

**Borrower Stories Submitted by Members
and Partners of the Texas Fair Lending Alliance**

The following stories represent some of the stories submitted by borrowers to members and partners of the Texas Fair Lending Alliance. The stories below appear in the format they were submitted and are listed starting with the most recent.

**Gloria, Dallas
September 19, 2016**

I took out a title loan for around \$700. When I went back, she said I should get out the whole \$2,000. She said the interest rate is the same and it won't cost you more and I needed the money for my rent. I was paying and nothing was going down. I would make payments and nothing was happening on the principal. The loan was 12% interest. They fired the whole staff there, because they were taking people's money and giving people false information. I paid \$300 every month. They said if I paid a little more it could pay off the loan. They then reduced the loan interest to 10%, which brought my payment down to \$225. They are renewing the loan every month. It is on a month to month.

I am in Dallas, Texas. I am right on the line of Addison. The store is in Richardson, Texas. The last time when I check it, it was going on three years. He told me if you call me by the 20th, I will get \$500 off of that, and then sent you to a location where 7 more payments would pay it off. I'm on social security. I have to pay for medicare supplemental B side. And on top of that trying to pay for a car note, I am struggling. I am struggling month to month trying to make ends meet. From 62-65, they don't allow you to work more than what your social security is. If I am only getting \$12,000 per year, I can't make more than \$12,000. You have to be 66 to get a better paying job. That is the dilemma. At my age, it is hard for people to hire you, so you have to set up on a contract thing. With this, I could get out this loan. I guess I just have to bite the bullet and go ahead and make more money to survive. They capitalize on your situation, on you needing the money and the state of mind that you are in when you need it. You are stressed and scared that you won't have a place to go. When I went in, I was in a panic. I didn't know what to do. They do not explain. When I came back in the second time, that is when they tell me what is going on, but I have already been there a year and a half. I am so distressed trying to survive, that your mind doesn't see anything else. It just sees getting the money to pay your rent and pull you out of that stress situation. You are in a box. All you think about is that you need to get this bill paid. They capitalize on your situation. They sound so nice and so caring until you miss a payment. I called and asked them to work with me when my check didn't come in on time, and they got totally rude. With an average payment of \$275, I have paid them \$9,252.

**Joy: Dallas
September 15, 2016**

I have had to take out auto title loans for years. It has been more than loan sharking, I am finding now. The little bit we were borrowing, it seemed like we have paid it back many

times over. They keep telling me the interest is 10%, but I feel somewhere something wrong is going on. The practices are so unfair.

A lot of the owners are millionaires and they are financing lobbyists and senators. They have taken so much from.

I have a title loan with Loan Star. They moved my title loan outside of Dallas.

I took out this loan 6 or 7 months ago. I came in to make a payment to pay a little extra to hit the principal. Even the small amount, it seems like I was paying it back. My due date is the 13th, and I am carrying some huge late fees. I believe the total that I own is \$500 or \$600. I think I have already met that or more.

**Sharon, Baytown
September 2016**

Sharon had a loan for \$5,000 from TitleMax. She has been paying interest for over three years. She paid \$337 to \$347 per month. She has spent over \$15,000 on a \$5,000. She is currently unemployed and is the single mother of three children. As soon as she gets her unemployment check, she takes it to TitleMax to pay on the loan and has very little left.

**Janice: Belton
February 8, 2016**

My name is Janice. I live in Belton, Texas with my husband and 5 children. I moved from Puerto Rico to New York in 1989. In 2013, my husband was promised a job in Killeen. My whole family moved from New York to Texas because of my husband's new job. We, as a family, were very excited. However, the job that my husband was promised never opened up.

In order to pay for all the bills and an apartment for the 7 of us in my family, we took out an auto title loan in 2012. The amount I borrowed was \$1,500. In the beginning, when I got the loan, I understood from the employee that as I made payments, the amount paid would go to the principal and fees. The employee gave me the impression that the auto title company was just like a regular bank. However, I began to notice that the payments that I made were only fees. The principal was not getting paid off each additional time I went to make payments to the auto title lender.

