



ACHIEVING CREDIT EXCELLENCE

DIY CREDIT REPAIR GUIDE

CONGRATULATIONS ON TAKING THE FIRST STEP TO REPAIRING YOUR OWN CREDIT! I'VE PREPARED THIS GUIDE TO HELP YOU ALONG YOUR JOURNEY. THIS STEP BY STEP APPROACH HELPED ME IN THE BEGINNING AND I HOPE IT DOES THE SAME FOR YOU!

XOXO
-MERCEDES COOPER

First: You need a credit monitoring service. Some of my favs listed below!

1. Smart Credit (tri-merged -- meaning you can see ALL 3 bureaus on the site) smartcredit.com/ace (I have partnered with this company)
2. Experian (premium membership) <https://www.experian.com/>
3. Annual Credit Report (free weekly until April 2021) <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/index.action>

Also, we have A LOT of data being housed about us with LexisNexis. If you plan on disputing public records you'll need to place a freeze on your consumer file. To do so follow the steps below:

Call LexisNexis at **888-497-0011** and say "Hey I'm calling to have a security freeze placed on my account and I would also like to request a full file disclosure."

For bankruptcy public records **collected after November 30, 2018**, TransUnion obtained information about your bankruptcy from third-party vendor, LCI. LCI may be contacted using the information provided below.

LCI Consumer Center
P. O. Box 1582
Burlingame, CA 94010
www.lciinc.com/transunionconsumers/

Another company you need to contact is **Sagestream**; they also report information about you to the 3 major credit bureaus and have been known to verify inquiries. To do so follow the steps below:

1. Call Sagestream at 888-395-0277 and request a copy of your consumer report and request that they place a freeze on your account. For more information visit their website:
[https://www.sagestreamllc.com/security-freeze/#:~:text=You%20may%20also%20call%20us,00%20PM%20\(Pacific%20Time\).](https://www.sagestreamllc.com/security-freeze/#:~:text=You%20may%20also%20call%20us,00%20PM%20(Pacific%20Time).)

GOT THAT DONE? GREAT LET'S MOVE ON!

Second: Review your credit reports! Start with one bureau at a time and **HIGHLIGHT ALL ERRORS AND NEGATIVE ITEMS!**

1. **Personal Information - its important to remove all old data because it links to the derogatory information on your credit report. Sometimes the bureaus will use this information to validate accounts you dispute.**
 - Inaccurate Names
 - Misspelled names
 - Old addresses
 - Addresses you've never lived at
 - DOBs
 - SSNs
 - Phone numbers
 - Employers
2. **Inquiries**
 - Unauthorized inquiries
 - Inquiries that are NOT attached to accounts
3. **Unpaid Closed Accounts, Derogatory Student Loans, Charged Off Accounts + Collections**
 - Balances
 - Dates
 - Payment history

- Company contact information
- Accounts that do NOT belong to you
 - Look for accounts that could belong to someone else with a similar name or same name without generation identifier
- Accounts that are closed but listed as open
- Joint accounts that ONLY belong to your spouse

4. Public Records

- Is all the information reporting the same on all 3 bureaus such as dates, court information, case/file numbers, contact information?
- Check for lawsuits you were NOT involved in or lawsuits that are still reporting after 7 years.
- Bankruptcies that were filed over 10 years ago.

Third, Dispute! Dispute! Dispute!

1. Once you have the items ready to dispute, create your letters. You can either create your own letters or purchase letters you need from my site here: www.achievingcreditexcellence.com/shop
2. Dispute 5 items per letter, per bureau.
3. The bureaus have 30 days to investigate and inform you of the outcome of an account and that 30 days starts the day they receive your letter, not when you send it!
4. More tips below on the disputing process!

When sending dispute letters here are some tips:

WHEN CONTACTING THE COLLECTION AGENCIES:

- Send CERTIFIED (it's okay if you choose not to — but you MUST keep up with dates)
- Do not sign your letters (only print your name if you write on this document — lessens the chance of them comparing signatures and validating debt on any documents you may have signed.
- Do NOT send the agency a copy of your ID. Do NOT send any additional information even if they ask. You are NOT on their payroll.
- Do respond to collection letters by sending a Debt Validation letter first.
- Do politely tell the rep who calls you from a collection agency to stop calling you and contact you via mail only and hang up. If they email you, respond by sending a debt validation letter to the company.
- Do NOT agree to payments over the phone.

WHEN CONTACTING THE CREDIT BUREAUS:

- ◆ Do NOT feel obligated to send all dispute letters certified (I know it can get expensive — sending certified is completely optional)
- ◆ Do include a copy of your identification (copy of DL + SSN card) — if your address is different on your license, send a utility bill.
- ◆ Do NOT sign any letters you hand write or type (same as collection agencies - if the bureaus can furnish proof provided by the original creditor — if you sign your letters all they have to do is compare signatures to verify debt — let's not make it easy for them)
- ◆ Do specify an action you want them to take on each letter (Update, remove late payment, delete account) they need to know what to do for accounts disputed.

WHEN CONTACTING THE CREDITOR:

- ▲ Do know your states SOL (statute of limitations) to avoid being sued.
- ▲ Only contact them directly via mail if you are sending a goodwill letter or are trying to settle the account by sending a Pay to Delete letter and be prepared to pay if they agree — BUT they don't have to agree to either option.
- ▲ Do NOT send a copy of your DL or SSN (it's their responsibility to keep up with all documents that verify your identity)
- ▲ Do NOT call them. Do NOT discuss payments over the phone. (No paper trail + could reset debt time clock if you agree to payment and don't and now you're back at square one and the account stays on your credit longer)

OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- ★ DO NOT DISPUTE ONLINE -- by doing so you give up rights to arbitration and agree to a 3 day investigation.
- ★ DO NOT RESEND THE SAME DISPUTE LETTER OVER AND OVER - get more firm with each letter and always follow up. You have a right to know what information the bureaus have about you, the right to know who furnished the information and the right to know the procedure used to verify the information that is being reported.
- ★ KEEP YOUR CREDIT UTILIZATION UNDER 30% ON ALL OF YOUR CREDIT CARDS!
- ★ BE PREPARED FOR STALL TACTICS:
 - The bureaus will send you a letter in response to your dispute requesting more ways to validate your identity even after you've sent your 2 forms of ID don't fall for their tricks! Call them out and let them know you won't stand for it. Demand an investigation of your dispute.
- ★ If a creditor fails to validate your debt:

- They can't collect on the debt.
- They are NOT allowed to contact you about the alleged debt.
- Per the FCRA, they are NOT allowed to report the debt. You can get up to \$1,000 per violation of the law according to the FCRA.

★ **CREDIT BUREAUS ADDRESSES:**

- Equifax Information Services LLC
PO Box 740256
Atlanta, GA 30374-0256
- Experian
PO Box 9701
Allen, TX 75013
- TransUnion Consumer Dispute Center
PO Box 2000
Chester, PA 19016

- ★ The credit bureaus have 30 days to respond to your disputes. If you dispute or call in about an account currently under investigation you grant the bureaus an additional 15 days to investigate.

WAYS TO CONTACT ME:

- ★ FACEBOOK GROUP: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AchievingCreditExcellence/>
- ★ E-mail: info@achievingcreditexcellence.com
- ★ YouTube: Credit Tips + Discussions posted on Tuesdays + Thursdays
www.youtube.com/LifeWithMC