



# Guides For Brides

## Tying the Knot: Tips On Marrying Finances

(NAPSA)—In the excitement of planning a wedding—choosing the flowers, organizing the reception and sending out invitations—couples don't always schedule time to lay the financial foundation for a successful marriage. Personal finances, after all, are traditionally the number one issue that causes arguments among married couples.

One of the keys to marital bliss is making sure you understand your financial priorities and spending habits. These questions can help you figure out your financial profile as individuals and as a couple.

- What assets do you have? How much debt?
- What are your saving habits and goals?
- Are you comfortable combining your finances?
- What are your spending habits? Do you stick to a monthly budget or are you more spontaneous?

As you start your lives together you should also find out each other's credit, or FICO<sup>®</sup>, scores. These scores help determine how easy—and how costly—it will be for you to get loans to purchase a house together or to obtain credit for buying cars or furniture.

According to a survey conducted by the Consumer Federation of America and credit card issuer Providian Financial, many couples incorrectly believe that their FICO scores will be combined after they get married. "While credit extended in both married partners' names will affect both individual credit scores, it is not unusual for



partners to have different credit scores—which is why knowing your FICO score is so important," said Chris Lewis, executive vice president with Providian, which is the only issuer that provides free FICO credit scores monthly for its customers.

Whether you choose to combine your finances or keep them separate, there are simple tips to ensure that your individual credit scores improve and remain strong as you celebrate many anniversaries together. These include:

- Pay bills on time—the most important!
- Maintain only a small number of credit card accounts; consolidate credit lines.
- Select a credit card that provides you with online financial management tools, like free access to your credit score.

Even if you and your future spouse have different spending habits today, it's important to develop financial compromises that will help make your lives better long after you say "I do."