

Get \$SMART Wausau

C O A L I T I O N

"Educating people to make smart money choices."

Q Who can help me with managing my debts when I'm overwhelmed?

A When you need assistance with managing your debts, there are reputable and disreputable credit counseling agencies. A reputable credit counselor will help you create a budget and teach you money management skills. If you decide to enter into a Debt Management Plan with a credit counseling organization the following questions from the Federal Trade Commission will help you decide if this is the kind of organization you want to work with.

- What services do you offer?
- Will you help me develop a plan for avoiding problems in the future?
- What are your fees? Are they set-up and/or monthly fees?
- What if I can't afford to pay your fees?
- Will I have a written agreement or contract with you?
- Are you licensed to offer your services in Wisconsin?
- What are the qualifications of your counselors? Are they accredited or certified by an outside organization?
- What assurances do I have that information about me (including my address, phone number and financial information) will be kept confidential and secure?
- How are your employees compensated? Are they paid more if I sign up for certain services, if I pay a fee, or if I make a contribution to your organization?

Catholic Charities has helped people throughout central Wisconsin manage their finances and debts since 1988. Visit their website, www.catholiccharitieslax.org or call them at 715-849-3311. The Department of Financial Institutions, Office of Consumer Affairs, www.wdfi.org or 800-452-3328, will give you a list of additional agencies licensed in Wisconsin.

Visit www.getsmartwausau.org for information on free or low-cost local programs to help you make smart money choices.