

The Steps to Financial Empowerment

UNDERSTANDING BASIC MONEY MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES



DCBA Mission



"To promote a fair and vibrant marketplace, we serve consumers, businesses, and communities through education, advocacy, and complaint resolution."

Serving Los Angeles County consumers and businesses since 1976



Our Services

Consumer Protection

- Complaint Investigation
- Consumer Counseling
- Mediation
- Small Claims Advisors
- Wage Enforcement
- Consumer Education and Public Outreach
- Rent Stabilization

Economic Development

- Center for Financial Empowerment
- Foreclosure Prevention
- Small Business Services

Immigrant Affairs

 Immigrant Advancement Services



Center for Financial Empowerment

On June 14, 2016 the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to establish a Countywide Center for Financial Empowerment as a two year pilot project

Mission and Purpose

The Center for Financial Empowerment (CFE) coordinates and aligns cross-sector efforts to build economice stability and household wealth for low to moderate income County of Los Angeles residents.



Consumer Financial Protection Bureau



Q Search

■ Submit a Complaint

Consumer Tools

Practitioner Resources

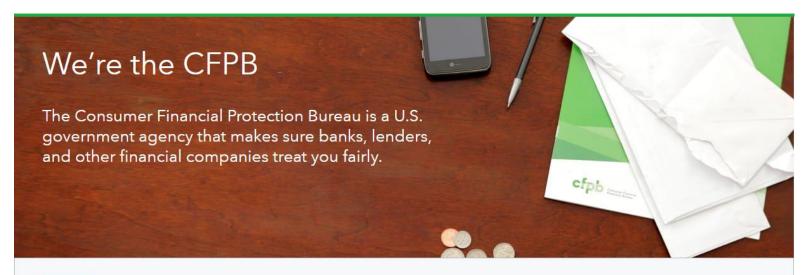
Data & Research

Policy & Compliance

About Us

Visit:

https://www.consumerfinance.gov/



FEATURED

CFPB is warning consumers that someone using a CFPB staff name is calling consumers to assure them that a fake prize they've won through a lottery or sweepstakes is legitimate. This is a scam.

Get the facts

We offer clear, impartial answers to hundreds of financial questions.

Find the information you need to make more informed choices about your money.

Ask CFPB



STEP 1: Make a Plan

Set Goals, Utilize a Budget, and Create an Action Plan



Set a Goal

VISIONING

Where do you see yourself in "X" amount of time?

Where do you work? Where do you live?

What do you own? What have you earned? What have you experienced?

Specific

Measurable

Attainable

Relevant

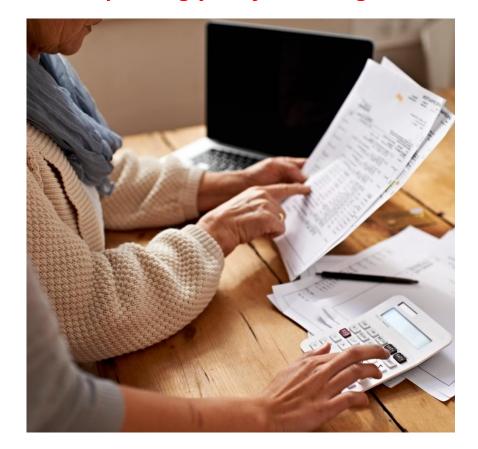
Time-bound

Utilize a Budget



12100245	EVENION	11100115	EVENION
INCOME	EXPENSES	INCOME	EXPENSES
June 1 st	June 1 st -14 th	June 15 th	June 15 th -30 th
\$70 from the	\$650 Rent due by 3 rd	\$0 from the previous	\$200 Pay day loan
previous 2 weeks		2 weeks	total due on 15 th
\$1,350 Paycheck	\$200 Car Lease due	\$1,200 Paycheck	\$300 student loans
	by 5 th		due by 20 th
\$150 Pay Day Loan	\$100 Utilities due by		\$200 Spin class
	the 10 th		package purchased
	\$75 Cable bill due by		\$350 Food and
	the 5 th		drinks
	\$45 Credit Card		\$150 Concert Ticket
	Minimum Payment		
	due by 5 th		
	\$350 Food & drinks		
	\$150 New tire		
TOTAL INCOME	TOTAL EXPENSES	TOTAL INCOME	TOTAL EXPENSES
\$1570	\$1570	\$1,200	\$1200
BALANCE 1st -14th	\$0	BALANCE 15 th -30 th	\$0

Budgeting doubles the probability of accomplishing your financial goals!



