

A Quarterly Publication for Members of Liberty Savings Federal Credit Union // Winter 2025

LIBERTY HORIZONS

CONSOLIDATE DEBT DOWN TO ONE & DONE

Turn multiple bill payments into one
Up to 2% off your lowest qualifying rate*

Find out more: www.LSFCU.org/Consolidate



Stressing about personal finance is normal—in fact, a recent Forbes analysis cites nearly half of Americans consider money a major stressor in their lives. What’s even more surprising is that many people spend more when they’re stressed, putting themselves even further into debt. It’s a behavior some media outlets are calling “doom spending,” and it’s on the rise. We’re tackling those challenges head on with our member-only Debt Consolidation program.

If you’re seeking financial stress relief, you don’t have to take on the world—there are a few simple steps you can take right now. Negotiating new rates and lowering monthly payments with current lenders are common tactics, but we have a much easier solution: Liberty Savings Debt Consolidation.

Consolidating debt allows you to focus on making one monthly payment instead of juggling several bills. And once your debt becomes centralized—and much less daunting on the whole—you can work with a financial adviser to hopefully lower the Annual Percentage Rate (APR) on your total balance.

When you consolidate your debt with us, you can earn up to 2% off your lowest qualifying rate.* So you’ll not only be able to simplify your debt, but also pay it down faster, as you’ll be saving money in the long run.

Getting started couldn’t be easier. Simply call one of our dedicated Lending Specialists at (201) 659-3900, option 4. Don’t forget to take advantage of the LibertyLink App. There are built-in tools to help you assess your spending habits and start taking charge even before you speak with us. As always, feel free to visit us at your local branch, or get started on your own by applying for free through LibertyLink Online.



Join us in welcoming Jenny Javier – North Hudson’s new Branch Manager!

Ms. Javier (pictured right) brings over 23 years of banking and financial experience to serve our members. She is Dominican-born, multilingual, enjoys spending time with family and friends and traveling. Every community we serve is truly unique. Ms. Javier will play an important role in guiding the future vision of our North Hudson service model. Please stop in and say hello! We are also proud to announce that our current North Hudson Branch Manager, Linda Gallardo (pictured left), will be stepping into a newly created Human Resources role. Ms. Gallardo sees this new role as an opportunity to streamline processes, focus on how our staff is serving members, and help advance our ever-changing internal culture.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

My Fellow Members,

Happy New Year to everyone across Hudson County! From the tip of North Bergen down to Bayonne, our neck of the woods is filled with new and exciting opportunities to come together and get ahead.

The start of a new year is an inspiring time, but it is also normal to feel a little uncertainty. This is the perfect time to assess progress or completion of last year's goals; and chart a new path forward. Our Representatives are here to help you with a personalized plan to reach that next milestone of greater savings, a new home or organizing finances.

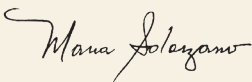
We've already set some aggressive goals for ourselves to serve our members and the community in exciting new ways. Thanks to strong support from our community partners, you'll be seeing a greater Liberty Savings presence around town, spreading the word about our mission and benefits. We're spearheading new initiatives into advancing technologies – like our partnership with Sparrow. Sparrow is a leading platform that helps members streamline the entire student loan process. Students will now be able to secure loans for tuition. Don't be surprised if you see some new in-branch processes as we advance our member experience. When you're in the branch or on the phone, please remember to ask our Representatives what's new. We're always developing new strategies to support our growing member base.

Please be sure to talk with us about our Debt Consolidation Lending Program. From January 1st through March 31st, we're offering up to 2%* off your lowest qualifying rate. Our Consolidation Program may help you bring down your total monthly payment on multiple loans. The savings you earn can be directed toward whatever you see fit, including your New Year's resolutions. More financial freedom and less stress always go hand in hand.

I know that thousands of Hudson County students are just months away from a huge milestone: graduation. Many are also in the process of applying to universities, junior colleges, and trade schools. As a credit union founded by educators, we take this achievement seriously. We are also uniquely aware of the financial stresses that come with this new chapter. To that end, we are proud to announce that our annual scholarship program is back! We'll be awarding one graduating student from every Hudson County high school a \$500 scholarship. If you or someone you know is a proud member of the Class of 2025, encourage them to apply. Get all the details on to the right of my letter.

Whatever opportunities you choose to seize in 2025, know that our team is here to offer support. Here's to a successful, productive, and joy-filled New Year!

Sincerely,



Maria Solorzano
President/CEO

Holiday Closing Reminders

All Liberty Savings branches will be closed:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: Monday, January 20th
- Presidents' Day: Monday, February 17th
- Memorial Day: Monday, May 26th



Don't miss our top three housing market predictions for 2025

We don't have a housing market crystal ball, but we do have decades of experience helping thousands of Hudson County members buy and sell homes. Many times, we help our members move into their first home. Here's what we see on the horizon:

Declining interest rates should continue to decrease

The Federal Reserve (a.k.a. the Fed) lowered the federal funds rate in November, and mortgage rates should continue going down in response to that cut. And let's not

forget that some mortgage rates already fell a bit at the end of 2024. Even though we may be a long way from rates returning to the 2–3% range we saw at the end of 2021, it's still a good sign for buyers to see rates trending in the right direction.

Available inventory will grow slowly as FOMO continues to vanish

When it comes to the housing inventory for 2025, things are currently looking up! Even though inventory is increasing slowly, it's still nowhere close to pre-COVID levels. While we won't predict any type of major price correction yet, this is still a very positive sign because it means the market is getting healthier overall.

