

How Do I Begin To Repair My Credit?

According to the Wall Street Journal you should consider working with a nonprofit credit-counseling agency.

Consumers seeking help with debt need to tread carefully. As Americans' credit-card bills have spiraled out of control, the airwaves have filled with advertisements for "debt—settlement" services that say they'll help consumers settle debts for a fraction of what they owe. But they charge high upfront fees, and their strategies can drag down clients' credit scores and even make the debt burden balloon.

Nonprofit credit-counseling agencies offer a differed approach. After reviewing your financial situation, the agency may offer you a debt-management plan, which will help you steadily pay down the full amount owed over a period of roughly three to five years. Creditors will often reduce interest charges or waive fees for consumers participating in these plans.

A good place to start looking for a nonprofit credit counseling agency is www.debtadvice.org, a web site maintained by; the Nation Foundation for Credit Counseling. The NFCC sets guidelines on fees that member agencies can charge consumers and required agencies to proceed services free of charge if a consumer can't afford to pay. To find NFCC members agencies, click on "find a counselor now."

It is also a good idea to check your detailed credit reports at least once a year, which you can do free of charge at annualcreditreport.com .

What Should I Do if I am Struggling with My Mortgage Payments?

First contact the company that services your mortgage! Open a dialog as soon as you realize that this may be an issue. Most servicers and lenders employ loss control experts and are now more that ever willing to discuss options to prevent foreclosures.

1-888-955-HOPE

You can also call HOPE NOW, a coalition of counselors, servicers, investors which provide free phone based counseling and puts the homeowner in touch with servicers to find alternatives to foreclosure.

Find Local Help Now

<http://www.hud.gov/foreclosure/index.cfm>
www.housinghelpnow.org