



NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025

Building Your Savings: A Simple Guide

Saving money may seem overwhelming at first, with all the options available—savings accounts, certificate accounts, or retirement plans. But the most important factor in saving is forming the habit. The key is to start small, whether it's cutting back on a daily coffee or setting aside part of your paycheck. These small actions will add up over time and help you build financial security.

Step #1: Savings & Money Market Accounts

Savings accounts are the most basic option, ideal for beginners. You'll earn interest on your deposits, though the rates are lower than other options.

Advantages:

- Easy access to funds
- Low or no minimum balance
- Federally insured by NCUA

Drawbacks:

- Lower earning potential compared to other options

Step #2: Certificate Accounts

Once you've built up your emergency fund, consider a certificate account. These accounts offer higher returns but lock your funds in for a set term. The trade-off is that you can't access your money early without a penalty, but the interest earned can make it worthwhile.

Advantages:

- Higher returns
- Fixed terms that help your savings grow
- Federally insured by NCUA

Drawbacks:

- Early withdrawal penalties
- Minimum balance requirements

Step #3: IRA or 401(k) Accounts

For long-term savings, retirement accounts like IRAs and 401(k)s are excellent options. These accounts offer tax advantages to help you save for retirement. If your employer offers a 401(k) matching program, be sure to take advantage—it's essentially free money!

Advantages:

- Tax benefits for retirement savings
- Higher earning potential
- Options to invest in stocks

Drawbacks:

- Limited access to funds
- Possible penalties for early withdrawals

Start Today

Building your savings doesn't have to be complicated. Whether you start with a basic savings account or plan for the future with retirement accounts, every step counts. Visit us at any branch or call 888-777-9982 to learn more about the savings options available at our credit union. Let's start building your financial future today!





A Message from the CEO

Just two months ago, Pennsylvania's most famous weather/season prognosticator emerged from his burrow and saw his shadow forecasting six more weeks of winter. According to the fact-checkers, he is typically not very accurate in this tradition - correctly predicting the change in seasons about 35-40% of the time. I don't think I am alone hoping that once again Phil was off base and that spring is truly on the way.

In the short time since the hoopla in Punxsutawney, our teams have been extremely busy with a focus on, and vision of, empowering lives and enriching the economic well-being of our communities. To enhance the member experience, we're working on making things more convenient and user-friendly. For example, in January we broke ground on two new Patriot full-service branches - one on Williamsport Pike in Martinsburg, West Virginia, and another on Antrim Way in Greencastle, Pennsylvania. We expect that both branch offices will open for business in late summer or early fall if all goes as planned.

Last month, we transitioned to a new wealth management partner - Ameriprise Financial Services. For the last several months clients of Patriot Financial Services - which has been rebranded to Patriot Investment Services - have been receiving communications about the change. Ameriprise provides us with a stronger support team and resources for the financial advisors, Alex and Eric, to serve you. If the need arises, schedule some time to introduce yourself and meet with them to see what they can offer.

That's not all that our teams are working on to better serve you. In the coming months we will be rolling out a new phone system with enhanced capabilities, revamping our Online Bill Pay channel, begin replacing ATMs with newer models that feature 'tap and go' or cardless access, and upgrading our online and mobile banking platform with additional enhancements. As we introduce and expand services that members regularly utilize, we feel it is also prudent to look at sunsetting services and channels that are costly to operate, have more limited utilization, and don't deliver the value that they once did. A couple of examples of this are the separation from the Allpoint surcharge-free ATM network and the removal of lightly used ATMs at Meritus Hospital and Medical Center. These changes were made as consumer habits and technology evolves. The two ATMs located on the Meritus campus had very low utilization and pre-dated our Robinwood Office drive-up ATM, which offers greater accessibility for most members and is located directly across the street.

In the case of Allpoint, many local convenience stores offer surcharge-free ATM access including Wawa, Royal Farms, Rutter's and Sheetz. In a typical month, these locations are accessed more than 15,000 times by our members,

compared to a very small number through the Allpoint network which carries a hefty cost. In addition to free access at these convenience stores, members can get cash back at most merchants when they use their Patriot debit card. Speaking of our debit card, members have responded to the roll-out of Patriot Perks, where they can earn points on everyday purchases. Earned points through Patriot Perks are redeemable for gift cards - just another way that Patriot adds value and enables members to earn more.

We understand that change can often be difficult as it breaks us from habits and routines, some of which we have become accustomed to for many years. Change is something that many people across our great nation are dealing with under the new administration in Washington, DC and in our personal financial lives with stubborn inflation and higher costs of borrowing continuing. As consumer habits and trends in our industry change, Patriot is proud to be agile enough to change with the times and invest in our future, a future focused on bringing more value to our members and the communities that we serve.

