



Your credit rights



Consumer Credit Counseling
Service of Michigan

Consumer Credit Counseling
Service of Southern New York

Consumer Credit Counseling
Service of Northwest Illinois

Consumer Credit Counseling
Service of Northern Indiana

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MEMBER
People Who Care



NOTICE: The services of GreenPath Debt Solutions are financed through grants, client fees and voluntary contributions from the business community. Many credit granting organizations participate in funding programs. Some give donations directly; while others authorize GreenPath Debt Solutions to retain a small percentage of the amounts paid to them by GreenPath Debt Solutions on behalf of clients on debt management programs. GreenPath Debt Solutions clients are given full credit for amounts paid to creditors on their behalf.
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Truth In Lending Act

- Mandates the disclosure of cost requirements for the annual percentage rate and the finance charges.
- Requires that loan terms and conditions are clearly communicated.
- Regulates how credit terms are advertised.
- Prohibits sending unrequested credit cards by card issuers.
- Limits your risk on lost or stolen credit cards.

Fair Credit Reporting Act

- Requires the disclosure of the name and address of any consumer reporting agency which provides credit reports used to deny credit, insurance or employment.
- Provides the consumer with the right to know what is in his/her file, have incorrect information investigated and allows the consumer to include a 100-word statement in the file explaining the financial situation.
- Specifies the consumer be notified when an investigation or information request is made of their credit file.
- Limits the time credit information may be maintained in a file.

Equal Credit Opportunity Act

- Prohibits creditors from discriminating against credit applicants based on sex, race, marital status, national origin, religion, age or the receipt of public assistance.
- Prohibits requiring reapplication for existing credit due to a change in marital status.

Q. Will my credit score be negatively affected if I use GreenPath's services?

A. We do not report to the credit bureaus. If you are on a debt management program, your creditors may note it in their report to the bureaus. If you have had credit problems, creditors often view a debt management program positively because you took proactive measures to resolve the issues. Many of our clients are able to obtain mortgages and other loans upon completing their program. Enrolling in a debt management program should not prevent a lender from extending you credit in the future.

Keep in mind that you need to take a long-term approach to your situation. What is most important for the long-term is that you resolve your financial difficulties. Paying bills on time is generally the single most important contributor to a good credit score. Being late on any bill, for any length of time, is a possible indication of future non-payment of debt and is viewed negatively by lenders. Any late payments will remain on a credit report for up to seven years.



Money management for a better life.



Credit

Your credit success can be as easy as learning more about your credit rights, your credit report, and establishing your credit.

Turn on the radio or television and you will be bombarded with messages about how easy it is to make purchases using credit. If used properly, credit can be a positive tool. But if credit has become out of control in your life, the late fees, creditor calls and high interest rates will begin to weigh down on you like a ton of bricks. Now is the time to take a step back to learn how to get yourself back on the right path....the path to debt freedom.

GreenPath Debt Solutions is here to help!

This brochure covers many facets of credit and credit management. If you need additional information, please call us at 800-747-2898 or visit our website at www.greenpath.com. Our certified counselors stay up-to-date on credit issues to better provide you with helpful information.

First things first....make sure you understand what is on your credit report and how it can affect you.



Credit report and reviews

It's important that you understand the information on your credit report, regardless of your financial situation. This information directly impacts your ability to obtain a credit card, buy a car or home, rent an apartment, or even get a new job. Review your credit report today to help avoid problems in the future!

- Make sure your credit report is accurate
- Protect yourself from fraud or identity theft

Ordering a Credit Report

There are different ways you can obtain your credit report. Choose from a single credit bureau report or one that includes all three national reporting agencies (Experian, TransUnion and Equifax). You can access your report instantly on our website at www.greenpath.com, or have it mailed directly to you by calling us at 800-747-2898.

You can view your credit score, how your score ranks in relation to other United States consumers, and the main factors that influence your score (listed in order of importance). If you find any mistakes on your report, contact the specific bureau in writing. You are entitled to have incomplete or inaccurate information corrected without charge.

Credit Report Review

If you have never reviewed a credit report before, it can be a bit confusing. GreenPath Debt Solutions offers a personal credit report review if you would like additional assistance from a certified credit report professional. We will review your credit report, help you understand it, explain your rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, suggest ways to improve your credit score, and offer guidance on how to correct inaccurate information.

A credit report review is available over the phone or in-person. We can provide the report as part of the review, or you can obtain the credit report on your own. If you are interested in a credit report review, please call 800-747-2898.

Now that you know what is on your credit report, it is time to start re-establishing your credit.



Re-establishing your credit

If you have had problems paying your bills in the past, your credit history has been affected. With this in mind, it may be difficult to obtain future credit. The following suggestions will help you re-establish your credit:

- Pay all your bills on time each month. Paying bills on time is generally the most important contributor to a good credit score. Being late on any bill is viewed negatively by lenders, and late payments remain on a credit report for up to seven years.
- Use a savings account as collateral for an installment loan. You may be able to borrow as much as you have in the account, but your prompt repayment will indicate responsibility.
- Make a larger down payment than required. A creditor is more likely to approve a loan where you have something invested.
- Have a cosigner who has not had credit problems apply with you for a charge account or loan.
- Obtain a credit card with a minimal credit limit from a major department store until you can prove your credit worthiness.
- Avoid rent-to-own companies that advertise re-establishment of credit by renting merchandise. It is not uncommon for the required weekly payments to increase the cost of the merchandise 2 or 3 times its normal value.

It is much easier to successfully qualify for a loan with a solid credit history. Let's see what it takes to get your much-needed loan.

According to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, you have the right to attach a 100-word statement to your credit report. If the circumstances behind your problems are unusual, it may be helpful to have the added clarification available for potential lenders.



Qualifying for a loan

Whether you are applying for your first loan or you are an expert at filling out loan applications, loan officers will look at many aspects of your credit report. They study your assets, as well as your past and current debts. The ideal loan applicant will have:

- A solid history of repaying loans.
- A pattern of making their payments on time.
- No judgments and liens filed against them.
- No repossessions, foreclosures or evictions.
- A year or two at the same address.
- No history of overdrafts.
- A stable job.

If you are denied a loan, ask your loan officer the particular reason they turned you down. Communication is always the best way to work at getting your next loan application approved.