're after. But by following these steps, we can make it much harder for them to get sensitive information, saving you time and money.

If you have questions about your accounts or believe they might've been compromised, contact us immediately at **800.242.2120**. Contact Center representatives are available Monday through Friday 8:30am - 6:00pm and Saturday 8:30am - 2:00pm.





# COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

## Democracy and Community

*While we're certainly one-of-a-kind, we didn't invent the co-op. Financial cooperatives and credit unions have been around since the 1800s, evolving with a shared set of principles that govern and guide like-minded companies around the globe.*

*From our commitment to community, to our unique mission in financial services, to your relationship and role as a member – the Eight Cooperative Principles of Credit Unions help to distinguish who we are and what we do. Take two of our core principles for example: Democratic Member Control and Concern for Community.*

### Democratic Member Control

*"Credit unions are democratic organizations owned and controlled by their members. Each member gets one vote, no matter their financial status, to help make the organization's policies and decisions."*

– National Credit Union Foundation

We're accountable to our members. That means our volunteer Board of Directors, President/CEO, and staff leaders listen to your voice when making company

decisions. Our annual meeting is available for all to attend. We make sure the Annual Meeting's announcements, agendas, and results are transparent and accessible, along with our Annual Report. We also loop you into our other news, from government advocacy (see page 17) to product launches (page 7) to branch updates and other important details (page 19). Plus, we make sure it's easy to find – it's right here in MoneyMatters, online at [visionsfcu.org](https://visionsfcu.org), sent in mailings, and posted in branches on our digital screens. Through all these efforts and more, we're keeping you informed and involved as an owner and member.

### Concern for Community

*"While focusing on member needs, credit unions work for the sustainable development of communities, including people of modest means, through policies developed and accepted by the members."*

– National Credit Union Foundation

At the heart of what we do, we're committed to community – it's one of the biggest differences between us and banks. While we serve our members, we develop our communities, support financial wellness in

our homes, and give back in huge ways to support local causes. Within our regions, we target education, health and food insecurity, economic development, and other civic and humanitarian causes. Within our organization, we aim to represent the communities we serve and make sure all are welcome in our spaces regardless of race, religion, gender, social status, or ability. We're here, invested in our communities and working to create better places to live, work, raise a family, and own a business.

Check out page 3 for an example of our commitment to community. Or, visit us at [visionsfcu.org/cares](https://visionsfcu.org/cares) for information about our grants, donations, volunteerism, and more.

To learn more about Visions, our mission, and the credit union movement, visit [visionsfcu.org/aboutus](https://visionsfcu.org/aboutus).



# Helping You THRIVE

## *Tools for your financial journey*

On your financial wellness journey, you might feel healthy one month, then struggle the next. Whether you're surviving, thriving, or somewhere in between, remember that all journeys have ups and downs – and Visions is here to support you.

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As your lifestyle and priorities shift throughout the years, it helps to think of saving, borrowing, spending, and investing as tools to reach your financial goals. Sometimes you're saving, other times you're borrowing – sometimes you're balancing them all!

Here are some things to keep in mind to balance the four pillars of financial wellness.

## SAVING

We all have savings goals. Maybe it's working toward a down payment on a home or building an emergency savings fund. It could be planning for a big family vacation or, maybe you're a seasonal worker, and you're saving for your downtime.

It's at these points, when you have a specific goal in mind, that budgeting becomes the biggest priority. At the same time, though, you're still spending. After all, life's expensive. But by exercising proper budgeting skills, you should be able to achieve your goals over time.

Perhaps it's by cutting back on outings in lieu of date nights at home, or meal planning and buying in bulk to save money through the week. There are countless ways to save, but it ultimately comes down to achieving a balance between the other three pillars of your financial journey. If you're curious about how to get started, check out our resources at [visionsfcu.org/budgeting](https://visionsfcu.org/budgeting).

1.

Borrowing might not seem like fun, but sometimes it's a necessity. That's where it's important to consider the difference between good debt and bad debt.

