

# A Better Option for Those Experiencing Financial Hardship in the Tri-Cities Area

How one credit union is making a difference in the lives of its members.

Petersburg, VA - August 3, 2016 - Despite a recovering economy, over 127,000 Virginians took out at least one payday loan in 2015, and an additional 134,000 took out a car title loan according to the State Corporation Commission. With average interest rates of over 220%, many families struggle to find alternatives to these costly financial Instruments for the hiccups of life. Peoples Advantage Federal Credit Union, a local community credit union, is looking to change that by offering products and services to educate and guide consumers to a better credit position.

Peoples Advantage fulfills its mission of enabling the underserved, unbanked, and no credit population to build and fulfill dreams by taking a unique risk-based approach to lending. "We really try to get to know the situation of each member, and guide them down a path to better financial understanding" says Vice President of Retail Sales Amanda Habansky.

One of the ways PAFCU is meeting the need is by having Certified Financial Counsellors at each branch to meet with and coach members with the goal of improving financial acuity. Working together, credit is reviewed and recommendations are made in order to meet life needs. Products such as Fresh Start Checking allow those with bruised banking relationships a chance to rebuild. Traditional lending products such as automobile and personal loans have a maximum interest rate of 18%. By comparison, many subprime and online lenders have interest rates of 25% or more.

In addition to offering competitive rates and a unique underwriting experience, Peoples Advantage regularly offers workshops to help members improve and better understand their credit. Since March of 2016, over 125 people have attended these informational events. Beginning in the fall, Peoples Advantage will be offering a new workshop on budgeting and debt.

Peoples Advantage Federal Credit Union has roots back to 1966 as Fibers Federal Credit Union. Today PAFCU has four branches in the Richmond and Tri-Cities area with membership open to anyone who lives, works, or worships in the Richmond Metropolitan Statistical Area. The main branch is located at 110 Wagner Rd in Petersburg near SRMC.

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Loan Expert and Certified Financial Counsellor Shawn Vattelana explaining the “Four C’s” that underwriters review for credit decisions at a recent workshop.