



CONSUMER CREDIT
COUNSELING SERVICE
OF ROCHESTER

RethinkingDebt.orgSM



CCCS of Rochester/RethinkingDebt Headquarters: 1000 University Ave, Rochester, NY 14607 **SUMMER 2013**

Inside this issue:

Secure Your Credit	1
Elder Abuse	2
Horizons	2
Credit Confusion	3
Carrying Debt	4
Foreclosure Bill	4
C.A.S.H.	5
Lifetime Health	5

Secure Your Credit

By: Danielle Grasta, Client Support Specialist



Are you having trouble receiving new credit or do you need help building your current credit score? One option is to try a secured credit card.

A secured credit card is a type of credit card secured by a deposit account that is owned by the cardholder. With this type of account, the card holder must deposit 100% of the amount of requested credit. As a card holder, you will still make monthly payments on behalf of the expenditures that are applied to the credit card during the month to pay off all charges, ultimately in full. If the cardholder is unable to make the payment, the funds would then be taken from the deposit account. However, funds will not be taken from the deposit account until the card is in severe delinquency or if the account is closed. This is important to remember, as it means that if the cardholder is does not pay off the balance each month, the credit card can accrue interest and fees just as a regular credit card would and could have a negative impact on credit reporting. With a secured credit card, the cardholder is never be able to spend more than the limit that the card holds.

This type of credit can assist a consumer that has little, negative, or no credit to build or rebuild their credit score by making sure they are making consistent and timely payments every month. By complying with the requirements a secured card holds, upon proven success, the cardholder may be granted further credit privileges such as a higher limit or additional types of credit.

To obtain a secured credit card, visit your banking institution for further details.



CCCS of Rochester
u/a/n RethinkingDebt.org
is licensed and regulated
by the NYS Department
of Financial Services

ACCREDITED



COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION
OF SERVICES FOR FAMILIES
AND CHILDREN, INC.



Enlightenment on Elder Abuse

By: Shaun Morrison, Compliance Specialist

Financial exploitation of seniors is widespread and produces devastating effects. The unfortunate reality is that callous predators prey on the weakness and frailty of elders who seemingly have no one to turn to for recourse. What makes the situation even more agonizing is that the abuse is generally difficult to detect because it happens in private, domestic settings and often goes unreported.

We are all aware of the variety of tactics used by telemarketers and door-to-door salesman who attempt to convince individuals to send money, disclose personal information or collect on the contest they have just won. However, the most insidious cases of financial exploitation hit much closer to home. Most often the perpetrator is not a stranger, but rather, a trusted family member or caregiver. In response to questions posed by the newly formed Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Investor Protection Trust & Investor



Protection Institute polled a diverse group of regulators, financial planners, health care professionals, social workers, adult protective services, law enforcement officials, elder law attorneys, and academics. Of the top three exploitation issues the experts identified, the two most common abuses were “theft or diversion of funds or property by family members” and “theft or diversion of funds or property by caregivers.” In addition, multiple social service agencies combined their efforts to produce the New York State Elder

Abuse Prevalence Study. The 2011 report is one of the most ambitious and comprehensive examinations ever attempted to ascertain the extent of elder abuse. The study polled 54 New York State counties and revealed that overwhelmingly the most common relationship between victim and abuser was family-oriented. As this epidemic becomes more prevalent, agencies are developing programs and strategies to address particular cases. In response, CCCS of Rochester/ RethinkingDebt has taken up the mantle of instituting services that provide financial advisement to seniors and expanded its resources to meet this growing need. BalancedCare, a division of CCCS of Rochester, is designed to identify, prevent and address instances of financial exploitation of Social Security benefits, incurring debt and day-to-day money management. Our goal is to ensure that our community’s seniors golden years continue to glisten.

CCCS: Broadening Horizons

By: Danielle Castro, Marketing Intern

During summer, learning doesn’t have to end. After a successful summer session at the Horizons at Harley program last year, CCCS of Rochester expanded their reach this summer. Not only did CCCSR teach another financial literacy course to the 5th-8th graders at Harley, they also taught a course for Horizons at U of R’s Warner School. The financial literacy course is created and taught by CCCS of Rochester education specialists. The Horizons Student Enrichment Program was developed to serve low-income City of Rochester students in kindergarten



through eighth grades. The goal is to counteract the effects of summer learning loss by providing the children with continued knowledge through experiential learning. To offset the costs of the program, CCCS of Rochester was awarded a grant from M&T Bank. The grant was greatly appreciated by CCCSR, as it helped to provide materials to aid in the enrichment of the Horizons program. CCCS of Rochester and the Horizons program hope to continue offering the course each year and to expand further to other locations.

