

# Financial Empowerment Center Counselor Training Standards

As the CFE Fund continues to expand the FEC model in local governments, maintaining high training standards is crucial to ensure the professionalism and consistency of counseling services across the country.

To support this endeavor, the CFE Fund created the FEC Training Standards, a set of required training topics all FEC Counselors must complete to be eligible to see FEC clients. The FEC Training Standards are based on findings from our [2017 evaluation of the model](#) in five localities, field best practices, and insights gleaned from partners over the last 10 years. The Standards have also been made in consultation with Professor Joyce Moy from the City University of New York (CUNY), who serves as CFE Fund's independent training evaluator.

The FEC Training Standards include:

- Context of Poverty, Cultural & Socio-Economic Factors
- Financial Content
- Counseling and Coaching Skills
- Experiential Learning
- Continuing Education
- Additional Trainings, *including Code of Ethics, model and database training, partner training, and training on localized issues such as consumer financial protection and public benefits.*

Counselors are expected to satisfy all elements of the Training Standards within 6-8 weeks, and continue to develop their skills and expertise through continuing education each year. The training topics included in the FEC Training Standards are fulfilled by a combination of local and national trainers, alongside the CFE Fund.

## Core Training

The CFE Fund has established the “Core Training,” which is made up of three Standards:

- Context of Poverty, Cultural & Socio-Economic Factors
- Financial Content
- Counseling Coaching Skills

Core Training is delivered only by approved training providers. Approved trainers satisfy all the elements in Core Training fully detailed in the following sections. These national Core Training requirements ensure that all FEC counselors are held to the same national standards and best practices in financial content and counseling and coaching skills.

FEC partners select training providers based on providers' format, cost, and availability.

**The CFE Fund invites training providers to submit their curriculum for approval and become eligible to deliver training content to FEC Counselors.**

## Applying

Providers that are interested in offering Core Training to FEC Counselors can submit their trainings for independent evaluation. The CFE Fund accepts national and local trainers, including partner organizations, training consultants, community colleges, or universities.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis through the CFE Fund’s online portal – [FEC Training Standards: Training Provider Application](#). **Applications must include all course materials** (presentations and handouts to participants) for review, as well as information on the delivery and duration of the training. Applications are reviewed and approved by CFE Fund’s training consultant.

Below are the individual topics that must be covered in each Training Standard, as well as a recommendation on how many hours are needed to cover each topic:

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## Context of Poverty, Cultural & Socio-Economic Factors

*Provide introduction for counselors about the local and broader context in which their work is being conducted.*

- ☐ Create awareness of socio-economic factors that cause and perpetuate poverty; the high cost of poverty – economic, social and psychological impact; how financial education and empowerment of the poor and working poor breaks the cycle of poverty.
- ☐ Provide demographic/linguistic/cultural information about specific target populations where applicable.

## Financial Content

### I. Money Management & Budgeting

- ☐ **Assessment** – Understand and implement assessment of client's current financial situation, the following tools and the purpose and use of the tool
  - Income & expense statement to understand the income received, and the current outstanding expenses in preparation for budgeting
  - Financial statement /balance sheet/net worth to understand the client's net worth or wealth; clearly stating amount of aggregate debt (liabilities)
  - Debt analysis - itemize and prioritize debt (balance, due dates, minimum payments, interest rates, late fees and penalties, defaults) to prepare for a budget
- ☐ **Budget** – Understand the purpose of a budget, and its components
  - Gross income/net income – understand the components of income
    - Salary/wages/freelance
    - Public or private cash or in-kind benefits
  - Monthly expenses – Understand hierarchy of expenses and prioritization model
    - Needs – food, shelter, basic clothing
    - Wants – not needed for basic needs
    - Debts in danger of collection or legal action
- ☐ **Spending plan** – Understand its purpose and how to integrate with budget
- ☐ **Savings plan** – Understand its purpose and how to integrate with budget
- ☐ **Investment plan** – Understand its purpose and how to integrate with budget
  - Reserve – Understand how much of a reserve fund is recommended and why, the role of the reserve in cash flow and emergency
- ☐ **Use of credit for budgeted items** – Understand the role of credit in maintaining the budget and managing cash flow
- ☐ **Goal setting** – Understand how to set goals
- ☐ **Periodic review and modification of budget** – Understand the need for review, modification as circumstances change
- ☐ **Practical Exercises Component**
  - Suggested exercises include a case study application of assessment, income and expense statement analysis, and budget creation and a personal goal setting exercise



