

Disputing credit report errors

What's included:

- *Reentry Tool: Disputing errors on your credit report*

What to do:

Use this tool to help your client understand how to address inaccurate or incomplete information on their credit report. If your client finds inaccurate or incomplete information in their credit report, they should file a dispute with the credit reporting company and the company that furnished the information.

- Give the tool to your client and walk them through the steps for filing a dispute.
- Explain to them what information and/or documents they will need to include in the dispute letter.

What to say:

"Inaccurate or incomplete information in your credit report can affect your credit score, your access to credit, and possibly the ability to get a job, housing, or insurance. It is important to get accurate information on your credit report. This tool will help you with filing a dispute with the credit reporting company and the company that furnished the information, e.g., lender."

To access a dynamic and fillable version of this tool, visit: www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/your-money-your-goals/companion-guides.



Disputing errors on your credit report

If you find an error on your credit report, it's important to get it fixed. To dispute an error, follow these steps.

1. Review your credit report. Circle any mistakes.

 2. Submit a dispute to the credit reporting company that provided the report with the error. You can dispute the error with each credit reporting agency either by submitting your dispute online or by sending it in the mail (which means you'll have a record). You can use the CFPB's letter template or find information for specific credit reporting companies here:
 - Equifax: [equifax.com/cp/MailInDisclosureRequest.pdf](https://www.equifax.com/cp/MailInDisclosureRequest.pdf)
 - TransUnion: [transunion.com/docs/personal/InvestigationRequest_Chester.pdf](https://www.transunion.com/docs/personal/InvestigationRequest_Chester.pdf)
 - Experian: [experian.com/disputes/experian-mailing-address.html](https://www.experian.com/disputes/experian-mailing-address.html)
 - CFPB template: http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/092016_cfpb__CreditReportingSampleLetter.pdf

 3. In your letter to the company, explain the error. You may want to include a copy of your credit report with the incorrect information circled. If you can, include copies (never send originals) of anything that proves there is an error. For example, if your report incorrectly shows that you are late on payments on an account, send copies of bills or cleared checks (money order stubs) that show you have paid them on time.

 4. Send a letter to the business or individual that provided the incorrect information. The address may be found on your credit report. You may want to include a copy of your credit report with the incorrect information circled. If you can, include copies (never send originals) of anything that proves there is an error.

 5. If sending letters by mail, you may wish to use certified mail, return receipt requested, if that is available to you. The post office will send a postcard telling you when your dispute letter was received.
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6. The credit reporting company generally has 30 calendar days (with an additional 15 days in some circumstances) to investigate your dispute. It has 5 business days to notify you of the results once it completes the investigation.

 7. If the error is fixed based on your dispute, you will also receive a copy of your updated credit report. This free report does not count as your annual free report.

 8. If a company provides the wrong information to a credit reporting company and then determines that it needs to correct your credit report as a result of your dispute, it must forward the correction to every credit reporting company to which it has provided the incorrect information.

 9. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your dispute(s), you may file a brief statement with the credit reporting company. In any subsequent report with the information disputed, the credit reporting company has to clearly note that the information has been disputed and provide your explanation or accurate summary of it.
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You also can submit a complaint with the CFPB at consumerfinance.gov/complaint. We will forward your complaint to the company and work to get you a response.

You also may want to seek assistance from an attorney. Visit consumerfinance.gov/askcfpb/1549 and lsc.gov/what-legal-aid/find-legal-aid.

This tool is included in the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's *Your Money, Your Goals: Focus on Reentry* companion guide. The CFPB has prepared this material as a resource for the public. This material is provided for educational and information purposes only. It is not a replacement for the guidance or advice of an accountant, certified financial advisor, attorney, or otherwise qualified professional. The CFPB is not responsible for the advice or actions of the individuals or entities from which you received the CFPB educational materials. The CFPB's educational efforts are limited to the materials that CFPB has prepared.

Sample dispute letter

You can use this sample dispute letter from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau website to a credit reporting agency as a guide for writing your own letter. It can also be found at http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/092016_cfpb_CreditReportingSampleLetter.pdf

1 Identifying information

- Your full name
- Consumer report/id number
- Date of birth
- Your address
- Driver's license number (optional)
- Social security number (optional)
- Today's date

2 Company information

- Name of company
- Company Address

3 Disputed items

- Your account number
- Dates of disputed information
- Explanation of inaccuracy
- Company that provided the disputed information
- Type of disputed information

4 Enclosures

- List any documents that are included

1 Sue A. Jones
Account # 1234-56678
DOB 12-01-1984
1234 Main Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

2 3/10/2016

3 Equifax Information Services, LLC
P.O. Box 740256
Atlanta, GA 30374

Dear Equifax:

I am writing to request an investigation of the following information that appears on my Equifax consumer report:

Dispute 1

- Account #: 1234-56789
- Dates associated with item being disputed: 12/01/2015
- Explanation of item being disputed: The account with Ficus Bank in question is showing as settled for less than full value, but I paid the full amount owed. Please update to show it as paid in full.

4 Enclosures:

- Copy of credit report with report number # 1234-56678
- Last billing statement from Ficus Bank
- Payoff Statement from Ficus Bank.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Sue A. Jones