For example, a mortgage or an auto loan is typically good debt, whereas store cards with high charges could be considered bad debt. We say "typically," though, because one of the key points in borrowing is to not spend beyond your means. When you're looking to take out funds, be an informed consumer. Consider how your payments will factor into your budget and the other three aspects of your financial wellness journey. Perhaps you're better off buying a used vehicle so you can keep building your emergency savings – or invest those funds into something bigger.

3.

## BORROWING



# SPENDING

There's no way around it: you need to spend money. But just like borrowing, the key is to do so responsibly and – better yet – conveniently. That means finding the best way to spend that works within your budget practices.

Some people prefer to spend with cash, as it provides a tangible gauge of what they have to work with. For example, if you're out to eat and eyeing that fancy \$50 entrée, the \$20 bill in your wallet will put a stop to that pretty quickly. For others, though, cards and online tracking is the way to go.

2.

Consider a debit card and online banking. Before you make a purchase, just sign in and verify that you have the funds. Digital banking gives you instant access to all of your accounts at a glance. Better yet, think of how a good rewards credit card can pay you back for spending money. You can then use those rewards toward saving or paying down your balance. Check out our cards on page 14 to see how they can work for you.

4.

Planning for the future doesn't just mean savings, it can also mean investing. Some people seek additional forms of income through investments. Others use investments to plan for retirement. It takes time, though, and whether it's stocks, cryptocurrency, or a business investment – there are always potential risks.

Again, it comes down to being an informed consumer and realizing how much you can invest and when you can do it. Young professionals starting out may not have enough cash flow to invest much, but that doesn't mean that they can't work with a professional. Whenever possible, seek advice from a trusted source. For us, that means Visions Investment Services. Check them out on page 12 or visit our website!

# INVESTING

## *How can we help you thrive?*

**We don't want you to feel like you're just surviving – we want you thriving. Check out these additional resources:**

### SAVING:

[visionsfcu.org/rates](https://visionsfcu.org/rates)

[visionsfcu.org/budgeting](https://visionsfcu.org/budgeting)

[visionsfcu.org/walletwellness](https://visionsfcu.org/walletwellness)

### SPENDING:

[visionsfcu.org/debitcards](https://visionsfcu.org/debitcards)

[visionsfcu.org/creditcards](https://visionsfcu.org/creditcards)

[visionsfcu.org/finsavvy](https://visionsfcu.org/finsavvy)

### BORROWING:

[visionsfcu.org/loans](https://visionsfcu.org/loans)

[visionsfcu.org/calculators](https://visionsfcu.org/calculators)

[visionsfcu.org/mortgages](https://visionsfcu.org/mortgages)

### INVESTING:

[visionsfcu.org/investmentservices](https://visionsfcu.org/investmentservices)

[visionsfcu.org/digitalassets](https://visionsfcu.org/digitalassets)

**And, don't forget that you can stop by your local office or call us at 800.242.2120.**

**We're here for you.**

## Important Tax Information for 2023

**One silver lining of last year's high inflation rate is that it carries over to the IRS's Annual Inflation Adjustments. Here are some of the changes that may make the biggest impacts on your tax bill.**

### Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA)

An IRA is a great place to save for retirement outside of any employer retirement account. In 2023 you can contribute up to these limits:

IRA	
IRA Contribution Limit (under age 50)	\$6,500
IRA Contribution Limit (age 50 and older)	\$7,500

### Roth IRA Changes

For those that qualify, contributing to a Roth IRA can be a great way to save for retirement. They typically come with an income phase-out limit, however, so that those who make more money can't take advantage of the system. The income guidelines have changed for this year, though, so that workers can earn more and are still be able to contribute.

Phase-out of Roth IRA Contribution Eligibility	
Single/Head of household	\$138,000-\$153,000
Married, filing jointly	\$218,000-\$228,000
Married, filing separately	\$204,000-\$214,000

### Changes to Employer-Sponsored Retirement Plans

For those looking to super charge your retirement savings and take advantage of an employer match, your employer's retirement plan is a great option.