Track sources of income



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Income for the Month of:

Source of income / benefits	Frequency	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total by source
Job	□ Regular □ Irregular □ One-time □ Seasonal	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Second job	□ Regular □ Irregular □ One-time □ Seasonal	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Self- employment Income	□ Regular □ Irregular □ One-time □ Seasonal	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
SNAP	□ Regular □ Irregular □ One-time □ Seasonal	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
TANF	□ Regular □ Irregular □ One-time □ Seasonal	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Social Security / SSI	□ Regular □ Irregular □ One-time □ Seasonal	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$



Bill Calendar

	Month:						
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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	Total bills for week
CHN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	Total bills for week
SUN	MON	102	WED		FKI	<u> </u>	Total bills for week
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	Total bills for week
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	Total bills for week

Do your bill due dates match the dates you receive your income?

If not, try calling your utility company, credit cards, and others to request a change for your bills due date to avoid late fees.



Prioritizing bills

Focus area	Your expense
Protect your income.	
If you need a car to get to and from work, stay current on your car payment and insurance.	
Maintain other expenses needed to keep your job, such as paying for the tools you need or required licenses.	
Protect your shelter.	
Whether you rent or have a mortgage, the costs of losing your home are big. Remember to include the taxes, condo fees, and mobile home lot payments you need to stay housed.	
If possible, maintain your utilities. They are difficult to live without, and reconnection is expensive.	

Consider protecting your income, shelter, and assets before sending a payments for other bills.







Pay your obligations.	
Examples include: child support, income taxes, student loans, etc.	
Protect your assets and health.	
Don't let essential insurance coverage lapse; this includes auto, repter's, homeowner's, and health insurance premiums. Include the cost of your copays and needed prescriptions.	
Not having insurance may mean you cannot drive your car, and it puts your assets, including your health/your family's health, at risk.	



STEP 2: Save for Your Future

Build an Emergency Fund, Save for Retirement and Other Financial Goals



Tips for saving

- Pay Yourself First. Make saving automatic.
- ☐ Take full advantage of tax time opportunities. Free tax preparation, refundable credits, and direct deposit into a savings account.
- □ Save for retirement. Take advantage of employer match savings. Start with a least 10-15% of your income.
- Save for goals. Ideally, ones that will grow your assets or money making potential like starting a small business or pursuing an advanced certification.

Analyze Spending

- Spending that <u>cannot be cut</u>
- Spending that <u>can be eliminated</u>
- Spending that <u>can be reduced</u>



Spending that cannot be cut	Reason

Are there items that **can be completely eliminated**? If yes, the money you spend on these items can be used on other things like saving for emergencies or goals or paying down debt.

Steps to eliminate

Are there items that can be **realistically reduced**? If yes, list them below. Set new spending targets for these items and include them in your cash flow.

Spending that can be reduced	New spending target

Find ways to increase income



One-time activity

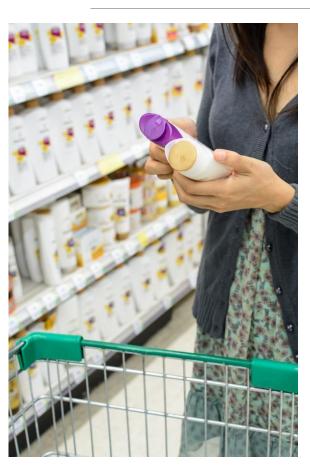
This might work	Strategy for increasing income	Next Steps
	Hold a yard sale/garage sale.	
	Sell items online.	
	Claim tax credits if you qualify.	
	Other:	

Regular income

This might work	Strategy for increasing income	Next Steps
	Seek a raise or additional hours at current job.	
	Change tax withholding (if you generally receive a large tax refund).	
	Get a part-time job.	



Tips for cutting expenses



- Buy generic brands
- Use coupons
- End Cable TV service
- Carpool
- Avoid eating out frequently.
- Look for free entertainment events in your community
- Cross shop cell phone plans
- Call your credit card company and ask if you qualify for a lower APR
- Cancel your gym membership. Find free or low cost exercise classes at your local park or community center.
- Avoid buying bottled water. Use reusable bottles.



STEP 3: Protect Your Money

Join the Financial Mainstream and Avoid High-Cost Alternative Financial Products



Join the financial mainstream

Affordable financial products that safeguard your money, grow your assets, build your credit, and allow for easy access when you need it.

Institutions:

FDIC regulated Banks (including online banks) and Credit Unions.

Products:

Checking Accounts, Savings, Tax Advantaged College/Retirements Accounts, Credit Lines, Personal Loans, Car Loans, and Home Loans.



Avoid unexpected charges and fees

Make sure that the financial tools you have fit your actual lifestyle.

Review account charges and balances often.

Allow time for deposits and charges to post.



TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND FEES

Read disclosures for important terms and conditions

- Overdraft fees
- Late fees
- Interest rates
- ■Grace periods
- ATM fees
- Cash advance fees

BANK ON LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Connect LA County residents to safe and affordable financial products



Find a list of certified accounts that meets national standards for safety, affordability, and accessibility.

