

Tips for Repairing and Maintaining Your Credit History

1. Order your credit report at least one time per year AND review it using a Credit Report Review Checklist.
2. Identify any mistakes and get those corrected—write letters of dispute or fill in the dispute form on the credit bureau websites.
3. If you are late or delinquent on any active accounts, get current and stay current.
4. If you have outstanding judgments, use your budget to begin paying those down.
5. If you carry balances on credit cards, develop a strategy to pay those down.
6. Reduce your credit balances to no more than 30% of your credit limits.
7. Close accounts that you do not use and plan to use unless they are your oldest accounts.
8. Develop a plan to pay any debts in collections or old debts; be aware of any effects your actions could have on statute of limitations.
9. Develop a budget and stick to it—as much as possible, avoid going into debt.
10. Get professional help understanding your credit report or developing a plan to reduce your debts and improve your credit—for example, use a nonprofit credit counseling service, a community development credit union, or another non profit that offers financial literacy help.