The change in the Capitol has been fast and furious since late January. Most of us will be impacted in some way as it reverberates throughout our economy. There are varying opinions on what will happen with interest rates, but the Federal Reserve plans to stay the course to temper inflation, avoid a recession, and land softly.

Amidst the uncertainty and volatility in the political arena, our goal remains steadfastly focused on being here for you, when you need financial services and solutions, in the good times and the challenging ones. Some of the changes that we make may cause disruption in your habits and daily patterns, but all of our decisions are in the interest of stewardship and doing the right thing for the 80,000 members that we are fortunate enough to serve. Patriot can't be all things to all people, but we strive to provide value and offer financial options to meet the needs of individuals, families, businesses, and organizations throughout our field of membership.

In closing, I want to thank the staff that makes up Team Patriot, our members, and the community. Thank you for allowing us to serve you and earn your trust and confidence. We also appreciate your patience and understanding as we make improvements and changes to better serve your needs now and in the future. And please share your feedback with us. If we fail to meet your service expectations, we would ask for the opportunity to address it and make it right. Likewise, if we exceed your expectations, let others know about your Patriot experience.

Sincerely,

Ron Celaschi
CEO - Patriot Federal Credit Union

Patriot Investment Services



Exciting News: A New Partnership for Your Financial Future

At Patriot Federal Credit Union, we are committed to helping you achieve your financial goals. That's why we are excited to announce our new partnership with **Ameriprise Financial** and new program name, **Patriot Investment Services!** This collaboration allows us to offer you an enhanced level of financial advice and planning services, helping you feel more confident, connected, and in control of your financial future.

For over 130 years, **Ameriprise Financial** has provided trusted, goal-based advice and a diverse range of investment solutions. With this partnership, you'll have access to their experienced service and digital tools, to help ensure you receive the guidance you need to make informed financial decisions.

Our dedicated Financial Advisors, **Alex Bacay**, and **Eric Morrow** will continue to be available at multiple Patriot branch locations, ready to assist with your investment and planning needs.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more, feel free to reach out to Alex or Eric directly:

☎ **Alex Bacay** -717-709-4991 | alex.bacay@ampf.com

☎ **Eric Morrow** - 717-709-2577 | eric.morrow@ampf.com

We have a partnership with Ameriprise Financial Services to provide financial planning services and solutions to our clients. We are not an investment client of Ameriprise, but we have a revenue sharing relationship with them that creates a conflict of interest.

Investment products are not insured by the FDIC, NCUA or any federal agency, are not deposits or obligations of, or guaranteed by any financial institution, and involve investment risks including possible loss of principal and fluctuation in value.

Ameriprise Financial Services partners with financial institutions to provide investment advisory, brokerage and insurance services to their clients. This is a contractual relationship, which earns the financial institution compensation from Ameriprise for successful referrals. In most cases, the financial institution also receives a majority of the commissions and fees generated by Ameriprise financial advisors for the services noted above. This applies as long as the referred client maintains a relationship with Ameriprise. Non-licensed employees of the financial institutions may receive incentives from their employer for referring clients to Ameriprise. These incentives create a conflict of interest.

Patriot Investment Services is a financial advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC.

Patriot Federal Credit Union is not affiliated with Ameriprise Financial, Inc.

Investment advisory products and services are made available through Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, a registered investment adviser.

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Important Update: Changes to Surcharge-Free ATMs

At Patriot Federal Credit Union, we're always looking for ways to improve your banking experience. Starting April 1, 2025, we will no longer participate in the Allpoint ATM Network, meaning ATMs at locations like Target, CVS, Walgreens, Giant Food, and Kroger will no longer be surcharge-free for Patriot cardholders.

How to Avoid ATM Fees:

- ✓ Use Patriot ATMs - Withdraw cash surcharge-free at our branch ATMs.*
- ✓ ATM Locator - Find nearby surcharge-free ATMs, including Sheetz, Rutter's, Wawa, and Royal Farms, using our website or mobile app.*
- ✓ Cash Back at Retailers - Many stores offer cash-back when making a purchase with your Patriot debit card.

