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DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS LAUNCHES *YOU CAN TACKLE YOUR DEBT*, A PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE NEW YORKERS TO GET FINANCIAL COUNSELING AT THE CITY'S FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT CENTERS

Advertisements to Run on Subway Cars and Buses, Bus Shelters, Telephone Kiosks; Video Testimonials of Real New Yorkers Featured Online

Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Jonathan Mintz today announced the launch of *You Can Tackle Your Debt*, a public awareness campaign that highlights how the City's Financial Empowerment Centers can help New Yorkers take control of their debt, deal with debt collectors, improve their credit and create budgets. The campaign, which is the fifth in DCA's "Protect Your Money" series, emphasizes personal experiences: "You can negotiate with your creditors," "You can answer your phone without worrying it's a bill collector," and "You can sleep through the night." Campaign ads will run on subway cars and buses, bus shelters and telephone kiosks. The campaign's website features video testimonials of eight New Yorkers who highlight how the free, one-on-one financial counseling at the City's Financial Empowerment Center helped them. All New Yorkers are encouraged to share their stories on DCA's social media sites using the hashtag [#YouCan](#) at [@NYCDCA](#) or by posting on DCA's [Facebook](#) page. A video about the Financial Empowerment Centers' services is also posted on [YouTube](#).

"More than half of the New Yorkers who come to the Financial Empowerment Centers come because they are struggling with debt," said DCA Commissioner Jonathan Mintz. "Too often they are afraid to answer their phones or open their mail and can't sleep at night. This campaign lets New Yorkers know that they can tackle that debt and that we're here to help them do it...that we, as a number of our clients have said, can help you 'see the light at the end of the tunnel.' We hope our message resonates with people in debt and motivates them to pick up the phone and call 311 to make an appointment at one of our Centers or to share their own [#YouCan](#) story."

The City's network of nearly 30 Financial Empowerment Centers, operated by DCA's Office of Financial Empowerment, offers free one-on-one professional financial counseling in multiple languages. Financial counselors have helped more than 17,000 New Yorkers reduce their debt by more than \$7.5 million. Operating partners include: Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corp., East River Development Alliance, Financial Clinic, Neighborhood Trust Financial Partners and Phipps Community Development Corporation.

To view all the ads and for more information about "Protect Your Money," visit [nyc.gov/ProtectYourMoney](#). New Yorkers can call 311 to make an appointment at a Financial Empowerment Center. New Yorkers can also stay informed about programs, services, events and tips on how to be an educated consumer and business owner by following DCA on Twitter at [@NYCDCA](#), visiting DCA's [Facebook](#) page or by watching DCA's videos on [YouTube](#).

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related business laws throughout New York City. Empowering consumers and businesses to ensure a fair and vibrant marketplace, DCA licenses more than 78,000 businesses in 55 different industries. Through targeted outreach, partnerships with community and trade organizations, and informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses alike about their rights and responsibilities. The DCA Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) was launched by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and the Center for Economic Opportunity at the end of 2006 as the first local government initiative in the country with the specific mission to educate, empower, and protect individuals and families with low incomes. OFE creates innovative programs, products, and services for New Yorkers so they can build assets and make the most of their financial resources. The Agency's goal is to increase access to high-quality, low-cost financial education and counseling; connect individuals to safe and affordable mainstream banking and products and services; improve access to income-boosting tax credits, savings, and other asset building opportunities; and enforce and improve consumer financial protections to safeguard financial stability. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at [nyc.gov/consumers](#).