## II. Basic Banking and Financial Transactions

- ☐ **Reasons for establishing banking** relationships – Understand the role of formal bank and financial relationships in managing finances and establishing credit
- ☐ **Documentation required to open bank accounts** – Understand the minimum government documentation required by law to establish bank accounts, and those imposed at institutions' discretion; understand what constitutes government documentation and tax identification number
- ☐ **Choosing an institution**– Understand the different types of financial institutions (commercial banks, credit unions, and savings and loans), purpose, services, and best fit for consumer; learn to compare services, fees and costs
- ☐ **Types of accounts** – Understand the purpose of each type of account, how each is used in financial management, and how to choose the right account
  - Savings – Understand the role of savings in meeting overall financial goals; reserves for unanticipated events; savings strategies
  - Checking – Understand transactional purpose of checking account, and how it interfaces with other accounts
  - Money market deposit accounts and certificates of deposit – Understand the features of account and advantages and disadvantages
- ☐ **ATM and Debit cards** – Understand features and uses; transactional use of debit cards compared with credit cards; bank account-linked debit cards; reloadable prepaid debit cards
- ☐ **Starter accounts/rebuilding banking relationships** – Learn about available starter accounts, becoming bankable, and the Bank On movement and National Account Standards
- ☐ **Consumer Reporting Agencies/ChexSystems** – Understand the ChexSystems barrier to banking relationships and how to overcome. Understand how to obtain free copies of Consumer Reporting Agency account screening reports.
- ☐ **FDIC and NCUSIF** – Understand insurance coverage for bank and credit union accounts in case of institutional failure
- ☐ **Overdrafts** – Understand what they are, how it occurs, consequences and how to avoid overdrafts
- ☐ **Alternative financial services** – Understand the costs and pitfalls compared to banking services of check cashing stores, money orders, and reloadable pre-paid debit cards
- ☐ **Simple interest, compound interest and Rule of 72** – Understand how interest is computed, and how money (and debt) grows

## III. Credit Report

- ☐ **What is credit?** – Understand that credit is a trust relationship; indicia of fiscal responsibility
- ☐ **Credit relationship** – Understand that the debtor/creditor relationship, the rights and obligations are set forth in a binding contract, and the legal and regulatory provisions
- ☐ **Role of credit in our lives** – Understand credit's impact on employment, home ownership or rental, business loans and other opportunities; understand the connection to background checks (beyond just credit for employment) – review and discuss background check and credit report consent forms



- ☐ **Real cost of using credit** – Understand how using credit can substantially increase the costs of purchases, and loans; factoring interest rates, learn specific terminology related to loans and credit
- ☐ **3 major credit reporting agencies** – Learn about Equifax, Experian, and Transunion; the information they collect, and the role they play in consumer credit evaluation
- ☐ **Obtaining free credit reports** – Understand eligibility for and how to obtain free copies of credit reports from the 3 reporting agencies
- ☐ **Credit scores and how they are calculated** – Understand the components and value of each in the calculation of the credit score
- ☐ **Types of Credit** – Understand types of credit: real estate, installment, revolving, student loans, and other types reported on credit report; role type of credit plays in credit score and standing
- ☐ **How to read the credit report** – Understand report content; what content reflects about status of credit and loan accounts, debts and other information
- ☐ **Strategies for building, maintaining and repairing credit** – Understand steps and resources to build credit, maintain credit in good standing, and how to correct errors and rebuild credit that is damaged, including: factors considered by creditors; disputing errors on credit report; removing negative outdated information
- ☐ **Consumer rights – Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)** – Learn duties imposed on creditors to report accurate information, and understand how consumers can use the FCRA to demand corrections on credit reports
- ☐ **Practical Exercises Component**
  - Suggested exercises include reviewing, analyzing, and discussing two real-life credit reports, and background check and credit report consent forms
  - Having counselors obtain their own free credit report and reviewing them, noting errors or inaccuracies, etc.

