

# Debt Setoff— 2013 Pre-Workshop Edition

## Reminders:

- Training Workshops handouts will be available by August 26, 2013, view: <http://www.ncsetoff.org/Training.htm>
- Registration is required for the Training Workshops—register now at <http://www.ncsetoff.org/2013WorkshopRegistration.htm>
- 2014 Participation Form will be available beginning September 9, 2013

## Inside this issue:

Six FREE Training Workshops Set for September 2013	1
Security—the Focus of This Year’s Workshop	2
Already Participating—So Why Attend?	2
We Hope to Migrate Away from Submission of Excel Files	3
Can You Use Our Software If You Have Vendors/3rd Parties?	3
Do You Have Several Departments That Participate Or Need To?	3
Client Software Version 2013 Information/Update	4

Volume 3: Issue 3

August 1, 2013

## Six FREE Training Workshops Set for September 2013

The 2013 training workshop locations are set:

1. Tuesday, September 10  
 Beaufort County Community College  
 5337 Hwy 264 East  
 Washington, NC 27889
2. Wednesday, September 11  
 Mad Boar Restaurant  
 111 River Village Place  
 Wallace, NC 28466
3. Thursday, September 12  
 Raleigh Quorum Center  
 323 West Jones Street  
 Raleigh, NC 27603
4. Tuesday, September 17  
 Asheboro Public Works Conference Room  
 1312 N. Fayetteville Street  
 Asheboro, NC 27204
5. Wednesday, September 18  
 Hickory Council Chambers  
 76 North Center Street  
 Hickory, NC 28601
6. Thursday, September 19  
 Henderson County Courthouse  
 200 N. Grove Street  
 Hendersonville, NC 28792

- Maps for all but Asheboro are now available on the Training website page: <http://www.ncsetoff.org/Training.htm>
- Agenda and Handouts will be available by August 26—an email will be sent when ready and posted on the Training website: <http://www.ncsetoff.org/Training.htm>

### Each Training Workshop has two Different Sessions:

#### 1. 10:30—11:30: New participants

Main topic is the required one-time paperwork/contractual agreements and preparing to submit debts for the first time.

- Local governments that have not completed the required paperwork to participate
- Attendees who have attended this presentation in past and want a refresher
- First time attendees to a debt setoff workshop
- Your local government is currently participating in debt setoff but it is a new responsibility for you

#### 2. 1:00—3:15: All Attendees

Some of this year’s topics:

- Recap changes since last workshop
- Planned changes for 2013-2014
- 2014 Participation form
- Tips/Reminders
- Dept. of Revenue Update
- Security
- Why & How to switch from ASCII/Excel to our software
- Files from vendors/3rd-parties
- Client Software update and demonstration

The presenters will be:

- Lisa Nolen, N.C. Assoc. of County Commissioners
- Rob Shepherd, Melissa Smith, Wanda Veasey, N.C. League of Municipalities
- Cindy Honeycutt, Department of Revenue
- Bill Walsh, Fran McClary, Five Star Computing

Online registration is required and is now available at <http://www.ncsetoff.org/2013WorkshopRegistration.htm>

Spaces may be limited at some locations so don’t delay.



**Over the past few month's we have been working with security companies and consultants to check our processes and provide guidance.**



**The Clearinghouse sincerely appreciates the local governments that attend the workshops each year.**

## Security—The Focus On This Year's Training Workshop

You've probably heard about the breach at the South Carolina Department of Revenue late last year. Several employees of Five Star Computing were notified that their information had been compromised.

So we have been focusing not only with protecting the data at the Clearinghouse but for the local governments that maintain confidential information on their debtors they submit to us.

Our dealings with knowledgeable security specialists has lead us to provide better security solutions, starting with our client software.

In addition, in June we hired a new employee with security experience with a bank to assist us with designing, testing, implementing and deploying this new security upgrade, Billie Mills spent several years work-

ing with Microsoft SQL, which is our database solution.

You may have received an email explaining the details and that we would soon be contacting all current users of the software to schedule this upgrade. Our priority order:

1. Single workstation users
2. Server and one user
3. Server and multiple users
4. Users with new workstations needing re-installation

For those local governments with the SQL database on a server with multiple users who have on-staff I.T. we will work with them to coordinate the upgrade, which requires access to each user's workstation to upgrade the client software and a settings txt file.

