

Why are so many senior citizens facing credit card debt?

- Increased health care costs
- Gambling
- Lower interest rates on investments
- Loss of job before planned retirement
- Low retirement income

For what purchases do senior citizens use credit cards?

- Prescription drugs
- Home repairs
- Groceries
- Financial assistance for adult children

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Resources

To report fraud:
1-877-FTC-HELP

To know your rights:
1-888-8-PUEBLO

To get a copy of your credit report:

TransUnion
1-800-916-8800

Equifax
1-800-685-1111

Experian
1-888-397-3742

To contact the Better Business Bureau for the Erie County area:

BBB of Western Pennsylvania
(412) 456-2700

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Senior Citizens and Credit Cards

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It's a fact

- ▶ 59 percent of households headed by an individual 65 years of age or older carry outstanding debt.¹
- ▶ Senior citizens 65 and over carry an average credit card debt of \$4,041, almost double the amount from ten years ago.²
- ▶ Bankruptcy filings among those 65 and over represent only about 4.6 percent of the total petitions, but they also represent the age segment with the fastest growing percentage.²

¹Vincentini, Chris and Pete Jacques (2004), "Seniors Get Ready to Charge," LIMRA's MarketFacts Quarterly, Winter, Vol. 23, Issue 1, pg. 64-68.

²Powell, Eileen A. (2004), "Older Americans Take on More Debt and Pay Dearly," Houston Chronicle, July 7, pg. 3.

Are you in debt? What to do

- ▶ Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- ▶ Ask your creditors to give you lower interest rates.
- ▶ Don't use convenience checks to make payments.
- ▶ Use your credit card for necessary purchases only.

For your security and protection, DO NOT

- ▶ Give out personal information over the phone to an unsolicited caller. Personal information includes your Social Security number, address, bank account numbers, credit card numbers, telephone numbers, or date of birth.
- ▶ Write your personal identification number (PIN) on your credit card.
- ▶ Have more than two major credit cards.
- ▶ Charge more than you can afford each month.
- ▶ Lend your credit card to others.

DO

- ▶ Keep all receipts and check the transactions on each monthly statement.
- ▶ Shred any papers that carry your personal information and credit card number before you throw them away.
- ▶ Sign the back of your credit card as soon as you receive it in the mail.
- ▶ Check with your local Better Business Bureau if you are considering an offer from an unsolicited caller or telemarketer.

Did you know?

- ▶ If you miss a payment on one of your credit cards, your other credit card companies may raise your rate.
- ▶ Having a fixed APR does not guarantee that it will always remain the same.
- ▶ Creditors can change the terms of your agreement if they send you a letter in writing.
- ▶ Your credit score is a number between 300 and 850 that is used by creditors to decide whether to give you credit and on what terms. The higher the number, the better your credit rating.
- ▶ Some estimates show that senior citizens are swindled out of \$40 billion each year.