



# Housing Counseling Helps Millennials Manage Student Debt



## The Price of Student Loan Debt

**Blacksburg, VA** – Although a college degree or other post-secondary credential or certificate has never been more important, it has also never been more expensive according to the U.S. Department of Education. A White House report entitled, [Taking Action: Higher Education and Student Debt](#), estimates that 40 million Americans have student loans and more than 70 percent of U.S. students that graduate with a bachelor's degree, leave college with debt. Currently, the U.S. student loan debt exceeds one trillion dollars.

During the past three years, the [Virginia Cooperative Extension \(VCE\)](#) has seen more clients with ever increasing student loan debt as part of their total debt package, oftentimes many years after graduation. Student debt can be a mixed bag of federal loans, Direct Student loans, Stafford, PLUS, or Perkins loans and higher interest rate private student loans.

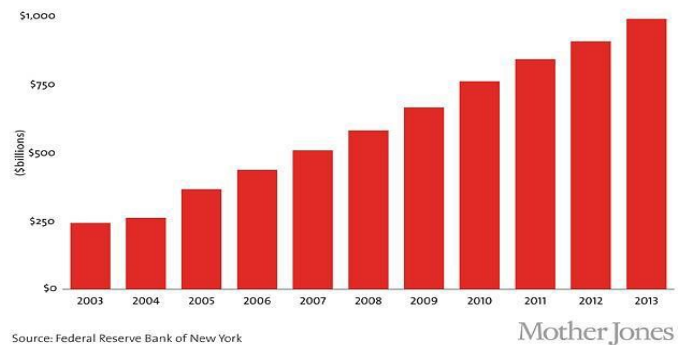
VCE Prince William is a HUD-approved local housing counseling agency offering services for clients with student loan debt in two scenarios:

1. Clients who are keeping up with their payments but may be paying the minimum, which barely reduces their debt, and
2. Clients who may be underemployed or unable to pay the minimum and have slipped into default.

Total debt likely includes multiple student loans both public and private and many clients are carrying near \$100K in education loans.

## Big Debt on Campus

Student loan debt has nearly quadrupled in the past 10 years.



When working with clients carrying extensive student loan debt, VCE first creates a *Matrix of Debt* where the client lists all outstanding loans, detailing minimum payments, due dates and corresponding interest rates. This fact gathering step gives a clear visual of the client's monthly financial reality.

While several clients expressed that they came to VCE feeling hopeless, after meeting with VCE counselors, clients leave with a plan focused on debt reduction. This gives them a sense of accomplishment and the knowledge that their debt is manageable.

VCE offers classes specifically for Millennials called *Money 101*. This three-week course is designed to increase financial knowledge and empower young professionals to make savvy financial decisions. The *Student Debt Repayment* class is focused on clients that are already in default. It offers creative payment plans that will improve credit scores and may gradually lead toward a long-term payment plan through one of the [new federal student loan repayment options](#).

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## FROM THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY



**Sarah Gerecke**  
*Deputy Assistant  
Secretary  
Office of Housing*

Greetings,

As we prepare for end of summer vacations and students heading back to school, this edition of *The Bridge* centers on the plight of millennials facing huge student loan debt in their pursuit of higher education and the impact of this debt on their lives, including homeownership, for many years to come.

According to the White House report, [\*Taking Action: Higher Education and Student Debt\*](#), over the past three decades, the average tuition at a public four-year college has more than tripled, while a typical family's income has barely budged. More students than ever are relying on loans to pay for college. In 2013, 71 percent of those earning a bachelor's degree graduated with debt averaging \$30,000.

Housing counseling agencies are increasingly providing counseling and guidance for consumers of all ages struggling with student loan debt. In response, some agencies are developing budgeting and financial literacy courses specifically targeting millennials that include debt repayment options. Others are expanding training classes and certification to prepare counselors to serve this growing need.

The [U.S. Department of Education](#) is redoubling its efforts to identify borrowers who may be struggling to repay. The Department's efforts led to more than 124,000 borrowers enrolling in an income-driven repayment plan like Income-Based Repayment or the Pay-As-You-Earn plan. Moving forward, the Department will test new ways to reach 2.5 million borrowers with the greatest risk of encountering payment difficulty, such as borrowers who have left college without completing their education, missed their first loan payment, or defaulted on low balance loans, and get them back on track with their loan payments.

