

2023 SUMMER EDITION

FIRST TAKES



Big Prize SAVINGS

EARN CHANCES TO
WIN JUST BY SAVING!

\$50,000 Every Year
\$10,000 Every Quarter
\$1,000 Every Month



VISIT [BIGPRIZESAVINGS.COM](https://www.amerfirst.org/bigprizesavings.com)

*Must be 18 years of age or older to open a Big Prize Savings Account. Official Big Prize Savings Account Rules can be found on BigPrizeSavings.com which supersedes all print, digital, and other marketing material. Exclusions for AFCU employees, volunteers, family members and their households apply. Personal accounts only. Membership eligibility and a one-time \$5 lifetime membership fee will apply for new members. See us for details.

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

HOLIDAYS/ IMPORTANT DATES

Monday, September 4 (CU Closed)
Labor Day

Monday, October 9 (CU Closed)
Indigenous Peoples' Day



BALANCE WEBINAR

August
Safeguarding Kids' Identity & Online Privacy

September
Psychology of Spending

October
Federal vs Private Student Loans

A MESSAGE FROM **Jon Shigematsu**
CEO/President

Dear Valued Members,

As we step into the heart of this year, I am thrilled to share with you some remarkable milestones and exciting news that underscore the essence of our mission—to uplift and empower the lives of our members.

With great joy, we congratulate Michael N. as the proud recipient of our fifth annual \$50,000 Big Prize Savings grand prize! Michael's story embodies the very spirit of this account, and we are heartened to witness the positive impact it has made on his life and the lives of past winners. Through the Big Prize Savings program, we have contributed a total of over \$510,000 towards the life-long savings goals of our dedicated members. We invite each of you to partake in the excitement that our Big Prize Savings account offers—because who knows, you might just be our next monthly, quarterly, or even annual Big Prize winner.

But that's not all—the triumphs continue! I'm thrilled to share that we've recently crossed a monumental threshold by securing over \$1 billion in commercial real estate loan fundings—with a remarkable feat of zero loan defaults. This achievement is a testament to the dedication and commitment of our Commercial Real Estate team, who have been working tirelessly since 2015 to make our members' commercial dreams a reality. If you're considering your own venture in the realm of commercial real estate, I encourage you to reach out to us. Let us help you turn your aspirations into accomplishments.


As the warmth of August embraces us, the anticipation of the back-to-school season is palpable. We understand that this time of year can bring financial challenges, and we want to ensure that back-to-school shopping doesn't hinder your student's path to a strong start in the new semester. That's why we've crafted an article to guide you through this phase, offering tips to manage back-to-school expenses in a way that's gentle on your bank account. Education is indeed a beautiful pursuit, and we believe that the journey should be marked by enthusiasm, not financial stress.

Our commitment to your financial well-being spans over seven decades, and each generation's unique financial complexities are close to our hearts. Our younger members, aged 18 and under, present us with an extraordinary opportunity—to guide and nurture the next generation of leaders towards financial responsibility and wellness. As part of this commitment, we offer a plethora of financial resources and tools available online at amerfirst.org. Additionally, mark your calendars for August 17, when we will be hosting a FREE two-part workshop titled "Safeguarding Kids' Identity & Online Privacy." This webinar addresses crucial issues faced by our tech-savvy generation and equips them with the knowledge to navigate the digital landscape safely.

Our successes have been built on the bedrock of your trust and partnership. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for choosing us as your credit union, allowing us the privilege to serve both you and our local community. Your dreams are our pursuit, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to making those dreams a reality.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey. Together, we shall continue to flourish.

Warm regards,


Jon Shigematsu



OPEN A TEEN CHECKING ACCOUNT TODAY!

- Totally FREE checking account plus \$25!*
- Debit card with uChoose Rewards®
- No monthly fee
- No minimum balance
- No initial deposit required
- Mobile banking & Online banking



Deposited directly into your account

CALL OR VISIT A BRANCH TO OPEN A TEEN CHECKING ACCOUNT TODAY!

**Limited time offer may change or end at any time without notice. You must be age 13 - 18 and open a checking account to receive the \$25 deposit and debit card on-the-spot. Joint signor age 18+ is required on the checking account.*

Must call us or visit a branch to open, unavailable online. Membership account required and the one-time membership fee will be paid by the credit union as part of our high school Financial Education Program. \$25 will be reported on a 1099-INT or 1099-MISC as dividend income.



PEOPLE FIRST



At American First Credit Union, our unwavering commitment to people is at the heart of everything we do. Since our inception 70 years ago, we have been dedicated to serving our associates, customers, and the communities we proudly call home.

Join us and experience the difference of banking with people in mind. Together, we can achieve your financial dreams, empower our associates, and make a lasting impact on our communities. Discover the genuine care that sets us apart. Together, we are American First Credit Union. Together we put people first.

Back-to-School SHOPPING

DELAYED GRATIFICATION AND OTHER TRICKS TO TRIM YOUR SPENDING

If you've procrastinated over doing your child's back-to-school shopping because inflation has made the task seem about as fun as a trip to the dentist, you might be in luck. That's because waiting until after the summer back-to-school sales may help you save. Below you'll learn why and get some additional tips for making your shopping experience as joyful as graduation day.