#### IV. Using Credit Wisely

- ☐ **Connection between credit and financial goals** – Understand the role of credit, how it can be leveraged, how lack of access and damaged credit can impact future goals such as home ownership, cost of credit
- ☐ **Criteria for using credit** – Understand when it is best to use credit or cash on hand
- ☐ **How to choose the right credit card** – Understand the terms and features offered, the implications of, or purpose of features and how to choose a card with the most advantageous terms available to client given the client's goals
- ☐ **Secured credit cards/credit builder cards or loans** – Understand how these forms of credit work, where to find them, and how to use them to help create new credit history or improve/rebuild damaged credit
- ☐ **Review credit card agreement** – Understand terms contained in credit card/credit agreements
- ☐ **Consumer credit card protections** – Learn terms of Credit Card Accountability Responsibility & Disclosure Act of 2009; understand provisions requiring credit card companies to provide consumers with clear and understandable forms and statements, restrictions on interest rate increases, and special protections for students and young consumers



- ☐ **Fringe lending or financing** – Learn the terms of the following, how they work, and consequences such as spiraling debt, excessive or unnecessary interest payments, overpaying for items, not contributing to building credit; understand and recommend alternative solutions
  - Payday loans
  - Informal lending
  - Income tax refund anticipation loans
  - Rent to Own
  - Pawnbrokers
  - Auto title loans
- ☐ **Identity theft** – Understand what constitutes identity theft, how it happens, what to do if victimized and how to prevent it
- ☐ **Practical Exercises Component**
  - Suggested exercises include reviewing, analyzing, and discussing at least one department store, and one mainstream credit card contract/agreement

v. **Consumer Rights – Debt Collection**

- a. *Federal rules and jurisdiction; legal and regulatory environment; the three levels (federal, state and local) of jurisdiction and how they interface*
  - ☐ **Debt collection process (overview)** – Understand the flow of the collection process from first date of late payment to collection action, lawsuit, judgment, and enforcement of judgments. Understand the effect on credit report separate and apart from collection process.
  - ☐ **Pre-litigation-** Learn and understand the steps taken by collectors before filing a lawsuit, and the basis for the rights and obligations of both creditor and debtor
  - ☐ **Impact on credit report and score** – Understand when lateness is reported to credit reporting agencies, and how it affects credit standing
  - ☐ **Who is the creditor?** – Understand whether the collector is an original or third-party collector
    - **Original creditors** – Understand who is defined as an original creditors including assignees of non-defaulted debt , laws governing original creditors' collection practices, statutes of limitations –and the pitfalls of reaffirming debt
    - **Suggested action steps for debtors in original creditor collections** – Understand how debtors should respond to collection efforts by original creditors
    - **Third party collectors** – Understand who is defined as a third party collector: Collection agencies, collection attorneys; buyers of defaulted debt –assignees of defaulted debt, and that the contractual rights and obligations between original debtor and creditor bind third party collectors, laws governing third party collection practices
    - **Federal Fair Credit Billing Act and Fair Debt Collection Practices Act** – Learn and understand the provisions of these regulations, and how to apply them to protect and negotiate for the benefit of the debtor
    - **Suggested action steps for debtors in third party collections** – Understand how debtors should respond to collection efforts by third party creditors
  - ☐ **Advanced stages of collection process**





