



Did You Know?...

...Credit Health



Did You Know...

...that many scam artists target people already in debt?

According to the FTC, consumers should beware of:

- Ads Promising Debt Relief but are really offering bankruptcy. Bankruptcy is a last resort because it stays on your credit report for 10 years and may even prevent you from getting jobs in the future.
- Advance-Loan Fee scams requiring an upfront payment to get a credit card or loan.
- Credit Repair scams that suggest you invent a new report or dispute everything in your credit report. These methods are illegal.

For more information about your union's Union Plus programs visit

www.UnionPlus.org

- Did you know that if you are having trouble paying your debts it is far better to contact your debtors than avoid them?**

Contact your creditors and let them know why you are having trouble making your payments. Do this before your account is turned over to a debt collector. The creditor is more likely to work out manageable terms of payment with you than a debt collector.

- Did you know that if you pay one bill late, you may be penalized by your other creditors?**

This is especially true of credit card companies. It's called "universal default" and people are usually surprised when this happens because these clauses are often written in the fine print. The solution? First, be aware of the terms of your credit cards and know what the universal default rate is if you make a late payment of more than 30 days on any of your debts. Secondly, avoid making the payment late.

Finally, switch to a card like the Union Plus MasterCard that does not use universal default to penalize consumers.

- Did you know there are rules about how and when a debt collector can contact you?**

Under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, a debt collector may not call you before 8 a.m. and after 9 p.m. or at work if they know your employer objects. They may not harass you, lie or use unfair tactics to get the money owed. And they are obligated to honor any written notices to stop contacting you.

- Did you know that Union Plus has a number of programs to help union members get back to financial freedom?**

Union Plus Credit Counseling offers free credit advice and discounts on personalized budget plans. The Union Plus Mortgage Program can help you get cash to purchase, sell or refinance a home even if you have less than perfect credit. For existing UP Mortgage customers, there's the Mortgage Assistance Program to help you in certain instances where you've lost your income. Visit the debt management Web site – **www.UnionDebtHelp.org** for more UP programs designed to help you when you need it most.

More information is available from the Federal Trade Commission's Web site www.ftc.gov.