As the parent of two millennials, it pains me to think of the burden that student debt imposes on this generation at a time when they are just beginning their careers and forming their own households. The Office of Housing Counseling and our HUD-approved housing counseling agencies will continue to be proactive in increasing our knowledge to assist millennials and other consumers to understand their options in managing student loan debt.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

***Sarah***

# STUDENT LOAN DEBT: A BARRIER TO HOMEOWNERSHIP



Washington, DC – On the whole, consumers have been making good progress toward controlling credit card debt and growing personal savings. Employment rates have improved since the peak of the financial crisis and people are more confident about their ability to land a job. All of these factors are good for potential growth in the housing market, but there is one massive barrier standing in the way of many college graduates. That roadblock is the \$1.2 trillion dollars of outstanding student loan debt currently owed by Americans.

## Barrier to Homeownership

According to HUD-approved housing counseling intermediary, National Foundation for Credit Counseling's (NFCC) 2015 Financial Literacy Survey conducted by Harris Poll and sponsored by NerdWallet, the majority of those repaying student loan debt (76 percent) say doing so has impacted their personal financial situation in some way. For example, exactly half (50 percent) have been unable to put money away for an emergency fund, and nearly two in five are unable to save for retirement (38 percent). About one in four (26 percent) struggle to make their monthly student loan payment and 19 percent struggle to pay their monthly rent/mortgage.

To those who say that student loan debt is not as much of a barrier as some have reported, these findings are proof that the situation is as serious as ever. Educational loans are a problem not just for those who already own homes. Confirming that student loan debt is in the way of personal savings reveals that it keeps homeownership just beyond the reach of those trying to achieve that goal for the first time.

Further complicating matters are the myriad of student loan debt relief offers flooding the airwaves and internet. Those struggling the most are tempted by slogans promising "guaranteed relief" through an "instant student loan debt

forgiveness" plan. The fact is that many of the offers boasting such claims are unlikely to deliver what they promise and are grossly misleading.

Borrowers who are in the deepest trouble and are the most desperate for help are likely to pay upfront for these offers, only to discover that their money was wasted on false promises. For those who have been scammed, they are often worse off than they were before reaching out for what they thought was help. A recent student loan default coupled with a depleted savings account makes it nearly impossible to qualify for any type of loan, especially a mortgage.

## Reversing the Tide

To help reverse the tide of student loan debt, the NFCC is currently building the nation's largest network of comprehensively certified student loan counselors. All participating counselors will be required to complete specialized training that covers the complete inventory of student loan programs associated with repayment, forbearance, and other forgiveness options. In addition to the training requirement, counselors will have to successfully complete an additional round of examination to earn special certification.

Offered along with NFCC's credit and housing counseling certification already recognized for setting high standards, this will be a thorough and comprehensive certification process for student loan counselors. Stringent certification guidelines will ensure that each counselor is prepared to skillfully serve the needs of student borrowers.

Because the cumulative total of outstanding student debt in the U.S. is growing at the blistering pace of \$3,055 per second, it is important that nonprofit financial counselors respond with services that are best suited to generate the most sustainable results.

To learn more about student loan counseling available from NFCC member agencies, visit [studentloanhelp.org](http://studentloanhelp.org). For information about housing and other financial counseling services offered by NFCC members, visit [nfcc.org](http://nfcc.org).

# MILLENNIALS IN THE MARKET



Wiscasset, ME - Running a non-profit housing counseling program in Maine may give one a unique perspective. As a state, Maine finds itself atop several “lists” that make it challenging to further the home buying process.

Maine’s median age was the highest in the nation at a robust 44 years in comparison to the U.S. average of 36.8 years. Projecting out to the year 2030, the U.S. expects to see population growth of over 17.5 percent while Maine is likely to see a net reduction in its population over the same period.<sup>1</sup> Add to this that Maine just surpassed Vermont as the most rural state in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> and you can see that engaging the millennial generation and service delivery are both challenges and, at the same time, opportunities for organizations such as Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI), a HUD-approved housing counseling agency.