<u>Important features include:</u>

- Low/No opening minimum balances
 - Low/No monthly fees
 - FREE check cashing
 - NO OVERDRAFT!

dcba.lacounty.gov/bankon



Avoid alternative financial products

Expensive financial products with excessive fees, high interest charges, and little/no consumer protection.

Institutions:

Check Cashers, Payday Lenders, Pawn Shops, Buy-Here Pay Here Dealers, Others

Products:

Money Orders, Prepaid Debit Cards, High Cost Loans: Payday Loans, Auto Title Loans



Can you guess the average APR for a payday loan?

HINT: The average APR for credit cards is around 15%



ANSWER: The average APR for a payday loan is...

400%

4 out of 5 payday loans are renewed

leading to never-ending debt cycles for consumers without access to mainstream financial products



STEP 4: Understand Credit

Credit is an Asset. Learn How to Build, Maintain and Repair it.



Why is credit important?

- Useful when an unexpected emergency expense happens and you don't have the savings to cover it.
 - (Examples: flat tire, lost phone, last minute trip)
- Safer and more convenient than carrying around large sums of money.
- Allows you to make a large purchase (like buying a phone, computer, or car) and pay it off over time.
- □ Landlords and employers use credit to gauge responsibility.



Who are the credit reporting agencies?

A Credit Bureau or Credit Reporting Agency is a company that collects information from various sources and provides consumer credit information for a variety of uses.

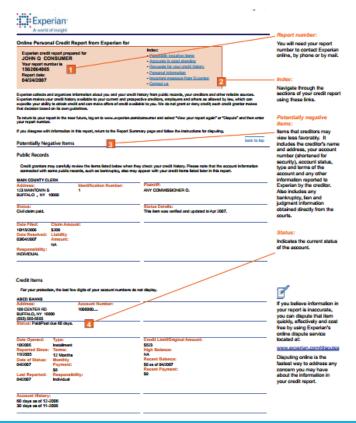
There are 3 major credit bureaus in the U.S.

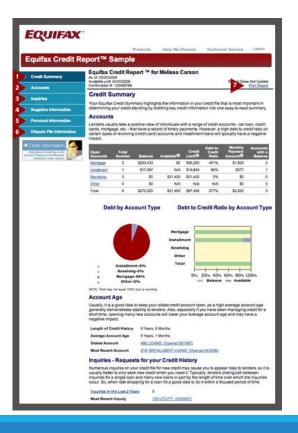


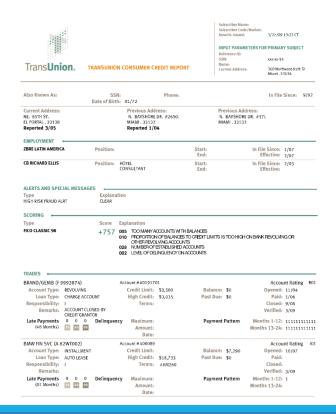


Credit Reports

Your Credit Report contains your 7 year credit history as reported to the CRA's by lenders. The information in your credit report is used to generate Credit Scores such as your FICO score. 1-in- 5 contain an error (FTC).







Where do you get your credit report?

AnnualCreditReport.com or call them at: 1-877-322-8228



Annual Credit Report.com

The only source for your free credit reports. Authorized by Federal law.



Your credit reports matter.

- Credit reports may affect your mortgage rates, credit card approvals, apartment requests, or even your job application.
- Reviewing credit reports helps you catch signs of identity theft early.

Request your free credit reports

FREE Credit Reports. Federal law allows you to:

- Get a free copy of your credit report every 12 months from each credit reporting company.
- Ensure that the information on all of your credit reports is correct and up to date.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY









Sample Credit Report



"The Five Information Zones"

IDENTIFYING (PERSONAL) INFORMATION

I. Wishfor Credit 805 Main St. Anytown, America 77777 12 Lost Lane Somewhere, USA 66666 Date of Birth 1-25-56 SSN 888 88 8888 Sam's Gas & Oil Attendant

2

PUBLIC RECORD (LEGAL ITEMS)

9-06 Judgment \$1000 Satisfied 3-07

3

COLLECTION ITEMS

7-05 Collection \$500



TRADE LINE (ACCOUNT) INFORMATION

Industry	Date Reported	Date Opened	High Credit	Balance	Current Rating	Historical Rating
Bankcard	6-08	3-89	\$5,000	\$0	Current	120+, 6 yrs ago
Auto loan	6-08	7-06	8,000	1,500	Current	
Retail	3-08	6-97	1,000	200	30 days	



INQUIRIES

Date	Industry	Date	Industry	
7-01-08	Bank	6-01-08	Auto finance	
6-15-08	Oil company	2-07-09	Retail	



What's a credit score?

