



Liz Pulliam Weston

The Basics

20 ways to make \$100 more a month

Do your months stretch further than your money does? Here are reader-tested ideas for moonlighting your way into solvency or savings.

By [Liz Pulliam Weston](#)

Sometimes, all you need to bridge a budget gap is a few extra bucks a month.

If you've cut your expenses as far as they'll go and your gimlet-eyed employer turned down your request for a raise, moonlighting can be the way to make those ends finally meet.

I asked posters on the [Your Money message board](#) for real jobs that can help real people earn \$100 or more a month. I also plucked several great suggestions from a thread about the same topic that started earlier this year on the [Women in Red board](#).

To make the cut, the jobs had to be:

Real -- something the posters were actually doing or had done.

Flexible -- something people could do either before or after a regular workday.

Available -- something that people in most areas can find.

Not speculative -- something that doesn't require a big upfront investment or have a high probability of failure.

Obviously, not every idea will work for everyone, but you should find at least a few options that could work for you or at least get you thinking about the possibilities.

Assistant

Leaner staffs mean plenty of workplaces don't have anyone to help with administrative tasks like filing or making photocopies. One place to start looking is your current workplace.

Poster "LSG7168-WIR" makes photocopies for a university department chair while serving as a teacher's assistant for another professor. "At least around here, a lot of people have too much paper-pushing to do it all themselves, but it's not enough work to warrant a full-time assistant," wrote LSG7168-WIR. "Thus, a few hours of my time a week gives them some breathing room and gives me some extra cash. But you have to ask around. No one advertises a 3-hour-per week photocopying job."

Auction seller

Plenty of folks make part-time income selling stuff on online auction sites such as eBay.

Poster "momOnARoll" says she usually makes more than \$100 a month on the site. "If you look around your house, there is usually something you don't use anymore or your kids don't play with anymore that can be sold," she wrote. "When I don't have anything around my house, I go to thrift stores and buy things cheap and sell them on eBay for more. Some things that I've always been successful with are old 'vintage' concert t shirts, sports team clothing, designer brand purses, and collectibles like figurines or commemorative plates."

Video: [The eBay effect](#)

But she warns: "Be careful that if you are buying stuff to resell, you need to know at least a little about it. It ruins your profit if you buy a nice purse and it turns out to be a knock off brand or something."

Catering staff

Poster "designgrad08," a student, makes extra money on weekends as a server for a catering company. Experience as a waiter, waitress or bartender can help land these gigs at weddings and swank parties.

Check with local catering companies and popular wedding locations for opportunities.

Cleaner

Office buildings need folks to tidy up nights and weekends after the occupants have gone home.

Poster "book" wrote: "I do this extra job two nights a week. With my teenage daughter's help that earns me an extra \$70 a week, about 3 to 4 hours work per week." Check with janitorial-service companies or directly with local building owners. Or start your own home-cleaning service, as poster "sekh1976" did: "I charge \$20 an hour (with a four-hour monthly minimum). I make my own cleaning products, so very little overhead (other than gas for the car). This will clear me a

minimum of \$160 this month."

Continued: Clinical trial participant

Clinical trial participant

This job would give many of us the willies, but poster LSG7168-WIR wrote: "A lot of my friends ... participate in clinical trials. . . . I've seen tons of ads for just answering surveys (~\$10 each), a few for trying new drugs or vaccines (\$200-\$2,500) and one for eating a new kind of mushroom and describing whether you like the taste better or worse than other mushrooms (\$50)."

Check university campuses, where these opportunities tend to be advertised.

Computer whiz

The limits are dictated only by your skills. You could help regular people troubleshoot their PCs or set up networks for local businesses.

Poster "sunny_light" wrote: "I used to develop/maintain a company Web site for about \$12/\$13 an hour as a part-time thing on the side. It was convenient because I could do it from home in the evening or the weekends."

Convention-center worker

These venues need plenty of part-time bodies during conventions and other events.

Poster "Debtbuster" signed up for occasional work serving ice cream and wrote: "So far I've worked during a basketball game, a wrestling tournament and a concert. They call me with available dates and I pick and chose the dates I want, depending on my full-time job and things going on at home. It's fun and exciting. Fast paced and easy work in general. ... So far it's been working for me when other retail stores became too much for a tight schedule."

Editor

Not everyone can write a coherent paragraph. If you can wrestle sentences into shape, you might be able to earn extra money helping those who are less skilled. Poster "BalalaikaBanjo," who lives in a university town in the Midwest, makes extra money editing dissertations and other writing projects.

"I also did work for several professors who were writing textbooks, and this in turn led to contacts at several textbook companies," BalalaikaBanjo wrote. "They sent me work on a referral basis. . . . I only got three or four referrals per year, but each one was worth anywhere from \$1,500-\$2,500."

Handyman

If you've got the skills and the tools, you can help people with the tasks they can't do -- or can't get around to doing.

Poster "Covercalls" wrote: "I do little things like sealing the roof for leaks, mending the fence, doing brake and easy maintenance needs on cars for other people. These jobs usually take from 1 to 3 hours, and I estimate I make about \$25 to \$40 cash an hour."

