

# FIRST FORUM

*Your Source for Financial Solutions*

## Your Complete Year-End Financial Checklist

As we usher in 2022, take a moment to go through this year-end financial checklist for ensuring your finances are in order for the new year.

### 1. Review your budget.

Is your monthly budget still working well for you? Are you stretching some spending categories or finishing each month in the red? Take some time to review your budget and make any necessary changes.

### 2. Top off your retirement plan.

If you have a 401(k), check to see that you are taking full advantage of your employer's matching contributions. If you haven't contributed as much as you can, be sure to make the revisions for 2022. If you turned 50 in 2021, be sure to check out your additional catch-up contribution for 2022.

If you have an IRA, you have until April 15 to scrape together the maximum contribution of \$6,000, with an additional \$1,000 if you are age 50 years or older.

### 3. Check your progress on paying down debt.

Give your debt an annual checkup by comparing your original debt to what you owe now. Have you shed debt from one year ago, or is your debt growing? If you've made no progress, or your debt has grown, consider taking bigger steps toward paying it down in 2022. You could consolidate your debt with a Save As You Pay debt reduction loan or look for budget busters within your finances with a member of our Certified Financial Counseling team. They can also help you plan ahead by asking questions, like whether you anticipate getting a bonus and how to use it, or review your interest rates to lower payments and outstanding balances. Book an appointment at [membersfirstga.com/ccufc](https://membersfirstga.com/ccufc).

### 4. Get a free copy of your annual credit report.

The end of the year is a great time for an annual credit checkup. It's a good idea to review your statements each month to check for fraudulent charges, but you can also request a free copy of your credit report from all three credit agencies once a year. Get your free annual credit reports at [annualcreditreport.com](https://annualcreditreport.com), and take a close look at each report. Look for accurate, updated information and any errors, like charges you don't remember making, or other signs of possible identity theft. If you find any wrongful charges, be sure to dispute them immediately. Take an extra step and sign up for the IdentityIQ® Identity Theft Protection program through Love My Credit Union Rewards at [membersfirstga.com/offers](https://membersfirstga.com/offers).

### 5. Review your investments and asset allocation.

Take some time at year's end to rebalance your portfolio and to see if your asset allocation is still serving you well. You may need to make some changes to your mix of stocks, bonds, cash and other investments to better reflect the current state of the market.

### 6. Review your beneficiaries.

Has your family situation changed in the past year? If it has, be sure to switch the beneficiaries on your accounts and life insurance policies to accommodate these changes.

### 7. Complete open enrollment and select your employer benefits.

The end of the year coincides with open enrollment for health insurance policies. This is your chance to select the employer benefits you want for the coming year. If you miss this window, you will be stuck with the benefits you chose last year or with no benefits at all.

### 8. Review your tax withholdings.

It's a good idea to review your W-4 annually and see if the amount of tax being withheld from each paycheck needs to be adjusted. If you're not a numbers person, ask your accountant for help. Changing up the numbers just a bit can make a significant difference in your tax bill at the end of the year. Or, if you usually get a large refund, adjusting the amount withheld can mean enjoying a larger paycheck throughout the year instead of giving the government an interest-free loan to be paid back in one lump sum at year's end.

You successfully checked off your Christmas gift list; now take some time to check off your financial checklist for 2022. It's never too late to gift yourself a strong financial foundation.

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# DON'T BE A VICTIM OF A SOCIAL SECURITY SCAM

As if there aren't already so many other scams to watch out for, the Federal Trade Commission [FTC] is warning of a surge in Social Security scams. Many of these scams target the elderly who depend on Social Security benefits for living needs. The scammers, hoping to prey on overly trusting loved ones, are all too often successful, creating a mess of finances and altering benefit payment schedules.

## **Here's how these scams work:**

The victim receives a phone call from an alleged Social Security employee telling them their benefits have been suspended and need to be reactivated. To lift the suspension, they say, the victim must share their personal information.

Alternatively, the victim receives an automated voice message instructing them to call a specified number to reactivate their Social Security benefits. Upon calling the given number, the victim will be asked to provide their personal information.

