

Planning Ahead is the Key to Managing Funeral Costs

Funeral homes, cemeteries and other service providers expect to receive payment in full at the time of the funeral. With the average cost of a funeral in the U.S. exceeding \$8,000, it can be a hardship if you have not planned ahead for this expenditure. There are several ways to manage your funeral expenses and spare loved ones the financial burden.

The first step in managing funeral costs is to do some advance funeral planning. At a minimum, you need a basic funeral plan to determine your expected funeral price.

Average Funeral Costs

According to the 2010 funeral price survey by the National Funeral Directors Association, the average funeral cost for an adult funeral is \$7,775.00. This is based on the most commonly selected items for a traditional funeral including a casket and vault. However, it does not include cemetery costs. A grave space, a grave marker, and opening/closing the grave can easily cost another \$1,500 to \$2,500. Therefore, a typical traditional funeral and burial cost is likely at least \$9,000.

Depending upon the quality of the casket, burial vault and other merchandise selected, a traditional funeral and burial cost could be less than \$5,000 or exceed \$10,000. If no services to commemorate the deceased are desired, a direct burial or direct cremation can be arranged for under \$1,000.

Managing Funeral Costs

A funeral doesn't have to be expensive to be meaningful. Careful planning takes into consideration the costs vs. the benefits of the various options for funeral services and merchandise. Allocate more of your funeral dollars to those items that have the most meaning to you. A casket of the highest quality may be of utmost importance. Or you may choose to go with a rental casket to free more dollars for a mausoleum crypt or an extended visitation period.

Planning in advance is the key because it allows you the time to carefully consider your options and to "shop" and compare funeral prices. By planning ahead and pre-funding your funeral, you can lock in today's prices with a price guaranteed funeral contract.