

WHEN WORK ENDS SUDDENLY · YOUR NEXT RIGHT STEPS

What to do after a *layoff*.

Your Domain Money guide to navigating what comes next, with clarity, calm, and a plan you can act on today.



START HERE

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

First, take a *breath*.

The hours and days right after a layoff can feel like a blur — a fast shuffle of paperwork, passwords, and feelings you didn't plan for. This guide is built for exactly that window.

The goal isn't to fix everything at once. It's to help you *protect what matters most right now* (your income, your coverage, and your options) while you decide what a confident next step looks like for you.

Read it straight through, or skip to the section that fits today. When you're ready to put a plan on paper, we're here.



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SECTION 01

Navigating the first few days.

A layoff opens a short window where a handful of practical moves can meaningfully shape the months that follow. Focus on these four, the rest can wait.

01 / 04

BENEFITS

Clarify your benefits and coverage

- Confirm the exact date your health insurance ends.
- Review COBRA alongside marketplace and partner-plan options.
- Qualifying Life Event: If you have a spouse, you may be eligible to enroll in their health insurance policy for up to 30 days after your job loss date.
- Explore private or marketplace insurance options
- Schedule any near-term medical needs while you're still covered.

02 / 04

PAPERWORK

Review your severance carefully

- Understand every component of what you're being offered.
- Take the time you're entitled to before signing anything.
- Plan for taxes withheld (22% Federal + State + FICA taxes).
- Consider whether negotiation is appropriate for your situation.

03 / 04

INCOME

Apply for unemployment

- File as soon as possible, don't self-disqualify.
- Benefits help offset the short-term income gap while you plan.
- Rules vary by state; check the specifics for yours.

04 / 04

THE WHOLE PICTURE

Understand your full financial picture

- Gather account balances, comp details, and benefits info.
- Capture the last two months of spending in one place.
- This single snapshot informs every decision that follows.

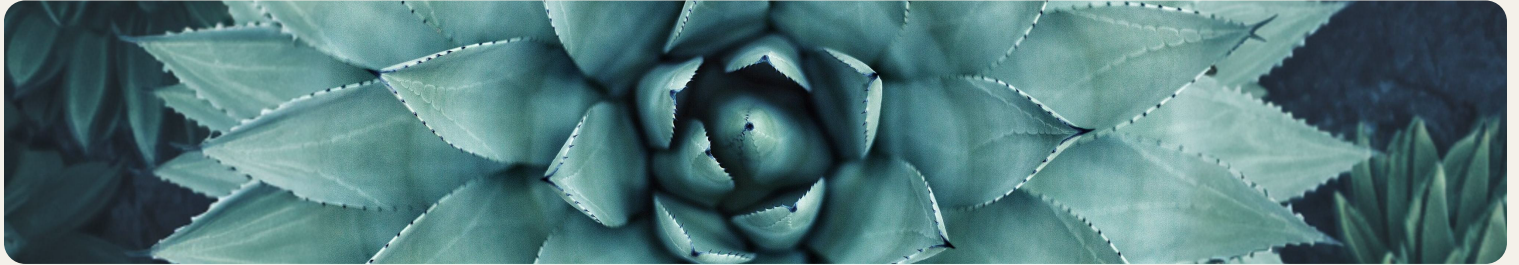
A SMALL THING THAT HELPS

Write down who said what, and when. Details from these conversations fade fast — notes are surprisingly useful two weeks from now.

SECTION 02

Immediate financial priorities

A change in income can shift your position quickly. The goal right now is simple: *stabilize, don't overcorrect*. Small, deliberate moves beat a panic overhaul.



I.

Understand what support is available

- Unemployment benefits (file early).
- Healthcare subsidies and marketplace options.
- State or local programs you may now qualify for.

These benefits exist for exactly this moment. Using them is not judgment on your career - it's the system working as designed.

II.

Stay ahead of financial obligations

- Proactively contact lenders and service providers.
- Ask about temporary flexibility (hardship programs, deferment, lower minimums).
- Document every agreement in writing.

Most creditors would rather work with you than chase a missed payment. A ten-minute call early is worth a year of cleanup later.

III.

Prioritize essential expenses

- Housing (rent or mortgage).
- Insurance (health, auto, the basics).
- Core living costs (food, utilities, transportation).

Everything else is a judgment call. Protect essentials first; revisit the rest from a place of clarity, not urgency.

WORTH REMEMBERING

Stability first. The best financial decisions in a transition are the ones you can defend a year from now - not the loudest ones you could make today.

SECTION 03

Assess your financial position.

Before you can make decisions, you need a clear picture of where you stand today. Four short steps; thirty minutes, a coffee, and a recent statement or two.

01

Calculate your available resources

Everything you could access today, if you had to.

- ✓ Cash: checking and savings.
- ✓ Severance pay, lump sum or otherwise.
- ✓ Any liquid investments you'd be willing to tap.

02

Identify your monthly income

Money you expect to arrive, reliably.

- ✓ Unemployment benefits, once filed.
- ✓ Partner or household income.
- ✓ Recurring payments: rental, royalties, dividends.

