

The Problem – Student loan debt is a 1.7 trillion dollar problem casting a long shadow over the economy, delaying home purchases, crimping consumer spending, causing divorces and delaying retirement. It has impacted the affordability of the American dream. About 10.8 million borrowers are in default on their loans, damaging their ability to rent apartments, buy cars and even get or maintain jobs. Last year 70% of college seniors graduated with student debt. Nearly 78% of employees with high financial stress say that they are distracted by that stress at work.

By almost every measure, the student debt crisis has hit borrowers of color especially hard. Nearly 85% of black bachelor's degree recipients carry student debt, compared with 69% of white bachelor's degree recipients, according to the Center for Responsible Lending, a non-profit in Durham, N.C. The average white student loan borrower owes around \$30,000; the average black borrower owes closer to \$34,000. White borrowers pay down their education debt at a rate of 10% a year, compared with 4% for black borrowers.

According to a survey conducted by StudentDebtCrisis.org, 33% of federal student loan borrowers were having difficulty making their payments before COVID-19; and a staggering 46% of borrowers expect to be challenged to make payments after federal relief ends on December 31, 2020. Even before the pandemic, according to the Center for Microeconomic Data, more borrowers were delinquent on their student loan payments than mortgages, credit cards, or auto loans payments.

If you or your children are one of the millions of former students facing massive amounts of student loan debt, there are a wide variety of federal and private programs available to help them, including Public Service Loan Forgiveness (a loan forgiveness program for City and State employees). The Government does offer help but cannot be expected to solve this challenge alone as the assistance process has proved difficult, confusing, time consuming and the success rate is very poor. As a result, NYSCCA, is helping their members with one of the biggest financial hurdles facing union members today.

The Need is There - There is a need for a knowledgeable guiding hand to assist student loan borrowers and their families in avoiding potential pitfalls and realizing the greatest benefit of achieving lower monthly payments and loan forgiveness. In many cases, the best choice is to speak with a Student Loan Counselors. We are providing a new member benefit that includes trained Student Loan Counselors.

NEW MEMBER BENEFIT - We will provide you with Student Loan Counselors that have the tools to work with you as well as your spouses and children to review your situational goals, educate you on the options available, and aid you in potentially, immediately, lowering your monthly loan payments and eventually achieving tax free loan forgiveness.

The program objective is to maximize your chances of success in immediately lowering monthly loan payments and achieving tax free loan forgiveness. Counselors we will guide you through the entire process, track your progress and help you re-certify annually.

Who is Eligible - Most full-time union members with Parent Plus Loans and potentially their children.

How does the program work - Through live programs, webinars and one on one consultations the National Student Debt Forgiveness Center will counsel you, your spouse and your children regarding student loan issues. This includes both government and private loan issues. You will have access to assistance and advice in connection with the various student loan assistance programs.

- We will help you determine eligibility for the Payment Reduction Programs and determine which program works best. The counselor will consider income, family size and tax issues.
- We will also help you determine eligibility for Public Service Loan Forgiveness Programs.
- You will then receive an action plan including the student debt repayment options that work best for you.

Stronger Together - The Federal Government has a stake in educating the citizens of the United States to enable the country to remain competitive. Despite the commitment to education, Federal Student loans are constantly evolving and changing. With the right advice, solutions can be found thus making this a very valuable benefit.

As we all navigate the impact of COVID-19 on the U.S. economy, it's critical to prioritize financial wellness for union members. Student debt is one of those issues that plague union members. By providing an impactful student loan benefit and other financial wellness tools, we can further improve the overall financial wellbeing of our members.