

# MANAGING



Karen P. Goebel  
and Linda A. Boelter

## Bartering

**W**hen your paycheck dwindles and bills stack up, you need to consider all of your family's assets and resources — including non-dollar resources — to balance your budget and get what you need.

Your family assets and resources include time, knowledge, experience, possessions, personal property, and creativity.

**Bartering** — exchanging assets and resources with others — is a time-tested way to stay in control when money is tight.

Be creative. Use this fact sheet to think through what you have to offer, and what you no longer need. Make a list of your skills, training, talents, interests, and possessions you may be able to trade. See the fact sheet in this series *Making the most of what you have/Cómo sacar el mayor provecho de lo que tiene*.

Next, match your skills and goods with community needs. Start small. Make your first swap with a friend, neighbor, or relative to build your confidence.

### Why barter?

Bartering is a way out of a “money mentality.” Bartering places value on human resources and commodities instead of money. Barter exchanges can increase your cash flow and buying power, stretch your budget, and conserve reserves.

Plus, bartering extends goods and services to those on low or fixed incomes, taps relatively unused talents and resources, and involves all family members.

Even young children can swap toys for one or two weeks to make playtime more fun and to learn sharing. But first, agree to replace items that could get broken.

### Guide to successful bartering

One challenge to successful bartering is making the right exchange. Another is determining **fair value**. How do you put a value on knowledge, skills, or talents?

For example, you can get rid of all that baby equipment you no longer need. Or you can retain ownership and exchange part-time use — such as lending your station wagon to your neighbor once a week for using that neighbor's lawn mower or snow blower.

If you need services from someone and they don't need what you have to offer, ask what they may need help with, and consider doing that. Or find a third person who has what they want, and arrange a three-way swap.

Review the **liability coverage** in your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy. Liability issues may make some barter arrangements too risky.

### Barter agreement

When bartering involves exchanges of **substantial value**, set up a **barter agreement**:

- **Identify who will supply needed materials.** Usually the receiver pays for supplies, but the provider may have the needed equipment or power tools, for example. When materials must be purchased, work together to determine specifics, cost limits, quality of materials, and other details that could otherwise become irritants.
- **Clearly state your expectations.** Set times or deadlines in advance to avoid misunderstandings. Never assume anything. Be sure you each understand and agree on exactly what will be done and when.



- **Put the details in writing.** Sign and date the agreement. A barter agreement is as legally binding as any contract. But renegotiating or changing the terms is less costly than going to court.

## Tax help

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) may tax what you barter, and you may owe local sales tax as well. When substantial value is involved, decide in advance how to report barter.

If in doubt, you can get tax help and information in English or Spanish:

VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) is available at many public libraries, community centers, and other locations from January to April 15. To find VITA tax help near you, call the toll-free IRS Hotline at (800) 829-1040 (press 8 for Spanish) or (800) 829-4059 (TTY). Or visit their web site at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

To find out more about the tax implications of bartering, request a free copy of IRS publication 525 *Taxable and Nontaxable Income* (available in English only as of 2004) at (800) 829-3676. Allow two weeks for delivery. Or find the publication online at [www.irs.ustreas.gov/formspubs/index.htm](http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/formspubs/index.htm).

Report barter as income on IRS form Schedule C or C-EZ. If you are in a barter exchange organization, you should receive IRS Form 1099-B by February 1. This form shows what you received from exchanges during the year. The IRS also receives a copy.

### **If you receive credit units for your contributions to the barter exchange:**

Report these credits on your federal income tax form even if you do not actually receive goods or services from other members until a later tax year.

## Bartering services

### When you provide a service...

- Be sure you are clear on details of the service you are expected to provide. Provide services that best match your skills and expertise. Never take on tasks that are too challenging or beyond your capability.
- Before you render the service, make sure you and the recipient have agreed on who will pay for any supplies or materials needed. And make sure you have everything you need to do the job right.
- Keep the recipient well-informed on your progress as well as any problems or delays.
- Carry through as you agreed. Build a reputation of being competent, adaptable, and dependable.