Maine’s housing counseling collective has made it a priority to engage millennials who have remained in or returned to Maine’s workforce after secondary or post-secondary education. Doing this, however, means that rural agencies have to meet these prospective buyers where they are. While CEI still offers a significant slate of in-person homebuyer education classes, it also has begun to offer a webinar version of this live education, which has been very well received by Generation Y. They are overwhelmingly familiar with the online platforms that are used and, as many have intimated they would have been hard-pressed to physically attend 8 - 10 hours in class time during evenings or on weekends.

While there are a number of online homebuyer education platforms, CEI really wanted participants to experience a live class interaction from their own homes. This is not only important to engage a younger generation of homebuyers but also to enable potential buyers in some of the more far-flung, rural areas to experience the feel of the live class.

Another serious impediment for millennials while pursuing homeownership is student loan debt. At over \$1.3 trillion dollars and counting, student loan debt is like a mortgage payment for graduates before they ever consider stepping foot in a home of their own. CEI has spent a vast amount of time in the last 8 to 10 years providing default and foreclosure services for distressed borrowers. This has allowed CEI housing counselors to become very skilled in negotiating with lenders, which also supports students, and sometimes parents, in working with student debt.

CEI is in the early stages of developing a student loan debt counseling program which, it hopes, will become a robust pipeline for its homebuyer education offerings. While this may not result in an immediate increase in mortgage-ready borrowers, it allows CEI to interact with these clients in a couple of important ways.

1. First, through this type of counseling, coupled with broader financial capability assistance, CEI will provide access to financial tools which are often no longer emphasized through traditional education.
2. Second, it also allows this generation to see the value of one-on-one counseling and its tangible benefits for them as they move into the home buying process.

A home purchase is a huge commitment and an enormous financial decision and the industry already knows the overwhelming benefits that come from this ounce of prevention – for borrowers and lenders alike. The industry should engage millennials where they are comfortable and show them what value housing counseling can bring to their financial realities. In doing so, CEI hopes to become a trusted resource for millennials throughout their lives, not just during the process of buying a single home.

Learn more at [www.ceimaine.org](http://www.ceimaine.org), follow on [Facebook @CEIMaine](https://www.facebook.com/CEIMaine) and Twitter at [@ceimaine](https://twitter.com/ceimaine).

<sup>1</sup>Maine State and County Population Projections 2030; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 National Population Projections <sup>2</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-year American Community Survey

# THE IMPACT OF STUDENT LOANS ON FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS

**Farmington Hills, MI** - The importance of first-time homebuyers to the overall health of the housing market cannot be understated. Today, the percentage of first-time buyers in the market is hovering around 30 percent, according to the National Association of Realtors, well below their peak of over 50 percent in 2009. At [GreenPath](#), a HUD-approved housing counseling agency, its staff believes that one of the main drivers preventing first-time homebuyers from entering the real estate market and taking advantage of historically low mortgage rates is high debt loads, mainly due to substantial student loan debts.

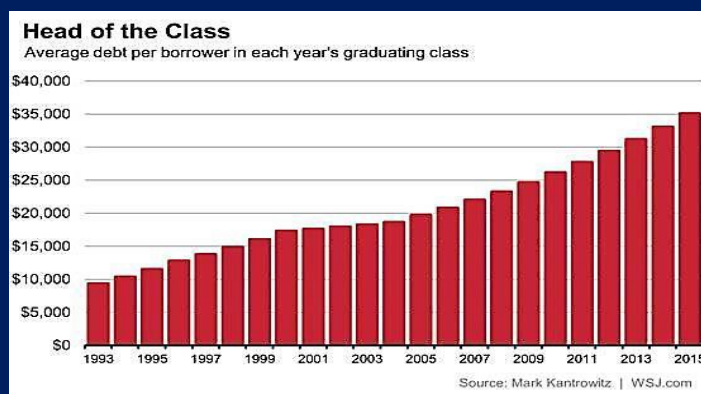
GreenPath counselors have been helping consumers understand their student loan repayment options for many years. In some cases, it's merely a matter of getting a better handle on the monthly household budget, which then allows for the borrower to repay the loans over a standard 10 year period. However, in more cases, borrowers need to take advantage of the various alternative repayment options such as Graduated Repayment or Income Based Repayment, to be able to sustain their monthly payments. The eligibility guidelines for these options can be complicated, so working with a non-profit agency and speaking with a knowledgeable student loan counselor can make a huge difference in creating the right plan for the borrower.