HOORAY FOR THE DELAY

It's likely there are items on the list from your child's school that won't be needed immediately—if at all. Ask teachers which items can be put on the back burner until prices cool off. Electronics, in particular, tend to come down significantly in price after Labor Day. Clothing price tags tend to fall in, well, the fall. Waiting also has the added benefit of spreading the total financial burden of sending kids back to school over a few months.

IN-HOME TREASURE HUNT

If you're like everyone else who has ever shopped, you've bought an item only to realize later you already had it at home. So before you start spending, look first in your storage areas at home. This generation of kids tends to embrace reducing, reusing, and recycling, so get them involved in the hunt, too.

ONLINE AND UNDER BUDGET

If you're savvy using online tools to reach your goals, saving big on the back-to-school list could be just a few clicks away. Sign up for the email list of your favorite stores and follow them on social media to get immediate discounts and ongoing coupons. For big-ticket items, use a price-tracking site to make an initial cost comparison and monitor any changes in price after that. Use browser extensions that automatically search for coupons when visiting an online retailer. Take advantage of the sign-up bonus from a cash-back shopping site and subsequent rebates. To find great deals on used items for your youngster, visit the marketplace area of your favorite social media sites before you buy new.

CLOTHES-MINDED

Clothing can send the total outlay for school shopping through the roof. Sharing the spending limit with your child can go a long way toward avoiding arguments and lingering hard feelings. If there are a few pricey pieces of apparel your junior style icon absolutely must have, make sure they understand the impact that will have on the overall clothing budget. For example, shelling out for a few high-priced items at fashionable boutiques may necessitate thrift store shopping to fill out the rest of the wardrobe. This disciplined approach can help keep your expenses inside the stratosphere and teach your child a valuable lesson about limited resources and prudent money decisions.

STRENGTHEN YOUR NUMBERS

If you know other families with children returning to school, consider buying items in bulk together and then divvying them up to get a lower unit cost. To kick the savings into high gear, organize a swap event with other families that have school-age kids. Things other kids no longer want or can use (like clothes) might be perfect for your child. Spending time facilitating such efforts could put extra dollars in your pocket.



DON'T LOOK A GIFT CARD IN THE MOUTH

It's easy to forget about that gift card you got from Aunt Maria for that big box store. It's especially easy to forget the one from Uncle Jerome for that store you'd never even heard of before. Both can help you escape the school shopping blues. Gather up all your unused gift cards and determine which can be used for school items and which can't. For the ones that can't be put toward educational needs, consider trading them in for cold hard cash at any websites that buy unused gift cards. Putting that dough toward your child's must-haves can make a big difference.

NOT LEFT TO YOUR OWN DEVICES

Many folks will tell you to look for refurbished tech for your child to save massively. That's solid advice, but you may be able to find gadgets just as good for free. If your family's got a group text going or a regular gathering place on social media, put the word out about that laptop or phone needed by the young scholar in your home. You might find that your relatives have unused devices just lying around. Make sure your query reaches that family member who continually upgrades instantly to the latest tech. You know the one.

A REWARDING EXPERIENCE

Have you ever checked out at a drugstore or other retailer and been asked if you'd like to use your rewards toward the purchase? Go through your loyalty program cards and consider which might help knock out a few items on your student's list.

With the average family spending \$864 on back-to-school in 2022, there's a lot of room for economizing. By shopping on your schedule and taking the time to consider all your options, you can make the grade and save.

Written by BALANCE, a free and financial resource for AFCU members. Visit amerfirst.balancepro.org for articles, programs and more.



Caring First

The first half of 2023 has been an incredible time for our Caring First team as we continue to look for opportunities to serve our community. It's been a pleasure to team up with our partners and foundations to make an impact on the lives of many families and individuals.

SERVING THE LOCAL AREA

We hosted a clothing drive for the La Habra Collaborative, in support of their outreach efforts to give back to residents. In total we collected 8 large boxes, and 6 large plastic bags of clothing and other essential items. We also participated in HomeAid Orange County's Essentials Diaper Drive for families experiencing hard times and even homelessness. AFCU volunteers helped sort, count and stack pallets with thousands of diapers and wipes that were delivered to the OC Food Bank. Home Aid OC exceeded this year's goal and collected over 1.1 million diapers and essential items!

FOCUSING ON THE YOUTH

It is so fulfilling to educate and partner with our youth to teach them about the importance of finances through our Bite of Reality program. The Caring First team has impacted the lives of over 1,400 students by

presenting 13 workshops. We also partnered with the Fullerton Joint Union High School District ASB project as mentors for the city's Love Fullerton. Together, we helped clean up the Richman Trail, picking up trash and removing weeds and debris. It was a joy to participate in the 25th Annual Read Across America celebration at La Habra Children's Museum where we read to over 200 children through-out the day.

ANNUAL COMMUNITY DAY

118 American First Credit Union employees volunteered a combined 472 hours for the Annual Community Day. AFCU partnered with Giving Children Hope and sorted 26 pallets of clothing and household products ready to be distributed to those in need. Through "We've Got Your Back" program we categorized 7,000 comic books and packed 300 backpacks for families in the community. All-in-all about 12,000 pounds of nonperishable goods will be distributed to local children and at-risk families.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 20 - Choc Walk in the Park

September 9 - Relay For Life

1 Billion REASONS to Celebrate



We've recently reached over \$1 Billion in commercial real estate loan fundings.

3 Reasons to Choose AFCU

- Over 70 Years of Service
- Safe and Secure Lender
- Zero Defaults on Commercial Loans

[VIEW RECENT CLOSINGS](#)