### When you receive a service...

- Check the provider's qualifications. Make sure he or she is clear on details of the service you want and who pays for supplies and materials needed.
- Carefully explain and supervise work to be done. Supervision ensures that you actually receive the service and the job is completed as you expected.
- **If you are unhappy with the service or quality of the work: Be persistent.** Try to resolve your differences. You may find an alternate agreement that still benefits you both.

## Barter ideas

### Animal care

- Caring for, feeding, walking when owner cannot
- Grooming
- Training, exercising

#### Other ideas:

### Appliance care & repair

- Computer, printer installation, upgrades
- Electronic equipment
- Furnace, air conditioner, or compressor
- Large appliances
- Small appliances

#### Other ideas:

### Arts & crafts

- Decorative arts, handicrafts, flower arranging
- Decorating for special occasions
- Fiber arts, crochet, knitting, macramé
- Fine arts, painting, sculpting

#### Other ideas:

### Carpentry

- Assembling do-it-yourself furnishings
- Building bookcases, decks, fences
- Furniture repairs, refinishing
- Home repairs, remodeling

#### Other ideas:

### Child care, elder care

- Day care in your home
- Providing transportation
- Home nursing
- Occasional or respite care
- Preparing meals

#### Other ideas:



## Companionship

- Accompanying, escorting, guiding
- Playing cards, games
- Sharing meals, special occasions
- Taking walks
- Traveling

**Other ideas:**

## Entertainment

- Juggling, magic, acrobatics
- Playing musical instruments
- Singing
- Reading, storytelling

**Other ideas:**

## Food preparation & preservation

- Baking cakes, cookies, pies
- Catering for special occasions
- Cooking meals
- Freezing, canning, drying, pickling
- Shopping

**Other ideas:**

## Food production

- Berry picking
- Fishing, hunting
- Planting, caring for, harvesting garden produce

**Other ideas:**

## Hair care

- Coloring, highlighting
- Cuts, trims
- Perms
- Wash and set, style, or braid

**Other ideas:**

## Home care & upkeep

- Caretaking, maintaining vacation property
- Changing storm or screen windows and doors
- Installing insulation, weatherizing
- Licensed plumbing or electrical work
- Minor repairs or remodeling
- Painting house or trim, washing siding
- Patching roof, cleaning eaves
- Wallpapering

**Other ideas:**

## House work

- Cleaning, vacuuming, dusting
- Dish washing, polishing
- Floor care, shampooing carpets
- Hanging fixtures, pictures
- Laundry, mending
- Organizing closets, attics
- Recycling, hauling trash
- Replacing light bulbs, alarm batteries
- Washing windows, walls

**Other ideas:**

## Lessons, tutoring

- Arts, music, voice, dance
- Canning, preserving
- Coaching, training
- Computer browsing, messaging, photography, record-keeping, CD storage, electronic tax filing
- Cooking, baking
- Gardening, composting
- Language, reading
- Sewing, handiwork
- Vehicle care and upkeep
- Woodworking

**Other ideas:**

## Moving, hauling

- Furniture, appliances
- Groceries, household supplies
- Recycling, trash, debris, donations
- Wood, firewood
- Yard and garden supplies, fencing

**Other ideas:**

## Office

- Bookkeeping
- Bulk mailing, e-mailing
- Collating, photocopying
- Filing, organizing
- Research, writing
- Typing, word processing
- Web page design, upkeep

**Other ideas:**

## Photography, video

- Digital
- Portrait
- Scanning, storing on CD, photo albums
- Slide shows
- Special occasions, events
- Video documentation

**Other ideas:**

## Sewing

- Alterations, mending, buttons
- Costumes, special occasions
- Custom tailoring, handiwork
- Quilting, making window treatments, wall hangings

**Other ideas:**

## Transportation

- Errands, shopping, visiting
- Medical appointments
- Rides, carpooling

**Other ideas:**



## Vehicle care & upkeep

- Jump starts, emergency services
- Oil changes, tune-ups, maintenance
- Wash, wax, interior cleaning, vacuuming

### Other ideas:

## Yard work, gardening

- Cutting, splitting, stacking firewood
- Garden tilling
- Lawn mowing, leaf raking, composting
- Planting, landscaping
- Snow removal
- Tree, hedge, edge trimming
- Watering, mulching
- Weeding, hoeing, harvesting

### Other ideas:

## Be creative

Bartering allows you to exchange your time, skills, experience, and other resources in place of money to get what you and your family need.

