



## Finding a Good Financial Counselor

*courtesy of AICCCA member Pioneer Credit Counseling*

After reviewing your financial situation you have come to the decision that credit counseling may be the right choice for you.

The problem now is that there are so many to choose from how do you know if they are a reputable company. Here are a few considerations that you can use to ensure that you are choosing the right counselor for you.

Start off by asking what fees will be charged. This can all depend on what type of organization it is. Non-profit agencies typically offer smaller fees and their purpose is to help individuals over making money.

Make sure that you are working with certified counselors. Certified counselors have dedicated themselves to provide quality service. Make sure that the company is a member of a nationally accredited organization.

You will want a thorough explanation of how their Debt Management Plan works. Here are a few questions that they should be able to answer for you.

**What is your monthly payment to them?**

**How much of it goes to your creditors and how much is dispersed if there is more than one?**

**How will they help you deal with your creditors?**

**What are your obligations to the program and what course work is involved?**

**What forms of payment do you accept?**

**What debts are not allowed through your program?**

**Are there any specific creditors that you do not work with and what can we do about those creditors that you don't work with?**

You may want to find out what they have to offer as far as programs go. Many agencies offer more than just counseling. They can offer anything from specific budgeting programs and classes, as well as, pre and post bankruptcy counseling. Some also offer Housing Counseling.

Be weary of agencies that are eager to sign you up before you have had a good consultation with them and have provided them with all of your financial information. In some cases a debt management plan may not be the right choice for you. Some companies may just want to set you up with them so they can collect monthly fees from you. It is important to find an agency that is in the business of helping you out and not themselves.

Take your time and you should find a company that is willing to help you out and help you recover from your financial strains.