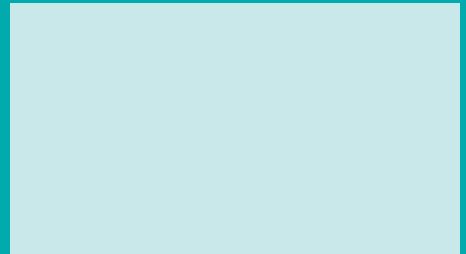




MONEY WISE

VALUING PEOPLE. VALUING MONEY.
MANAGING IN TOUGH TIMES INITIATIVE



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

BUDGET TO AVOID JITTERS OVER WEDDING COSTS

Wedding costs can add up quickly. Planning the big day may be the first financial challenge for a couple. It may help to practice compromise, communication, and good budgeting skills. Your wedding budget needs to line up with your income and your other financial goals. Know how much you're able to pay and how much others, such as your parents, may be contributing. Don't assume parents will cover traditional costs – it's important to ask up front.

Once you know how much money you have to work with, plan your expected expenses. Be honest and allow yourself wiggle room. Some things might cost more than you expect.

The following are ways to save money on some of the bigger wedding expenses.

Date - Saturdays in summer are the most popular wedding dates. Choosing an off-peak month or

different day of the week could reduce the cost for the venue and other services.

Guest list - Know if your venues or caterers have a minimum or maximum requirement. Generally, the more people you invite, the more the event will cost. Besides meal and beverage expenses, changing the size of your group could mean the difference between a large rental space or a smaller, more affordable venue.





Location/Venue - Fancier places may cost more. On the other hand, a beautiful, rustic location might cost a lot to get party-ready if you must rent tables, linens, lighting, and more. Hosting the ceremony and reception at the same place can lessen the need for rented group transportation.

Invitations and other paper goods - Heavier papers or non-standard shapes could cost more in postage. Keep that in mind when ordering stationery, or consider making your own invitations and programs at home. Address and stuff the invitations yourself. Instead of a postage-paid RSVP, consider using a registration web link.

Attire - A wedding dress can be a big expense, and that doesn't include any special undergarments or alterations. Shoes, jewelry, a veil, and more can increase the costs. Budget for all expenses when picking out the bride's ensemble. Tuxedo rental can be pricey. It might be more economical to buy the groom a nice suit that can be worn for future special occasions.

Food and cake - Simplify the menu. Choosing a few upscale items may cost less than offering a bounty of options. Selecting regional or seasonal

specialties can help reduce costs too. Save on the cake by having a smaller fancy cake for cutting and display. Serve your guests from additional sheet cakes or cupcakes in the same flavor.

Finally, before you sign any contracts, read the fine print so there are no unexpected costs later. Don't forget to account for these costs: taxes and tips; delivery, setup, and cleanup fees; cake cutting and corkage fees; digital access fees for photos and video; and tasting fees. Comparison shop between vendors to get the best prices. Plan ahead and budget to keep your celebration stress-free.

Kelly May, Senior Extension Associate, Family Finance and Resource Management

Jennifer Hunter, Ph.D., Assistant Director of Family and Consumer Sciences Extension, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service,
(859) 257-3887; jhunter@uky.edu

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