- **Litigation: court process** – Understand how a lawsuit is filed, stages of trial, and issuance of decision or judgment by court
    - Optional: Local FEC management can decide how in-depth they want to cover the court process, e.g. summons & complaint, answer, counterclaims, motion practice, evidence production, trial, judge's decision, judgment filing and effective period of judgment. The CFE Fund suggests going into some depth so counselors understand what happens once a creditor takes a debtor into court. Knowing where a debtor is in the collection process allows them to help assess the potential actions available, as well as how much jeopardy the client faces.
  - **Post litigation – enforcement of judgment** – Understand how a court decision or judgment in favor of a creditor is recorded and enforced; understand liens, levies and garnishments – how they are obtained and work; how long they remain in effect, ability to negotiate settlement after judgment, impact on credit report
  - **Assets and income exempt from liens, levy and garnishment** – Understand which federal benefits, amount of salary and wages, pensions and other retirement funds, and limited cash assets are exempt from judgment enforcement
  - **Action steps for debtors subject to judgment enforcement** – Understand the possible options available to a judgment debtor including: vacating a judgment negotiations/settlements post judgment, paying off the judgment voluntarily or as a result of enforcement, obtaining and recording a satisfaction of judgment
    - **Assignment of judgments by judgment creditors** – Understand that creditor can assign, sell, or transfer all of part of judgment, and its implications for debtor
  - **Other key regulations and role in collection practice** – Learn and understand provisions in Fair Credit Reporting Act and Truth-in-Lending Act, and how they apply to a debtor in the collection process
  - **Distinguishing the legal process from the credit report process** – Understand that what happens in the collection process is not the same as impact on credit report and score
  - **Avoiding scams** – Understand legitimate and fraudulent debt settlement services, how they work and how to avoid being scammed
  - **Role of bankruptcy in debt collection process** – Understand when it is appropriate to consider bankruptcy, understand the consequences, impact on current debt, and credit status
- b. *State and Local Consumer Rights – Debt Collection*
- Understand specific applicable state and local rules in state and local jurisdiction *\*Most state and local laws mirror the federal laws, however there may be more stringent state or local rules that fill in gaps in the federal law. (Counselors also complete local training on consumer financial protection laws and rights before service).*



## VI. Student Loans

- ❑ **Student loan basics** – Understand the general terms of student loans, how and by whom they are issued, guidelines for eligibility, if any, and education costs qualified to be paid by loan proceeds
- ❑ **Impact on credit** – Understand the how student loan debt affects credit profile (report and score), and consequences of failure to pay including: offsets against future payments of social security, income tax refunds, garnishments without court process, etc.
- ❑ **Types of public or government student loans** – Learn about the terms, distinguish among and understand:
  - Government guaranteed and insured loans (pre-6/30/2010)
  - Federal Direct Student loans (Subsidized and unsubsidized loans)
  - Stafford loans
  - Direct Plus loans for parent
  - Direct Plus loans for graduate students
  - Direct consolidation loans
  - Perkins loans
- ❑ **Other options for financing education** – Understand other ways to finance education including: scholarships, grants, work study programs, personal or secured (non-student) loans, private student loans
- ❑ **Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program** – Understand the requirements, eligibility and process for forgiveness of public/government student loan balances
- ❑ **Perkins loans cancellation and loan balance forgiveness** – Understand requirements and eligibility for undergraduate Perkins Loan cancellation, law school Perkins Loan forgiveness, National Institute of Health Perkins Loan Forgiveness
- ❑ **Federal Agency Repayment Program** – Learn about federal agency jobs offering employees student loan repayment benefits, and their terms
- ❑ **Repayment plans based on income and balance forgiveness** – Learn about, distinguish among, and understand repayment plans that reduce monthly payments for affordability, eligibility, the process, and provide loan balance forgiveness as follows:
  - Income Based Repayment Plan (IBR) and balance forgiveness
  - Pay as You Earn (PAY) Repayment Plan and balance forgiveness
  - Income Contingent Repayment Plan (ICR)
- ❑ **Strategy for maximizing student loan repayment and forgiveness provisions** – Understand how the repayment plans can be integrated with the public service loan forgiveness or other forgiveness provisions to reduce amounts repaid overall
- ❑ **Terminology specific to student loans** – Learn definitions specifically applicable to student loans that may vary from common meaning in debtor/creditor provisions
- ❑ **Action steps for debtors in danger of delinquency** – Learn provisions and strategies to avoid or rectify a delinquency; understand how this benefits the student loan borrower
- ❑ **Action steps for debtors in default** – Learn provisions and strategies to avoid or rectify a default; understand how this benefits the student loan borrower
- ❑ **Strategies after student loan borrower has rectified delinquency or default** – Understand how to use the income-based repayment plans and forgiveness provisions to manage future and on-going student loan payments and balances