Mystery shopper

I wrote about this possibility in "[Real work-at-home jobs](#)" and included links to legitimate companies that hire mystery shoppers to pose as regular customers and evaluate the service they receive.

Assignments typically pay \$5 to \$100 each. It helps if you live in an urban area, said poster "typer": "I tried it in my town, and I was only able to do a few things (because) the businesses didn't sign up for it -- but if you're in a large city, or close to one, you could do it."

Paper deliverer

Yes, some folks still receive their news via dead trees. It's not a bad gig if you're an early riser, says "Banker Gurl," who says she makes an extra \$400 a month for an hour a day of work.

"I don't lose any spare time, or friends and family time, since I do it before I go to work." Check with your local newspapers (including "shoppers," those free newspapers that get tossed up on your porch) to see who's hiring.

Pizza deliverer

This was one of my many part-time jobs in college, and one that was reasonably lucrative, thanks to tips.

As poster "Nomad Guy" wrote: "I delivered pizzas for Papa John's and ended up really enjoying it. I worked from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. five days a week. They had weekend positions for drivers also. I ended up making anywhere from \$300-\$450 a week between the tips and the pay. On my best night I earned \$110 in tips. I had a lot of fun and met some interesting people."

Plasma seller

You can make \$10 to \$35 a pop selling your plasma, a blood product, to a for-profit plasma collection center and you can donate as often as twice a week. Poster "ff991" did this while a student.

Video: [The eBay effect](#)

"I made \$15 the first donation, and \$20 the second donation per week," ff991 wrote. "It took about 45 minutes to donate. I

worked at a plasma clinic near a college campus for awhile (which is how I found out about this in the first place) and every Friday afternoon we were swamped with the college crowd (getting their 'beer money' for the weekend)." Check online or at local college campuses for advertisements.

Pooper scooper

This idea came from poster "Talk2Me2," who belongs to a group of friends who all have an entrepreneurial bent. The part-time businesses they run include a delivery service for local restaurants, prepackaged dinners for dieters, mural painting, party entertainers and, yes, pooper scoopers for busy dog owners.

"I do know that with most of the jobs it took a little while to build a clientele and I know that many of us gave incentives/freebies to get going," wrote Talk2Me2. "I also know that the hobbies/ business ventures that have worked and thrived have been with friends who are passionate about the business/hobby they chose." Well, you at least should be passionate about dogs; contact local vets and pet-supply stores to see if they'll let you put up a flier.

[Continued: Become a pro shopper](#)

Professional shopper

Help the time-pressed, or the clueless, get through their shopping lists. Poster "Thevail" has made "a few hundred now and then" this way.

"Seriously, you'd be stunned how many guys will pay you to buy their wives or girlfriends lingerie, or order flowers for their Grandma," Thevail wrote. "I've even had women pay for an hour consultation on what to buy their new (mother-in-law) for Christmas or their father-in-law for Father's Day. You can make even more if you offer to take care of shipping for out-of-state gifts. Admittedly, it's sheer laziness on their part, but I charged \$20 plus mileage (with a nominal \$5 wrapping charge)."

Video: [The eBay effect](#)

Thevail found clients by advertising in local papers.

Retail

High turnover and fluctuating demand mean many stores need part-time help, particularly at night or on weekends. Poster "MadMadFee" and her husband recently landed holiday jobs at local retailers.

"Between the two of us (at our current schedules), we should gross about \$5K by the 2nd week in January," she says.

Teaching

"Ashin2" teaches a four-hour workshop at an adult community education center that pays \$100.

"Not bad! Considering there is little time commitment involved, except for preparing the workshop and having fun teaching it." If you have a skill to teach or wisdom to impart, check out the possibilities with local community colleges, extension services and community centers.

Temping

Those lean workplaces I referenced above often need temporary workers to fill in for vacationing employees or to meet peak demand.

Poster "kafra56" praised the flexibility of these jobs: "I did this one summer. I told them I was interested in short-term stuff only -- 1- (or) 2-day jobs. I made between \$10-\$15/hr depending on the job. The good thing is you can tell them no if you're out of town or just don't feel like doing it."

Tutoring

Poster sunny_light made \$12 an hour tutoring math.

Check with local schools and any teachers you know to see if there's demand for your skills.

Writing

Poster ff991 -- the one who used to make money selling plasma -- now makes extra cash writing articles for the local newspaper. "Since I was just trying to get my feet wet, I charged 11 cents per word, and usually was assigned a 400-500 word story. With interviews and edits it usually took me about 2 hours per story, and I was usually assigned 2-4 articles per month."

Another poster, "Writer88," wrote: "I sell short fiction and personal experience articles to magazines and newspapers for extra money. There are hundreds of magazines and newspapers out there with editors dying for good writing in fiction AND non-fiction." [WritersMarket.com](#) is one place to check for leads.

Columns by Liz Pulliam Weston, the Web's most-read personal-finance writer and winner of the 2007 Clarion Award for online journalism, appear every Monday and Thursday, exclusively on MSN Money. She also answers reader questions on the [Your Money message board](#).

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