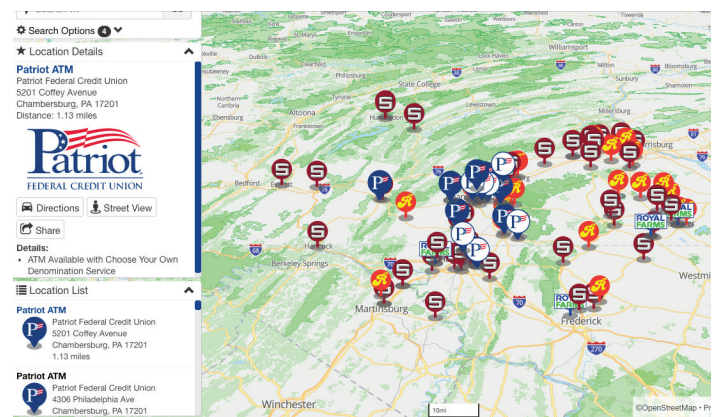
We're here to help! If you have questions or need assistance finding an ATM, call us at 888-777-9982.

New Branch & ATM Locator

Finding a Patriot branch or surcharge-free ATM just got easier! We've launched a new Branch & ATM Locator at Patriotfcu.org. Simply navigate to 'Locations & ATMs'

to explore Patriot branch locations, Patriot ATMs, and surcharge-free ATMs at convenient store locations. Plus, you can quickly access the locator anytime through the menu on the Patriot Mobile App. Check it out today at <https://www.patriotfcu.org/locations-atms/>

*ATM limits may apply based on your checking account type. See your Consumer Fee and Benefit Schedule for details or visit <http://www.patriotfcu.org/personal/checking-accounts/>



Fraud Tips! Stay Alert: Prevent Smash-and-Grab Thefts



Car break-ins are on the rise, with thieves smashing windows to steal valuables. These quick crimes can lead to financial loss and identity theft. Recently, Patriot Federal Credit Union helped prevent fraud when two individuals were caught attempting to cash stolen checks using a victim's identity.

How to Protect Yourself:

- ◆ **Don't leave valuables in your car** - Lock items in your trunk before arriving.
- ◆ **Park in well-lit, busy areas** - Thieves prefer secluded spots.
- ◆ **Lock doors and close windows** - Make your vehicle a harder target.
- ◆ **Stay aware of your surroundings** - Report suspicious activity.
- ◆ **Act fast if theft occurs** - Report stolen items to your bank, file a police report, and monitor accounts.

Contact us immediately for assistance in securing your accounts. **Stay vigilant, stay safe!**

Important ATM Update - Meritus

Effective **June 2, 2025**, the **Patriot ATMs at Meritus Medical Center and Meritus Hospital** will be removed:

- ❑ **Meritus Medical Center** - 11110 Medical Campus Rd, Hagerstown, MD
- ❑ **Meritus Hospital** - 11116 Medical Campus Rd, Hagerstown, MD

Alternative Ways to Access Your Funds:

- ✓ **Nearby Patriot ATMs** - Visit our branch ATM at **11067 Robinwood Dr** or **18721 Longmeadow Rd, Hagerstown, MD**
- ✓ **Mobile & Online Banking** - Manage accounts, transfer funds, and deposit checks anytime
- ✓ **Surcharge-Free ATMs** - Available at **Sheetz, Wawa, Rutter's, Royal Farms**, and more
- ✓ **Cash Back at Checkout** - Use your debit card for cash back at participating retailers

We appreciate your understanding and remain committed to convenient banking solutions.

New Branches

Patriot recently broke ground on a new branch at 5268 Williamsport Pike, Martinsburg, WV, set to open in fall 2025—our 10th full-service location!

"With over 5,000 members in Berkeley County, this branch reinforces our commitment to serving the Martinsburg community," said Ron Celaschi, CEO.

Located in Spring Mills, the 2,900 sq. ft. branch will offer personal service, financial consultations, mortgage loans, and business services.



Martinsburg, WV

Patriot also recently held a site preparation ceremony for our upcoming Greencastle branch, located at 200 North Antrim Way near Weis Markets. This will be our 11th full-service location, providing greater access and convenience for our members in the area—set to open fall 2025.

"Greencastle has a strong Patriot membership base, and we're excited to bring a modern, full-service branch to the community," said Ron Celaschi, CEO.



Greencastle, PA

Both 2,900 sq. ft. branches will offer personal service, financial consultations, mortgage loans, and business services. Features include:

- ✓ Traditional banking services & private consultation spaces
- ✓ Tech bar with financial resources
- ✓ Comfortable waiting area with refreshments
- ✓ Two drive-up lanes & SMART ATM with multilingual options and flexible withdrawals (\$5, \$10, \$20)

We're excited to expand and better serve you—stay tuned for updates!