## VII. Bankruptcy

- ☐ **Bankruptcy defined** – Understand the legal definition of bankruptcy; different from accounting/financial definition
- ☐ **When considering bankruptcy is appropriate** – Understand the goal and purpose of the bankruptcy process
- ☐ **What debt is dischargeable?** – Learn about the types of debts and obligations that are discharged or canceled in bankruptcy, and what is not. Understand how this determines whether bankruptcy is appropriate for your client, including student loans, judgments, family support obligations, secured loans
- ☐ **Chapter 7** – Understand how this section of the bankruptcy law works and the process; what is discharged and the implications for the credit profile
- ☐ **Chapter 13** – Understand how this section of the bankruptcy law works and the process; what is discharged and the implications for the credit profile
- ☐ **Requirements for filing** – Learn debtor compliance before eligibility to petition for bankruptcy relief
- ☐ **Implications and impact of bankruptcy filing** – Understand how bankruptcy is represented in credit reports, and its impact on consumer credit and future prospects

## VIII. Planning for Retirement

- ☐ **Sources of retirement income** – Understand the terms, eligibility, and requirements of most common sources of retirement income including:
  - Role of social security and Medicare; eligibility for social security and Medicare; impact of age of when claiming Social Security benefits, continued employment; anticipated monthly payments
  - Pensions
  - Employment based retirement plans (401ks, 403bs) including contribution allocations and mix
  - Withdrawal strategies
    - Mandatory withdrawals of retirement funds
    - Impact of loans against retirement plan funds
  - Traditional and Roth IRAs
  - Annuities
  - Reverse mortgages – role and pitfalls
  - Resources for seniors

## IX. Future Planning and Investments

### *Optional*

- ☐ **Role of counselor** – Understand role of counselor in encouraging client awareness and exploration with qualified professionals on investment and other financial goals
- ☐ **Factors to consider in investing and planning** – Learn criteria to be considered when considering investment opportunities



- ☐ **Selected common types of investments** – Understand the significance of investments in the following and potential risks:
  - Stocks
  - Bonds
  - Mutual funds
  - Real estate
- ☐ **Choosing a financial planner** – Learn about levels of education and qualifications of financial advisors, and other criteria and considerations such as conflicts of interest, breadth of services offered, for choosing a planner aligned with client financial goals
- ☐ **Paying for higher education** – Understand available strategies and options for paying for higher education, including:
  - Types of higher education institutions
  - Proprietary schools
  - Trades/vocational training
  - Anticipating college costs
  - 529 College savings plans
  - Tax credits and deductions
- ☐ **How to start investing and future planning** – Understand and identify the issues to be considered, strategies and tools for approaching the plan integrating goal setting, assessing anticipated income and expenses, modified and updated budgets
- ☐ **Practical Exercises Component**
  - Suggested exercises include completing a personal financial profile