Number of home sales will be on the rise

You heard it here first. We're seeing all the signs of the housing market becoming unstuck. We've already seen sales rising at the end of 2024. It was the first year-over-year gain in sales in three years. With lower interest rates, slightly more inventory, positive changes in the economy including job growth, we could be seeing the market balance out in that sweet spot between a buyer's and a seller's market.

Even though the housing market is always changing and adapting, the one constant that we know is that if your finances are in good shape and you're ready to make a move, there's never a bad time to talk with us about a pre-approval and buying strategy.



Our Scholarship Program is back! We're awarding \$500 to one high school senior from every Hudson County High School. Apply by April 30, 2025.

High school seniors are gearing up for graduation, and our annual Scholarship Program is back to help. We're giving one student from each Hudson County high school \$500 to further their education. To be eligible, a student must be a Liberty Savings Member, graduating this year, and plan on continuing their education at a 4-year college, community college or technical school.

To apply, download the application online at: www.LSFCU.org/Scholarships. Submit your completed application and official transcripts to: Jim Miller, Jr., Marketing, Community & Business Development Manager, (201) 659-3900 Ext. 7045 or jmillerjr@lsfcu.org.

Have you checked your credit score recently?

If you're banking with the LibertyLink App, you can check your credit score for free! Good credit will help you borrow money for just about anything at better rates - mortgages, auto loans, personal loans, student loans and more. You might even get better rates on simple things - like your monthly mobile phone payment. Don't forget to check in. If you're score is below 690, talk to us about how to bump it up.



There's nothing like that bonus points feeling you get just for spending with the right card

Once you start earning and redeeming with a Liberty Savings Platinum Visa Rewards Card, you'll never look back. Earn points when you fill up the tank, swing by the grocery store, check out of your vacation hotel room, and everywhere in between. Every purchase qualifies for rewards! Plus, our 24/7 monitoring and zero-liability fraud policy protects you from hoaxes, cons and scams.

A Visa Rewards Card gives you the power to shop with confidence knowing that you've got a great rate. According to Federal Reserve data, the average credit card interest rate in 2024 was 24.6%. With us, you'll enjoy rates as low as 10.75%, and never higher than 18%.

Need to transfer your existing credit card balance? No problem. We offer fee-free balance transfer options, making it easier than ever to free yourself from high-rate credit card balances and start saving more every month.

Get started online today at www.LSFCU.org/Visa, visit any branch or call (201) 659-3900 Ext. 4.



Free balance transfers from your other credit cards

Points on every purchase

Pay low interest rates



Score some free money with a hot new side hustle

It's no surprise that get-rich-quick schemes are universally bunk. But that doesn't mean there aren't ways to make a lot of extra cash with only a little effort. Especially if you've got an internet connection. Here are some great ways to accrue supplemental income online this year:

Take Online Surveys: Unglamorous but true: companies will pay you to take surveys. Aggregators like Survey Junkie and Branded Surveys connect you with brands looking to gain consumer insight—and shell out some cold hard cash for it too.

Watch Viral Videos: Talk about low-effort. There's a company out there granting cash payment to people willing to sit through viral videos. Check out Inbox Dollars to add a little incentive to what would otherwise just be doom scrolling.

Share Your News Views: Get paid to express your opinions about various news media with YouGov. (www.today.yougov.com)

Even if you don't decide to check out these online opportunities, the point is this: Getting creative about making extra money can set you up for a brighter financial future. Any funds you can use to pay down debt or deposit into high yield savings accounts can turn out to be that last-push money you need to achieve a major goal, like making a down payment on a house.

We've got the answer to your student loan dilemma

New year, new semester, same expenses—and a lot of them. Between tuition fees, room and board, textbooks, supplies, transportation, and the cost of basic necessities, it seems like the student life price tag gets bigger by the minute. We've partnered with Sparrow to help get students the loan options they need fast.

With Sparrow's state-of-the-art student loan search automation platform, you can compare rates from multiple student loan lenders across the U.S. in a matter of minutes through one single form. Plus, you don't need an income or credit history to get started. So whether you're an undergrad, a graduate or professional student, parents of a student, or hoping to refinance an existing student loan, this tool will find you the perfect private student loan—quickly, securely, transparently, and completely for free. Our student loans are personalized, featuring competitive fixed and variable rates, flexible repayment terms and options, and zero origination or prepayment fees.

Find out if you pre-qualify in a matter of minutes. Start your search today at www.LSFCU.org/sparrow.



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*Terms & Conditions subject to change at any time without notice. See policy at www.familysecurityplan.com or a branch Representative for details.

Get free help with tax preparation and enter to win \$10,000* at www.LSFCU.org/Taxes

Tax filing isn't anyone's favorite chore...but if you do it right, you could end up with a bigger refund. Plus, you've got big member perks waiting for you. Check it out:

TurboTax. It's America's #1 brand of tax software, and you can tap into it with a Liberty Savings 20% discount. TurboTax guarantees 100% accurate calculations and the biggest refund you're due. Do it yourself, and get help from a TurboTax Live CPA as you need it.

H&R Block. Get expert help with or without an office visit, with the biggest refund possible – guaranteed. New clients of H&R Block save \$25 on in-office tax prep services from a tax professional. Returning clients get Tax Identity Shield® for FREE (\$35 value).

Reward yourself – the smart way. It's tempting to splurge, but think about using your tax refund to treat yourself to a better financial future: Open a savings account, or use it to pay down some debt.

To claim your TurboTax or H&R Block discounts, and enter to win \$10,000,* visit www.LSFCU.org/Taxes



Liberty Savings
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Helping You Achieve Your American Dream



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