03

Calculate your monthly expenses

Average the last two statements; adjust for changes.

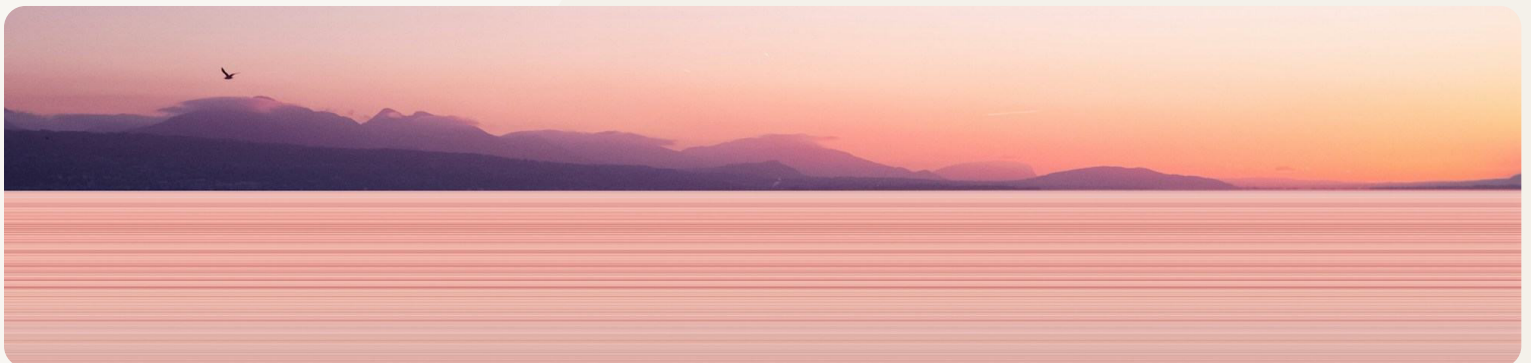
- ✓ Housing, insurance, debt payments, core living.
- ✓ Remove job-related costs: commute, daily meals.
- ✓ Add new costs: health insurance, if applicable.

04

Determine your timeline

How long today's resources carry today's lifestyle.

- ✓ $\text{Monthly shortfall} = \text{expenses} - \text{income}.$
- ✓ $\text{Timeline} = \text{available resources} \div \text{monthly shortfall}.$
- ✓ If $\text{income} \geq \text{expenses}$, your timeline is open-ended.



SECTION 03

What the number tells you.

THE QUICK CALCULATION

Monthly shortfall

= *expenses* – *income*

Timeline (in months)

= *available resources* ÷ *monthly shortfall*

If your monthly income equals or exceeds your expenses, your timeline is effectively open-ended. You can replace income on a timeline that prioritizes fit, not speed.

WHAT THIS TELLS YOU

If income covers expenses

You have flexibility. Use it. This is the moment to be thoughtful about the next role, not just the fastest one.

If income falls short

Your number is how many months of your current lifestyle your resources can carry. That figure should shape two things: how quickly you need to replace income, and how much room you have to be selective about the next move.

The goal of this exercise isn't to produce a single answer — it's to replace a vague worry with a specific number. Even an uncomfortable one is easier to plan around than the unknown.



ILLUSTRATIVE	Resources	Shortfall / mo.	Timeline
A sample profile — your number will vary.	\$42,000 cash + severance + liquid	\$6,000 expenses – income	7 months at today's lifestyle

SECTION 04

Extend your flexibility.

If the timeline on page six feels shorter than you'd like, there is usually room to extend it. The goal is to buy time without cutting into the protections future-you will want intact.

01

Reduce expenses thoughtfully

- Start with discretionary spending subscriptions, dining, travel.
- Renegotiate what's non-negotiable (insurance, internet, phone).
- Avoid cutting essentials or long-term protections; they cost more to restore later.

02

Increase available funds - carefully

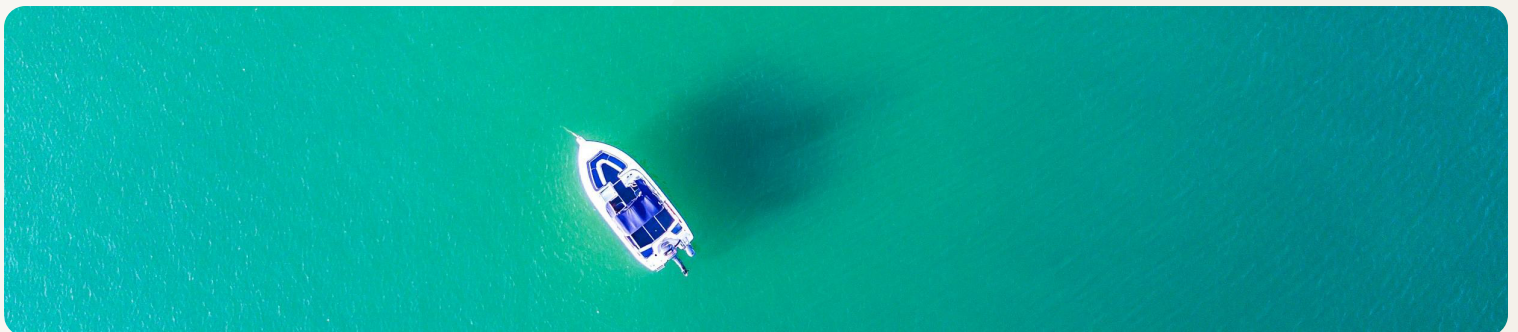
- Revisit severance structure (lump sum versus continued salary).
- Consider temporary or contract income that doesn't foreclose options.
- Review short-term liquidity sources; weigh the tax cost before touching long-term accounts.