If you are ready, have your I.T. contact us to schedule. Other-

wise we will be in touch.

Although behind the scenes and not noticeable to the user, the main security enhancement is the encryption of every occurrence of social security numbers, usernames and passwords. The most notable enhancement of the software that is visible to the user is the control of online and print visibility of social security numbers. It is possible to hide all visual occurrences of social security numbers by user. Now able to configure all users to be restricted from viewing or printing any report with an SSN. There are three options: to completely hide the SSN, show only the last four, or show in its entirety.

We will explain and demonstrate these security enhancements in detail at the training workshops.

## Already Participating—So Why Attend?

There must be a good reason that over 400 people have attended workshops each of the last four years.

There will be updates from staff with the N.C. Association of County Commissioners, League of Municipalities and Department of Revenue. Five Star Computing, the vendor for the Clearinghouse will also provide training and explain the latest upgrades on the client software.

If your local government is already participating there is probably no reason to attend the 10:30—11:30 morning session as that mostly covers the eligible participants and the required one-time paperwork/agreements. But feel free to

attend and bring others if interested in seeing what we discuss. But entirely optional except for new prospective participants.

We highly advise that ALL local governments attempt to have at least one person attend the 1:00—3:15 afternoon session. There is always new information at that session.

The past four years have focused a great deal on our software and this year is no different.

Over the years we have had many local governments who attend each year to hear about recent changes to legislation and processes. In addition, both recent and future changes are

discussed and ample time given in case vendors and/or I.T. changes are required or optional. We encourage counties and municipalities with large numbers of debts and/or multiple departments to bring I.T. staff. Third-party vendors are welcome but need to have someone from a local government with them.

If you have any ideas, suggestions or questions you would like addressed at the workshops please send an email to [ncsetoff@ncsetoff.org](mailto:ncsetoff@ncsetoff.org)

If you can't make it this year be sure to view the online handouts and presentation materials.

## We Hope to Migrate From the Submission of Excel Files

Sometime in the near future we would like all of those who currently submit Excel files to switch to our software. You will still be able to import Excel files into our software.

While an Excel file may be the simplest way for a local government to submit an entire file of debtors, or just a small update of payments there are concerns.

For one thing, Excel files are an easy way for anyone to open and see all data in its simplest form with SSNs and names

easily visible. While Excel files can be password protected, compressed/zipped and even encrypted it is not as easy to interface with the Clearinghouse. In addition, each week-end the Clearinghouse has to manually process each excel file.

Many local governments leave it to the Clearinghouse to format the data so we can process it. Some of the issues: no header row; more than one header row; extra columns we don't need/use. In addition, we

have to convert the debt amount (column I) to numeric so we can calculate a total in order to verify we imported the correct amount.

With our software there is encryption, additional security functions and integration with the Clearinghouse processes.

So if you are currently using Excel and would like to upgrade to our software, please call to discuss or simply complete the [required online request form](#).

***The two safest alternatives to securing your data: 1) switch to our client software; or 2) let us do your data entry (if small number of debts or don't add/update often)***

## Can You Use Our Software If You Have Vendors/3rd Parties?

We have more than twenty local governments that use our software and receive ASCII and/or Excel files from another provider. There are at least four third-party vendors submitting files to their own secure folders. We transfer the files to the local gov.'s folders then connect via remote software to the local government and do the imports for them.

There are also varying methods of files that can be imported:

1. An entire replacement file for a department/account code
2. (ADDS Only) Add the entire file to existing debts
3. (ADD and ADJUSTMENTS) Add any new debts while also update any existing debts (uses SSN and Unique Key)
4. (ADJUSTMENTS ONLY) Update existing debts and replace with new balance

The best method is NOT to do an entire replacement. That wipes out history and loses the priority. The other options do retain history and priority. See if your vendor/3rd party can provide just new debts and updates to existing debts.

We don't need 3rd parties to send us debts we have setoff as we have those balances. The preference is just new debts and those debts they collect directly.

