



U.S. Department of Justice

Executive Office for United States Trustees

PRESS RELEASE

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**U.S. TRUSTEE PROGRAM BEGINS APPROVAL PROCESS FOR
BUDGET AND CREDIT COUNSELING AGENCIES,
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTIONAL COURSES**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The United States Trustee Program (“Program”) announced today that on July 5, 2005, it will begin accepting applications for approval as a budget and credit counseling agency or provider of a financial management instructional course for bankruptcy filers, under the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act (“BAPCPA”) of 2005.

The application forms and related materials are posted on the Program’s web site at www.usdoj.gov/ust. For additional information, applicants may contact the Program at (202) 514-4100.

Under BAPCPA, which was enacted on April 20, 2005, all individual debtors who file bankruptcy on or after October 17, 2005, must undergo credit counseling within six months before they file bankruptcy and must complete a financial management instructional course after they file bankruptcy. With certain exceptions, an individual is not eligible to file bankruptcy without completing credit counseling, and is not eligible to receive a bankruptcy discharge without completing a financial management instructional course.

BAPCPA directs the U.S. Trustee to approve budget and credit counseling agencies and providers of financial management instructional courses according to criteria set forth in the law. It also directs the Clerk of the Bankruptcy Court to maintain a publicly available list of U.S. Trustee-approved budget and credit counseling agencies and financial management instructional courses.

The United States Trustee Program is the component of the Justice Department that promotes integrity and efficiency in the nation’s bankruptcy system by enforcing bankruptcy laws, providing oversight of private trustees, and maintaining operational excellence. The Program has 21 regions and 95 field offices. The Program does not cover Alabama or North Carolina.

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