When I went to speak to the manager the next month, he was transferred to another store and I felt lied to me and that they were stealing my money because it was not what they promised to me. They said that I misunderstood the 20 pages of paper work. I did not know what to do but to continue paying the fees, even though I could barely afford it. In the winter of 2013, I was late on my payment. Because of this, my minivan was repossessed. My family had no car. I was told that it was taken Austin. To come up with enough money to rent a sedan and drive to Austin to get my car back, I sold a lot of personal items and my jewelry. Our whole family had to fit in the sedan for 5 days before

having the time on the weekend to drive down to Austin to get our minivan back. Then we had to drive to Killeen to retrieve our personal items that were left in the minivan. In March of 2014, after 21 months, we had paid more than \$2,100 in fees. We still owed the original \$1,500 on the loan.

Thankfully, Helping Hands Ministry of Belton was able to help me out. They paid the \$1,500 to the auto title company in March. I am so thankful for their help. Without them, we would not have been able to pay it off. We would still be paying money every month to the lender and would still owe \$1,500.

I will never get another loan with an auto title company and I will never recommend a payday or auto title loan to anyone else. I do not think it is fair or right to charge more in fees or interest for the principal loan.

Sammy
November 30, 2015

Defaulted on a payday loan in 2012. Received a call from someone saying that they would file criminal charges. Took out a loan from EZ Money Payday loans in Terrell, Texas. I took out a regular payday loan. I made some payments on it. I then rolled the loan over into a \$700 installment loan. They deposited the difference into my account. My payments every time were \$100 every week—a total of \$1,200. I did that for 2-3 months before I went to the new loan. Under the new loan, I paid \$140 every week or two. I made three payments on it, and then I lost my job and couldn't continue to make the payments. I paid \$1,600 or \$1,700 dollars for a \$700 loan. When I lost my job and knew I couldn't pay, I tried to make an arrangement with them, almost a full week before the payment was due. I was trying to find odd and end jobs. They weren't willing to work anything out with me. They told me that if I missed my payment, I would be in default. The day after the first payment I missed, they started hitting my account. They hit my account two times. I closed the account and cleared my outstanding debt with the bank. They didn't really explain to me—I didn't have any idea how much it was going to cost me to pay this back.

This summer, I was contacted by someone. They called me one morning and said that I had until that afternoon to take care of the charges. I don't have anything like that on my record. I don't want a felony on my record. It scared me. They didn't send me anything in writing. I did pay them with a credit card. I paid them \$1,915 and some change. They said they would send me a receipt, but never did.

A new company called me last week, and told me I had to pay \$752 by 2pm on Wednesday or they would file felony theft charges against me. I was waiting on my check and told them I would pay, but my check didn't come in in time. They told me I had to pay by MoneyGram or by a bank to bank wire. Something didn't seem right, and so I started researching it.

**Dorothy: Fort Worth
2015**

I took out a \$3,630 loan. I have paid \$3,250. . . . Here I am, 81 years old. . . I am paying \$419 per month for 8 months and realized I would get a different number at the top of the form. Why is the payment not going down and the contract number. I thought I would file bankruptcy, but TitleMax told me they would still get paid no matter what. When I realized it was just fees I was paying, I asked, "You expect me to pay this in one month?" The lady did not explain that to me. I would never have taken out the loan. Here I am, the insurance is going to pay me, and it is all going to TitleMax. Some towns have a law against that, but they don't seem to have it here, for my understanding. My car is paid for, and the appraiser is giving me \$4,000. At my age, I cannot get a steady job to pay off a car. At this age, I cannot get anything to pay it off. I have social security income, and I work in the nursery of my church.

