



Action Plan:

TALK TO YOUR SPOUSE ABOUT MONEY

DIFFICULTY: **EASY**

Talking about money issues under normal conditions can be stressful. Talking about them while a servicemember is deployed to a remote location can be more so. The best remedy is to communicate regularly about household finances. That way there are no surprises or added headaches when orders arrive.

The following Action Plan provides the steps you can take to initiate financial discussions with your spouse and family members.

THIS ACTION PLAN REQUIRES EIGHT STEPS:

- 1 Plan ahead and make a list of financial matters to discuss.** You want to make every moment of your conversation count. Collect any documents you may need (e.g., mortgage, loan, and other financial papers). Planning ahead helps you:
 - Get a lot accomplished in a short time.
 - Stay on track.
 - Shorten financial discussions so you can spend more time on other things.
- 2 Practice the discussion.** If you're apprehensive about having it, consider sharing your list of discussion points with a trusted friend or confidant. Ask for guidance on how to conduct the discussion. Keep it focused and positive, and make it the most helpful for your spouse.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- A meeting agenda
- Financial documents
- List of financial goals

- 3 Give your spouse a heads up.** Tell him or her about your desire to discuss some financial matters. Your spouse may need time to locate financial documents before you talk.
- 4 Keep your emotions in check.** An approaching deployment or other family matters can be stressful enough, so try to keep emotions out of your financial discussions. You might consider having a trusted friend or confidant join your discussion to help moderate emotional issues.
- 5 Ask your spouse for his or her opinion.** Then listen. Stay focused on the family's financial situation, and try not to let the conversation stray into other areas.
- 6 Suggest ways your spouse can get financial help.** Financial readiness resources are available through your Family Services or Support Centers.
- 7 Discuss ways to manage costs.** Listen to ideas your spouse has for managing costs, then add your own.
- 8 Recap at the end of the discussion.** Go over what you and your spouse are going to do after your conversation and express your encouragement.

Try to dedicate some time every week or every month to talk about spending, financial planning, savings goals or other money issues. When both spouses are aware of needs, goals and priorities, it becomes easier for one spouse to take over when the other is deployed or otherwise unavailable.