Other Qualified Plans	
401(k), 403(b), governmental 457(b), and SARSEP elective deferral (under age 50)	\$22,500
401(k), 403(b), governmental 457(b), and SARSEP elective deferral (age 50 and older)	\$30,000

### Saver's Credit Advantages

Finally, in case you wanted an extra incentive to save for retirement, many may be eligible to receive the Saver's Credit when they save money in a retirement account. The Saver's Credit, also known as a Retirement Savings Contribution Credit, is a refundable tax credit up to these amounts:

Saver's Credit	
Maximum Credit - Single	\$1,000
Maximum Credit - Married, Filing Jointly	\$2,000

### We're Here for You

If you have any questions about ways to save for retirement, reach out to Visions Investment Services. Our certified professionals can help point you in the right direction. And, keep a lookout for upcoming seminars this year on topics that matter most to you!



Have questions or want to make an appointment? Give us a call at 800.242.2120, ext. 10469.

**Securities and advisory services are offered through LPL Financial (LPL), a registered investment advisor and broker/dealer. (Member FINRA/SIPC).** Insurance products offered through LPL Financial or its licensed affiliates. Visions Federal Credit Union (VFCU) and Visions Investment Services **are not** registered as a broker/dealer or investment advisor. Registered representatives of LPL offer products and services using the name Visions Investment Services, and may also be employees of VFCU. These products and services are being offered through LPL or its affiliates, which are separate entities from and not affiliates of VFCU or Visions Investment Services. Securities and insurance offered through LPL and its affiliates are:

**Not Insured by NCUA or Any Federal Government Agency**

**Not Credit Union Guaranteed**

**Not Credit Union Deposit or Obligations**

**May Lose Value**

LPL Tracking #389828-01-02



# Read, Solve, WIN!

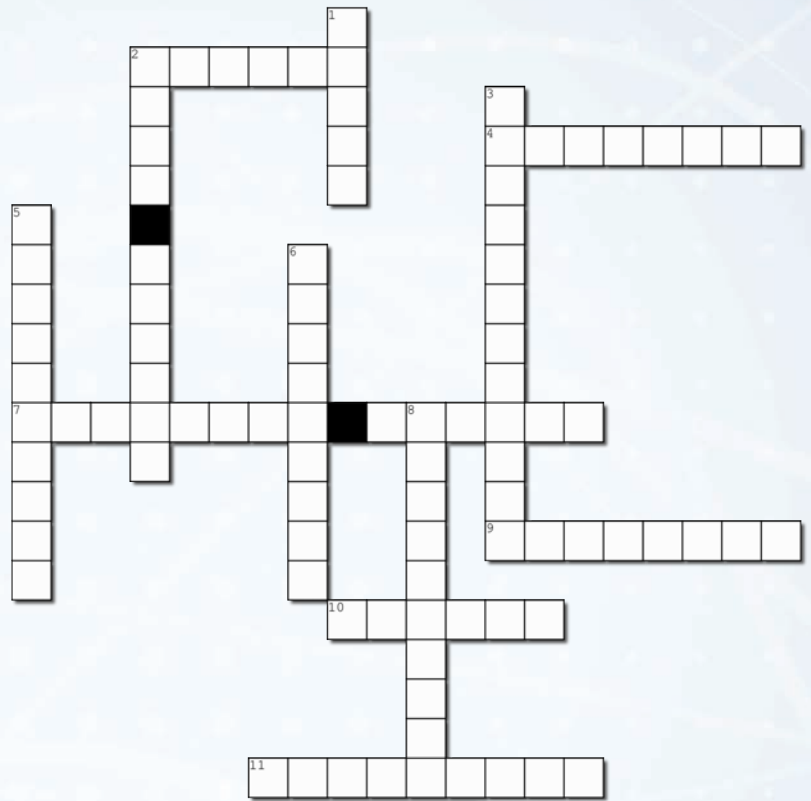
Complete this crossword puzzle, submit your answers at [visionsfcu.org/puzzle](https://visionsfcu.org/puzzle), and you could be eligible to win one of five Dunkin'® gift cards!\*