A common question GreenPath has been asked over the past few years is: **What role is student-loan debt playing in the current mortgage market?** There are various opinions, but one item is indisputable - student loans are reported to credit reporting agencies and are a factor in qualifying for a mortgage loan. Borrowers with significant amounts of debt will likely not qualify for a conventional mortgage due to the 28/36 mortgage lending guidelines. These are debt ratios suggesting that a borrower's mortgage loan cannot exceed 28 percent of their gross income and all debt cannot exceed 36 percent of gross income.

One of the common exercises a GreenPath counselor will do when working with a client is to demonstrate how their debt will impact their ability to qualify for a mortgage. For example, a borrower earning \$56,000 a year would qualify for \$1,307 per month to go toward principal, interest, taxes and insurance (PITI). However, a different borrower with that same income

but with \$250 a month in student loan debt, a \$200 monthly car payment and \$100 a month in credit card payments would only qualify for \$1,130, which could go toward PITI, thus limiting the amount of mortgage he/she can qualify for.

Since the beginning of the recession in 2008, all major categories of household debt have decreased with the exception of student loans. Today, the total balance of outstanding student loans exceeds \$1.1 trillion, an amount greater than all existing credit card debt. What's more, over the past two decades the average amount owed at graduation by students with a bachelor's degree has jumped from \$10,000 to \$35,000.



Couple this with the fact that delinquency rates on student loans have doubled to 12 percent over the past eight years while they've been falling on credit cards, mortgages and auto loans.

So moving forward: **How do non-profit financial counselors help make it easier for first-time buyers to purchase homes?** At GreenPath, counselors first help consumers recognize the financial consequences of debt, including student loans. Students that incur large amounts of student loan debt as a result of pursuing an undergraduate degree or an advanced degree must recognize that these borrowed funds must be repaid. After that, the counselor and client will work together to develop a holistic long-term plan to create financial stability.

The benefits of a college education are well documented, but for many people, that degree will come with debt. Making good financial decisions about how to responsibly pay off those student loans are an important component to building a solid future and eventually buying that first home.

# OBSERVATIONS AND GUIDANCE ON STUDENT LOAN DEBT

**Logan, UT** – A 2012 study by the Pew Research Center found that workers with a college degree make \$17,500 more annually than workers with a high school diploma. Only 3.8 percent of college graduates in the study faced unemployment compared to 12.2 percent of high school graduates. College graduates will make hundreds of thousands of dollars more than high school graduates over their lifetimes.

A college degree is not without its drawbacks, the most significant of which is cost. [The Institute for College Access and Success](#) reported that in 2013 seven out of every ten graduating college seniors had student loan debt. The average indebtedness of graduates was \$28,400, up from \$16,928 in 2000. While money allows for opportunity, debt requires an opportunity cost. It allows students to obtain an education now that they otherwise might not be able to afford, but it requires a substantial future commitment to repay the principle and interest.

The [Utah State University Family Life Center-Housing and Financial Counseling Clinic](#) (FLCHFC), a HUD-approved housing counseling agency, has been working with students, borrowers and community members during the last 30 years to resolve their debt, credit, and budget problems while preparing to become a homeowner, entrepreneur, or investor. Student loans have become a growing challenge for many graduates. Here are some observations from its time working with indebted students.

**Downtime.** How students spend their time can have an impact on how they spend overall. When reviewing the budgets of students who choose not to work to focus on school, FLCHFC found they often attend a higher number of school and social activities. While this is great for making new friends, it is often harder on their pocketbook! Working even a few hours a week seems to help students be more aware of how they are spending their money.

**Using the right budget.** In many cases using a traditional budget to balance monthly income with expenses does not accurately reflect the students' needs. Student budgets often have significant influxes of cash during the summer and at the beginning of each semester. Using an annual budget with



subordinate budgets that reflect their specific requirements for each month can help students avoid unwelcome surprises like running out of food money at the end of the semester.

**Protect the priorities.** Students who overspend on food, entertainment, and other expenses may risk not having enough income to pay for lodging and other bills. When working with clients who struggle with missed payments and late fees, consider encouraging them to have two separate checking accounts. One account to pay bills, preferably automatically, the other for food, entertainment and other miscellaneous expenses.