03

Recalculate your position

Run the numbers from Section 03 again with your adjustments. Even small changes compound. A \$500 monthly reduction can stretch a seven-month runway to nearly nine.

A longer timeline means better decisions - not just later ones.



ON CUTTING RIGHT

The people who come out of a layoff ahead aren't the ones who cut the most - they're the ones who cut the right things, early.

SECTION 05

Make the most of your severance.

Your severance package is one of the most important financial tools in this transition. Treat it as a complete offer — not just a number — and review every component before signing.



KEY AREAS TO REVIEW

- 01 Cash compensation**
Base amount, structure (lump vs. salary continuation), and payout timing.
- 02 Health insurance coverage**
How long coverage continues, what's covered, and what the employer is contributing.
- 03 Equity and stock options**
Vesting treatment, exercise windows, and the deadlines tied to each.
- 04 PTO and accrued-time payouts**
What's being paid out, at what rate, and on what schedule.

WHERE NEGOTIATION MAY BE POSSIBLE

- ✓ Additional severance pay. Particularly where tenure warrants it.
- ✓ Extended benefits. Continued coverage or a COBRA subsidy window.
- ✓ Equity terms. Vesting acceleration, exercise-window extensions.
- ✓ Outplacement or transition support where offered.

A NOTE ON POSTURE

Severance negotiation is a standard business conversation — not a personal favor. Be prepared, be polite, and put everything in writing.

SECTION 06

Other factors to consider.

Every situation is different. These four areas are where small oversights tend to become expensive surprises. It's worth a closer look even if the immediate picture feels stable.

01 / 04

EQUITY

Equity compensation

- Stock options often have post-termination exercise deadlines, sometimes as short as 90 days.
- RSUs may be forfeited, accelerated, or partially vested depending on plan terms.
- Tax implications can be significant; coordinate decisions with someone who can model them.
- If you don't have the cash to exercise, you can get quotes from ISO/NSO financing companies.

02 / 04

TAXES

Income changes and taxes

- A lower-income year can open strategies (Roth conversions, capital-gains harvesting) that a higher-income year wouldn't allow.
- Severance timing, exercise decisions, & unemployment income all interact.
- Plan the year, not just the next paycheck.

03 / 04

HOUSEHOLD

Household financial structure

- Single- vs. dual-income households have very different exposure to a sudden change.
- Fixed obligations (mortgage, childcare) are less flexible than variable spending.
- Have the conversation early. Partners want to help, not be told later.

04 / 04

PAUSE, IF YOU CAN

Decisions worth deferring

- Major purchases (homes, cars, renovations).
- Large financial commitments (new debt, long leases, big gifts).
- Significant investment changes made primarily out of fear.



A SHORT CHECKLIST

Putting it together

If you only do seven things this week.



01 **Confirm your health coverage end date.**
Compare COBRA to marketplace & partner-plan options.

02 **File for unemployment.**
Today or tomorrow. Don't self-disqualify.

03 **Read every page of your severance.**
Twice. Note anything with a deadline.

04 **Write down your equity deadlines.**
Exercise windows, vesting, tax events.

05 **Run the runway math.**
Resources, income, expenses, timeline.

06 **Identify one expense to pause.**
Discretionary first; protect the essentials.

07 **Put a thirty-minute call on the calendar — with an advisor, a mentor, or a trusted friend who has been through this before.**
You do not have to figure this out alone, and the people who've been through it will tell you the same.

SHORT ON TIME?

Items 01, 02, and 03 are the ones with clocks on them. Start there.

SECTION 07

What comes next.

Once the immediate priorities are handled, the real work is turning that clarity into a plan; one that fits the life you want to build from here, not just the one you're leaving behind.

NEW TO DOMAIN MONEY?

Book a Free Strategy Session.

A focused conversation to:

- ✓ Get a clear, honest view of your financial position.
- ✓ Talk through your most immediate priorities.
- ✓ Understand how a financial plan can support your next steps.

Free Strategy Session



ALREADY A MEMBER?

Connect with your advisor.

A working session to:

- ✓ Revisit your existing financial plan.
- ✓ Adjust your strategy for this transition.
- ✓ Make confident decisions, moving forward.

Connect with your advisor



A CLOSING THOUGHT

Layoffs are hard. They are also, almost always, a turning point rather than an ending. We're here for both parts.

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