



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Take Charge America?

Founded in 1987, Take Charge America, Inc. is a national nonprofit agency offering financial education and counseling services including credit counseling, debt management, student loan counseling, housing counseling and bankruptcy counseling. It has helped more than 1.6 million consumers nationwide manage their personal finances and debts.

Is Take Charge America held to any industry or best practice standards?

Take Charge America is a member of the Association of Independent Consumer Credit Counseling Agencies, a national membership organization established to promote quality and consistent delivery of credit counseling services.

Housing counseling services are approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Bankruptcy counseling services are approved by the Executive Office for United States Trustees to provide bankruptcy counseling and debtor education courses.

Take Charge America credit counselors are required to complete 240-280 hours of training in consumer debt management, accredited by Rio Salado College in Phoenix, in order to become a nationally certified credit counselor. Certification is provided by the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education.

Additionally, Take Charge America maintains an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau serving Central, Northern and Western Arizona.

Is there a fee to talk to a Take Charge America counselor?

The initial credit counseling session is free. Consumers who choose to move forward with a debt management plan will typically have a one-time set-up fee and a modest monthly fee that is determined by their state of residency.

The initial student loan consultation is free. Borrowers who choose to move forward with a comprehensive student loan assessment are charged a modest fee.

Foreclosure prevention and homebuyer education services are provided free of charge. Reverse mortgage counseling may require a fee, depending on the state of residency. Back to Work counseling requires a \$100 fee.

For bankruptcy counseling, single and joint filers pay a \$39 fee for an online course.

What is Take Charge America's relationship with creditors?

Take Charge America teams with major creditors nationwide to help consumers solve debt challenges. When a credit company identifies clients who cannot be served adequately through an internal repayment program, it refers them to Take Charge America for a comprehensive assessment.

What makes Take Charge America stand out among competitors?

Founded in 1987, Take Charge America is one of the nation's leading credit counseling and debt management agencies. It has earned an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau (BBB) serving Central, Northern and Western Arizona, and received a BBB Business Ethics Award recognizing ethical business practices and integrity in the marketplace. The company has also earned a number of other accolades for its service, employee relations practices and dedication to financial education.

What is the Take Charge America Institute?

The Take Charge America Institute for Consumer Financial Education and Research (TCAI) was created in 2003 through an endowment from Take Charge America. Located at the University of Arizona, TCAI's mission is to create research-based educational outreach programs to improve financial literacy and help consumers make informed financial choices in today's complex markets.

TCAI's Take Charge Today program provides middle and high school teachers nationwide with free personal finance curriculum and training. Take Charge America helped establish Take Charge Today in 2001, and has remained committed to supporting the program ever since. For more information on TCAI and Take Charge Today, visit www.tcainstitute.org.

###