

## Talking to Service Members About Credit

From understanding how credit works, to paying off debt, to protecting their financial futures, service members need to know how to utilize the credit resources available to them – and you can help guide them in a safe, smart direction.

Help service members understand the essential role credit plays in financial and mission readiness. With knowledge of how to build, manage and monitor credit, service members can:

- Avoid debt traps
- Achieve financial stability
- Protect against identity theft
- Maintain security clearance status

### Resources

- The Office of Financial Readiness: <https://finred.usalearning.gov/>
- Encourage service members to check their credit report at least once per year: <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/index.action>
- “Guard What’s Yours: Monitor Your Credit” infographic: <https://finred.usalearning.gov/assets/downloads/FINRED-MonitorCredit-I.pdf>

## How to Start the Conversation

- “Do you regularly use a credit card? If so, do you pay off the balance in full each month?”
- “Have you ever struggled with credit card debt?”
- “Do you know how to build good credit?”
- “Do you understand why good credit is important?”
- “Have you checked your credit report yet this year?”
- “Do you know what strategies you can use to raise your credit score?”
- “Did you know that a rapidly falling credit score can affect your security clearance?”
- “What steps have you taken to protect yourself against identity theft?”
- “Are you familiar with how to use credit screening and freezing?”

- “Locking Down Your Credit: Checking/Banking Account Screening and Freezing” blog: <https://medium.com/@dodfinred/locking-down-your-credit-checking-banking-account-screening-and-freezing-4b90750968ff>

Personal financial managers and counselors can help continue the conversation. Share this contact information for your local PFM or PFC:



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