**Elizabeth: Denton
October 9, 2014**

I have had this loan for well over a year, in September of 2013 i came into Denton office and made double the amount of my payment so that it would bring principle down. My next payment I was told that i owed same amount. When asked why the reason they had applied the over payment to the following months payment, therefor my principle was still at original amount. Each time i make a payment the representative states that a new contract with new rules has to be applied. First it was that the city of Denton changed the way they could collect fees. She also stated they found a loop hole. My next contract seems to have a waiver of having to carrying their insurance, this makes my original payment of 50 plus up to over 100 plus dollars. I seem to never be making head way on this loan and now they want a new contract that adds a percentage fee. I am a single house income of less then 32k a year raising a Granddaughter and as they say Dieing on the vine. Title Max is ripping me off because they found this loop hole to over charge poor people like myself. They will repossess my vehicle, in turn this will make a domino effect and cost my household the ability to work. I have paid three times the amount i borrowed already and still owe over the twice the amount loaned. Please help take the predator from consuming everything we have and look into the way they have found this loop hole. I agree i've received the loan and agree i need to pay the money back with reasonable charges but this is getting out of hand, I'm never seeing the end of this debt unless i fore fit my transportation. I have been lied to and undisclosed of the many changes in contracts they force consumers to sign. Please Please Help.

**Wendy: Spring
July 30, 2014**

I recently got a title loan for \$1,200.00. I was told by Loan Star Title Loan that the first month I would get \$500.00 off. Lie! They said because of some law that they can't do that after all. They didn't even notify me about this change. They said I don't have to pay anything for the first month but the next month I would have to pay the minimum of \$356.97 but my monthly bill is really \$416.00. Only \$60.00 goes to my principal!!!

WOW!! I will never be done paying this.. This is going to take 2 years just to pay the loan of \$1,200.00. This is ridiculous! Interest is high!! It leaves me in a big bind now. I'm a single mother, 4 kids, full time work, pay rent and all my bills and I receive assistance for food and kids Medicaid. I'm barely making it on my own and now this.. Loan Star had said I qualified to get up to \$1,800.00.. I can't imagine my interest if I would of took that loan.

CD: Dallas
July 30, 2014

My elderly uncle is trying to pay a Title Max car title loan in Dallas, Texas with over 117% interest and can barely afford to pay any other bills. He has been paying on the \$7000 original loan over a year and not making a dent in the loan. He can barely afford food. It was a desperate act on his part to get the loan. If he loses his car he can't work. He is getting physically sick because of the bills.

Michelle: Nolanville
May 22, 2014

I called Western Sky Financial for a loan out of desperation to help pay bills. The interest rate was over 300% for a 1 year term. They loaned me \$800, but only deposited \$500 and said \$300 of it was used for processing fees. The first payment from my personal account did not come from Western Sky but from a company called Delbert Services whom I did not originally create the contract with, nor give my bank details to. I then received an email from them stating they needed my bank details because they were updating their system and before I could reply another company called Cash Call helped themselves to my account as well. I called my bank to stop the payment as it was unauthorized to that company and I received the payment back. I then had to close my checking account and open a new one. I now receive calls everyday from this Delbert Services, 1 time even 9 times in 1 hour.

Jessica: Houston
May 22, 2014

I got a loan to help pay my bills. Because I had recently lost my job, I missed my payment due date by one day and they took my car that morning. I had to pay \$500 dollars extra to get my car back and still owe \$1000 for a \$700 dollar loan. I don't know what to do. I need my car to bring my daughter to school and to work at my new job delivering auto parts, so I'm stuck.

Yvonne: Houston
May 1, 2014

I got an auto title loan for \$2,100 to cover my brother's funeral expenses. I rolled it over 10 times and ended up paying about \$5,000. I had to rob Peter to pay Paul, pawning my

computer and all my jewelry, everything. I am on a fixed income and was paying about \$430 per month and another \$130 for some sort of insurance, leaving me with very little for the rest of the month. My advice to people considering an auto title loan: don't do it.

Cynthia: Dallas
April 30, 2014

I have taken out 3 Payday loans and a car title loan. I'm trying to keep up with car payments, insurance, lights, water and rent so I have to keep paying the finance fee. My title loan is due in full on 4/15 that's \$1100.00. I paid once over the finance fee but that was in vain because it just went back on the loan.

Tiffany: Marble Falls
July 30, 2013

I started out with a Loan from Check N Go.. I thought wow this is nice. I was so happy I could get out of my financial bind.. little did I know I was working myself into a much worse debt that I ever imagined. I kept getting loan after loan.. just trying to keep up with my first loan. Now I have seven outstanding loans.. I am a single mother. I have no idea what to do. Is there anyway to pay them back only what I originally owed without interest? I have already paid them enough interest in the first place with all the renewals.

