Del Norte Triplicate

COMMUNITY

Dave Ramsey Says: The Ultimate To-Do List

By Dave Ramsey November 25, 2026

Dear Dave,

Do you have a list of the important, immediate things people should think about if they have to deal with being laid off from a job?

– Oscar

Dear Oscar,

It’s great to know you’re thinking ahead. Hopefully, you’re not facing this problem at the moment, but if you are, here are just a few ideas that come to mind to help hold things together until you’re back on your feet again.

First, take any severance pay — plus all the other money you have — and put it in an emergency fund. You never know how long money will be tight in a situation like this. I mean, even if you immediately find a part-time job to tide you over, you’re still going to be facing a significant loss of income in the short term.

You know how much I love beating down debt, right? At this point, you need to stop paying extra on any debt you have. Pull the plug on retirement planning temporarily, too. You don’t need to worry about this stuff when you’re in the middle of a full-blown crisis. A detailed, bare-bones household budget is also a necessity. It’s beans and rice time when something like this happens, so no eating out, buying new things or vacations for a while.

Many times, people don’t want to experience the pain of a scaled-back lifestyle while they’re also feeling the pain of a job loss. Some of them even turn to credit cards, and that’s a really bad idea. It only makes a bad situation worse.

Be on the hunt for life insurance, as well, if you previously had it only through your employer. Everyone needs a good, inexpensive level-term life insurance policy outside of what’s offered at the workplace. And when it comes to medical insurance, consider looking into a government health care plan, or health savings account (HSA), one with a high deductible and low premium.

Finally, you’ve got to be willing to take any honest work that comes your way. This means even part-time jobs like delivering pizza. There’s no shame in honest work, and you might even be surprised by how much some people make doing this very thing.

Great question, Oscar!

– Dave

Dave Ramsey is a nine-time national bestselling author, personal finance expert and host of The Ramsey Show. He has appeared on Good Morning America, CBS This Morning, Today, Fox News, CNN, Fox Business and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people take control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for Ramsey Solutions.