

Key steps can help students curb credit-card debt
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At college campuses across the nation, many students are grappling with out-of-control credit-card debt that leaves them scrambling to pay their bills each month. Life SkillsSM, a new training program that aims to prevent education-loan defaults, identifies six key steps to take in taming credit-card debt:

1. Make an effort to pay off the entire balance each month.
2. Stop using your credit cards. When your balance spills over into the next month, you should put away your cards.
3. If you don't have the cash, don't buy it. It doesn't make sense to charge a sale item with your credit card, only to have to pay it back at 21-percent interest!
4. Be aware of instant credit that some department stores are offering when you open an instant credit-card account. Don't be tempted. Just say no.
5. Some credit-card companies offer "teaser" interest rates. The rates are very low initially, but within a matter of a few months, you pay high interest rates on any unpaid balance. Be wary of such "deals." Always read your credit-card statement carefully.
6. When all else fails, cancel your credit cards.

More information about curbing credit-card debt — as well as information about financial aid, completing school on time, succeeding in school and after graduation, and repaying education loans — is available through Life Skills. USA Funds[®] developed Life Skills to equip postsecondary institutions to teach their students effective time- and money-management skills.

For more credit-card tips to share with your students, and to learn more about Life Skills, contact your USA Funds debt-management consultant, Carol Buchli, at 573-341-2542; toll-free at 866-497-USAF (866-497-8723), ext. 7877; or by e-mail at cbuchli@usafunds.org.