

**NEW!** Check out the latest Market Update - now available in the Learning Centre  
[www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/learning-centre/market-update-winter-2025/](http://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/learning-centre/market-update-winter-2025/)

## DID YOU KNOW?

### What to do if you spent more (and saved less) than planned during the holidays

**G**ifts. Entertainment. Maybe travel... did your budget take a beating over the holidays? You're not alone. "At Educators, we know how to help our clients pay down debt, so they can start saving again", says **Michael Graves, Certified Financial Planner professional**. "The first step is to find extra cash to pay those bills." Here are 'Top Nine Ways to Maximize Your Cash Flow' after the holidays.

- 1) Pay bills on time to cut out late fees. Set up automatic payments so you're never late.
- 2) Make a budget and stick to it. Educators' online budget tool can help: [www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/budget-calculator/](http://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/budget-calculator/)

3) Don't pay for things you don't use, like a streaming service, gym membership, or magazine subscription. If you don't use it, cancel it. Which brings us to...

4) Make money from what you don't use. Many things can be resold on Kijiji or Facebook Marketplace.

5) Pause before you buy – if you see something you like, walk away for three days before deciding to buy.

6) Lower the credit limit on your cards (and have no more than two cards).

7) Do it yourself. Cook your own meals instead of getting takeout. Paint that bedroom yourself. (YouTube videos can teach you anything!)

8) Use your loyalty programs – before you buy anything check if your loyalty program offers a discount. And search online for coupons.

9) Work with experts. Not only do Educators' Financial Advisors offer educator-specific advice, they can advise you on strategies such as consolidating loans.

The cash flow you find can first be used to pay down debt, and then to start saving regularly. You'll also find helpful articles in our Learning Centre like this [www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/learning-centre/saving-isnt-hard-when-you-know-how/](http://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/learning-centre/saving-isnt-hard-when-you-know-how/) or talk to us at 1.800.263.954.

## PETER'S PERSPECTIVE

### Hello! And Happy New Year!

**A**s Educators' new President and CEO, I'd like to wish Chuck Hamilton a long and happy retirement. During his 13 years at Educators, he led our team of dedicated experts through many important changes, and I'm excited to be part of the continued growth of the company.



Although at times change can be challenging, it is often essential for progress. Some things at Educators will never change, such as our commitment to continue to help our clients and

members of the education community achieve peace of mind, by delivering financial solutions tailored to their unique needs. In order to keep doing that, we must change and innovate in the way that we do business.

A shining example of this is our recently-launched online access which reimagines how you access your Educators accounts. It's easy-to-use, self-serve design lets you quickly and easily perform important functions such as set and track goals, see your portfolio balance, book appointments, and much more. But we haven't stopped there. We'll continue to improve it by adding new features and refinements on an ongoing basis. If you haven't signed up for the new online access yet, I urge you to do so. Call us to register at 1.800.263.9541 or request access online at [www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/online-access/](http://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/online-access/)

In the short time I've been here, I have already noticed the commitment of our experienced and talented team. Their passion for helping our clients really resonates with me. One of the highlights of my career in financial services has been working closely with individuals to solve their unique financial goals. It's truly satisfying.

I look forward to getting to know you, our clients, and helping you achieve financial peace of mind.

**Peter Van Meerbergen**  
President and CEO,  
Educators Financial Group

P.S. If you'd like to reach out to me directly about how Educators can help you, you can email me at [pvmeerbergen@educatorsfinancialgroup.ca](mailto:pvmeerbergen@educatorsfinancialgroup.ca)



## When and how to update an estate plan.

We know that your days are long, and your 'to do' list longer. But making time for your finances, including your estate plan, should always be a priority.

*"Your estate plan should be reviewed on a regular basis," says Educators Certified Financial Planner professional Lisa Raponi, CFP®, RRC®, TEP. "It should also be reviewed after major life changes."*

**First step:** is your estate plan complete? An estate plan is more than a will. It also includes powers of attorney for personal care and finances. Your powers of attorney act on your behalf if you are debilitated and unable to make decisions for yourself. ([www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/learning-centre/estate-planning-powers-attorney-guardians-trustees/](http://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/learning-centre/estate-planning-powers-attorney-guardians-trustees/)) A will is a legal document that describes how you would like your property and other assets to be distributed after your death, and comes into effect once you pass away.

