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My Credit Report

How do I dispute and correct inaccurate information in my credit report?

If you discover information on your credit report that you believe is inaccurate, you can take the following steps to dispute the information.

1. Highlight the errors on your credit report
2. Gather supporting documents that show your side of the story; for example, receipts or bank records showing that you made a payment on time that's recorded as late or delinquent.
3. Submit the information to the credit bureaus with a brief explanation (100 words or less).

You may find that some companies have forms on their websites that you can use, such as one offered by CFPB, which can be found [here](#).

You can also submit your information directly to the reporting lender.

After you submit your claim, you may need to wait 30 to 45 days before it's resolved and the corrected information appears on your credit report. Note however, that if the inquiry confirms that the information is accurate, the credit bureau or lender won't change it.

If you still have questions after your claim is rejected and want to pursue your dispute further, you can file a complaint against a bureau or lender with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau or with the Attorney General of your state. You can find more information about that [here](#).

How is my credit score calculated?

The three major credit bureaus, Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion, provide detailed information about a consumer's credit activity to companies that calculate a credit score. The two major companies providing credit scores are FICO® and VantageScore®. Each uses a proprietary method to calculate their score.

FICO considers the following factors when calculating your score:

Payment history (35%)

Do you make your payments on time?

Amounts owed (30%)

Do you owe too much to too many lenders?

Length of credit history (15%)

Does your record show that you can maintain your commitment over a period of time?

New credit (10%)

Have you opened multiple new accounts in a short period of time?

Credit mix (10%)

Do you have a variety of account types, such as credit cards, installment loans, or a mortgage?

VantageScore 3.0 considers the following factors when calculating your score

Payment history (40%)

Repayment behavior, such whether you pay on time or have delinquencies.

Depth of credit (21%)

How long you've been using credit.

Utilization (20%)

The ratio between available credit and used credit.

Balances (11%)

Total amount of reported debt.

Recent credit (5%)

The number or recent accounts opened plus credit inquiries (hard inquiries).

Available credit (3%)

Amount of credit available.

Both FICO Score and VantageScore range from 300 to 850. However, they divide the categories differently.

FICO® Score categories

300 – 499: Very poor

500 – 600: Poor

601 – 660: Fair

661 – 780: Good

781 – 850: Excellent

VantageScore 3.0® categories

300 – 600: Subprime

601 – 660: Near prime
651 – 780: Prime
781 – 850: Superprime

FICO produces several models of their FICO Score to accommodate different types of lending. Models also vary depending on which bureaus provide the data for them. The most common model is FICO Score 8, which along with FICO Score 9 are widely used for lending. Both use data from all bureaus, as do most other other models.

FICO Score models that are more specific include FICO Auto Score and FICO Bankcard Score, for lending associated with car purchases and credit card applications. Scores for these models range from 250 – 900.

Mortgage lending uses FICO Score 2, FICO Score 5, and FICO Score 4, which use data from only one of the three bureaus.

Disclaimer: FICO® Scores are developed independently by Fair Isaac Corporation. Most, but not all, lenders use FICO® Scores to determine a consumer's credit worthiness. We're not affiliated with FICO and have no influence on producing a FICO Score.

How do I improve my credit score?

You can take several steps to improve your credit score, but be aware that there are no quick fixes. You may be able to see your score tick up soon after you start trying to improve it. However, credit reports are updated month by month and it may take several months or even years before your credit score is where you want it to be.

1. Pay your bills on time. Late and delinquent payments make up much of what determines your credit score. You need to establish a good record of timely payments. Consider setting up autopay for your accounts.
2. Reduce your credit utilization. Credit utilization is another important factor in calculating your credit score. Keeping low balances on revolving accounts, such as credit cards, will help improve your score.
3. Avoid or limit opening new accounts, especially multiple accounts within a short period. When you apply for credit, the prospective lender makes a hard credit inquiry, which is reported to the credit bureaus. Lenders may interpret making multiple credit applications as you having potential money troubles and you're looking to take on debt to help .
4. If you have no credit history, or a thin credit history, you can look into other ways to help generate that history. One solution is a credit builder loan, where you make payments into an account over a set period of time (usually one or two years). These payments are reported to the credit bureaus, so you build credit history. If you pay monthly rent and

utilities, you should look into rent reporting options. With rent reporting, your landlord or property management company reports your monthly rent and utilities to the bureaus.

5. Keep older accounts open. Length of credit history works for you. The longer you have an account open, the more stable you look to the credit bureaus.
6. Consolidate your debts. Too many accounts may work against you, and closing accounts can have a negative impact. If possible reduce the number of accounts, but be careful of affecting credit utilization. Don't max out an account by consolidating it.
7. Use credit monitoring. Improving your credit score is a project, a credit monitoring app is a critical tool for helping you manage your credit profile.

Why is my score different from others I see, such as Credit Karma or other banking apps?

The credit bureaus pull your information from many different sources (such as lenders, collections, court records) at different times, there will always be discrepancies at any particular time between the reports from each credit bureau.

The financial institutions and companies that provide your credit score use different methods. Some rely on FICO Score[®] and some rely on VantageScore[®]. Even between those two companies, there are credit scores based on reports from one bureau, two bureaus, or all three bureaus.

Each of the three credit bureaus (Equifax[®], Experian[®], and TransUnion[®]) uses a different model to calculate a credit score and each gathers data independently.