

Here are some simple guidelines to help you with credit card account negotiations. The goal is to reduce interest rates and/or reduce minimum payments.

Contact your creditors when you **FIRST** realize you will be late with a payment or that your minimum monthly credit payments exceed your income, so you can explain the situation and work out a realistic repayment plan.

## NEGOTIATE

Negotiating pay-offs and lower interest rates is a key way to pay down your debt.

### 1. **Make the call.**

- Call the credit card company and ask for the Collections Department.
- Introduce yourself and explain that you intend to repay them, but, in order to do so, you are requesting their help in any way possible.
- Let them know that this credit account, as well as others, will be closed and no new ones will be opened.

### 2. **Listen well.**

- Let them make an offer - they might surprise you and give you more than you would have asked for.
- Write down all details of the conversation, and repeat it back to them to be certain of no misunderstandings.

### 3. **Speak up.**

- Ask if you can get even more concessions and, if so, what it would take.
- Be polite but **FIRM**. (Take note that those who work in collection departments are used to dealing with "dead-beat" customers and may be somewhat hardened to your requests.)
- If any adjustments to your account are made, make sure they send the changes to you **IN WRITING**.

## VERY IMPORTANT!

When making phone calls, be sure to **keep a record** of:

- ✓ time & date of call,
- ✓ first & last name of the representative,
- ✓ direct phone number,
- ✓ mailing address, and
- ✓ Email.

4. **If a second step is needed, or you cannot get through, due to excessive hold times, send them a letter.**
  - Again, introduce yourself and explain your situation and what you need.
  - Keep a copy of the letter.
  - Follow up with a phone call after they have had time to receive the letter.

**REMEMBER**

At least try!  
The worst they can  
do is say, “no.”

Be careful to keep a record of all the calls you make, including the name of the company representative, and the time and date you made the call.