LET'S TALK MONEY®

January/February 2027

Get In Better Financial Shape In 2027

There's no time like the present to assess your financial health and start planning for a more secure future.



Revisit Your Budget
Take stock of your monthly income and expenses and categorize them as essentials and non-essentials (such as dining out and subscriptions). This helps you identify non-essentials you can cut back on.

Explore Investment Opportunities.
The financial landscape is constantly evolving, offering a range of options tailored to different risk and return preferences. You may already be familiar with stocks, bonds, and mutual funds*, but diversifying your portfolio may lead to greater returns. Consider emerging markets, exchange-traded funds (ETFs), or even real estate investment trusts (REITs). Your financial professional is the best guide for this exploration.

Build an Emergency Fund.
General advice is to set aside three to six months' worth of living expenses for unexpected situations. This fund can reduce reliance on credit cards or loans during times of need.

Manage Debt.
Make it a priority to tackle student loans, credit card debt, and other obligations, starting with the highest-interest ones. Reducing debt frees up cash flow, allowing you to invest more in your future.

Save for Retirement.
Participate in your employer's retirement savings plan. Contribute enough to fully take advantage of any employer matching contributions. Consider other retirement savings options, such as traditional and Roth individual retirement accounts (IRAs).

Stay Informed.
Tax laws change, investment opportunities arise, and market conditions shift. Stay current through regular meetings with your financial professional, books, reputable financial websites, or workshops to ensure you're not missing out on beneficial strategies.

**For mutual funds and exchange-traded funds, consider the fund's investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses before investing. Because fund values fluctuate, redeemed shares may be worth more or less than their original investment. REITs are subject to illiquidity and property devaluation risks based on adverse economic and real estate market conditions and may not be suitable for all investors. Before investing, read the prospectuses, which disclose all risks, fees, and expenses. Past performance won't guarantee future results. Diversification does not ensure a profit or protect against a loss.*



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I am committed to helping my clients achieve their financial goals for themselves, their families and their businesses by providing them with strategies for asset accumulation, preservation and transfer.

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Standard Version

LTM Client Marketing
helping financial professionals stay connected

FINRA Reference FR2026-0828-0139/E STAN

Can't Work? Your Paycheck Can Still Show Up

Illness, injury, and pregnancy don't wait for a convenient time. Short-term disability insurance helps replace part of your income while you're out — call your insurance professional to learn more.

The Basics

Short-term disability typically replaces 40 to 70 percent of your monthly income until you return to work or your benefit period ends, usually three to six months. It covers only nonwork-related injuries or illnesses.

Short-term disability policies typically use an "own occupation" definition of disability, meaning you're covered if you can't perform the duties of your current job. A stricter "any occupation" definition — which applies only if you're unable to work in any job — is more common in long-term disability policies. Check your policy's specific definition of disability before you need to rely on it.



Pregnancy Coverage

Sometimes, disability coverage begins two weeks before a woman's due date and lasts six weeks after the birth. You can amend the start date of disability coverage with updated medical information. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for the birth or care of a child — the same right applies to mothers and fathers alike. FMLA generally applies to employees who've worked at least 12 months and 1,250 hours for an employer with 50 or more workers nearby. Note that FMLA protects your job, not your paycheck — that's what short-term disability coverage is for.

Buying a Policy

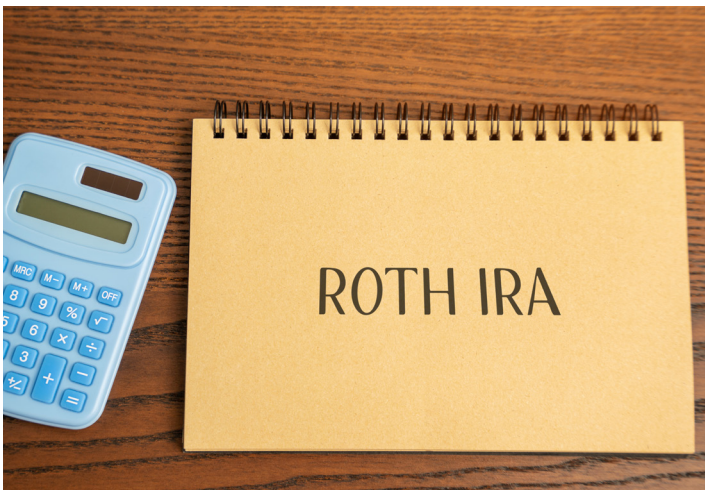
The cost of a short-term disability policy depends on your age, gender, occupation, and overall health. Before purchasing a policy, review the insurer's definition of disability, the length of the waiting and benefit periods, and the coverage amount.

Roth For Tax Diversification

A retirement plan is a strong start, but you'll still owe income taxes on much of what you withdraw in retirement. Tax-free retirement income from a Roth account can help offset taxes on withdrawals from a tax-deferred account, giving you more control over your tax bill.

How a Roth Can Help

- If you plan to retire to a lower-tax state but circumstances change and you end up staying put, you'd pay more state tax on traditional withdrawals than expected.
- Required minimum distributions (RMDs) from tax-deferred accounts could push you into a higher bracket. Roth accounts aren't subject to RMDs, so they won't add to that risk.
- A surviving spouse typically shifts to single-filer status, where tax rates climb more quickly, and RMDs grow larger with age — a combination that raises your tax bill further.