## Down

1. Before using your credit card on a website, you should check to see that the web address has a padlock or \_\_\_\_\_ before the URL.
2. Working with a \_\_\_\_\_ on your financial goals can help you cut down on debt and boost your credit. (Two words)
3. Website cookies help deliver \_\_\_\_\_ experiences and a consistent browsing visit.
5. The Eight Cooperative Principles of Credit Unions are taken from the National Credit Union \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Visions, like all credit unions, is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The Learning and Development department works with the Credit Union \_\_\_\_\_ Society for specialized classes.

## Across

2. You can sign up for \_\_\_\_\_ deposit of your tax return by using your account number and our routing number, 221375378.
4. Signing up for IDnotify™ by \_\_\_\_\_, available in digital banking, can help notify you of identity theft.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Post 80 won our booth decorating contest at the Veterans EXPO. (Two words)
9. Remote Online Notaries are offered through \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Without a beneficiary for your IRA, funds are subject to state laws and could pass to your \_\_\_\_\_.
11. At different points in your life, you may be focused on saving, borrowing, spending, or \_\_\_\_\_.



## CONGRATS, Q4 WINNERS!

Nancy H.  
Velley, AL

Susan H.  
Ramsey, NJ

Diana H.  
Vestal, NY

Mary M.  
Syracuse, NY

Christina V.  
New Albany, PA

*Thank you to all our members who participated.*

\*Visions Federal Credit Union membership required. Visions membership requires a \$1 minimum deposit; certain restrictions apply, ask for membership eligibility details. Must be 18 years or older. Answers must be submitted at [visionsfcu.org/puzzle](https://visionsfcu.org/puzzle) by 1/31/23; no alternate methods of entry apply. Limit (1) entry per person. Winners will be chosen at random; odds of winning based on total number of entries. Winners may only win one prize. Winners will be notified by mail by 2/20/23. Winners consent to have Visions Federal Credit Union use their first name, last initial, city, and state in social media posts or future advertising and promotional materials. Promotion sponsored solely by Visions Federal Credit Union.

# Our Member Saved WHAT?!

Nothing makes us feel better than helping our members, which is why we're always looking for opportunities to improve your financial well-being. Sometimes it's as easy as balancing a checkbook, other times it's saving you money on loan payments. Here's a great story from Candice in Vestal, NY:



A member came in wanting to set up auto payments on her loan at another institution. We started talking about it and it turns out that it was for an older, classic car. She explained that the dealership told her we wouldn't finance a vehicle that old, which wasn't necessarily true – we could finance it as a personal loan. Between the high rate she was paying elsewhere, we saved her nearly \$800 per month! It was a remarkable savings and I'm so glad that we were able to help her out.



# Slim down your wallet this year



Many people look to the New Year as the time to lose weight, but when was the last time you weighed your wallet? Chances are, it's bulging with store membership cards, credit cards, and old receipts. This year, resolve to slim down your wallet. Here's how.

## Consolidate or close cards you don't use

We all have those cards at the back of our wallet. The ones we opened to save 30% on a purchase or maybe to finance some car repairs. It's possible, though, that you don't use them that often or that their interest rates are shockingly high.

If that's the case, consider shifting that credit card debt into a personal loan. It's an open secret in the finance world: consolidating credit card debt into a personal loan is the way to go. The interest rate is typically less than half of what it is on a card, you can pay off the debt faster with a fixed term, and you have the convenience of one, simple payment. Set it up for auto pay and you'll never miss a beat. Not sure where to start? Just ask or apply online! We're here to help.

## Cut back on annual fees

Some credit cards come with premium perks – but also premium fees. If you have one of those cards with a \$100+ annual fee that you don't use that often, consider if you're really getting your benefits' worth. It's possible that you may be paying more than you're getting. If that's the case, consider closing them and using a more convenient, cost-effective card.

