



# Destitute Diaries

## THE FIRST INSTALLMENT ON HOW TO MANAGE LIVING ON YOUR OWN

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Living on your own can be especially hard – but living on your own and being in college can be even harder.

I have lived on my own for nearly two years now and it's not easy. I have to worry about bills, rent, groceries, transportation, fees and everything else under the grad cap. But, so far I have survived and yes, you can too.

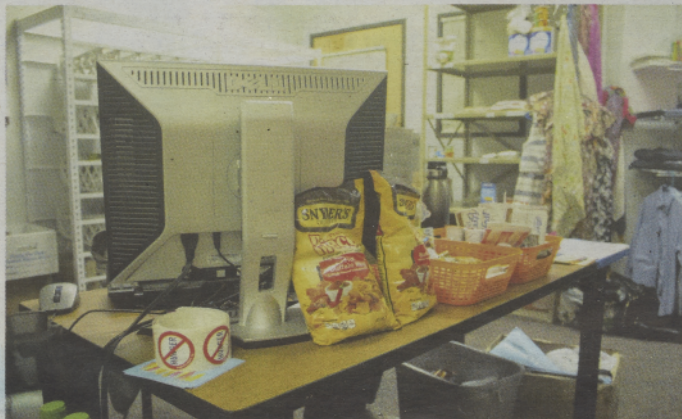
Budgeting helps, and these methods do take work, but dealing with the strain could help you save up enough for your fun time finances. We're going to start off with the harder budgeting such as groceries and transportation.

**Groceries:** If you've ever met me in person, you could probably tell that I love food, which can also hint at knowing the best spots to find free food and cheap food while still being nutritionally diverse. Here are my tips to filling your fridge:

**Food banks:** Yes, food banks. You can say and think what you want about food banks, but when you're eating ramen every meal, food banks harbor no shame.

Some food banks will let you choose your groceries and some will have a premade box for you as you arrive. I go to the Foothills Church in Molalla as they guide me through each aisle to pick out protein, grains, veggies and more. And yes, they do have vegetarian options! Look online for your local food banks.

**Food stamps:** If you make below a certain amount of money a month, you may qualify for food stamps. However, the amount of money you receive on your Electronic Benefit Transfer card will vary depending on your need, or really how much the government thinks you deserve.



ON THE COVER: Chrishawn West plays William in Lobby Hero. Photo and design by Jared Preble



Photos by Jonathan Villagomez

The government rejected me from receiving food stamps even though I was a full-time student with a part-time job, making around \$700 a month at the time I applied. Although I didn't receive food benefits, my partner did and he makes more money than me. We use that food stamp money every month to make a grocery trip to buy dollar store brand canned beans, corn, vegetables and fruits.

**Ounces & comparisons:** I'd describe myself as a crab, shuffling back and forth through the same aisle to compare prices and ounces. It's simple: if there are more ounces for less money, that's the best option! And always if you can, buy off brand or store brand; not until we get our degrees can we be bougie.

**Apps & deals:** I have two grocery apps on my phone for both Fred Meyer and Safeway. I use Safeway more often as you can really

find some good discounts, and you save more money by doing comparisons too. This method especially works when you have a roommate or partner you can split groceries with. Often my partner and I will both have a grocery list that I set up onto our phones with the same discounts and we purchase the same things again to store food. So if you and your sidekick have \$60 each worth of groceries in your carts, the coupons you compiled together but on each other's phone separately could cut each of those prices in half equaling \$30 each. So really, you're spending \$60 at the register for \$120 worth of groceries.

**Accumulate dry goods in bulk:** I have an entire cupboard of dry goods in a storage shelf in my dining room at home. These are from trips to the food bank and store. I have lentils, beans, rice, pastas, and even "exotic" versions of these grains and legumes. Every night will be pasta night!

**Cougar Cave:** The Cougar Cave located in the Bill Brod Community Center offers both food and clothing for free. The Cougar Cave carries dried goods, canned goods, hygiene products, and even gently used clothes for everyday use or for job interviews. And, of course you can always expect a cheerful welcoming from the gatekeepers of the Cougar Cave goodies.

Now, with your bellies and brains full, use this information to help your fellow college friends out – because college doesn't have to be a time of suffering. We can all suffer together!



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