Consult your tax and financial professionals to learn more about planning for taxes in retirement.

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The Holiday Bills Are In — Now What?



The gifts are unwrapped, and the credit card statements have arrived. Tackling holiday debt is one of the best ways to start the new year on solid footing.

Know What You Owe
Add up all holiday balances — including credit cards, buy-now-pay-later plans, and store financing.

Pick a Payoff Strategy
The avalanche method targets your highest-interest balance first to save more money, while the snowball method pays off the smallest balance first for quick wins. Either way, keep paying at least the minimum on the remaining balances.

Know the Difference
Credit card balances from holiday shopping are high-interest "bad" debt that should be paid off quickly. A mortgage, education loan, or business loan is typically "good" debt that builds your future.

Plan for Next Year
Once you pay off the holiday debt, open a dedicated savings account and contribute monthly to prevent a repeat next year.

Your January Money Reset

The holidays are behind you, and so is the spending that came with them. January is the natural time to see where your money actually went and to reset before old habits creep back in.



Compare Plan to Reality
Review your December statements and compare what you actually spent with what you budgeted. Look closely at categories that ran over — gifts, travel, dining out — and note why. This gap is where next year's budget should start.

Try a Spending Freeze
Consider a one-month freeze on non-essentials: no dining out, no new clothes, and no impulse buys. Keep it simple — pay bills, buy groceries, cover essentials, and pause everything else. A short freeze breaks the momentum of a high-spend season and makes it easier to see what you truly value versus what was just habit.

Get A Head Start On Tax Season

A new year means tax season is coming. Gathering your documents now, rather than in April, can save you time, reduce stress, and possibly save money.

What to Collect

- Income statements: W-2s, 1099s for freelance or investment income, and any distributions from Social Security or retirement plans.
- Deduction records: mortgage interest statements, property tax bills, charitable donation receipts, and medical expense receipts.
- Business and investment records: expense logs, mileage logs, and year-end statements from brokerage or retirement accounts.
- Life changes: notes on marriage, a new child, a home purchase, or a job change, since each can affect your filing status.



Keep It Organized
Create a single folder, either physical or digital, for everything as it arrives. Include last year's return for reference, as many figures carry over.

Starting early gives your tax professional more time to identify deductions and credits rather than rushing to meet the deadline.

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Stay The Course: Investing Wisdom For The New Year

Every new year brings fresh hope for the market ahead — but performance can't be predicted or timed. These time-tested basics can help you stay grounded and keep working toward your goals, no matter what the year brings.

Remain Calm
Don't get too excited when the market is high, and don't get too discouraged when it drops. Resist the urge to overcorrect. Selling in a panic leaves you less invested in the future, reducing your dividends and limiting your ability to participate in any potential recovery.

Stay Invested
Even experts cannot predict when markets may turn. Trying to "time the market" usually leads to poor decisions.

Automate Your Contributions
Investing a fixed amount on a regular schedule, known as dollar-cost averaging, buys more shares when prices are low and fewer when prices are high, smoothing out the impact of volatility over time and removing emotion from the decision.

Stick to Your Strategy
When sailors encounter rough seas, they keep a steady hand on the tiller and their eyes on the horizon. In investing, the equivalent is maintaining a well-balanced mix of assets aligned with your needs, goals, time horizon, and risk tolerance.

Diversify
By spreading your money across a mix of stocks, bonds, real estate, and cash, rather than concentrating it in a single company or sector, you may be able to create a portfolio that is somewhat shock-resistant.*

Rebalance
Market fluctuations can throw your investment mix out of line with your objectives. Reviewing your portfolio at least once a year, or whenever an asset class drifts several percentage points from your target, helps you decide when to buy or sell to maintain your desired risk level. A sharp market drop can also offer the chance to add investments at sale prices.

Be Patient
While nothing in life is guaranteed, history shows that major stock market declines are followed by recoveries to new highs, even after downturns that felt severe at the time. Sometimes the rebound takes weeks, and sometimes it takes years, but staying invested gives your portfolio the chance to participate when it happens.**

**Diversification cannot eliminate the risk of investment losses. Past performance won't guarantee future results. An investment in stocks or mutual funds can result in a loss of principal.*

***Morningstar, "What We've Learned From 150 Years of Stock Market Crashes, 2026".*



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We Value Your Input...

Your feedback is very important to us. If you have any questions about the subjects covered here, or suggestions for future issues, please don't hesitate to call. You'll find our number on the front of this newsletter. It's always a pleasure to hear from you.

FINRA

ADVERTISING REGULATION DEPARTMENT REVIEW LETTER

October 5, 2026

Reference: **FR2026-0828-0139/E** Org Id: 23568

1. LTM 180 Jan Feb 2027 Standard
   Rule: FIN 2210
   5 Pages

The communication submitted appears consistent with applicable standards.

Reviewed by,

William W. Brill
Principal Analyst

This year's Advertising Regulation Conference will be held October 15-16 in Washington, D.C. For more information and to register, please visit our website at: https://www.finra.org/events-training/conferences-events/2026-finra-advertising-regulation-conference

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