

The cash business

Arizonans pay big price at thriving payday-loan firms

Payday-loan offices, which have experienced dramatic growth in Arizona, have become popular for low- to middle-income wage earners who say they use them to get over financial humps. A look at some customers:

Name: Brian Osorio

Home: Phoenix

Bio: 36 years old. Landscaper.

Annual income: \$30,000.

Payday-loan use: Started two years ago. Every other week.

Quote: I think it's great for me. . . . You are going to have interest (for loan) regardless of where you go to borrow money. I spend that much (interest) going out to eat. . . . It definitely helps.

Name: Adam Bass

Home: Glendale

Bio: 20 years old. Student and auto service technician.

Annual income: \$19,200.

Payday-loan use: Started one year ago. Every few weeks.

Quote: I use it to help my mother-in-law get into her house . . . and I use it to buy books. They help, but you can get stuck very easily to take out a new loan to pay off the other one you took out.

Name: James Hill

Home: Mesa

Bio: 36 years old. Paint specialist

Annual income: \$20,000.

Payday-loan use: Started last year. Two to three times a year.

Quote: I realize they are out to make money. You don't get nothing for free. If you are living paycheck to paycheck, which is what I'm doing, and your vehicle breaks down and you have other things that come in, it's a real stressful thing. . . . There are a lot of things they (payday lenders) help me out with. If not for them, I would not have a vehicle to go back and forth to work and have a place to live. That is the way I see it."