



The California CareerZone's **Make Money Choices** is a popular, online budgeting exercise that is a fun, but serious glimpse into the costs of living on your own as well as which occupation, education, and training choices will afford the lifestyle you desire. You will make various lifestyle choices like housing, food, transportation, entertainment, etc., to create an annual salary which summarizes what you must earn to achieve your desired lifestyle. Once you know your annual salary, you can begin exploring occupations to consider pursuing. This workbook guides you through the budget process and gives you a place to write down your lifestyle choices and career exploration discoveries.

There are two ways to start building your budget: **Choose Your Lifestyle**, and **Pick Your Salary**. If this is your first time using **Make Money Choices**, it is recommended that you start with **Choose Your Lifestyle**.

CHOOSE YOUR LIFESTYLE

Choose Your Lifestyle lets you imagine what kind of lifestyle you want to have when you are an adult. You can choose to have a lavish lifestyle, a minimalist lifestyle, or any lifestyle in between.

This is your opportunity to make decisions without suffering the real-life consequences. After you have made your lifestyle choices, you will have an opportunity to explore occupations that support the lifestyle you created. Selecting any of the occupations will take you to a detailed description of the occupation. So, let's begin:

Step 1: Go to the California CareerZone home page at www.cacareerzone.org and under **Make Money Choices**, choose "Get Started."

Step 2: Select "Choose Your Lifestyle," underneath the heading "To get started, select an option below." Click on the picture or select "Budget how much money you'll need" button. The "Where do you want to live?" page opens up.

Step 3: Choose a California county where you would like to live. Be aware that living costs vary a lot from county to county and range from very expensive to reasonably priced. Also keep in mind where the county is located and what sort of attractions are in it that may interest you.

Step 4: Start making your lifestyle choices beginning with housing. Make your selection then click on the green "Next Section" button underneath the "Monthly Cost" box. As you work your way through the categories, use the chart on the next page to write down your monthly costs.

NOTICE: Each time you make a selection, the cost is added in the "Monthly Cost" box. If you know what you will pay for something, you can enter that dollar amount in the "Monthly Cost" box—just type over any numbers already in the box. After making your choice(s) from a category, select the green "Next Section" button underneath the "Monthly Cost" box.

NOTICE: All the categories are listed at the bottom of the page and you can access them by clicking on the icons. From this list, you can also see what category you are in, what categories you need to finish, and the total cost of all the choices you have made thus far.

Track Your Costs:

| Category | Items You Chose | Monthly Cost |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Housing | | |
| Utilities | | |
| Food | | |
| Entertainment | | |
| Clothing | | |
| Transportation | | |
| Health Insurance | | |
| Education | | |
| Savings | | |
| Additional Expenses | | |
| <i>Total Monthly Spending</i> | | |
| <i>Taxes</i> | | |
| Annual Salary Needed | | |

Step 5: When you are finished with the “Savings” category, click on the “Show Summary” button underneath the “Monthly Cost” box to see how much money you need to earn to have the lifestyle you chose. You can also get to the summary page by clicking on the “Total” icon at the bottom of your screen. Write your totals into the chart above.

Step 6: From the budget summary page, click on the green “View Occupations” button. Select up to four occupations that interest you. Click on each occupation to view details for comparison. Use this chart to record your occupational information:

| Occupations | Educational Requirements | Wages/Salary | Job Outlook |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

You may see a lot of occupations to explore or no occupations to explore depending on the budget you created. To change your list of occupations, revise your budget. Use your Web browser’s “Back” arrow to return to the budget summary page. Select any category(ies) you would like to change then go back to your summary sheet and click on “View Occupations” again. You will see a new list of occupations.

PICK YOUR SALARY

Another way to explore lifestyle options is to start with the salary from an occupation you would like to pursue. In this option, you enter the salary and then make your lifestyle choices. As you go through the categories, the cost of each item will be subtracted from that salary.

Step 1: On the *Make Money Choices* “Get Started” page, under “Pick Your Salary,” click on the picture or select the “Budget from a starting salary” button. In the Expected Annual Salary box, enter the annual salary you plan to earn then press the green “Next Section” arrow. The “Where do you want to live?” page opens up.

Step 2: Choose a California county where you would like to live. Be aware that living costs vary a great deal from county to county and range from very expensive to reasonably priced. Keep in mind where the county is located and what sort of attractions are in or near it that may interest you.

Step 3: After selecting your county, your lifestyle choices begin with the housing category. Select a housing option, then select “Next Section.” Complete each section until you have gone through all the categories. TIP: If you know what you will pay for something, you can enter the dollar amount in the “Monthly Cost” box; just type over any numbers already in the box.

As you go through the categories, you will notice that each cost is inserted into the “Monthly Cost” box in the cost calculator. At the bottom of the page is a list of icons, one for each page in *Make Money Choices*. You will see a running balance at the far right under “Total”; this is the total amount remaining from your original salary amount after subtracting the cost of all choices you have made thus far. Your original monthly salary stays visible at the far left side of the list. After making your choice(ies) from a category, select the green “Next Section” button underneath the “Monthly Cost” box. Continue to move through all the categories and write down the total cost of each category in the chart:

| Category | Items You Chose | Monthly Cost |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Housing | | |
| Utilities | | |
| Food | | |
| Entertainment | | |
| Clothing | | |
| Transportation | | |
| Health Insurance | | |
| Education | | |
| Savings | | |
| Additional Expenses | | |
| Remaining Balance | | |

Did your salary support the lifestyle you hope to live? Yes No

What lifestyle choices could you adjust to make the salary work?

What other occupations could you consider to support the lifestyle you want?

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