In yet another version, the victim receives an email or text looking like it came from the Social Security Administration [SSA]. The message includes a link asking the victim to update their personal information – giving a similar story as above.

## **Protect yourself and your loved ones with these tips:**

The Social Security Administration will never call, text or email about suspended benefits.

Don't believe a caller claiming your benefits have been suspended. Government agencies rarely make phone calls to private citizens. When they do, the citizen will always know in advance to expect that call.

## **Never share personal information via unsecured means.**

It's best not to share personal information over the phone or the internet. If you must, verify you are interacting with the party you believe you've reached. The best way to do so is by contacting the SSA yourself.

## **Report all scam attempts.**

If you receive a phone call, text or an email from an alleged SSA employee requesting information, don't respond. Instead,

contact the SSA and ask if there is truly a problem with your benefits. If, as is likely, you're being scammed, the SSA will be better equipped to stop the scammers.

You can also fill out a Public Fraud Reporting form at [socialsecurity.gov](https://www.socialsecurity.gov).

## **Tell your friends and family.**

Tell anyone you know about these scams and warn them not to share their information with anyone. You can also share these scams with other members on our social media pages. Just search @membersfirstcu on Facebook and Instagram.

***Keep your money safe and send those scammers packing!***



## REMEMBERING MR. DWAYNE CARROLL



The MembersFirst Credit Union family said a final farewell to our longtime friend and colleague, Dwayne Carroll, on Saturday, October 30, 2021. Dwayne passed away peacefully on October 24.

Dwayne worked at the credit union for many years in marketing, operations and as the manager of the DeKalb Medical branch. His kind, peaceful demeanor, quick wit and engaging stories of his travels and experiences won the hearts of members and coworkers over the years. Dwayne remained a member of our credit union family even after his retirement in 2015. He continued to attend and assist with our celebrations and gatherings and shared his love for the holidays as he helped decorate the elaborate and elegant Decatur Christmas tree each year until he became ill.

Prior to his time at MembersFirst, Dwayne served as the president of Southern Postal Credit Union in Atlanta. Outside of the credit union, Dwayne shared his love for the Lord, people and service at Crusselle Freeman Church of the Deaf, where he was a member and served as pastor, music director and associate pastor between 1971 and 2006.

This year, our Douglasville branch dedicated its small Christmas tree to Dwayne's memory. Rest well, friend; you are remembered with love.



# VISA BALANCE TRANSFER

## Ready! Set! Transfer!

Throw out last year's high-rate credit card debt and, beginning January 20, **get ready** to transfer those balances to a MembersFirst Visa® Credit Card at **1.99% APR for 12 months!**\* Plus, there's **no balance transfer fee**, and you can **enjoy this great rate on purchases** made through April 30!

### What's great about a MembersFirst Visa Credit Card?

- Our low, non-variable rates start at just 8.99% APR on Visa Platinum
- Earn one ScoreCard® Rewards point on purchases for every dollar you spend
- Convenient 24/7 access to your account
- No annual fee on Classic and Platinum Visa options
- No balance transfer fee
- No default rate

**So, get set!** Gather your balances and **transfer** to a MembersFirst Visa Credit Card today!

**Apply by April 30 at [membersfirstga.com/offers](https://membersfirstga.com/offers).**

\*APR=Annual Percentage Rate. Subject to credit approval. Rates as of 12/9/21 are 8.99% APR for Platinum Visa Credit Card and 13.88% APR for Classic Visa Credit Card. All credit union loan programs, rates, terms and conditions are subject to change at any time without notice. See [membersfirstga.com/offers](https://membersfirstga.com/offers) for more details. Offer available January 20 – April 30, 2022.



## Get *More* with a MembersFirst Checking Account

Have you compared checking account features lately? If you haven't taken advantage of all the great services and features a MembersFirst Credit Union checking account has to offer you, you're missing out!

### Perks like:

- No Monthly Maintenance Fees
- Easy, 24/7 Access to Your Account
- Free Remote Deposit
- Free Visa Debit Card With No Purchase Requirements
- No Minimum Balance or Deposit Requirements
- Remote Control Debit Cards

...and **More!**

Plus, we make it simple to switch with our free Bill Payment system and mobile app. Add a checking account today at [membersfirstga.com](https://membersfirstga.com) and help make "more" happen!

