

MONEY SENSE

Genesis
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INC.

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NEW BEGINNINGS, DEBT FREE

The Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act

If you or someone you know has been called to active duty in the military, the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act of 1940 may help. The law protects reserve component service members from many legal and money problems associated with being called to active duty. Service members may qualify for:

- **Reduced interest rates on mortgage payments and credit card debt.**

Under the SSCRA, a service member may request an interest cap of 6% on credit cards, mortgages, car loans and other debts (excluding student loans) for the duration of active service. The act applies to all debts incurred before active duty. Service members must submit a request for rate reduction in writing as it does not happen automatically. Evidence that military obligations have materially affected the ability to fulfill financial obligations must be provided. This can include proof of movement to active duty and documentation of the difference in military and civilian pay. If you are currently enrolled in our debt management program please contact one of our counselors for help at 1-800-460-8641.

- **Protection from eviction if your rent is \$1,200 or less.**

The SSCRA provides protection for dependants should they face eviction while a service member is on active duty. The act only applies if the service member's rent is \$1200 or less. If eviction does occur, courts may grant an extended period of stay providing there is evidence that a service member's duties have materially affected their ability to pay rent in a timely manner. This is typically granted for 3 months or what the judge determines as "just" order. Service members may also terminate a lease without penalty, which was signed before active duty. There must be written notice of termination to the landlord after entry on active duty or receipt of orders for active duty.

- **Delay of all civil court actions, such as bankruptcy, foreclosure or divorce proceedings.**

The SSCRA allows service members to request a stay or postponement in civil proceedings if military responsibilities prevent proper representation in court. The provision only applies to civil lawsuits, paternity suits, child custody suits, and

bankruptcy debtor/creditor meetings.

We hope this information is helpful to you or someone you know who has been called to active service. This article is a brief summary of several provisions covered by the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act of 1940 and is not meant for the purpose of legal advice. Please contact your unit's legal assistance office for more information.

Dollar Saver\$:

- Have "meatless days"- Opt for lots of veggies instead.
- Ask your salon if it has a training night. You'll pay less for the same quality of cut when done by a hair-dresser-in-training (who is supervised by senior staff).
- When you go grocery shopping, stock up on inexpensive soups, frozen meals and snacks you can keep at work to avoid the temptation of fast food.
- If you really like a product, ask to be put on their free sample list and to receive coupons when available.

Payment Address

Genesis Financial Management
P.O Box 758602
Baltimore, MD 21275-8602

Are you using this address?

If you make your monthly payments by Money Order, please be sure you are sending them to this address. Our previous lockbox address will no longer be in service after July 1 of this year. You can ensure your payments always get to us in a timely manner by using our new address



Credit Fact:

Over 500,000 people (and growing!) are victims of identity theft each year.

The average victim spends 30+ hours trying to correct the problem.

The most common type of theft is credit card theft.

Learn how to protect yourself. Visit www.ftc.gov or www.bankrate.com

To find out how you can obtain a free credit report, visit Annualcreditreport.com or call 877-322-8228

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One Client's Story of Success...

For Penny Ryan and her husband, debt was a roadblock to their dreams. It was preventing them from saving money and even kept them from attending their daughter's wedding. They had declared bankruptcy once before but found themselves struggling with it again and did not want to go back down the same road.

Then they saw an ad for Genesis, and in 2003 they started a debt management program. At that time they had 6 creditors and over \$5700 in debt.

Today they have three creditors left and less than half of their original debt. They are on track to be debt free within a year. Their determination has paid off.

Penny attributes their success to the structured nature of the DMP and the automatic withdrawals for payments. She also compliments the Genesis counselors who have shown care and understanding in addressing all of her questions and ensuring she is comfortable with the program.

And her goals for the future?: To "pay herself first." To save money that can be used to travel and visit family. And to really pay attention to where money is going because, as she advises "A lot of good things can come from managing your money well."

We offer our thanks to Penny and Michael Ryan for allowing us to share their story. If you have a success story you'd like to share, please let us know. With your permission, we may include your story in a future issue

Money Smart Topic of the Month: Free Credit Reports

Under the new Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act (FACT Act) consumers can request and obtain a free credit report once every 12 months from each of the three nationwide consumer credit reporting companies. Up until now, in most states, you had to pay a fee for your report unless you met certain criteria.

Eligibility for an annual

free credit report is determined by your state of residence based on the rollout schedule set by federal law. To find out when you can obtain yours, visit "Annualcreditreport.com" or call 877-322-8228.

Your credit report contains information on where you live, how you pay your bills, and whether you've been sued, arrested, or filed

for bankruptcy. Nationwide consumer reporting companies sell the information in your report to creditors, insurers, employers, and other businesses that use it to evaluate your applications for credit, insurance, employment, or home rental.

We recommend that you review your credit report at least annually to ensure that it accurately reflects your bill-paying history

A New Procedure for Returned Payments

Genesis has a new procedure for handling payments that have nowhere to go.

In the past, if a creditor returned a payment to us, either because they were paid in full or because we didn't have accurate information for them, we would attempt to contact you in an effort to update our informa-

tion and, if we did not receive a response, we would issue a refund check to you.

From now on, we will still attempt to contact you when funds are returned, in an effort to reissue the payment to the same creditor. If we are not successful in reaching you, though, we will roll the funds in ques-

tion over to your other creditors.

By doing this, we can ensure that even while we are trying to resolve an issue with one creditor, we are keeping you on track-or ahead of the game- with your other creditors so that you can be debt free as quickly as possible.

Visit Us On The Web At: www.genesisfinancialmanagement.com