Confused About Credit Counseling?

By: Lynette Baker, Director of Marketing & Outreach

Confused about what credit counseling is? Not sure how it can help you? You are not the only one. The National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC) recently took a poll of US consumers and it turns out that many people have misperceptions about credit counseling. This can prevent people from seeking and getting the proper help.

The NFCC survey revealed the following examples of some of the confusion associated with credit counseling:

- Respondents did not know which agency to turn to for assistance.
 - Consumers should definitely be smart and do their homework when choosing a credit counseling agency. You should look for an agency that is not for profit, is associated with a membership organization such as the NFCC, and always check their status with the Better Business Bureau and the State Attorney General's office.
- Many people thought that credit counseling was expensive.
 - Counseling through a non-profit NFCC member agency is either free or low cost.
- Some people believe that credit counseling would hurt their credit score.
 - Typically credit counseling agencies don't report to credit bureaus. Actually, with a Debt Management Plan, most scores improve as you begin making consistent payments.
- Some thought that debt settlement or bankruptcy were better options.
 - Debt settlement and bankruptcy are serious financial decisions. They have negative consequences for your credit report and could also have tax implications. While these options



may be right for some, they should only be considered after all other options have been reviewed.

CCCS of Rochester/RethinkingDebt understands the confusion related to credit counseling and choosing someone to help with finances. People are bombarded with so many options every day. For-profit companies advertise on radio and TV and claim to be able to help or try to steer you away from credit counseling. One such commercial will tell you that credit counseling agencies work FOR the credit card companies. This is untrue in the case of CCCS of Rochester/RethinkingDebt. We operate independently and are not owned or affiliated with any bank or credit card company. CCCS of Rochester/RethinkingDebt is a non-profit agency. We have been helping people since 1970 and have an A+ rating

with the Better Business Bureau. CCCS of Rochester does work closely with banks and credit card companies, though, in order to get concessions for you such as lower interest rates and waived fees. Our true client is YOU!

Schedule an appointment today to have one of our advisors take a look at your income and expenses. The initial credit counseling appointment is always free! If you choose to join a Debt Management Plan there is a low monthly fee of \$35. CCCS of Rochester/RethinkingDebt can typically save you more than that amount through budgeting and concessions from your creditors. If you are struggling with your debt, do yourself a favor and at least check us out. Appointments can be completed in person or over the phone so you never even have to leave your home if you prefer. You have nothing to lose!

Call us at 585-546-3440 or 888-724-2227. Or visit one of our websites—www.cccsofrochester.org or www.rethinkingdebt.org.



Carrying Debt May be Heavier than You Think

By: Danielle Castro, Marketing Intern

According to a recent National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC) online poll, 18% of consumers think that carrying credit card debt from one month to the next is a responsible way to manage their finances. Unfortunately for those 18% (almost one out of every five people), carrying over debt can bear more consequences than rewards.

Some of the consequences that the NFCC touches on are as follows:

- Interest on a credit card is typically calculated on an average daily balance. For those who carry a balance over from the previous cycle, interest is not only charged on the unpaid balance, but on any new purchases added to the balance.
- With interest added onto the balance month after month, consumers end up paying interest on the interest.
- Carrying a balance has the potential to negatively impact a person's debt to credit ratio, one of the main components of credit scores.



▪ A higher balance decreases the amount of credit available for future purchases.

On the other hand, not having any credit cards at all can have some negative recourse as well. Using credit cards in a responsible manner helps to build your credit, resulting in more opportunities to qualify for necessary loans. By not having any credit, the possible lender has no history to determine the "risk" of lending to you, therefore limiting potential options for obtaining loans.

One way to be a responsible credit card holder is to pay off your debt

monthly. There are a few benefits for utilizing your credit responsibly, in reference to the NFCC article:

- Timely bill payments and a low credit utilization ratio are typically the top weighted elements in credit scoring models. Therefore, this type of behavior could have a positive impact on an individual's credit scores.
- The convenience of using credit can be enjoyed without paying any interest or penalties.
- The entire line of credit remains available for future use.
- Stress and worries of being over-extended are avoided.

If you need to get a handle on your debt, call Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Rochester/Rethinking Debt today. You can meet with one of our Certified Credit Advisors to help you budget and resolve any issues you may be having. Call (585) 546-3440 to lighten the heavy burden that debt leaves behind.