## SAVE A TREE. SKIP A FEE.

Effective February 28, 2022, a \$3 paper statement fee will be charged per statement cycle. Make the easy switch to e-Statements today!

### Mobile App

Just log in and follow the on-screen guide.\*

### Online Banking

From a desktop or mobile browser, click Settings > Edit Email > Choose Your Email. Then toggle Statements 'ON.'

**Switch today or by February 28, 2022.**

**Learn more at [membersfirstga.com/e-statements](https://membersfirstga.com/e-statements).**

\*If an on-screen guide does not display, follow the steps above for Online and Mobile Banking.



# Fee Schedule

MembersFirst reviews and notifies you annually of our fee schedule. We work to remain fair and competitive (we dislike fees as much as you do) and charge only the fees which contribute to operating costs.

<b>SAVINGS ACCOUNTS</b>	
Christmas Club Early Withdrawal	\$10.00
Closure Fee (within 90 days of opening)	\$20.00
Excess Withdrawal Fee (above 3 per quarter)	\$4.00
Savasaurus Club (per transaction in excess of one per month)	\$10.00
<b>MONEY MARKET ACCOUNTS</b>	
Minimum Balance Fee (average below \$1,000)	\$5.00
Excess Withdrawal Fee (each over 6 per month; only 3 by check)	\$5.00
<b>CHECKING (SHARE DRAFT) ACCOUNTS</b>	
<b>Monthly Minimum Balance Fee for Checking Accounts</b>	
Basic Business or Personal Business Checking (average balance below \$1,000)	\$10.00
Direct Deposit Checking (earns interest on average balance of \$1,000)	\$0.00
Fresh Start Checking (average balance below \$300)	\$10.00
Interest Checking (average balance below \$300)	\$5.00
No Fee Checking	\$0.00
Collection (overdraft)	\$15.00
Draft (Check) Printing Charges	Depends on style
Overdraft Privilege (item paid on your behalf)	\$33.00
Overdraft Protection Transfer (from savings or other MFCU account)	\$7.00
<b>ATM TRANSACTION FEES</b>	
Publix® PRESTO! ATM Nationwide	Free
Transactions Including Inquiries Using Non-MembersFirst ATMs	No charge from MFCU; however, you may be subject to charges from the other financial institution and/or the ATM network.
<b>LOAN FEES</b>	
Flood Certification	\$25.00
GA Mortgage Loan Fee	\$10.00
Skip-A-Payment Fee (promotion)	\$30.00
Legal Process per Event	\$50.00
Loan Advance Processing Fee (Fast Cash and Holiday Loan only)	\$30.00
Title Fee (used vehicle loans)	\$49.00
UCC Form Filing	\$10.00
<b>OTHER FEES</b>	
Account Balancing / Research (per hour)	\$20.00
Account Verification	\$10.00
Bad Address (monthly; statements returned as undeliverable)	\$5.00
Business Account Bill Pay (per month)	\$5.95
Check Cashing (checks over \$200.00)	\$5.00
Inactivity Monthly Fee (no activity for 12 months)	\$5.00
Merchant Cashier Check (from personal check)	\$15.00
Money Orders (each)	\$1.50
NSF – Non-Sufficient Funds (per item)	\$33.00
Overnight / Expedited Delivery	Actual cost
Paper Statement Fee	\$3.00
Photocopy (first 3 pages free)	\$2.00
Replace Damaged, Lost, or Stolen Visa Debit or ATM Card	\$10.00
Returned Deposit Item (from member payable to themselves)	\$25.00
Returned Deposit Item (from others payable to member)	\$15.00
Shared Branching Convenience (per transaction)	\$1.50
Signature Guarantee (for members only)	\$10.00
Statement Copy / Account History Printout	\$5.00
Stop Payment	\$33.00
Telephone Transfer (teller assisted)	\$2.00
Teller / Official Check (payable to others)	\$5.00
<b>GIFT CARDS</b>	
Travel Money (reloadable card) [\$100.00-\$5,000.00]	\$5.00
Visa Gift Card [\$10.00-\$1,000.00]	\$5.00
<b>WIRE TRANSFERS</b>	
Wire Transfer (domestic)	\$15.00
Wire Transfer (incoming)	\$10.00
Wire Transfer (international)	Varies [\$60.00-\$100.00]

