The U.S. Trustee Program Helps Consumers

The United States Trustee Program promotes financial education programs that help consumers improve their money management skills. The Program works with judges, bankruptcy trustees, lawyers, and others to encourage educational programs for consumers. For example, the Credit Abuse Resistance Education (CARE) Program developed by Bankruptcy Judge John C. Ninfo II in the Western District of New York provides outreach to students while they are learning life-long financial practices. Other educational sessions provided by private bankruptcy trustees teach financial management skills, including those required to successfully emerge from bankruptcy.

... and Collaborates with Other Agencies and Groups

The U.S. Trustee Program partners with other government agencies and community groups to promote financial management education. Whatever your stage of life or degree of financial know-how, there is an educational program that can help you learn more.

Financial Literacy Education Commission

The Financial Literacy Education Commission was created in 2003 to encourage government and private sector initiatives to promote financial literacy and to coordinate the federal government's financial education efforts. For more information on the Commission, visit the web site of the Department of the Treasury's Office of Financial Education at www.treasury.gov/financialeducation.

Financial Education Resources

There are many resources for helpful information about consumer money management. Here are just a few:

Federal Citizen Information Center
www.pueblo.gsa.gov

Federal Reserve
www.federalreserve.gov

Credit Abuse Resistance Education (CARE) Program
www.careprogram.us

Cooperative Extension
www.csrees.usda.gov

Federal Trade Commission
www.ftc.gov

Small Business Administration
www.sba.gov

Social Security Administration
www.ssa.gov

National Credit Union Administration
www.ncua.gov

The U.S. Trustee Program is the component of the Department of Justice that protects the integrity of the bankruptcy system by overseeing case administration and litigating to enforce the bankruptcy laws. For more information on the Program, visit our web site at www.usdoj.gov/ust.

U.S. Department of Justice

UNITED STATES TRUSTEE PROGRAM

FINANCIAL EDUCATION:

PROTECTING YOUR FUTURE

Managing Your Money

Managing money can be a challenge for many reasons. A failure to budget carefully and spend accordingly can result in financial hardship. Loan offers arrive daily. As technology advances, electronic transfers are increasingly used and cash is being replaced by plastic -- credit cards, debit cards, pre-paid cards. Now it is more important than ever for consumers to understand fundamental principles of money management.

Avoiding Debt and Bankruptcy

Each year, more than one out of every 70 households in the United States enters bankruptcy. Basic financial education can help protect your future by enabling you to avoid stressful debt and possible bankruptcy.

Improving Financial Knowledge and Skills

Many governmental agencies, professional associations, and non-profit organizations provide valuable financial education programs to help consumers learn to manage their money.

Programs and Volunteers Make A Difference

"Bankruptcy judges and attorneys across the country have become a part of the CARE Program to alert middle school, high school, and college students to the serious consequences of abusing consumer credit. In just two years, volunteers have provided financial education workshops to more than 10,000 students in the Rochester, N.Y., area."*–The Honorable John C. Ninfo II, Chief Bankruptcy Judge*

"With so many technological developments in the world of personal finance, it's more important than ever that consumers have a firm understanding of where their money goes and how to save and spend wisely."*– Kathleen D. Schmitt, Assistant U.S. Trustee, Rochester, NY*

"Volunteering to teach financial literacy courses in local high schools gives us the opportunity to impress upon students the essential concepts of personal finance."*–U.S. Trustee Staff, Los Angeles, CA*

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Money Management Tips

Simple steps can improve your financial future:

√**Start a Savings Plan.** Pay yourself first. By saving as little as $100 a month at 5 percent interest compounded monthly, you will have more than $40,000 in 20 years.

√**Follow a Budget.** Create and follow a monthly budget or "spending plan," even if it is as simple as setting aside cash for regular expenses in separate envelopes.

√**Monitor Your Spending.** Track your spending for a week. You may find that you can reduce your spending on many items.

√**Don't Buy on Impulse.** Separate "needs" from "wants." Make a shopping list of the things you and your family need, and stick to it when you go to the store.

√**Use Credit Wisely.** Try to pay off your credit card balance each month. If you owe $10,000 in credit card debt at an annual rate of 16 percent, you will pay $133 in interest every month.