## Look for multipurpose cards

Here's something you might not know: all Visions credit cards are ATM cards, too. That's right: just establish a PIN when you activate it and leave your debit card at home. Combine that with low rates, instant issue in branches, no annual fees, and up to 2% cash back on Elite Visa Signature and 1% cash back on Visa Platinum purchases, and you'll see that a Visions credit card is a convenient, rewards-earning, two-in-one card. How's that for slimming the wallet down?



There are other ways to trim your wallet, like going digital on store membership or insurance cards, but credit cards are the easiest to manage – even when they feel unmanageable.

If you have questions about how to slim your wallet, consolidate debt, or even if you need help building a budget, stop by your local office or schedule time with us by visiting [visionsfcu.org/appointments](https://visionsfcu.org/appointments).



# Small Savings

## Little tips to make a big deal

Ready or not, we're into the winter months – when days are short, but hopefully your money isn't! To increase your savings or cut back on spending, don't overlook the small stuff. A lot of little changes could add up to big savings.

### Spending less

Try writing out a budget to track your spending habits. Many people discover places they're overspending, especially with habitual outings, date nights, and entertainment. Here are some slick tricks to help you cut back.

- Shop with cash – When you give yourself the option to pay credit, you might be tempted to ignore your budget. Instead, carry cash and keep it light.
- Reduce waste – Are you wasting energy, water, or gas? What about paper products? By reducing waste, your expenses and bills will drop, too.
- Don't do it all – Be selective about your outings. Affordable alternatives to pricey outings, like free local events or game nights at home, are great ways to discover what matters most while saving to enjoy the bigger things!

### Kitchen tips

Much of our budget goes into our bellies. Naturally, dining out will be more expensive than dining in, but even if you constantly find yourself in the kitchen, you may have additional room to save.

- Plan your meals – Make a menu for the week that utilizes similar ingredients and slims down the pantry. With proper planning, you could buy exactly what you need and cook exactly what you have, minimizing waste and reducing trips to the store.
- Batch and freeze – Buying products in bulk often reduces their unit price. Then, you can prep foods and freeze the batches. This works great with sauces, stocks, and even marinated meats.
- Shop the sales – If you're aiming to be frugal, adopt a rule to never pay full price. Start your meal plan in the grocery store with sale items, coupons, and whatever produce is in season.

### Celebrations

Holidays happen throughout the year. Build those costs into your budget and try the following tips to tame your expenses throughout the year.

- Give with your heart, not your wallet – Expensive gifts may be flashy, but sentimental gifts are often more meaningful while keeping things affordable. Homemade could be even better!
- Reuse gift bags – Save gift bags for all occasions, because wrapping paper, boxes, ribbon, and packing tissue can waste both time and money.
- Go online – When you're eligible for free shipping and saving on gas, it's worth it to order gifts online. It's also a great tool for researching prices or DIY gift ideas.
- Celebrate with potlucks – Stop cooking for everyone or overspending at restaurants. When everyone pitches in, everyone saves – and everyone wins.

### Remember to take notes along the way!

Simple tips can help you save a little extra money here and there – so track it! Keep those savings in a special account and apply it to one of your financial goals. The specific goal you have in mind is a great payoff for your frugal efforts.

Meanwhile, if you need help with your budget, we have tools to keep you on track. Explore our free online resources at [visionsfcu.org/walletwellness](https://visionsfcu.org/walletwellness).

### Looking for more tips to save money?

Keep reading our magazine for seasonal ideas to help you save and check out our financial blog at [visionsfcu.org/moneytalks](https://visionsfcu.org/moneytalks).  
We're always adding new content!



# Reminders for TAX SEASON

'Tis the season – to cross your fingers and hope for a tax refund! While you're busy hoping, remember to plan, too. Here are a few ideas to consider while you have taxes on your mind.

## Set up direct deposit.

When asked if you'd prefer "Paper or plastic?" for your refund, pick "Neither!" Paper checks can be delayed or intercepted in the mail, and plastic refund cards often come with restrictions or fees. Instead, choose the electronic option – **direct deposit**.