Clyde: Houston
January 15, 2013

The results left a bottomless result in my life, one which determined how I had to live up to this day. I had no gripes with the company when the loan was first given, everything they did at first helped me out a lot. I was late on payments, which I would go in and make arrangements with them, always bringing things up to date. There was never any indication from me to show that I was not going to pay back the loan.

One day while at work I went outside and my car was gone. I called the police because I was sure that someone had stolen my vehicle. Through these conversations with the police they pointed out that maybe it was the payday loan company that took my car. To my surprise that was what happen. I called the loan company and their explanation was that they had tried to call me at work but could not get a hold of me. Upon further inquiry I found that the loan company told their lenders to call in the loan by taking the car and giving me one month to pay off balance, which was something I could not do.

My pleas and letting them know how necessary it was to have transportation to work, day-to-day living and doctors visits since I was a heart patient. The value of the car was around 15k whereas the loan amount was around 2K. There was nothing I could do. I didn't have money to go to lawyers. The car was paid off. I had recently retired from my job, paid off all bills, knowing that at 62, the car was a necessity.

I felt as though I was helpless since everything was within their power with the rules of loans. To this day I have yet to recover in my mind the big loss I had suffered from taking that loan. GOD has been on my side for I follow him. Never a day goes by when I know in my mind that they didn't have to do what they did. That was the greatest loss of my life plus a big lesson learned from it. This is the first time I've shared this with anyone, hoping that it will help others in their decisions to go this route in their time of need.

Thanks for letting me share my experience with an auto title loan.

Patricia: Dallas
January 15, 2013

My daughter had a payday loan and we couldn't eat or pay the lights to keep us warm. Early one morning, I heard this truck pull into the driveway to take her car. We ran outside to block them from taking the car away. Several days later they came back and took the care. It cost us \$1,800, which led to us losing our house. Now we are homeless. They all need to be put out business with their over price tactics.

Deborah: Fort Worth
January 15, 2013

It comes down to "a world shattering experience" for myself and everyone I have ever known who has gotten one of these loans.

Two of my friends (also on disability) had taken out car title loans: The bottom line was IT WAS TOO EXPENSIVE and they BOTH HAD THEIR CARS REPOSSESSED. The manager showed no compassion even though both friends tried to make arrangements. Working for 35 years and becoming disabled after 5 back surgeries over an 8-year period, I suffered with not only a physical/mental disability but a financial disability as well. My credit was severely effected prior to my disability award so I had to turn to a payday loan like countless others who can not get a loan with a decent interest rate.

Every friend, family member and myself have renewed the payday loans a minimum of 2 or 3 times and paid excessive finance charges while only saving money to pay the principal. I get sick knowing that I will need extra money during any given month, since it is so difficult living on Social Security alone. Credit scores do not tell you what a person is really like or has endured to get where they are – we all need a little help from time to time. Sad it has to be from the predatory lenders and not a credible financial institution.

Jo Ann: San Antonio
January 15, 2013

My daughter was left penniless by her husband of 15 years. The last three years of their relationship, she was a stay at home mom. When he left, she had to take over the bills

including the house rent. She had no job and we helped her all we could. She was desperate so she went to one of these title companies. She received \$5,000 on a 2007 Nissan Murano. A year later she still owes \$5000 and pays \$600 monthly on the vehicle. She still hasn't gotten a job and had to move back with us (plus her four children). I would like to make it harder to get these types of loans because at this rate, she might never get her car title back.

Raquel: Cedar Park
January 15, 2013

I borrowed \$1,000 on a title loan about 3 years ago to help my daughter through college. I could not afford to pay the \$1,300 that they wanted all at once. So I made payments for more than two years. Thus paying them well over \$3,600. Finally I had enough and quit paying them. Unfortunately, they towed my car and I had to pay them an extra \$800 to get it back. I still owe them the initial \$1,300 plus interest. As far as I am concerned they can have the car. I will not give them another cent! This is a bad decision that I will never make again!