**Second step:** ensure documents are up to date. *"Many circumstances call for revising a will", says Lisa, "such as death of a partner, marriage or divorce, a new baby, an inheritance, acquiring assets, and a change of health."* One common reason is to change your executor, who administers your estate and applies for probate. If your original choice has moved, can't shoulder the responsibility, or is no longer on good terms with you, you may need to change.

**Third step:** make changes legally. In Ontario, changes can be made by annotating your existing will, preparing a codicil, or drafting a new will (perhaps the best way to ensure your will is legal and free from ambiguity.)

At Educators Financial Group, we help educators with all their financial needs, including developing an estate plan. Give us a call today.

## Is it time to consider Responsible Investing?

2024 was a boom year for Responsible Investing (RI) – investing based on environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors, which aims to not only provide financial return, but also encourage positive social change. The 2024 Canadian Responsible Investment Trends Report stated that increases in RI investing were due to improved quality of ESG reporting and clearer definitions of RI strategies, as well as heightened awareness of climate change\*.

*"At Educators, many investors have asked me about RI, their options, and whether they can invest and still reach their financial goals", says Educators Certified Financial Planner professional Brad Thompson, CFP®, RIS.*

While early opponents of RI argued that the nature of RI limited the choice of investments, and in doing so increased the chance of lower returns, more recent empirical studies conclude that RI does not mean lower returns, and may even enhance performance because it offers protection against downside risks.

At Educators, our investors have access to a variety of RI options, including the Educators BrighterFuture Funds™ [www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/brighterfuture-funds](http://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/brighterfuture-funds). These funds reflect high environmental, social and governance standards, and their investment sectors include clean water, clean energy, health and education, climate action and more. To help keep the funds on track, a rigorous ESG process is applied that involves screening and applying due diligence in investment appraisal and post investment monitoring.

Whether RI is right for you and suits your investment objectives is something that should be discussed with your financial advisor. You can set up an appointment to talk to an advisor at Educators Financial Group by calling 1.800.263.954.

## Are the new mortgage rules good news for you?

Canadian real estate is challenging. Whether you are a first-time homebuyer or renewing a mortgage on an existing home, you need to know the rules ... and the rules changed in Fall 2024.

In September 2024 the government announced two changes. The first increased the price cap for insured mortgages from \$1 million to \$1.5 million. The second change extended amortizations from 25 to 30 years for all first-time homebuyers (and anyone purchasing a new build with less than 20% down payment).

For example, under previous rules a home selling for \$1.3 million needed a 20% down payment, or \$260,000. Under the new rules, buyers need 5% on the first \$500,000 and 10% on the rest, or a minimum down payment of \$105,000.

*"However, homebuyers should know that extending the amortization period means that, while monthly payments will be lower, the overall debt will be greater", says Jessica Dadswell, Educators Regional Director, Lending Services. "And if housing supply stays low, increased borrowing power could result in increased demand and prices".*

In addition, on November 21, 2024, the mortgage stress test changed. Both insured and uninsured mortgage borrowers became exempt from the stress test when switching to a new mortgage lender at renewal time. The change only applies when the original mortgage amount and amortization period remain the same, and only for federally-regulated financial institutions. Read more here: [www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/learning-centre/attention-mortgage-holders-and-seekers-changes-are-coming/](http://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/learning-centre/attention-mortgage-holders-and-seekers-changes-are-coming/)

Understanding how the real estate market works is key to achieving your homeownership goals. Talk to us today.

Did you know Educators has an Estate Planning Checklist? Check it out: [www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/learning-centre/estate-planning-checklist/](http://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/learning-centre/estate-planning-checklist/)

Are you on track to save for retirement? Check it out: [www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/calculatepensiongap/](http://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/calculatepensiongap/)

It's easy to find out how extending your amortization will affect your mortgage. [www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/mortgage-calculator/](http://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/mortgage-calculator/)