



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & COMPTROLLER)



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Army Banking Flash Report BANK AND CREDIT UNION LIAISON OFFICERS (BLO/CULO) DoDFMR Volume 5, Chapter 34

We have addressed many issues and inquiries in the on-base financial institutions over the last Quarter. We are actively addressing the challenges installations are facing as a result of BRAC decisions and Joint Basing. Our collective efforts are for two reasons; to provide the best financial products and services to our Service Members and their families and to protect their consumer interests. Our goal is to ensure we have open communication with you the bank and credit union liaison officers, banks, credit unions, trade associations, DoD Bank and Credit Union Program Office, and MWR. This will ensure we can appropriately and immediately resolve any issue related to banking and financial education and training. Please continue to be vigilant in your respective role, update agreements, perform your required reviews and updates and finally, contact us at any time for assistance. Thank you!

Commander's Note Colonel Brown, Commander United States Army Financial Management Command and Command Sergeant Major Green

UPDATES

Here is an update on consumer related issues and situations affecting DoD banking policies. BLUF: Financial products and services should be provided only by or through the on-base financial institutions.

1. The implementation of a fixed fee for interchange using debit cards may reduce the revenue at banks and credit unions. This may change the products and services they offer. Make contact with the local branch manager to see if there will be any major impact.
2. The Tyburn Group is issuing a prepaid card called the "Trust Card". Please ensure this card is not issued or specifically advertised on-base.
3. ATMs are authorized from only the on-base bank/credit union unless a valid exception to policy is issued by the Department of Army. Please check to ensure this is the case on your base.
4. Operating Agreements must have a full update at minimum every five years. Also, you must perform an annual review of the service charges and fees. Ensure these reviews are documented and renegotiate financial services, service charges and fees, as necessary. We have found there are a lot of out of date or non-existent agreements.
5. We have had numerous requests for an exception to policy to the "one bank, one credit union" rule. The Army will

review and evaluate each request but the rule ensures the best service to Soldiers and families.

6. The on-base banks and credit unions offer small dollar, low cost alternatives to payday loans. Ensure you understand their available programs and share this information with Commanders, financial counselors and command financial specialists.

7. There are Army units that have operational financial support requirements. Where appropriate, assist these units with obtaining an agreement with the on-base FIs to supply them with physical currency to carry out their missions.

BANK/CREDIT UNION OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The Army Bank of the Year Award:

Fort Sill National Bank

The Army Credit Union of the Year Award:

Fort Sill Federal Credit Union

Fort Sill, OK

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

FINANCIAL COUNSELORS

Financial counselors on-base provide financial counseling assistance to Service Members and their families. These counselors are part of Army Community Services under the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command (FMWRC). They are responsible for financial education and training and they can identify the major financial challenges facing the Soldiers and Family Members. This information then can drive the types of financial education and training. I recommend a meeting with the on-base financial counselor and link him/her with the branch manager at the on-base FI and develop an overall training plan that will enable the Army to maximize all financial resources to educate, prepare and protect our Soldiers, Family Members and civilians. Remember this is a Garrison Commander's program.

Don't forget to register and attend the annual Credit Union (August 21-24, 2011, New York, NY) and Bank (September 8-11, 2011, White Sulphur Springs, WV) conference!

If a Soldier or Family Members does not qualify for a loan but needs immediate financial assistance, ensure your on-base FI refers them to the ACS financial counselor and talk to them about Army Emergency Relief!

OFFICE OF SERVICE MEMBER AFFAIRS

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Office of Service Member Affairs (OSMA) will officially begin operations on 21 July 2011. Their official responsibilities are to "educate and empower service members and their families to make better informed decisions regarding consumer financial products and services," "monitor complaints by service members and their families and responses to those complaints by the Bureau or other appropriate Federal or State agency," and "coordinate efforts among Federal and State agencies...regarding consumer protection measures relating to consumer financial products and services offered to, or used by, service members and their families." This new office, led by Ms. Holly Petraeus, has done some outreach and they are addressing issues such as mortgage disclosure reform, military spouse employment and financial education. OSMA will also handle and respond to consumer complaints. Additionally, they are interested in the efforts of the on-base financial institutions. We will continue to coordinate with the OSMA and jointly work any issues.

ADVERTISEMENTS, SPONSORSHIPS AND SOLICITATIONS

Financial education and training is provided during Basic Training, Advanced Individual Training and at the first duty station. Additionally, on-base financial institutions are mandated to provide free education and materials at the discretion of the Commander. Although we have all these resources in place there are still organizations that want to provide these services. Ensure you keep in mind that under no circumstances shall commercial agents, including loan, finance, insurance, or investment companies be used for this purpose; non-government, non-commercial organizations (educational foundations) must be approved by a Presidentially Appointed, Senate Confirmed civilian within the Department of Army.

FMWRC Corporate Sponsorships provided training to their on-base sponsorship coordinators on the rules and regulations of off base entities sponsoring MWR events. Remember they can sponsor events but they can not hand out or display competitive materials that compete with the products and services of the on-base financial institutions. Additionally, they can not obtain personal information without written permission from each attendant; at minimum an affirmative "opt-in" check box is appropriate during raffles/drawings. I recommend you make contact with your local sponsorship coordinator and review the list of events and sponsors and request a review of agreements and materials to ensure compliance.

Unauthorized Financial resources Housing Offices: In the last year we have received requests to evaluate educational materials or requests for services from the financial counselors and housing offices. This demonstrates the communication between Army agencies is improving. If you see something and you have questions whether or not it violates DoD regulations please immediately contact the Army Banking Officer for assistance or elevation up to the DoD Bank and Credit Union Office for a policy decision.

HAIL & FAREWELL

We bid farewell to the outgoing Army Banking Officer, MAJ Marocco Roberts. He served in the position with dedication and professionalism, we wish him well on his next assignment.

Congratulations to CPT John Schulke the incoming Army Banking Officer. We wish him success in his position.

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