***A Replace Option will remove the debt history and the priority. Get them to send ONLY new debts and debt balances paid directly to them.***

## Do You Have Several Departments That Participate Or Need To?

Perhaps you do not use our software but have to gather files from various departments, even some third-party administrators and combine into one file. Maybe separate departments submit separate files, even different types, such as TAX is ASCII but EMS is Excel. Even if one department has a new replacement file each time while another has just new debts or updated balances.

These are great candidates for our software. We can set up unlimited numbers of departments/account codes and for an unlimited number of users. We can also configure any or all departments/account codes to have their own letter information, contact information, and address and then generate letters for all debts for that department or just new or updated debts. You can also create a pdf of the letters to save as proof letters were sent

to whom and where.

If you are paying for letter generation, consider ours. While it doesn't offer mailing discounts, it is free and easy.

We are very familiar with all local governments that submit ASCII and/or Excel files and can think of very few, if any, that could not benefit from our software. Unless you have very old hardware we can probably assist.

***If you Submit for Multiple Departments consider using our client software! Even if different file types.***

# DEBT SETOFF CLEARINGHOUSE

Website:

<http://www.ncsetoff.org>

Toll-free Support:

(866) 265-1668

Interactive Voice Response

(IVR): (877) 843-0330

E-mail: [ncsetoff@ncsetoff.org](mailto:ncsetoff@ncsetoff.org)

N.C. Clearinghouse Staff:

Bill Walsh

(President/Operations Manager)

Fran McClary, Billie Mills and

Brandon Walsh

(Customer Services)

Drew Bryant

(Software Developer)

Linda Kaneft and Marcia Padgett

(Debtor Inquiries)

Rich Ware

(Network Admin./I.T Mgr.)



North Carolina Association of

County Commissioners

Website: <http://www.ncacc.org>

Contact: Lisa Nolen

Phone: (919) 715-4362

E-mail: [lisa.nolen@ncacc.org](mailto:lisa.nolen@ncacc.org)



North Carolina League of

Municipalities

Website: <http://www.nclm.org>

Contact: Wanda Veasey

Phone: (919) 715-2218

E-mail: [wveasey@nclm.org](mailto:wveasey@nclm.org)

N. C. Department of Revenue

Debt Setoff Unit

(919) 814-1119

N. C. Capital

Management Trust (NCCMT)

(800) 222-3232

## Client Software Version 2013 Information/Update

### Announcements, Updates and Tips:

#### Latest Version—2013.08 (August 1, 2013)

- Encryption for social security numbers, usernames, passwords and secure website
- Code signature added so passes through most Virus Protection without warnings
- Changed password to a minimum 15 character smart password to access secure website
- Allows for up to 20 character for User passwords
- Changed the admin password and made it a minimum 12 characters
- Control users online and report access to Social Security Numbers
  - Three options for each user: View none, last four or all nine digits of SSN
- Mark/Unmark letters as printed was corrected
- Excel imports/exports no longer keep Excel open once completed
- No longer calls 64TRANSMIT.EXE to transmit files if any user has a Windows 7-64 bit work-station
- Ability to Backup the database from the software if not running from a server
- **Recent changes/recap for versions: 2013.04—2013.07**
  - Search Account Number for exact number in addition to what it starts with
  - Ability to run interest accrual without signing-on as admin
  - Setoff .txt file changes
    - User access rights to determine who can import the setoffs without restricting other Transmit import/exports
    - If already downloaded, a message appears whether to override and do again
    - If a debt balance is less than what setoff file has, appears on error page and is not updated
    - Fixed zip+4 update of Dept. of Revenue address
    - No longer truncates after 25 characters of dept. of Revenue address

#### • Screen shot of the new User Access options:

Setoff	Report	Online
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> Full SSN	<input type="radio"/> Full SSN
<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Partial SSN	<input type="radio"/> Partial SSN
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No SSN	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No SSN

#### • Items we are currently working on:

- Online Help and PDF (to be current with the above software changes)
- Additional security functions and backup if using a server

Are there any errors or bugs you are experiencing? Our latest version may correct it, if not we will put on our list. Or do you have a suggestion for the software? Send to [ncsetoff@ncsetoff.org](mailto:ncsetoff@ncsetoff.org).