

Everyone Has a Story: Meet Dani

Transcript:

There's no place like Chicago. The people are great. It's really just a great place to be. I went to Illinois State University. I went there for English education, originally to become a teacher.

I had been having a lot of trouble with my private student loans, for a long time. And I got to the point where I couldn't manage keeping up with them and keeping up with living and eating.

I was trying to make an effort to pay them. I would call them and try and make arrangements, and they wanted to assess my finances. They told me that I had *plenty* of funds to be able to pay them. It got to a point where I had to stop paying them because I couldn't afford to pay them and eat and pay them and have clothes to wear to work.

It actually took a – a really big toll on my credit. I stopped paying everything else, because I couldn't afford to do both. And it got to the point where they were calling me, making very threatening phone calls, telling me that they were going to garnish my wages and telling me that, you know, they were more important; and that I needed to pay them.

My hope in reaching out to them was that they would be able to work with me and my finances and, perhaps, give me some kind of lower payment, or lower the interest.

I can't even tell you the number of times I've cried over my finances.

I contacted the CFPB because I really needed someone else on my side. There's nothing that I was doing with this private student loan service that was changing anything, and I was stuck in a position that felt hopeless to me. So, for me, it was all about finding someone that could actually make a difference.

Reaching out to the CFPB, I felt like it was really easy. I mean I went on the website. I was able to fill out a form that basically said, "Hey, what's your problem?" "Tell us about the situation."

It was maybe a – a couple of weeks before someone had reached out from my private loan servicer after they had gotten the complaint. And from there, I wanna say maybe the following month they had made an arrangement with me to be able to – to pay my student loans.

Finally having this issue resolved is such a weight off of my shoulders. It's such a relief to be able to not have to worry about if I'll have money for gas to get to work; or, not have to worry about whether or not I'll have something to eat that week; um, being able to afford a place to live. even if it's, you know, not quite the – the digs I would want. But it still – it still gives me that freedom to be what I have a space to call my own and to do the everyday things that, you know, are important.

I tell people about the CFPB all the time, actually. Anytime I hear about people having trouble with their private student loans, anytime I hear about people having trouble with other issues, I

definitely point them in the direction of the CFPB; because it helped me so much. And everyone should be able to reach out and find someone that can give them assistance that they can't necessarily find elsewhere.

You have the right to take charge of your student loan debt.