



Center For Consumer Credit Counseling

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CENTER FOR SIOUXLAND

July 2017

Your Credit History

Dates to Remember	
*	<i>CCCC is closed every 2nd Thursday from 9:00—10:00.</i>
*	<i>CCCC will close at noon Monday, July 3rd.</i>
*	<i>CCCC will be closed Tuesday, July 4th.</i>
*	<i>CCCC will be closed Monday, September 4th.</i>

At Center For Siouxland we get a lot of questions about credit reports and scores. Your credit score is a 3 digit number that affects many financial decisions you will make in your lifetime. It may determine your cost of borrowing through interest rates and fees, as well as whether you get approved or denied for a new credit card, car loan or mortgage. Employers and insurers are also checking your credit to establish how responsible you are in other aspects of your life, and to determine how much of a risk you may be.

Checking your credit report regularly is an important step in maintaining healthy credit. In fact, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau recommends that consumers check their credit report at least once per year to verify the accuracy of the information contained in the report. Consumers are eligible to receive one free credit report per year from each of the three major credit bureaus. The only authorized source under federal law that provides free credit reports is www.annualcreditreport.com or 1-877-322-8228. The free reports do not include a score but will provide you with all of the information that is used to compile your credit score.

Center For Siouxland's Consumer Credit Counselors can pull your credit report along with your credit score and review it with you. With a better understanding of your credit history and score, we can help you develop a strong plan for your next steps to be credit ready and give you suggestions on improving your credit score so you can achieve your financial goals. Call our office to set up an appointment to review your credit report/score today, 712-252-1861, ext. 47.

****REMINDER****

It is important to send copies of statements from your creditors every 3 months. We need this information to verify balances of your accounts.

****NOTICE****

If you receive a notice from a creditor notifying you that they have either sold or purchased your account, please provide us with the updated information.

The IRS is Now Using Private Debt Collectors

From the Federal Trade Commission

Do you have debt with the IRS that's more than two years old? If so, you might be getting a letter from the IRS about your account being transferred to a private debt collector. This new program only applies to taxpayers who have had an IRS debt for years, and who were previously contacted about it by the IRS. Here's how it will work, and how to spot a scam.

If your debt is put into this program, the IRS says you will get two letters. **The first letter** will come from the IRS and will say which private debt collection company your account has been assigned to. The companies are: CBE, ConServe, Perfomant, or Pioneer. **The second letter** will come from the private debt collection company assigned to your account. **Both letters** will include the tax amount owed, the name of the private debt collection company assigned, and a taxpayer authentication number that is unique to you.

But here's how you can tell you're dealing with the actual debt collector, not a scammer.

- The private debt collectors working with the IRS **will never ask you to pay them directly**. Instead, they'll tell you to pay electronically at [IRS.gov/payments](https://www.irs.gov/payments), or send a check, made out to the US Treasury, directly to the IRS. Anyone who says they're collecting for the IRS and asks you to make a payment over the phone is a scammer. Whether they're asking you to pay by credit or debit card, electronic check, wiring money, or a prepaid or gift card, **DON'T DO IT!**
- These debt collectors will never use robocalls or pre-recorded messages. You'll always speak to a live operator.
- These debt collectors will always use the authentication number that was in your letters. They will already know the authentication number and will not ask you to give it to them. If they ask you to tell them your authentication number, they are a scammer. Do not give your authentication number to anyone.

Not sure you owe the IRS money? Ask the collector for a written "validation notice," which says what you owe and to whom. You also can go to [IRS.gov/balancedue](https://www.irs.gov/balancedue) to check your account balance. If your account balance says zero, you don't owe money and should not be getting calls.

To learn more about this process, check out the IRS's site. And remember, all debt collectors have to follow the law. Know your rights, and tell the FTC if you spot a problem.

Center For Siouxland's Consumer Credit Counselors can assist you with creating a budget. They will discuss all of your options, and help you create an action plan to manage your debt. Contact Center For Siouxland's Consumer Credit Counselors at 712-252-1861 x 47. You can also visit our website www.centerforsiouxland.org or find us on Facebook.