

STATEMENT OF COUNSELING SERVICES

What Will Happen At My Counseling Session?

Your Counselor will begin by asking questions designed to help him/her better understand your current financial situation. You will be asked to provide information regarding the creditors to whom you owe money and the terms that currently govern those debts. Your Counselor will ask you questions regarding your monthly income and expenses in order to help you develop a budget; a plan for spending your money in the most effective and efficient manner. You will also be asked to provide information regarding assets and liabilities in order to develop a balance sheet. Your Counselor will then offer suggestions that could help you resolve your debts and better manage your cash-flow to obtain the greatest value from your income.

At the conclusion of the counseling session, you will be given a written assessment that outlines a suggested action plan which will be based on the following options:

- You will handle any and all financial concerns on your own;
- You may choose to enroll in a Debt Management Program. The Debt Management Program serves the dual role of helping you to repay your debts and helping your creditors to receive the money that is owed to them;
- You will be referred to the other services of the organization or another agency or agencies as appropriate that may be able to assist with particular problems that have been identified;
- You should be aware that debts to creditors that you repay through the DMP may be able to be discharged through bankruptcy, should you choose to file. CDC's Counselors cannot provide legal advice.

What Is CDC's Role In This Process?

Consumer Debt Counselors represents both the debtor and the creditor. We are required to treat both parties equitably. You may be assured that, in all we do, your personal and non-public information is held in strict confidence. Please see our Privacy Policy for additional information in this regard.

What Are My Counselors Qualifications To Serve As A Counselor?

This interview will be conducted by a Certified Credit Counselor or qualified professional Counselor. Certification as a counselor requires that the individual enroll in and complete a counselor certification program administered by a third party; i.e., the Association for Financial Counseling Planning Education, the National Foundation for Consumer Credit, etc. If your Counselor has not completed certification, the Action Plan presented to you will be reviewed by a Certified Credit Counselor. Your Counselor will present you with a copy of his/her biography card that details his/her qualifications to serve as your Counselor.

Office Locations



WINTER PARK, FL
Chamber of Commerce

Winter Park, FL – Lafayette, LA
Baton Rouge, LA – Metairie, LA – Lafayette, LA



Will Credit Counseling Impact My Credit Report?

Consumer Debt Counselors does not notify any credit-reporting bureau of your participation in a credit counseling session; nor will your creditors know that you have met with a Counselor if you do not enroll in a Debt Management Program. Additionally, Consumer Debt Counselors does not notify credit-reporting agencies of a client's participation in the DMP. Only the creditors do credit reporting; and CDC cannot be responsible for reports made by creditors. Your creditors may report that you are in a Debt Management Program and am not paying as originally agreed although they have accepted the reduced payment. Your participation in a Debt Management Program may change information that is already on your creditor report. If your credit report reflects that you have paid creditors as agreed in the past, a Debt Management Program could have a negative impact on a credit-worthiness decision by a potential creditor, landlord, or employer in the future.

It is our understanding that neither credit counseling nor participation in a Debt Management Program will neither add to, nor detract from, your credit score.

Will My Privacy Be Protected?

Yes! While CDC's Privacy Policy will provide more detailed information, you can rest assured that your privacy will be protected. At some time in the future, your information may be used for confidential research, quality assurance/training purposes, and/or a neutral party may contact you to request an evaluation of the services provided by Consumer Debt Counselors.

How Does CDC Obtain Funding?

Most of the funding that this agency receives comes from voluntary contributions from creditors who participate in Debt Management Programs (DMP). Since creditors have a financial interest in getting paid, most are willing to make a contribution to help fund Consumer Debt Counselors. These contributions are usually calculated as a percentage of payments that you make through your Debt Management Program; up to a maximum of fifteen percent (15%). Industry averages are **well below** 15%. However, your accounts will always be credited with one hundred percent (100%) of the amount that you pay through Consumer Debt Counselors. CDC will always work with all of your creditors, regardless of whether they contribute to Consumer Debt Counselors.

Complaint Resolution Process

We are committed to providing you with high quality professional services. However, if you are not satisfied with the services provided or if you want to make a complaint, we ask that you follow these guidelines.

- 1) Try to resolve the issue with the staff member involved giving him/her specific information about your complaint.
- 2) If step #1 is not possible or the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, write or call Tom Hoisington, CLU, ChFC, FICF, Compliance and Quality Manager at 222 S. Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 100, Winter Park, FL 32789.
- 3) Consumer Debt Counselors may request a meeting with you (in person or by telephone) to seek more information regarding the cause of your dissatisfaction. Consumer Debt Counselors will

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respond within fifteen (15) days. If your issue is still unresolved, you may appeal in writing directly to the President of Consumer Debt Counselors. After additional fact finding, he will provide a concluding decision to you within fifteen (15) days.

Hold Harmless

By participating in a counseling session, you agree to hold Consumer Debt Counselors, its employees, agents, and volunteers harmless from any claim, suit, action, or demand of any of your creditors, yourself, or any other person resulting from the advice or counseling provided. Nothing herein shall apply to actions or claims under the provisions of the United States Bankruptcy Code, 11 U.S.C. §101 et seq.

What Will My Counseling Session Cost?

Your initial counseling session is provided **FREE**.

We at Consumer Debt Counselors believe that money should not stand between you and the help you need. For this reason, we have always made every effort to ensure that any fees or contributions that we request from you, our client, be modest and affordable. Because of the contributions received from creditors, we ask only for the contributions/fees detailed below.

<u>Service</u>	<u>Fee/Contribution</u>
Counseling Session for Debt Management	FREE
Counseling for Bankruptcy Certificate	\$50.00
Personal Financial Management Course	\$50.00
Debt Management Program Client Expense Contribution *	\$7.00/account to a maximum of \$48.00 per month
Debt Management Program Set-Up Contribution *	\$49.00
Tri-Merge Credit Report (provides reports from Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion)	\$13.00

* Where state law limits monthly expense contributions and/or set-up contributions to a lesser

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amount, state law shall prevail

FEE WAIVER POLICY

Consumer Debt Counselors will waive the fees normally received for the provision of pre-bankruptcy filing credit-counseling when the client has an income that is less than one hundred and fifty percent (150%) of the poverty guidelines last published by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) that are applicable to a family of the size involved in the forty-eight (48) contiguous states.

Counselors will determine the DHHS poverty guidelines as published at the DHHS website:

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/06poverty.shtml>

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Consumer Debt Counselors serves all members of the community. We do not engage in the practice of discrimination in the selection and participation of clients in our programs or services with respect to race, religion, color, gender, national origin, or handicap.

OUR PLEDGE TO YOU

We pledge that our clients have the right:

- To prompt, confidential, courteous, counseling services from knowledgeable, certified Counselors;
- To treatment with dignity and respect;
- To be actively involved in a comprehensive assessment of their financial situation including an appropriate action plan;
- To ask questions and to have concerns addressed
- To discontinue their relationship with Consumer Debt Counselors at any time.

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