**Learn to spend what you need, not what you have.** Many students generate a budget based on what they have, planning on spending everything they borrow and make. Instead, encourage students to create a budget that identifies what they need. Excess funds should be saved for emergencies and can be used at graduation to pay down their student loans

**Teach them to manage credit.** Students who wait until they graduate to begin developing their credit score are missing a key opportunity. Acquiring a credit card at the beginning of their college career and using it wisely can provide huge benefits. A credit card with no balance, that has been used regularly, paid on time, and has been open for more than four years can have a strong positive influence on their credit scores. A good score can help them land a job and obtain lower interest rates.

**Get to them early.** Teaching students how to manage their finances early on is much easier than trying to eliminate

*(continued on pg. 9)*

# STUDENT LOAN FAQ'S

**Washington, DC** – Earlier this year, the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC), a HUD-approved intermediary, acquired the Student Loan Alliance® (SLA) to create the largest national nonprofit network of certified student loan counselors. “The need for a high quality, comprehensive, and consumer-driven program to assist student loan borrowers is urgent”, said NFCC president Susan C. Keating. “Student Loan Alliance resources will help our member agencies fill that need for consumers in every state.”

Here are some student loan frequently asked questions (FAQs) answered by the NFCC:

## **Q: Is there only one type of student loan?**

**A:** Student loans fall into either one of two categories; federal or private.

## **Q: What is student loan default?**

**A:** Default occurs if you fail to make payments within 270 days of the payment due date. Once a student loan goes into “default” status the full balance of the loan becomes due immediately. Furthermore, you will be ineligible to obtain student aid should you wish to continue your education.

Defaulting on your student loans can be quite costly. Collection fees can be added to the loan balance resulting in significantly higher costs. There are options for getting out of loan default without having to repay the full balance of the loan.

## **Q: What happens if I default on my student loans?**

**A:** Defaulting has severe and long-lasting consequences, including but not limited to:

- Suspension or non-renewal of Professional Licenses.
- Litigation and judgment costs.
- The entire unpaid balance of your loan and any interest is immediately due and payable.
- You'll lose eligibility for postponement options and repayment plans.
- You'll lose eligibility for additional federal student aid.
- The loan will be reported as delinquent to credit bureaus and will damage your credit rating.

## **Q: Will my student loans be forgiven in bankruptcy?**

**A:** It is possible to get your loan discharged in a bankruptcy although it is very difficult. All student loans can be discharged, but only if the borrower can prove undue hardship. The NFCC does not provide legal advice. For additional questions you should consult a bankruptcy attorney.

## **Q: What is Deferment and Forbearance?**

**A:** Deferment and Forbearance are options for borrowers who are seriously struggling with their student loans. These options allow borrowers to make substantially reduced payments, or even \$0 payments, for a period of time until their financial hardship passes. These are temporary programs, however, and therefore not a permanent solution.

Each loan has a maximum allowable period of deferments and forbearances, and once these have been exhausted, the borrower must return to making regular monthly payments. In addition, your loans may continue to accrue interest during a deferment or forbearance. Therefore, deferment and forbearance options should only be used during periods of true emergency, and are not a permanent solution to your student loan debt.

## **Q: Why should I work with an NFCC Certified Consumer Credit Counselor? Can't my loan servicer help me with my repayment?**

**A:** Your loan servicer can place you on different repayment plans, and will answer questions regarding your loans. However, a servicer may not take the time to walk through all of the implications for each repayment option, and even then will often only do so if you know the right questions to ask.

Ultimately, the servicer's job is to handle each caller as quickly and efficiently as possible, and that does not always allow for the most thorough consideration of your unique circumstance and repayment needs.

For information on student loan debt counseling, visit [studentloanhelp.org](http://studentloanhelp.org).

# INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW



[HUDHousingCounselors.com](http://HUDHousingCounselors.com) was launched June 4, 2015 and provides free on-line training and a downloadable study guide for housing counselors to prepare for the upcoming housing counselor certification examination. In this month's issue, we will focus on frequently asked questions regarding the website.