## X. Home Ownership and Mortgages

- ☐ **Renting vs. homeownership** – Identify and understand the pros and cons of renting vs. homeownership
- ☐ **Overview of the home purchase process** – Understand the sequence of events in the purchase process from identifying a property to closing on the property (may differ from state to state)
- ☐ **Types of property** – Understand the different forms of ownership and property characteristics and owner obligations and rights: condominium and real estate ownership; co-operative ownership
- ☐ **Financing a purchase** – Understand how to determine how much financing is needed; lending criteria; how much the borrower can afford
- ☐ **Actual costs of home purchase** – Learn about all related one-time and ongoing costs attributable to purchase and ownership
- ☐ **Types of mortgage and their advantages and disadvantages** – Learn about the terms of types of mortgages, pitfalls, and which types is most appropriate given client's goals and situation, including:
  - Fixed rate
  - Adjustable rate
  - Seller mortgage
  - Balloon mortgage
  - Interest-only mortgages



- ☐ **Applying for a mortgage** – Understand the mortgage application process, requirements, and costs
- ☐ **Evaluating a mortgage offer** – Understand the common terms of a mortgage, implications for future costs and payments
- ☐ **Value of property** – Learn how property is valued for financing, and real estate tax assessment purposes
- ☐ **Programs to help with purchase** – Learn about, and understand eligibility for, available programs that provide monetary and other support, particularly for first-time home buyers (may differ from one region to another)
- ☐ **Tax provisions for home owners** – Learn about tax provisions such as points paid for mortgage, mortgage interest, and real estate tax deductions that offset actual cost of housing
- ☐ **Predatory lenders** – Learn about fraudulent and predatory lending tactics and common scams, how to avoid, and what to do if victimized
- ☐ **Avoiding foreclosure** – Learn preventative measures to avoid foreclosure due to failure to pay or violation of mortgage contract provisions
- ☐ **Consumer protections “Ability to Repay Rule”** – Understand the provisions of law that provide protection, opportunity to resolve or delay mortgage foreclosure for the homeowner: specifically the mortgage modification amendments to Regulation X of Real Estate Settlement Act, Regulation Z and regulation of mortgage service providers

## XI. Insurance and Public Benefits

*\*Optional; Counselors also complete local training on public benefits before service*

- ☐ **What is insurance?** – Understand that it is a risk management tool, and how it works
- ☐ **Health insurance terminology** – Learn common terminology used in health insurance, and understand how they apply, including: premium, deductible, co-insurance, co-payments, reasonably necessary costs
- ☐ **Health insurance under the Affordable Care Act** – Learn about and understand the application of provisions:
  - Patient protections
  - Essential benefits – required to be provided
  - Basic Costs – constitutes basic costs covered under health insurance policies
  - Obtaining health insurance
- ☐ **Types of health insurance coverage** – Identify different types of health insurance plans, understand features and coverage, and how they work
  - Indemnity plans
  - Managed care (HMOs, PPO, POS, EPO)
  - Subsidized plans – learn about plans for children, families, and low-income individuals
- ☐ **Life Insurance** – Understand the differences between permanent and term life insurance, features and factors to consider in choosing; distinguish among the different types of permanent, and term life insurance, and understand purpose and applications of each type



- ☐ **Cash-based and insurance-based public benefits** – Learn about the types of cash-based and insurance-based public benefits, eligibility and requirements including: cash assistance, SSI, SSDI, RSI
- ☐ **Medicare and Medicaid** – Understand eligibility requirements, basic features of each

