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Cash Flow Worksheet

The Benefits of Tracking Your Cash Flow

One key to building wealth is managing your cash flow to capture excess income for savings and investments. The problem is we don't do it because we lack the time and the process isn't fun.

Before making any personal finance decisions from here on out, you'll want to ask yourself two questions to determine the next course of action:

1. How does this impact my net worth? (See: [Net Worth Worksheet](#))
2. How does this impact my ability to reach my goals?

The Cash Flow Worksheet helps you answer that second question..

How to Use the Cash Flow Worksheet

STEP 1: List all your income and regular expenses to determine how much cash flow you have available on a monthly basis to direct toward your goals.

Feel free to replace any category that isn't relevant to you.

Most people's income and fixed expenses are relatively straight forward, but everyone has some variability in cash flow that can slip through the cracks. On the earnings side, bonuses or commissions can get missed in a monthly constitution of cash flows. On the expense side, seasonal and one-time expenses (holiday gifts, summer vacations, auto repairs, home maintenance, and so on) are normal for just about everyone.

If you find yourself getting bogged down in the details, then you can use bank statements to calculate how much you spend. Simply print off or download statements from the past 12 months of your primary checking account, add up the expenses, and divide by 12 to come up with your average monthly expense to use for the worksheet.



STEP 2: Sign up for a financial account aggregator.

The easiest way to track and manage your expenses is leveraging financial technology. Here's what to do:

- ❑ Sign up for a financial account aggregator. I personally use Mint and BrightPlan.
- ❑ Link your bank accounts, credit cards, and investment accounts.
- ❑ Sit back and be amazed at how easy it is to track your expenses when a system does it for you automatically!

The longer you use these tools, the more accurate your spending estimate becomes and the easier it is to successfully plan for your financial goals. For example, planning for the retirement goal of “maintaining your current lifestyle without running out of money” is almost impossible unless you have a handle on what your current lifestyle costs.

Turn Information into Action

Once you determine your monthly income and spending, determine how much cash flow is left over for saving toward your goals. Pull out your [Goal Planning Worksheet](#) to see if the goals you listed are attainable based on where you stand financially right now.

If you don't have enough cash flow to meet your short-term goals, then use the priority rankings to decide where to contribute first. Remember, your retirement accounts and creating an emergency fund need to be the top two priorities no matter where you are in life. You don't need to max out every retirement account or build an emergency fund overnight, but you need to make meaningful contributions to give yourself the best chance of meeting your long-term goals.



After those top two priority items, does anything seem more important than the rest? Would you be equally happy if some of these goals came at a lower expected cost? Feel free to re-rank priorities, change estimated costs, or modify completion dates based on where you are today. That's the purpose of this exercise.



INCOME: MONTHLY AMOUNT

<i>Salary (Net: after taxes and benefits)</i>	\$
<i>Spouse's salary (Net: after taxes and benefits)</i>	\$
<i>Pension income</i>	\$
<i>Social Security income</i>	\$
<i>Interest/investment income</i>	\$
<i>Other income (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other income (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other income (specify)</i>	\$
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME AMOUNT:	\$



EXPENSES: MONTHLY AMOUNT

FIXED	
<i>Mortgage or rent</i>	\$
<i>Other real estate payments (taxes, assessments, etc.)</i>	\$
<i>Auto loan</i>	\$
<i>Student loan</i>	\$
<i>Credit card payment</i>	\$
<i>Utilities</i>	\$
<i>Tuition</i>	\$
<i>Child care</i>	\$
<i>Food</i>	\$
<i>Clothing</i>	\$
<i>Other expenses (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other expenses (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other expenses (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other expenses (specify)</i>	\$
TOTAL FIXED MONTHLY EXPENSES AMOUNT:	\$



EXPENSES: MONTHLY AMOUNT

VARIABLE (Discretionary)	
<i>Personal care (haircuts, gym memberships, etc.)</i>	\$
<i>Entertainment</i>	\$
<i>IRA contributions</i>	\$
<i>Other savings/investments (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other savings/investments (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other savings/investments (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other expenses (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other expenses (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other expenses (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other expenses (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other expenses (specify)</i>	\$
<i>Other expenses (specify)</i>	\$
TOTAL VARIABLE MONTHLY EXPENSES AMOUNT:	\$
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME:	\$
- TOTAL MONTHLY EXPENSES AMOUNT:	\$
= TOTAL MONTHLY CASH FLOW:	\$

