

Seven Steps to Spring Clean Your Finances

First Hope Bank offers consumer tips for eliminating financial clutter

Hope, NJ — The season for spring cleaning has arrived and while many may be focused on organizing closets or scrubbing floors, First Hope Bank encourages consumers to clean up their finances, as well.

“Spring is a great time to take a hard look at your finances and identify ways to manage them more efficiently,” said Lauren Blackburn, Marketing Officer. “By getting your financial house in order, you can set the stage for a stronger, more successful future.”

First Hope Bank offers the following tips to help our customers cut back on financial clutter this spring:

- **Evaluate and pay down or consolidate debt.** Take a look at how much you owe and what you are paying in interest. If there are better rates available now, consider applying for a home equity loan or refinancing your mortgage. Begin paying off existing debt, whether that’s by chipping away at credit cards with the highest interest rates or consolidating your debt first.
- **Review your budget.** A lot can change in a year. If you’ve been promoted, had a child, or become a single income household, be sure to update your budget. Determine what expenses demand the most money and identify areas where you can realistically cut back. Develop a strategy for spending and saving and stick to it.
- **Check your credit report.** Every year, you are guaranteed one free credit report from each of the three bureaus. Take advantage of these free reports and check them for any possible errors. Mistakes can drag down your score and prevent you from getting a loan, or cause you to pay a higher than necessary interest rate.
- **Sign up for paperless billing.** Converting to paperless billing will help keep your house, physical and financial, more clean and organized.
- **Set up automatic bill pay.** By signing up for automatic bill pay, you’ll never have to worry about a missed payment impacting your credit score. You can set it so that money is withdrawn from your checking account.
- **Consolidate your accounts.** Managing several accounts can be challenging. Streamlining all your accounts under a single bank, or using a bill management service that allows you to view all of your financial accounts, bills, subscriptions and travel rewards in one place with a single password can help organize your finances.
- **Download our mobile app.** Many banks now offer mobile apps that allow consumers to manage their finances from the palm of their hand. With the click of a button, you can make a deposit or access a record of all your recent transactions.

To sign up for these services, call First Hope Bank at 908-459-4121 or visit any of our six branch locations in Hope, Blirstown, Great Meadows, Hackettstown, Sparta and Andover.

***About First Hope** - First Hope Bank, established in 1911, is a full-service financial institution with locations in Andover, Blirstown, Great Meadows, Hackettstown, Hope and Sparta. Known for its customer service, financial strength and stability, First Hope Bank also offers the sophisticated range of products and services found in large financial institutions including a comprehensive Wealth Management division. First Hope Bank's associates strive every day to fulfill the Bank's motto, "Turning Hope into Reality." Visit First Hope Bank's website at firsthope.com, or email the Bank at info@firsthope.com.*