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The annual MembersFirst Credit Union members' meeting will be held via video/ phone conference among the offices in Decatur (Lawrenceville Highway), Douglasville, Hiram, Pooler, Sandy Springs, Savannah and WellStar-Kennestone Hospital at 3:00 pm on Tuesday, February 8, 2022. The nominating committee of the Board of Directors has nominated the following members for re-election: Billy Reid, Joe Van Horn, Douglas Reed and Jo Allen. Additional nominations are accepted through applications available at each branch.

## Temporary Change to Lobby Hours Effective January 1, 2022

Due to staffing limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, beginning January 1, 2022, all MembersFirst Credit Union branches will be closed on Saturdays.

The credit union will offer extended hours during the week at the **Decatur, Douglasville, Hiram, Pooler and Savannah** branches.

### The new lobby hours will be:

Monday: 9 – 5  
 Tuesday: 9 – 5  
 Wednesday: 10 – 5  
 Thursday: 9 – 5  
 Friday: 9 – 5

### Drive-thru hours (MembersFirst Credit Union members only):

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 9 – 5  
 Wednesday: 10 – 5  
 Friday: 9 – 6

Download the mobile app for mobile check deposit, account transfers and inquiries.





# CU HAPPENINGS!

We're working hard to give back to our friends and communities. Check out these CU Happenings – happening all around us!

## PCSD Rising Professionals

We're so glad opportunities for student enrichment are almost back into full swing! MembersFirst had the honor of speaking to several PCSD Rising Professionals students about interviewing and money matters. Thank you, Kim and LeeAnn, for sharing your expertise!



## SCCPSS Student Leadership

Here's Ashley DuBois with the SCCPSS Student Leadership Program (SLP) students after learning valuable financial life skills during the first Discovery event of the school year.



## Honoring Our Essential Workers

For Halloween this year, our Decatur staff honored the essential workers we serve for their hard work, especially over the last two years. We thank each of you for all you do and are grateful to have the opportunity to serve you as you serve others. (And, yes! Decatur won this year's Halloween contest!)



## Hiram Band of Gold

Nothing excites the spirit like a little Christmas music and holiday fun! We were honored to sponsor the Hiram High School Band of Gold at the 29th Annual Invitational Christmas Parade hosted by the Rotary Club of Paulding County this past December.



## HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

### New Year's Day

Saturday, January 1, 2022

### Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 17, 2022

### Presidents Day

Monday, February 21, 2022



## Locations and Contact Information

### Call Center

#### METRO ATLANTA

Phone (404) 978-0080

Fax (404) 978-0095

#### COASTAL GEORGIA

Phone (912) 352-2902

Fax (912) 352-0838

### Branch Locations

Visit a branch near you.

Atlanta, Austell, Decatur, Douglasville, Fayetteville, Hiram, Marietta, Newnan, Pooler, Sandy Springs and Savannah.

#### Main Office

2476 Lawrenceville Hwy.

Decatur, GA 30033-3226

#### Mortgages

(404) 978-0080

#### Mailing Address

PO Box 33189

Decatur, GA 30033-0189

#### Phone Banking

Metro Atlanta

(404) 978-0089

Coastal Georgia

(912) 352-0059

#### 24-Hour Lending Service

membersfirstga.com

#### Website

membersfirstga.com

This credit union is federally insured by the National Credit Union Administration.



Download our free Mobile Banking App from Google Play™ or the Apple® App Store. Just search 'membersfirstga'.



*MembersFirst wishes you and your family a safe and happy New Year! Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!*

## CU SUCCEED SCHOLARSHIP DRAWING

Hey, CU Succeed members! There's still time to submit your report card for our next scholarship drawing! Be sure to get your grades in by **Friday, January 28, 2022**, for our January 2022 drawing. Is your student a CU Succeed member? Learn more about this student account benefit at [membersfirstga.com](http://membersfirstga.com).