

Use Your Tax Refund Wisely

If you're like many people, the day you received your W-2s you made a list of 10 things you could buy with your refund. Here's a list of money-smart suggestions to make your refund go a long way:

- Pay down your credit card. Use your refund to pay the highest interest rate obligation.
- Set up an emergency fund. Or add to your current one. Notice this is not a 'Rainy Day Fund,' implying that you can use this money whenever you're feeling down or having a rough day. This money is for surprise emergencies and should be three to six months of living expenses.
- Refinance your home. With rates being low, now might be the time to use your refund to pay some or all of the closing costs.
- Fix up your home. Increasing the value of your home puts extra equity in your pocket. Get a professional to sketch out a plan and then decide if you can do it all yourself or need assistance.
- Detail your car. If you're planning on selling your car soon, a thorough detailing job will cost around \$175, but could increase the price you get by as much as \$1,000.
- Service your car. Now that you have the money, stop putting off an oil change or tune-up. Don't forget to properly inflate the tires. You'll burn less gas and save money in the long run.