

Boost your Credit Score

- Your credit score can affect everything from the interest rate on your loans to landing an apartment.
- Your credit score is based on the information found in your credit report.
- Knowing how long your activity remains on your credit report can help you better manage your credit score.

How long does information stay on my credit report?*

**Timeline is approximate and may vary depending on local legislation*

- **Fraud alerts – 90 days:** Fraud alerts are free to set up and require businesses to verify your identity before issuing credit in your name.
- **Promotional inquiries – 1 year:** Things like pre-approved credit card offers stay on file for one year but are not factored into your credit score.
- **Soft inquiries – 1–2 years:** These are inquiries made for background check purposes, or by you. They do not affect your credit score.
- **Credit counseling – 2–3 years:** This includes records of debts paid through a debt management program or credit counselor.
- **Hard inquiries – 6 years:** Made by other lenders or businesses; many inquiries in a short amount of time can lower your score.
- **Bad checks – 6 years:** Records of non-sufficient funds are kept for 6 years.
- **Account closures – 6 years:** For accounts closed due to debt or fraud.
- **Late payment history – 7 years**
- **Tax liens – 7 years:** This includes judgments (a court order that allows the creditor to use additional collection methods).

- **Bankruptcy – 7–10 years:** Depends on location and the type of bankruptcy filed for.
- **Good credit – 10+ years:** Accounts paid on time stick around for 10 years after their date of last activity.
- **Bankruptcy (again) – 14 years:** If you declare bankruptcy more than once, it stays on record for longer.

Your credit report checklist

- Request your free credit report from each of the main credit bureaus.
- Review your personal information and make sure that it's up-to-date.
- Read your credit report. If you need help, visit the credit bureau's website for guidance.
- Report any unauthorized activity to the issuing credit bureau.

Sources: Federal Trade Commission, Experian, TransUnion, LearnVest Planning Services