**Q: How do I hear sound for the on-line training portion?**

**A:** The on-line training does not have an audio component.

**Q: I have submitted a question through the "Feedback" link but no one answered my question. When will I receive an answer?**

**A:** The feedback feature is designed for visitors to the website to anonymously leave comments. Any personal information provided is deleted from the comments to comply with privacy regulations and the individual submitting the comment will not be contacted by Bixal Solutions (Bixal) or HUD.

If you have a question or need technical support relating to the website, you can contact Bixal at (800) 448-7149 during business hours from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm ET, Monday–Friday except Federal holidays. Individuals with hearing or speech impairments may access this number via TTY by calling the Federal Information Relay Service at (800) 877- 8339 and identifying HUD as the federal agency.

**Q: How can I keep track of my progress with the on-line modules?**

**A:** Currently the website does not collect any personally identifiable information to comply with Privacy regulations and guidelines and individual user IDs are not created. Please manually note your progress.

**Q: Do I get a certificate when I complete the training course?**

**A:** Because the training is optional, you will not receive a certificate for completion. Further the website is not collecting any personally identifiable information that would be required to issue a certificate.

**Q: Will I be required to take the training and practice examination?**

**A:** As stated previously, the training and practice exam are optional; however, you are encouraged to utilize the materials to prepare for the certification examination.

**Q: The links to the Practice Examination and Certification Examination do not work. When will this be fixed?**

**A:** These links will be activated when the practice examination and certification examination become available. OHC will notify our stakeholders when they become available.



# SEEKING YOUR HOUSING COUNSELING TESTIMONIALS AND SUCCESS STORIES



The Bridge has established a Testimonial Bank that will provide success stories for reference in governmental speeches and publications. We would like to highlight your success stories as part of our effort to demonstrate the value of housing counseling and the positive impact housing counseling has on helping families make informed housing choices. Please share your success stories at: [housingcounselingagenciestoOHC@hud.gov](mailto:housingcounselingagenciestoOHC@hud.gov).

*(continued from pg. 6 – Observations and Guidance on Student Loan Debt)*

bad habits and deal with the consequences of poor spending later. Consider programs that help both graduate and undergraduate students. For example, the USU Family Life Center recently partnered with the USU Veterinary Medicine program to work with incoming students to help them create budgets, manage monthly expenses, and create strategies to deal with the high debt loads that accompany doctoral degrees.

Housing counseling agencies have the privilege and opportunity to help households resolve current problems, avoid future difficulties, and succeed in managing their finances. Consider ways your agency can partner with high schools, local colleges, universities, tech and trade schools, and businesses in your community to create programs that help students manage, control, and minimize student debt. Obtaining a college degree can open many doors, successfully managing the debt that accompanies a degree keeps those doors open.

*(continued from pg. 1 - The Price of Student Loan Debt)*

AMOUNT OF TIME TO REPAY	
<b>10 YEAR PERIOD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>10-YEAR REPAYMENT PERIOD:</li><li>• AVAILABLE FOR ANY LOAN</li><li>• DECREASES TOTAL INTEREST PAID BUT INCREASES MONTHLY PAYMENT COMPARED TO 25-YEAR REPAYMENT PERIOD</li></ul>	<b>PAY AS YOU EARN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>20 YEAR: ANY REMAINING BALANCE IS FORGIVEN AFTER 20 YEARS</li></ul>
<b>25 YEAR PERIOD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>25-YEAR REPAYMENT PERIOD:</li><li>• MAY BE AVAILABLE IF YOUR LOAN BALANCE EXCEEDS \$30,000</li><li>• DECREASES MONTHLY PAYMENT BUT INCREASES THE TOTAL INTEREST PAID COMPARED TO 10-YEAR REPAYMENT PERIOD</li></ul>	<b>INCOME-BASED REPAYMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>25 YEAR: ANY REMAINING BALANCE IS FORGIVEN AFTER 25 YEARS</li></ul>
<small>LONGER REPAYMENT PERIODS ARE AVAILABLE FOR CONSOLIDATION LOANS</small>	<b>INCOME-CONTINGENT REPAYMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>25 YEAR: ANY REMAINING BALANCE IS FORGIVEN AFTER 25 YEARS</li></ul>
<small>YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR REPAYMENT PLAN AT ANY TIME BY CONTACTING YOUR FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN SERVICER. NOT ALL LOANS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR ALL REPAYMENT PLANS. TO LEARN MORE, GO TO STUDENTAID.GOV/REPAY</small>	
<b>FederalStudentAid.gov</b> PROUD SPONSOR of the AMERICAN MIND®	

[FederalStudentAid.gov](http://FederalStudentAid.gov) is a great resource for everyone. It includes an outline of the three new [Income Driven repayment plans](#). These repayment plans are designed to make debt more manageable by reducing monthly payments. Most federal student loans are eligible for one of these plans.