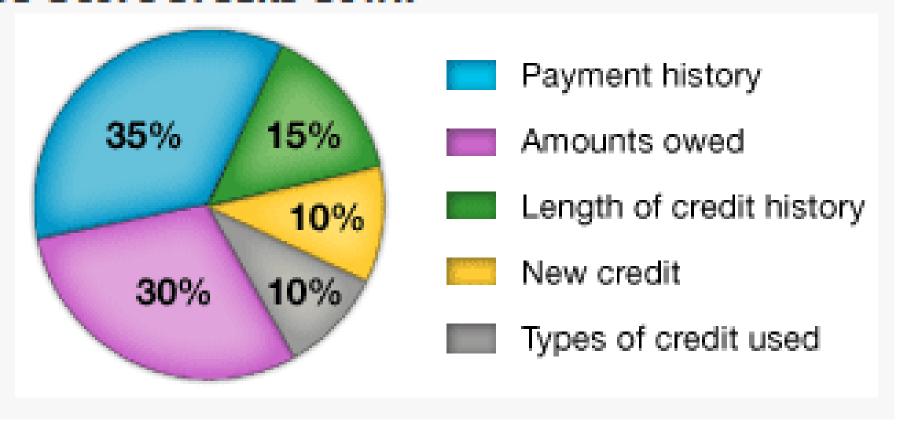
It's a 3 digit number that lenders use to measure risk for different types of lending. Including mortgage, auto, and personal finance loans.





How is the score calculated?

How a FICO Score breaks down





What is a Good Credit Score?

Scores range from:

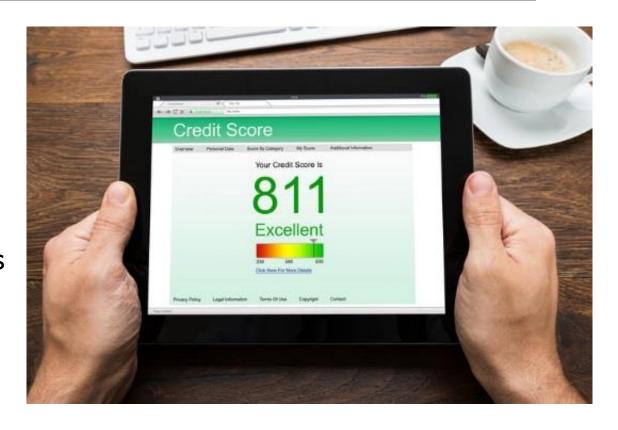
300 - 850

Range	FICO Score	Impact
Subprime (Poor/Low)	Under 620	No access or unfavorable rates & terms
Prime (Fair/Good)	620 - 780	Reasonable or good rates & terms
Super Prime (Excellent)	780+	Better or best rates & terms



How to Improve/Rebuild your Credit

- 1. Pay on time and consistently
- 2. Keep balances low (30% or less)
- 3. Don't close old accounts in good standing if you don't need to
- 4. Have 3 active trade lines
- 5. Maintain mix of active credit trade lines
- 6. Six months of good history and activity
- 7. Resolve debt collection problems
- 8. Correct mistakes on your credit report



Watch out for "credit repair" companies









THIS IS A FREE SERVICE!





Watch out for "credit repair" companies

WARNING SIGNS:

- They tell you not to contact the Credit Reporting Agencies
- They ask for an advance fee
- They don't give you a contract
- They don't explain to you your legal rights
- Promise you a "new credit identity"
- Tell you that they can remove information from your report, even if its accurate



STEP 5: Maximize Your Money

Utilize Free Money Saving and Asset Enhancing Programs Available to You!

CFE RESOURCE GUIDE

Utilize local free resources to maximize your money!



LMI County Residents qualify for:

- Match Savings Programs
- Financial Counseling
- Free Tax Preparation
- Career Development
- Small Business Development
- And more!

CFE ONLINE

Find Additional Information
About

- Money Managemnt Tools
 - Digital Resource Guide
 - VITA Tax Prep Locations
 - BankOn Safe and Affordable Checking Accounts

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

OPENING A CHECKING ACCOUNT

CREATE A BUDGET

FINANCIAL SERVICES

FINANCIAL TIPS

FREE TAX PREP

DOWNLOAD GUIDE

REACH US ONLINE

Website dcba.lacounty.gov

Social Media

Facebook: LACountyDCBA

Instagram: LACountyDCBA

Twitter: @LACountyDCBA

@LACoConsumidor

@LACountyCFE

@LACoSmallBiz

@LACimmigrants

Learn about current scam alerts, community events near you, consumer and small business news





How can we help you?









SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES



FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT



MINIMUM WAGE



SMALL CLAIMS & MEDIATION



