

Are You Ready for Life's Biggest Financial Decisions?

A Financial Checklist for Life-Changing Events

When it comes to financial planning, people often think of it in terms of their retirement and investment goals. However, life can be complex and full of moments where a sound financial strategy is critical.

Are you financially prepared for a life-changing event? Change is the only constant in life and this checklist is the first step to help you prepare for these events now or in the future.

Getting Married

Getting married is an exciting time. Two people have fallen in love and are preparing to spend a lifetime together. Marriage also combines two lives into one, including financially. Here are a few things a financial professional could help you with:

- Creating a budget
- Designing a savings plan for retirement goals
- Preparing an emergency account for unexpected events
- Learning about and planning for possible risks

Birth of a Child

Raising children is a costly undertaking. More than ever before, parents are turning to financial professionals for help as they plan how to pay for childrearing expenses. Although these numbers are subjective and will not be the same for everyone, here are a few annual costs involved in raising a child to consider:

- Childbirth or Adoption: \$4,500 to \$43,000
- Housing: \$3,750
- Food: \$2,794
- Healthcare: Can vary significantly
- Daycare & Education: \$37,400
- Clothing, Toys, & Misc.: \$2,865
- Transportation: \$1,947

Buying a House

A home might be the largest purchase you make in a lifetime. Unfortunately, there are financial aspects to purchasing a home that can blindside homebuyers. Learning what steps to take beforehand can help you mitigate unnecessary issues in the future. Some of these concerns may include:

- Recouping the initial costs of buying a home
- Budgeting for homeownership expenses
- Obtaining a home loan and making the down payment
- Being tempted to borrow from retirement funds
- Credit score and credit history

Changing Jobs

You might be switching jobs or embarking on a new career path which can be just as exciting as it is stressful. How can a financial professional assist you? Each person's situation is different, but some decisions you may encounter that could affect your financial plans include:

- Comparing benefit packages and incentive stock options
- Enrolling in your new retirement plan
- Deciding what to do with your old retirement account
- Determining the new job's impact on current and long-term strategies
- Potential relocation costs

Saving for College

Attending a four-year college these days is closing in on the cost of a medium-sized house, and the cost of a private school is even more staggering. A financial professional can help parents determine which college savings plans could work with their financial strategy. Here are some options to consider:

- Financial Aid and Scholarships
- 529 Plan
- Coverdell Education Savings Account
- Custodial accounts
- Personal Savings
- Permanent Life Insurance

Divorce

In the United States, 35%-50% of first marriages and 60% of second marriages end in divorce. The divorce process can be emotionally draining and financially complex. Helpful documents a financial professional might analyze to help you manage your finances through this difficult time may include:

- Bank statements
- Bills
- Credit Card statements
- Life Insurance policies
- Documentation of other income streams
- Mortgage statements
- Investment portfolio statements
- A list of debts
- Pension information

Planning for Aging Parents

Taking on the responsibility of caring for aging parents can be rewarding. However, it may also be emotionally and financially daunting. It is a sensitive topic, and a financial professional may be able to assist with the following:

- Budgeting both short-term and long-term fiduciary responsibilities
- Performing a comprehensive review of all assets and debts
- Creating a manageable strategy for paying debts down
- Setting up payment plans for ongoing expenses
- Preparing for unexpected costs or emergencies

Death of a Spouse

Losing a spouse is one of the most difficult events we can experience. Along with coping with grief and managing a funeral, the surviving spouse will also have financial decisions that require their attention, for example:

- Managing tangible assets and updating what is needed
- Updating financial accounts
- Preparing funeral and memorial service expenses
- Reviewing short-term financial concerns
- Reviewing long-term financial goals and strategy

Diagnosis of a Terminal Illness

When a doctor diagnoses a loved one with a terminal illness, it is a very emotional time and there will inevitably be financial implications. A financial professional can help families develop a financial plan and get their affairs in order. Here are a few estate planning steps to consider:

- Organize legal, financial, and other important documents
- Update beneficiaries
- Create a plan for healthcare expenses
- Designate a durable power of attorney
- Arrange care for any dependents
- Consider options for end-of-life care

Starting a Business

When you decide to start a business, many moving parts come into play and you could face numerous financial challenges. As you are working to get your business off the ground, a financial professional can help you:

- Manage any mistakes that might occur
- Navigate the risks involved with financial decisions
- Design short-term and long-term strategies and goals
- Provide guidance on keeping your personal and business finances separate
- Create money management and budgeting strategies

Sources:

[Things Financial Planners Wish You Knew About Buying a Home \(realtor.com\)](#)

[2023 Average Cost of U.S. colleges \(collegetuitioncompare.com\)](#)

[Here's some advice financial advisors offer to new parents \(cnbc.com\)](#)

[Divorce Rate by State 2023 \(worldpopulationreview.com\)](#)

[A Guide to Divorce Financial Planning \(2023\) \(survivedivorce.com\)](#)

[A Breakdown of the Cost of Raising a Child - The Plutus Foundation](#)

[Managing Finances During and After Divorce: 8 Considerations | Comerica](#)

Important Disclosures:

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Please keep in mind that insurance companies alone determine insurability and some people may be deemed uninsurable because of health reasons, occupation, and lifestyle choices.

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This article was prepared by Marketing Solutions.

LPL Tracking #1-05372452