## Counseling and Coaching Skills

### I. Counseling and Coaching Techniques

- ☐ **Counseling compared with coaching** – Understand the different roles and skills applied to work with clients as counselor and/or coach, that roles may evolve or may alternate based on issues addressed
- ☐ **Counseling skills: basic skills** – Understand the elements of the skill, master application of skills to establish rapport, elicit information, engage and empower clients; and how they form the basis for coaching, including:
  - Attending
  - Asking the right questions
  - Paraphrasing
  - Summarizing
  - Reflecting
  - Diffusion
- ☐ **Coaching skills** – Understand elements of basic coaching skills and application including:
  - Client focus
  - Listening
  - Challenging constructively
  - Support and guidance
  - Accountability
- ☐ **Cultural responsiveness** – Raise awareness of and sensitivity to differences in communication styles, interactions and expectations due to differences in culture, religion, experience, or community perceptions, including verbal and physical cues such as eye contact, smiling, head nodding, and physical touching such as handshakes or hugs. Encourage learning about appropriate population(s) to develop effective and appropriate responses
- ☐ **Avoiding judgment or appearance of judgment** – Promote self-awareness of behaviors that may indicate judgment of client
- ☐ **Privacy** – Understand that privacy is the right of the client to restrict access to information, and how that works in the counselor/coach context
- ☐ **Confidentiality** – Understand that confidentiality refers to how the client information will be protected, and how that works in the counselor/coach context; understand the circumstances under which information may be shared such as with internal staff or explicit written consent of client
- ☐ **Ethical behavior** – Understand the basic rules guiding a counselor/coach's conduct, including those set forth in the FEC Codes of Ethics and Conduct; and what constitutes a violation of the codes



- ❑ **Role of the supervisor** – Understand the role of the counselor/coach supervisor, including providing guidance, support, and professional development opportunities on financial content and counseling/coaching skills
- ❑ **Appropriate referrals** – Understand the boundaries of financial counseling/coaching, and when referral to internal/or external experts or professionals are necessary and appropriate (such as referral to an attorney, law enforcement, mental health provider)
- ❑ **Practical Exercises Component**
  - This training ideally should occur after the counselor has had substantial exposure to the financial content, to allow them to apply the content while practicing the counseling and coaching skills
  - Suggested exercises include guided role plays based on real-life scenarios with a client that require the counselor to practice different types of skills

## II. Negotiations

- ❑ **What is negotiation?** – Understand the characteristics of negotiations, and the intended goal
- ❑ **What is effective negotiation?** – Understand what is required for an acceptable outcome to a negotiation
- ❑ **Steps to successful negotiation** – Understand the components needed, and how they are applied to enhance the likelihood of success, including:
  - Preparation
  - Negotiating from position of strength
  - Strategies and tactics
  - Applications of strategies and tactics by creditors and debtors
  - Leveraging consumer protection knowledge
  - Communicating with the opposition
  - Assessing and evaluating an offer of settlement
  - Summarizing and memorializing agreement
  - Deliver as agreed
- ❑ **Practical Exercises Component**
  - It is recommended that practical exercises related to negotiation take place after counselor has been exposed to and had an opportunity to apply their counseling and coaching skills
  - Suggested activities include: 1) roleplaying where the counselor demonstrates the application of their counseling and coaching skills and negotiates on behalf of the client using the negotiation skills learned, 2) roleplaying where the counselor coaches the client on how to negotiate directly, 3) opportunities for the counselor to role play from the perspective of a creditor or debt collector.

### Recommended Hours Per Training Standard:

*Please note that Core Training curriculums that take no more than 2-4 weeks are ideal for FEC Counselors as Counselors aim to complete all of the Training Standards required to see FEC clients in a total of 6-8 weeks.*

Section A - Context of Poverty (30-45 minutes)

Section B - Financial Content (total of 26-27 hours)

- Topic I. Money Management Time: 2.0 hours plus 45 minutes to 1 hour for case study application
- Topic II. Basic Banking: 1.5 hours
- Topic III. Credit Report: 2.5 hours plus 30 minutes of exercises
- Topic IV. Using Credit Wisely: 2.5 hours plus 30 minutes of exercises
- Topic V. Consumer Rights: 3 hours + 1 hour of State and Local consumer rights
- Topic VI. Student Loans: 3 hours
- Topic VII. Bankruptcy: 1.5 hours
- Topic VIII. Planning for Retirement: 1 hour
- Topic IX: Future planning and investments: 1.5 hours
- Topic X. Home ownership and mortgages: 2.5 hours
- Topic XI. Insurance and Public Benefits: 2.5 hours

Section C - Coaching and Counseling Skills: (5-6 hours)

**Questions? Please contact Madeline Murnane ([mmurnane@cfefund.org](mailto:mmurnane@cfefund.org)).**