

A SHORT GUIDE ON CREDIT REPORTS FOR CURRENT & FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

What is a Credit Report?

Credit reports are a way that credit reporting agencies, also known as CRAs, summarize information about your credit history.

Your credit report lists things like credit cards and loans taken out in your name, and shows whether you paid what you owe on time or not.

Why should I check my Credit Report?

If your credit report has incorrect information or unpaid debts, it can lower your credit score and make it harder to rent an apartment, get approved for a credit card, open a bank account, or get a loan for school or a car.

If there is a mistake or someone has used your identity to open accounts, you will want to fix your credit report right away.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR CREDIT REPORT

1 Regularly check your credit reports

Under the law, you can get one free copy of your credit report from **each** of the three Credit Reporting Agencies "CRAs" (***Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion***) every 12 months. The **recommended** place to get the free reports is at www.annualcreditreport.com or by requesting them at 1-877-322-8228.

2 If you see something wrong, contact the credit reporting agencies (CRAs)

If you see a mistake on your credit report, you have the right to tell the credit reporting agency and get it fixed. Contact each CRA separately (there are three) – **Experian**, **Equifax**, and **TransUnion**.

Be ready to provide your identification and a written statement about what is wrong on your report and your request that it be corrected or removed.

3 If you see accounts that you don't recognize, you may be the victim of identity theft.

Someone may have used your personal information to get credit cards or loans that will show up on your credit report.

First, contact the **Identity Theft Resource Center (ITRC)** at www.idtheftcenter.org or **888-400-5530**. They will provide you with help and information on the next steps.