Pay Yourself First

1. **Start with the savings line** from your one-page budget. That's the money left at the bottom after every bill had its job. No line yet? Pick $25 a check and start anyway.
2. **Open a savings account at a different bank, and name it.** Not the bank that holds your checking. Online savings accounts often pay more than a regular bank; compare rates. Money you can't see in your checking app is harder to spend. Check today's rates at **bankrate.com/banking/savings/rates** or scan the code. Look for no monthly fee, no minimum balance, and FDIC or NCUA insurance. Call it something like "Emergency Only."
3. **Make it automatic.** Ask Payroll (972-882-7322) whether your direct deposit can split into two accounts. If it can, send the savings line straight to the new account. If it can't, set an automatic transfer at your bank for the day after payday, once the deposit has posted.
4. **Think in days, not months.** $250 a check is about $8 a day. When researchers asked people to save $5 a day instead of $150 a month, four times as many said yes.* It's the same money; the day-size number is easier to say yes to.
5. **Give it a first job: $1,000.** Dave Ramsey calls it Baby Step 1. It isn't meant to cover your life. It's there so the next flat tire comes out of the account instead of going on a credit card.

FOUR CHECKS TO $1,000

November 24, December 18, January 27, February 26. Four at $250 is $1,000, in the account before Spring Break. Paid twice a month? Split it across both checks.

*Hershfield, Shu & Benartzi, "Temporal Reframing and Participation in a Savings Program," *Marketing Science* 39(6), 2020; cited in CFPB, *Consumer Savings App Strategies and Savings Outcomes* (2022).

Watch: Pay yourself first
The idea in three minutes.
Khan Academy on YouTube

Watch: How big a cushion?
Dave Ramsey on the $1,000 starter fund and what comes after it.
The Ramsey Show on YouTube

Compare savings rates
Today's high-yield savings accounts side by side. Rates change, so check before you open.
Bankrate

Do the math on your phone
Your amount per check, per day, and the date you hit $1,000.
Google Sheets

Print the setup card
The same math on one page, ready to print.
PDF

If money stress is weighing on you right now, the district's Employee Assistance Program is free and confidential: **1-877-851-1631**, any time.

WHERE THE IDEA CAME FROM

"Pay yourself first" is a hundred years old. It comes from *The Richest Man in Babylon*, a 1926 book of short parables about a Babylonian named Arkad, who got rich on one rule: a part of all you earn is yours to keep. He saved a tenth. It's a short read, out of copyright, and free online. Good one for Thanksgiving break.

INTIRETY WEALTH MANAGEMENT

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