



## AFSA Education Foundation

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For Immediate Release

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### **In an Uncertain Economy, Tried and True Spending Basics Can Help Holiday Shoppers** ***AFSAEF Introduces Online, Interactive Spending Budget for the '09 Holiday Season***

WASHINGTON, November 18, 2009 . . . While consumers have been showing spending restraint in recent times, sound budgeting strategies can help them stay on track and within a comfortable spending range this holiday season, says the American Financial Services Association Education Foundation (AFSAEF).

“Even during the best economic times, it’s always been important to take the time to plan your holiday purchases to prevent over spending,” says Susie Irvine, AFSAEF president and CEO. “Now, it’s absolutely essential.”

With this in mind, AFSAEF has converted its popular *Manage Your Holiday Spending* brochure into an interactive online calculator ([www.afsaef.org/HolidaySpending.cfm](http://www.afsaef.org/HolidaySpending.cfm)). In addition, the foundation is offering the following tips to help consumers keep holiday spending under control:

- Make a gift list before shopping to keep a handle on how much you spend.
- Consolidate online purchases into one order so that you only pay shipping and handling fees once rather than multiple times. Look for companies that offer free shipping.
- Consider drawing names rather than buying individual gifts.
- Check your card’s credit limit. It may have changed recently, as some issuers have lowered lines of credit in response to today’s tightened economy. If you make a purchase that exceeds the card’s credit limit, it may be declined or generate an over-the-limit fee.
- Don’t wait until the last minute to shop. You will be more likely to stick to your holiday budget when you aren’t under pressure.

AFSAEF also has an interactive version of its *Consumer Budget Planner* ([www.afsaef.org/budgetplanner.cfm](http://www.afsaef.org/budgetplanner.cfm)), a budgeting tool that allows users to calculate their monthly income, savings, and expenses.

Based in Washington, D.C., the AFSA Education Foundation’s mission is to help consumers realize the benefits of responsible money management, understand the credit process and seek help if credit problems occur. It is affiliated with the American Financial Services Association, the national trade association for the consumer credit industry, protecting access to credit and consumer choice.

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