



Take These Steps if You're Falling Behind on Payments

National nonprofit credit counseling agency Take Charge America shares how consumers can regain financial control and confidence

PHOENIX – (June 15, 2021) – Even though many Americans are rebounding from the economic effects of the pandemic, millions remain impacted as they struggle to keep up with bills or are at risk of falling further behind.

“For those still struggling, the prospect of falling behind on bills is emotionally stressful and can leave them feeling hopeless and helpless,” said Michael Sullivan, a personal financial consultant with Take Charge America, a [nonprofit credit counseling and debt management agency](#). “While it may seem impossible to catch up, understanding your options and taking action will help you regain confidence and control of your finances.”

Sullivan shares six tips for consumers who have fallen behind on bills:

- **Ask for help.** Contact your creditors and lenders about assistance programs. Whether it's mortgage forbearance or credit card hardship plans, most lenders offer some form of help during temporary financial struggles. The sooner you reach out, the more options are available.
- **Rework your budget.** Scrutinize your budget and eliminate any unnecessary expenses, at least until you're current on all your bills. Cut out non-essential items like extra subscriptions or entertainment. Focus on essential expenses to free up as much cash as you can.
- **Prioritize your bills.** All bills are not created equal when you fall behind. You want to prioritize them in a way that protects your ability to earn an income. That may look different for you depending on your situation, but generally, you'll want to pay bills in this order of importance: rent/mortgage, vehicle loan, utilities, insurance, then credit cards.
- **Explore gig work.** Gig work offers flexibility to earn extra cash on your own schedule. From walking dogs through Rover to fulfilling shopping requests with Shipt, there are numerous gig opportunities to help with bills even while still working a full-time job.
- **Sell unwanted stuff.** Another great way to generate extra cash is selling used items. Online platforms like Facebook Marketplace, eBay and OfferUp are great places to put items up for sale. Designate your sales earnings for your bills.
- **Consider credit counseling.** Consider a [free credit counseling session](#) from a nonprofit credit counseling agency such as Take Charge America. Done either online or over the phone, you'll review your complete financial picture and receive a customized action plan including a personalized budget to help you determine the best course of action for your situation.

For more financial tips, visit Take Charge America's [Financial Education Center](#).

About Take Charge America, Inc.

Founded in 1987, Take Charge America, Inc. is a nonprofit agency offering financial education and counseling services including credit counseling, debt management, student loan counseling, housing counseling and bankruptcy counseling. It has helped more than 2 million consumers nationwide manage their personal finances and debts. To learn more, visit takechargeamerica.org or call (888) 822-9193.

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