Direct deposit goes straight from the Treasury to your account. That means it's quick, convenient, and accessible. Plus, it's easy to set up!

To get started, all you need is our Visions routing number (221375378) and your account number, which you can find in digital banking or your monthly statements. Need help finding your account number? Ask a representative at **800.242.2120**.

## Cut down debt and boost your credit.

If you have a financial wellness coach or debt counselor, seek their guidance when placing those funds. For example, maybe by using your refund to pay down debt, you'll be able to improve your credit. They'll help you weigh your options and work toward your financial goals. That way you can be confident in your next steps forward.

To get in touch with a Debt Expert and discuss your financial goals, head to **[visionsfcu.org/debtfree](https://visionsfcu.org/debtfree)**.

## Save for financial emergencies.

Life can be hard to predict, so it's best to have funds for the unexpected. By setting aside six months of expenses as emergency savings, you can prepare for the unknown – and your tax refund could be a good start!

To start saving for emergencies, open an extra savings account at Visions for free. Ask a representative or simply click "Add an Account" in digital banking to get started.

Refund or no refund, now's a great time to review your financial wellness. Check out pages 8, 10, and 11 for more ways to review personal finances and security as you enter the new year.





## The Importance of Your IRA Beneficiary

*One simple step to save time and money*

You were thinking ahead, preparing for your future. You opened an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) and started saving money. Then what? You named a beneficiary for the account, right?

Without a beneficiary, those funds are subject to state laws and could pass to your estate. Then, after the legal probate process – plus fees and taxes – the loved ones you saved for are likely to receive a smaller portion of those savings. With a beneficiary in place, this scenario could be avoided.

By designating a beneficiary on your IRA, you'll eliminate confusion. During the account settlement, your IRA can skip probate and go straight to your beneficiary, saving time and money for your loved ones.

Now *that's* thinking ahead.

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To establish or change beneficiaries on an IRA with Visions, stop by your local branch or call **800.242.2120**.

For more information about IRAs, visit **[visionsfcu.org/IRA](https://visionsfcu.org/IRA)**.

\*This article is for educational purposes only. For legal or tax advice, speak to an attorney or tax professional.

### Important reminder:

You have until tax filing day – **April 18, 2023** – to make IRA contributions for 2022. Open or contribute to your Visions IRA today to make the most of your potential tax benefits.

## New Year, New Resolutions, New Congress

The 118th Congress is now underway. After the recent census and subsequent redistricting due to population shifts, we've seen New York and Pennsylvania lose seats in the House of Representatives, many members of Congress retire, and a new batch of freshman legislators join the ranks. The changes in roster became active with the New Year, along with renewed vigor and plenty of opportunity.

So, what does that mean for you, our members, and for Visions Federal Credit Union? It means we have opportunities, too:

- To educate new members of Congress about the credit union difference, our mission, and the importance of People Helping People
- To share stories of personal goals and financial wellness achieved through credit union products and services
- To boast our support for small business, our impact on civic and development projects, and our reach through community giveback
- To engage with regulatory agencies and educate them about unintended consequences of proposed legislature

Each new year provides our advocacy team with a fresh slate to represent your best financial interests to the members of Congress who represent Visions' communities. In 2023, our team will meet representatives in Washington, DC to champion key interests, including cybersecurity and data privacy, policies that affect lending and mortgages, and awareness of regulatory and compliance costs.

We stand by, ready to inform you and the rest of our Visions' teams when action is needed to ensure your voice is heard. As we look forward to the year ahead, we invite you to continue engaging with credit union advocacy through our online portal at **[visionsfcu.org/advocacy](https://visionsfcu.org/advocacy)**.



# NEED TO Know



## OFFICE CLOSINGS AND EVENTS Mark Your Calendars

Monday, January 16

### **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

All Offices Closed

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Monday, February 20

### **Presidents' Day**

All Offices Closed

.....