Be creative. Think of ways you can use what you already have to help balance your budget.

## Resources

### For help bartering...

To find out about providing child care in your home, contact the regional agency near you. Call **Child Care Resources and Referral** at (888) 713-5437 or visit their web site at [www.wisconsinccrr.org](http://www.wisconsinccrr.org).

See these money management fact sheets in this series, in English or Spanish:

*Setting spending priorities* (B3459-01)/  
*Cómo decidir cuáles son los gastos más importantes* (B3459-01S)

*Strategies for spending less* (B3459-02)/  
*Cómo gastar menos* (B3459-02S)

*Deciding which bills to pay first*  
(B3459-03)/*Cómo decidir qué cuentas pagar primero* (B3459-03S)

*Talking with creditors* (B3459-04)/  
*Comunicación con los acreedores*  
(B3459-04S)

*Keeping a roof overhead* (B3459-05)/  
*Cómo asegurarse de que la familia tenga donde cobijarse* (B3459-05S)

*Meeting your insurance needs*  
(B3459-06)/*Cómo pagar por el seguro que necesita* (B3459-06S)

*Bartering* (B3459-07)/*El trueque*  
(B3459-07S)

*Making the most of what you have*  
(B3459-08)/*Cómo sacar el mayor provecho de lo que tiene* (B3459-08S)

*Deciding if bankruptcy is an option for you*  
(B3459-09)/*Cómo decidir si la protección por bancarota es una buena opción para usted* (B3459-09S)

*Taking care of yourself* (B3459-10)/  
*Cómo satisfacer las necesidades personales* (B3459-10S)

*How you can help when mom or dad is unemployed* (B3459-11)/  
*Cómo puedes ayudar cuando tu papá o tu mamá está sin empleo* (B3459-11S)

*Helping children cope* (B3459-12)/  
*Cómo ayudarles a los niños a sobrellevar las dificultades* (B3459-12S)

*Community agencies that can help*  
(B3459-13)/*Las agencias comunitarias pueden ayudar* (B3459-13S)

*Looking for a job—Watch out for scams*  
(B3459-14)/*Búsqueda de trabajo—Tenga cuidado con las estafas*  
(B3459-14S)

*Where to go for help finding a job*  
(B3459-15)/*Dónde conseguir ayuda para encontrar empleo* (B3459-15S)

*Starting your own business* (B3459-16)/  
*Cómo iniciar su propio negocio*  
(B3459-16S)



**Copyright © 2006** by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System doing business as the division of Cooperative Extension of the University of Wisconsin-Extension. All rights reserved. Send copyright inquiries to: Manager, Cooperative Extension Publishing, 432 N. Lake St., Rm. 103, Madison, WI 53706.

**Authors:** Karen P. Goebel, professor and consumer science specialist, University of Wisconsin-Madison and UW-Extension, and Linda A. Boelter, CFP®, professor emeritus, UW-Extension.

**Reviewers:** Marsha A. Goetting, CFP®, professor and extension family economics specialist, Montana State University; Michael Gutter, assistant professor and family financial management specialist, University of Wisconsin-Extension; Brenda B. Janke, Lincoln County family living educator and family financial specialist, UW-Extension; Elizabeth Kiss, family resource management specialist, Purdue University; and Barbara Roder, Fond du Lac County family living educator and family financial specialist, UW-Extension.

Produced by Cooperative Extension Publishing, University of Wisconsin-Extension.

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Extension Cooperative Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

This publication is available in English or Spanish from your Wisconsin county UW-Extension office ([www.uwex.edu/ces/cty](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty)) or from Cooperative Extension Publishing. To order, call toll-free 1-877-WIS-PUBS (877-947-7827) or visit our web site at [cecommerce.uwex.edu](http://cecommerce.uwex.edu).