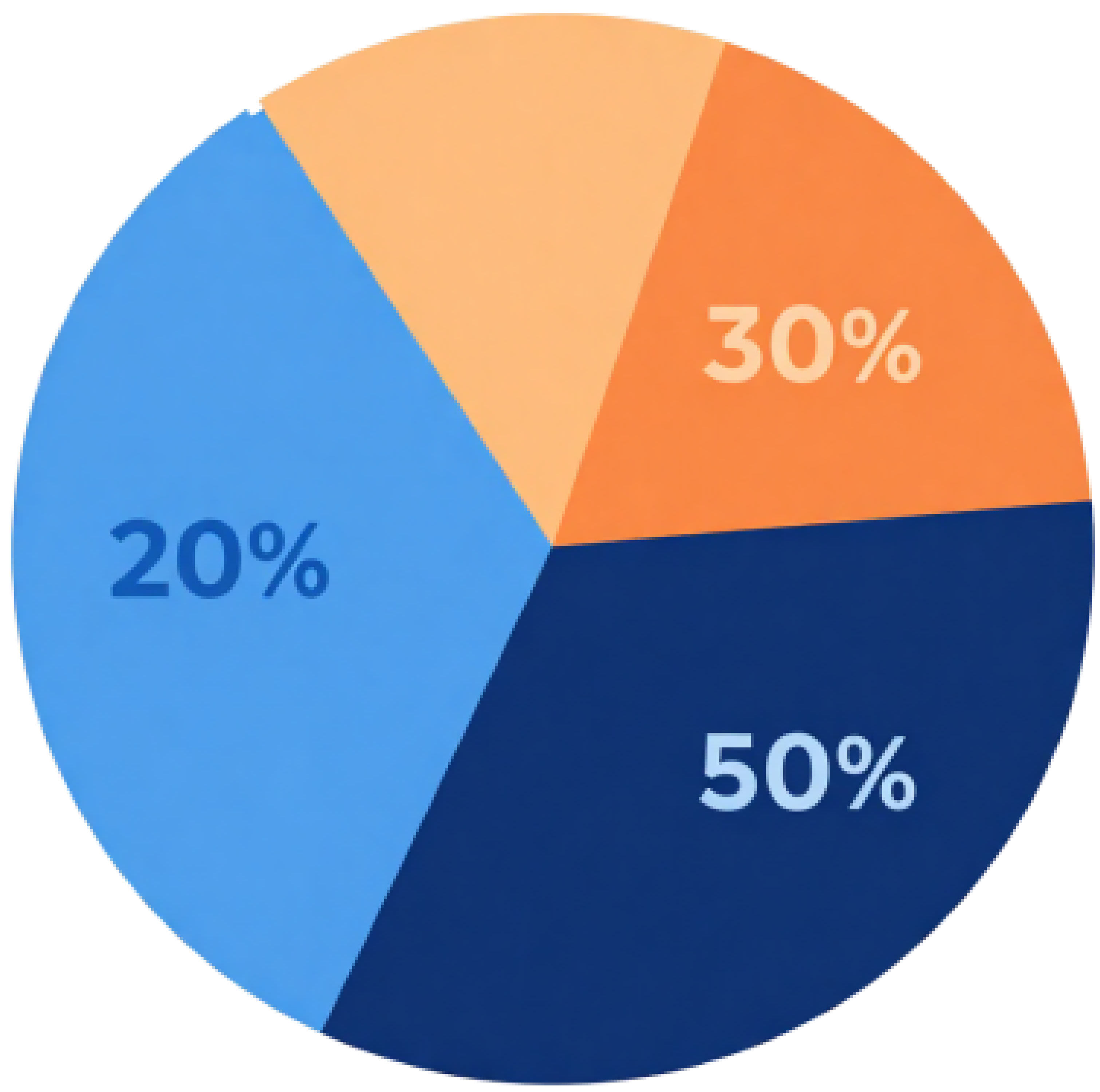
THE BUDGETING BLUEPRINT

A simple guide to mastering the 50/30/20 rule
and building wealth on your terms.

START SMART FINANCE
FINANCIAL EDUCATION COMPANY

THE 50/30/20 RULE



50% — NEEDS
Rent, utilities, groceries, insurance, minimum debt payments, transport

30% — WANTS
Dining out, entertainment, subscriptions, hobbies, travel, shopping

20% — SAVINGS & DEBT
Emergency fund, retirement (401k/IRA), extra debt payments, investments

Pro Tip: Start with your take-home pay (after taxes). This rule is a guideline — adjust the percentages to fit your life.

ALTERNATIVE BUDGET RULES

50 / 30 / 20

The Classic

50% Needs

30% Wants

20% Savings

Best for: balanced lifestyles
with moderate expenses

55 / 25 / 20

The Saver

55% Needs

25% Wants

20% Savings

Best for: high cost-of-living
areas (rent takes more)

60 / 20 / 20

The Aggressive

60% Needs

20% Wants

20% Savings

Best for: fast debt payoff
or aggressive investing

Remember: These are starting points. Track your spending for one month, then adjust to match your reality.

SAMPLE BUDGET: $80,000 SALARY

Take-home pay (after taxes): ~$4,800/month

NEEDS — 50%

$2,400/month

Rent/Mortgage	$1,200
Utilities	$150
Groceries	$400
Transportation	$300
Insurance	$200
Min. Debt Payments	$150

WANTS — 30%

$1,440/month

Dining Out	$300
Entertainment	$150
Subscriptions	$80
Shopping	$200
Travel Fund	$400
Hobbies	$310

SAVINGS — 20%

$960/month

401(k) Contribution	$400
Emergency Fund	$200
Roth IRA	$250
Extra Debt Payment	$110

Your numbers will differ! Use this as a template. The key is that every dollar has a job.

GETTING STARTED & CHECKLIST

YOUR ACTION PLAN

1. Calculate your monthly take-home pay (after taxes).

2. List all fixed expenses (rent, utilities, insurance, debt minimums).

3. Choose your budget split: 50/30/20, 55/25/20, or 60/20/20.

4. Set up automatic transfers for savings on payday.

5. Track spending for 30 days using an app or spreadsheet.

6. Review and adjust at the end of each month.

START SMART CHECKLIST

- ☐ Know my take-home pay
- ☐ Emergency fund started ($1,000 minimum)
- ☐ High-interest debt payoff plan in place
- ☐ Retirement account open (401k or IRA)
- ☐ Automatic savings transfers set up
- ☐ Budget tracked for 1 full month
- ☐ Reviewed and adjusted my percentages
- ☐ Shared my goals with an accountability partner