New Law Helps with Foreclosure

By: Jeana Breakingbury, Certified Counseling & Housing Advisor

The majority of foreclosure proceedings stall because of lack of proper paperwork filed by the attorney on behalf of the lender. Recently, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a Bill into law that will help distressed homeowners out of the "Shadow Dockets" of foreclosure proceedings. Shadow Dockets relegate homeowners to housing purgatory because they have received notice that their lender has initiated a foreclosure, but because the lender failed to file all the required paperwork, the process halts. During this standstill the homeowner is penal-

ized because they are unable to



schedule a mandatory settlement conference and must continue to pay on interest and fees virtually making

it impossible to avoid foreclosure.

This new law places greater responsibility on lenders and their attorneys to practice due diligence. Otherwise the submission of improper paperwork will slow down and/or stop the foreclosure process which allows homeowners the time to seek counseling, to get a settlement conference, obtain a loan modification or seek other remedies to save their home. Call CCCS of Rochester/RethinkingDebt today to schedule your free Foreclosure Prevention counseling session.

C.A.S.H

By: Chad Rieflin, Director of Programs & Grants

C.A.S.H. - Creating Assets, Savings, and Hope - is a community coalition led by Empire Justice Center and the United Way of Greater Rochester. C.A.S.H. was established in 2002 to help low-income workers make the most of their money and build stronger financial futures. The Credit Education Bureau – an extension of CCCS of Rochester – and C.A.S.H. have worked together since 2005 to co-facilitate a program known as C.A.S.H. Coach. With funding from the Women's Giving Circle, the program offers free, one-on-one financial coaching to working women in group and individual settings. With the help of trained volunteer coaches over a period of nine months, participants learn to manage their money and improve their financial future through achieving realistic,



measurable and attainable financial goals.

During the nine month period, coaches meet with their partners in person once a month; additionally, coaches and clients attend a group meeting where a guest speaker discusses different topics related to participant needs; i.e. housing, healthcare, consumer debt, employment, job skill training.

The program is the most successful from September through May. Participants and coaches typically have more free time

outside of the summer months. All meetings take place in the United Way building on 75 College Avenue in Rochester, NY.

In addition to offering our traditional program, C.A.S.H. Coach is also partnering with the Women On The Move Program (WOTM) at the St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center. WOTM is a program designed to help women move toward sustainable economic self-sufficiency. Volunteer coaches will be matched with the program participants.

For more information about the C.A.S.H. Coach program, visit <http://www.empirejustice.org/cash/cash-coach-program/> or email: crieflin@cccsofrochester.org.

Guest Essay: Lifetime Health

By: Morgan Doyle

Lifetime Health Medical Group is a leading medical group in Western New York, delivering quality health care and service to nearly 80,000 patients. At Lifetime, patients will find not only qualified health care professionals, but also experienced and helpful financial consultants. The group participates with all major commercial insurance companies and offers numerous payment arrangements and budget plans for costly out-of-pocket expenses. Patients with Lifetime Health have the ability to break up their total account balance into monthly payments with no additional fees or interest added. By allowing patients to establish and maintain these budgets, the practices provide



a stress-free financial plan where medical expenses can be paid on time without the worry or fear of being sent to collections. These budget payments can be made through the fast and easy convenience of online bill pay, over the phone with a Patient Account Representative or auto-debited from any major credit card. Lifetime Health also offers settlement discounts for

those patients with particularly high balances who want to satisfy their medical debt by paying in full and financial hardship discounts for those who qualify.

The highly skilled staff at Lifetime Health understands the ever changing financial demand of medical expenses and is available to help. The patient-centered care and thoughtful approach are reflected in the daily success at improving financial wellness for patients.

Whether it is through a monthly auto-debit transaction or an approved discount, Lifetime Health provides top quality care for any budget. For more information, visit www.lifetimehealth.org

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Rochester, NY
Permit NO. 986

Stay Connected with CCCS/RethinkingDebt



Facebook - www.facebook.com/RethinkingDebt



LinkedIn - www.linkedin.com/company/1929041



Twitter - www.twitter.com/RethinkingDebt

Toll Free Phone: 1-888-724-2227

Email: cccsinfo@cccsofrochester.org

This newsletter is a publication of CCCS of Rochester/ RethinkingDebt, a Not-for-Profit agency. It is a source of information for clients, partners, representatives of the credit industry, and the service networks supportive of our mission and vision.

Headquarters:

1000 University Ave., Suite 900
Rochester, NY 14607
Phone: (585) 546-3440
Fax: (585) 546-5693
Toll Free- (888) 724-2227