## **Annual Meeting**

**March 11, 2023**

Visions Headquarters  
3301 Country Club Rd  
Endwell, NY 13760

9:30 am – Continental breakfast  
10:00 am – Meeting begins

All members are welcome!

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Visit [visionsfcu.org/events](https://visionsfcu.org/events) for upcoming seminars, activities, and more.

## Prefer a Digital Copy?

All member households will receive a mailed copy of MoneyMatters at the beginning of each quarter. If your household prefers to reference this financial magazine online, please complete the unsubscribe form at [visionsfcu.org/moneymatters](https://visionsfcu.org/moneymatters) or call our Contact Center at 800.242.2120.

## Add Visions to your contacts!

When you add **800.242.2120** to your cell phone contacts you'll have quick access to give us a call. And, we'll show up on your Caller ID if we ever need to reach you.  
Win-Win!

## WE HAD A WINNER: \$10,000 Visa® grand prize!

This past spring, Visa held their Debit Card Online Solutions Sweepstakes. This national contest had a \$10,000 prize, and all you had to do was make a purchase by using a Visa debit card online.

Well, we had a lucky Visions member: Sarah M. of Endicott, NY! We were thrilled to meet with Sarah and celebrate at her hometown branch.

Keep a lookout for more Visa promotions. After all, who knows? Maybe you could be the lucky winner next time!





# VISIONS NEEDS *You!*

Visions is looking for qualified members to serve on various volunteer committees – including our Board of Directors. As a volunteer, you can help shape the future of your credit union while using your skills to contribute to its mission.

Any member age 21 or older, with the exception of credit union employees and their immediate families, is eligible. A background in finance or the financial services industry would be helpful, but is not required. All inquiries are held in strict confidence. Applicants are subject to a credit check.

For complete details, contact Jenna Rosenberg at 800.242.2120, ext. 10429, or complete a volunteer application (available on our website or at any branch) and drop it off at any branch to her attention.

Visions has an exciting history built on the efforts of volunteers, strong leaders, and dynamic staff. With your continued involvement, we look forward to many more successful years of serving you and your fellow members. Learn more at [visionsfcu.org/volunteer](https://visionsfcu.org/volunteer).

## VOLUNTEERS

### Board of Directors

Christopher H. Marion, Chairperson

Mary C. Robinson, Vice Chairperson

Kelly A. Roche, Secretary

George S. Bobinski, Jr., Treasurer

Kenneth H. Kidder III

James J. Lewis

Michael A. Mullen

Laurie Schorno

Denise B. Stoughton

### Supervisory Committee

Douglas J. Camin, Chairperson

Mark A. Wasser, Vice Chairperson

Fermin Romero III, Secretary

Stephanie Jerzak

Gordon E. Thompson

John K. Koniuto, alternate

## Location Updates

### Pardon our dust!

**We're working to make your experience even better**

We were hard at work throughout 2022, making improvements to branches across our regions. And while the dust settles on those projects, we're kicking up dust on others!

Stay tuned this year for renovations to locations throughout New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. We might even have a new office coming to a town near you!

**Remodels in process:**

• **Newark Valley, New York** • **Sayre, Pennsylvania**

...more to announce soon!

*All loan types referenced in this publication are subject to Visions Federal Credit Union's standardized policies including, but not limited to, lending, membership, and creditworthiness. Please contact a credit union representative for more information regarding application requests.*



Federally insured  
by NCUA.



# VISIONS

FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

24 McKinley Ave • Endicott, NY 13760

## CONNECT WITH A **DEBT EXPERT**

### Take Control of Debt

Visions has all the tools you need to consolidate, reduce interest, and lower payments with local, personal attention you won't get from big lenders. You know what else you won't find at online banks? An actual person to sit down with you.

Visions not only has the products, but the people who know how to best use them.

If you're ready to take control of your debt, simply fill out the form online to get started. A real, live person will get in touch to talk about your particular situation and offer solutions.

**Get started today at [visionsfcu.org/debtfree](https://visionsfcu.org/debtfree)**