



According to the Federal Reserve, in 2012 the average household carried nearly \$15,266 in credit card debt.



### National Foundation for Credit Counseling

If you need help making your goal of becoming debt free a reality, reach out to a trained and certified credit counselor for assistance. To locate the NFCC Member Agency closest to you, dial (800) 388-2227, or go online to [www.NFCC.org](http://www.NFCC.org).

For assistance in Spanish, call (800) 682-9832.



NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR CREDIT COUNSELING  
*Knowing the difference can make all the difference.*



**CONSUMER CREDIT COUNSELING SERVICE**  
of BUFFALO, INC.  
*Our Business is Your Credit*

1-800-926-9685

[www.consumercreditbuffalo.org](http://www.consumercreditbuffalo.org)

# Take the Debt Free Pledge



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## Benefits to Becoming Debt Free

- You'll feel as though you got a raise. All the money that was going toward debt repayment is now yours to use as you see fit.
- With the extra money, you can begin or add to a savings account. This will allow you to establish an emergency fund, and save toward your goals for things such as a vacation, vehicle or home improvements.
- You'll have money to invest.
- You can stop *paying* interest on your debt, and instead put the money to work *earning* interest for you.
- Your credit report and credit score will improve, putting you in a better position to receive preferred rates if you need to borrow money in the future.
- Your insurance premiums could decrease since rates can be based on credit-worthiness.
- You can answer the phone and get the mail without the dread of collection notices.
- You'll be in a better financial position if you were to lose your job.
- By ridding yourself of the burden of overwhelming debt, you'll sleep better, be a better spouse, parent and employee, all because you've removed the cloud of debt that previously was your constant companion. By losing the debt, you lose the stress.

## Tips to Becoming Debt Free



### Getting Started – The Basics:

- Know where you stand. Start by getting your credit report free of charge at [www.AnnualCreditReport.com](http://www.AnnualCreditReport.com). Review it for accuracy, and dispute any errors.
- Order your credit score. It'll be fun to watch your score go up as your debt goes down.
- Set your debt-free date. Use an online calculator to see how long it will take you to become debt free at your current pace. Then, plug in your debt-free date to see what amount of money you will need to dedicate to debt repayment to meet your goal.
- Become financially organized. Put all bills, bank statements, and financial papers in one location. Commit to visiting your financial center at least once per week.
- Create a cash-flow calendar by writing down the date of each paycheck and the bills that are due to be paid out of that check.
- Set up automatic bill pay so that you're never late paying a bill.



### Turning Your Goals into a Reality:

- Find hidden money in your budget by tracking your spending for 30 days.
- Create a realistic spending plan which includes all living expenses, debt obligations and money for emergencies.
- Involve the entire family in decisions so that everyone is pulling in the same direction.
- If you've dug a deep financial hole, stop digging. Tighten the budget belt by omitting or reducing any optional spending.
- Remove all credit cards from your wallet. More plastic equals more temptation.
- Stop charging and begin paying with cash or a debit card.
- Get a part-time job and dedicate all earned income to debt repayment.
- Take the Debt Free Pledge! Reach out today to an NFCC Member Agency near you to begin your journey toward financial freedom.

