

consumer action

Education and advocacy since 1971

Resources for Good Credit

(Download an electronic version of this resource sheet at: www.consumer-action.org/downloads/outreach/credit_building_resource.pdf)

Consumer Action Brochures and Fact Sheets

Good Credit: Build it and keep it

www.consumer-action.org/modules/articles/good_credit_en

Improve Your Credit: Put bad credit behind you

www.consumer-action.org/modules/articles/improve_your_credit_put_bad_credit_behind_you_en

Freeze Your Credit File: Leave ID thieves out in the cold

Explains how consumers can "freeze" their credit files, which prevents new credit from being established in their name.

www.consumer-action.org/english/articles/freeze_your_credit_file

Credit Scores in the U.S.: A guide for students, immigrants and savvy consumers

Explains what a credit score is, how it is used, how to find out where you stand and what specific steps you can take to build a credit history or improve your score.

www.consumer-action.org/english/articles/credit_scores_in_the_us

Credit Reports and Credit Scores

Covers what goes into credit reports and scores, obtaining and interpreting a score, and improving a score.

www.consumer-action.org/modules/articles/credit_reports_and_credit_scores

Get Real Debt Help, Not Empty Promises

Tips on avoiding mortgage relief assistance scams and debt relief scams, prepared jointly by Consumer Action, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union and the National Consumer Law Center.

www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/Get-Real-Debt-Help.pdf

Don't Get Caught in the Debt Settlement Trap

Tips related to debt settlement companies that do not sell services over the phone (and are therefore not subject to federal rules described above in "Get Real Debt Help, Not Empty Promises"), prepared by Consumer Action, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union and the National Consumer Law Center.

www.consumerfed.org/elements/www.consumerfed.org/file/ConsumerDebtTips_English%201_4_10.pdf

Key Basic Steps to Help Improve Personal Finances

Consumer Action fact sheet with tips and resources for opening bank accounts, checking credit reports, paying down debt and more.

www.consumer-action.org/downloads/alerts/financial_steps.pdf

Understanding Debit Cards

Consumer Action's booklet on debit cards describes how debit cards work and includes information about protections required under federal law as well as voluntary protections offered by issuers.

www.consumer-action.org/english/articles/understanding_debit_cards

Debt Collection: Know your rights

Consumer Action's educational module, which includes the Debtors' Rights booklet and the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act brochure.

www.consumer-action.org/modules/module_debt_collection

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Publications

Credit Repair: How to Help Yourself

Step by step instructions for correcting credit report errors, and information about rules that apply to credit repair companies.

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/pdf-0034-credit-repair.pdf

Coping with Debt

Tips for consumers dealing with debt, including how to find reputable credit counseling organizations, rules that apply to debt settlement services and basic bankruptcy information.

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0150-coping-debt

Time-Barred Debts

Information for consumers dealing with old debts, including advice to help consumers determine when a debt is too old to collect.

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0117-time-barred-debts

Fake Debt Collectors

Advice for consumers getting calls from "fake debt collectors" attempting to collect on loans that consumers never received, for amounts never received, or without authorization by the original creditor.

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0258-fake-debt-collectors

Annual Credit Report Request Form

Consumers can order free annual credit reports from the three national credit bureaus by phone at 877-322-8228, online at www.annualcreditreport.com or by using this downloadable Annual Credit Report Request Form.

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/pdf-0093-annual-report-request-form.pdf

Additional Resources

The Best (and Worst) Secured Credit Cards

Credit card expert, author and consumer advocate Beverly Harzog's secured card rankings (June 10, 2016).

www.beverlyharzog.com/the-best-and-worst-secured-credit-cards/

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Sample Debt Collection Letters

Sample letters consumers can use to tell debt collectors that they do not owe the debt, need more information about the debt, want the debt collector to stop contacting them, or want to be contacted in a specific way.

www.consumerfinance.gov/askcfpb/1695/ive-been-contacted-debt-collector-how-do-i-reply.html

Credit Scoring in Insurance: An Unfair Practice

Article by United Policyholders describing how a credit score can impact insurance premiums, explaining related consumer rights under state and federal law, and providing tips for consumers negatively impacted by poor credit.

<http://uphelp.org/library/resource/credit-scoring-insurance-unfair-practice>

Your Credit Card Rights: Facts for Older Consumers

By the National Consumer Law Center, provides details about three separate types of protections available to consumers dealing with credit card disputes.

www.nclc.org/images/pdf/older_consumers/Your_Credit_Card_Rights.pdf

Nolo's Debt Settlement & Negotiating With Creditors homepage

Links to several articles to help consumers prepare to discuss repayment options with creditors and collectors; includes a link to "Strategies for Negotiating With Creditors," with tips on settling for substantially less than the amount owed.

www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/debt-settlement-negotiating-with-creditors

National Foundation for Credit Counseling

Helps consumers find local certified credit counseling assistance (800-388-2227).

www.nfcc.org

Privacy Rights Clearinghouse fact sheet: Identity Theft Monitoring Services

Helps consumers decide whether investing in identity theft monitoring services is a smart choice for them.

www.privacyrights.org/consumer-guides/identity-theft-monitoring-services

Privacy Rights Clearinghouse's fact sheet: Privacy When You Pay: Credit, Debit, Cash And More

Outlines the potential risks and benefits of different payment methods. Describes how a lost, stolen or otherwise compromised debit card can result in bank accounts being wiped out by thieves.

www.privacyrights.org/consumer-guides/privacy-when-you-pay-credit-debit-cash-and-more

Solve Your Money Troubles

Everything you need to know to get out of debt and repair your credit, from Nolo Press, the self-help legal publisher. By Robin Leonard.

www.nolo.com/products/solve-your-money-troubles-mt.html

Submit consumer complaints to our advice and referrals hotline: www.consumer-action.org/hotline/complaint_form/ or 415-777-9635. Chinese, English and Spanish spoken.