1. Income-Based Repayment Plan (IBR Plan)
2. Pay As You Earn Repayment Plan (Pay As You Earn Plan)
3. Income-Contingent Repayment Plan (ICR Plan)

With college tuitions still on the rise and interest rates poised to go up, the Virginia Cooperative Extension offices are putting into place plans for more financial literacy classes to meet the needs of the current student debt epidemic. Classes will focus on the challenges of the younger community facing this student debt crisis. Class goals are to support their decision making process. As clients move forward on their career path, VCE wants to help them grow their financial skills and abilities.

VCE plans to expand not only classes and services but to implement additional training for its Master Financial Volunteers and Coaches, who will guide and support these clients as they face the added burden of this generation – excessive student loan debt.

For more information, visit [Virginia Cooperative Extension](http://VirginiaCooperativeExtension.org).

**THE BRIDGE** is pleased to recognize Champions of Service who have provided exemplary service in the Housing Counseling arena and Success Stories highlighting client's achievements. Nominations of persons both inside and outside of HUD are welcomed.

Please send your nominations by the 20th of each month to: [thebridge@hud.gov](mailto:thebridge@hud.gov).

# TOOLS AND RESOURCES



## [U.S. Department of Education](#)

Log in to view your federal student loan data, notify schools of counseling completion, and save proof of counseling completion.



## [Federal Student Loan Repayment Options](#)

Find the right repayment plan for you, learn how to make payments, get help if you can't afford your payments, and see what circumstances might result in a loan being forgiven, canceled, or discharged.



## [The White House: Making College Affordable](#)

[Taking Action: Higher Education and Student Debt](#)



## [National Foundation for Credit Counseling's \(NFCC\) 2015 Financial Literacy Survey](#)

[studentloanhelp.org](#)



## [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Know Your Options](#)

Provides information and advice for optimizing how you pay off your student loans based on some basic information about your situation.



## [National Student Loan Data System](#)

Get a list of all federal loans made to you.



## [StudentLoanHelp.org](#)

Provides nonprofit, one-on-one counseling to student loan borrowers in need of obtaining assistance through [federal programs](#).



## [Mint.com](#)

Free app to manage your cash flow, budgets, and bills from one place.



## [Tuition.IO](#)

Track loan balances, payment history, savings and evaluate student loan options.



## [Student Loan Hero](#)

Compare repayment options with student loan tools and calculators.

# ON THE HORIZON



September 3-24, 2015	<a href="#">NeighborWorks America - Upcoming eClassroom Express Sessions</a>
September 8, 2015	<a href="#">Webinar: SBA's Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Assistance Programs</a>
September 10, 2015	<a href="#">IRS Educational Training for Exempt Organizations</a>
September 15-29, 2015	<a href="#">Webinar: NCLR Homeownership Network Learning Alliance (NHNLA) Training for Housing Counselors</a>
September 16, 2015	<a href="#">Incorporating Green Infrastructure into Housing Developments</a>
September 21-25, 2015	<a href="#">NCRC National Training Academy Presents Housing Counseling Training</a> , Las Vegas, NV (All participants will receive a <i>tuition</i> scholarship to attend these courses, no application is required.)
September 22, 2015	<a href="#">Webinar: FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program Training for Housing Counselors</a>
September 22, 2015	<a href="#">Mortgage Assistance for Nevada Homeowners</a>
September 24, 2015	<a href="#">IRS Educational Training for Exempt Organizations</a> , Austin, TX
September 25, 2015	<a href="#">Webinar: Reporting Tips for HUD 9902</a> (Originally scheduled for September 11, 2015. Those already registered for the prior date do not need to re-register.)

Visit the [Office of Housing Counseling Training webpage](#) to keep up-to-date on the latest training, events, and webinars. If you missed a webinar, visit the [Webinar Archive webpage](#) to access previously recorded sessions.

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