Don’t Let Holiday Spending Create Financial Havoc

Holidays can be stressful. Your plans may include hosting, traveling, giving gifts, preparing meals, and more. Consider a few of these tips to not let finances add to your stress during this upcoming holiday season and eventually the new year.

Set a budget. Budget can be a scary word but ultimately you need to know how much money is coming in and how much is going out so you can pay the necessities, like housing, utilities, groceries, etc. Once you know your income and expenses, you can plan how much you would have for holiday spending. It is critical that you stick to that amount so be realistic.

Make a list. This is especially important when shopping for food or gifts. Know exactly what you are buying, who you are shopping for, and even a dollar amount of what you’d like to spend within your budget. This will help minimize impulse or duplicate purchases that put a dent into your finances.

Use cash. Swiping a card is convenient but can cause you to spend too much money. By utilizing an envelope system with cash, once you’ve used up your money, you are done shopping.

Watch for sales. Remember that list I mentioned earlier? If you know what you are wanting to purchase for meals, gifts, or even travel accommodations, make it a regular habit to check for sales throughout the year if possible.

Consider alternatives. If certain gifts, foods, or even travel plans are too expensive, seek out other options. Can you make a gift? Can you get a cheaper cut of meat? Can you stay home and utilize a videoconferencing service to spend time with loved ones?

Don’t let holiday spending lead to debt and added stress. The holidays are about spending time with family and friends. Take the time to make smart financial decisions so you can enjoy your holidays rather than worrying about how you will afford them.

If you need assistance with financial management, contact Monica Thayer, Family Resource Management Extension Agent, at 785-527-5084 or mthayer@ksu.edu for free resources on budgeting, paying off debt, increasing savings, and more.

-30-

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.