

# Debt collector response sample letter

You're saying: "Tell me more about this debt."

Use the sample letter on the next page to ask for more information about this debt.

## How to use this sample letter:

1. Read the background below.
2. Fill in your information on the sample letter and edit it as needed to fit your situation. Delete any parts that don't apply to you.
3. Print and send the letter as soon as you can. Keep a copy for your records. You should consider sending the letter by certified mail or another method by which you can establish when the letter is received by the intended recipient.

## Background

Send this letter as soon as you can -- if at all possible, within 30 days of when a debt collector contacts you the first time about a debt. This is important because, under the Federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, your legal rights to obtain verification information from a debt collector are greater during the 30-day period.

When a debt collector is asking you to pay money, you're entitled to ask for details. The sample letter below will help you to get details on the following:

- Why a debt collector thinks you owe this debt.
- The amount of the debt and how old it is.
- Details about the debt collector's authority to collect this money.

A debt collector may not have a legal obligation to provide some or all of the information you seek, even if you request it within the 30-day period. If the collector doesn't give you what you request, that doesn't necessarily mean the debt collector has broken any laws or has given up a legal right to collect from you.

After you send your letter:

- If the debt collector makes vague statements about what will happen if you do not pay, read their response to your letter carefully. If they tell you that they intend to sue you, you should take that seriously. Federal law prohibits a debt collector from threatening to take any action they can't take or that they don't intend to take.
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If you have specific questions, you may want to contact a lawyer. If you need a lawyer, you can:

- Review this list of [state legal services](#).
- Find lawyer referrals in your county and state by visiting the websites for your local or county bar association, or [legal aid](#).

State laws, have statutes of limitations, or limited time periods when creditors or debt collectors can file a lawsuit to collect a debt.

- These periods of time can be two years or longer.
- The period of time varies by state and by the type of debt.
- In some states, even a partial payment on the debt will restart the time period.

If you suspect that the debt may be beyond the statute of limitations, you may want to consult a lawyer before making any payment on a debt.

Not all states require debt collectors to be licensed. Where a license is required, knowing whether or not a debt collector is licensed may be useful. If the debt collector isn't conducting itself properly, you can contact the state licensing agency.

Sample letter begins on the next page

[Your name]  
[Your return address]  
[Date]

[Debt collector name]  
[Debt collector Address]  
Re: [Account number for the debt, if you have it]

Dear [Debt collector name]:

I am responding to your contact about a debt you are trying to collect. You contacted me by **[phone/mail]**, on **[date]** and identified the debt as **[any information they gave you about the debt]**.

Please supply the information below so that I can be fully informed:

Why you think I owe the debt and to whom I owe it, including:

- The name and address of the creditor to whom the debt is currently owed, the account number used by that creditor, and the amount owed.
- If this debt started with a different creditor, provide the name and address of the original creditor, the account number used by that creditor, and the amount owed to that creditor at the time it was transferred. When you identify the original creditor, please provide any other name by which I might know them, if that is different from the official name. In addition, tell me when the current creditor obtained the debt and who the current creditor obtained it from.
- Provide verification and documentation that there is a valid basis for claiming that I am required to pay the debt to the current creditor. For example, can you provide a copy of the written agreement that created my original requirement to pay?
- If you are asking that I pay a debt that somebody else is or was required to pay, identify that person. Provide verification and documentation about why this is a debt that I am required to pay.

The amount and age of the debt, including:

- A copy of the last billing statement sent to me by the original creditor.
- State the amount of the debt when you obtained it, and when that was.
- If there have been any additional interest, fees or charges added since the last billing statement from the original creditor, provide an itemization showing the dates and amount of each added amount. In addition, explain how the added interest, fees or other charges are expressly authorized by the agreement creating the debt or are permitted by law.
- If there have been any payments or other reductions since the last billing statement from the original creditor, provide an itemization showing the dates and amount of each of them.

- If there have been any other changes or adjustments since the last billing statement from the original creditor, please provide full verification and documentation of the amount you are trying to collect. Explain how that amount was calculated. In addition, explain how the other changes or adjustments are expressly authorized by the agreement creating the debt or permitted by law.
- Tell me when the creditor claims this debt became due and when it became delinquent.
- Identify the date of the last payment made on this account.
- Have you made a determination that this debt is within the statute of limitations applicable to it? Tell me when you think the statute of limitations expires for this debt, and how you determined that.

Details about your authority to collect this debt.

- I would like more information about your firm before I discuss the debt with you. Does your firm have a debt collection license from my state? If not, say why not. If so, provide the date of the license, the name on the license, the license number, and the name, address and telephone number of the state agency issuing the license.
- If you are contacting me from a place outside my state, does your firm have a debt collection license from that place? If so, provide the date of the license, the name on the license, the license number, and the name, address and telephone number of the state agency issuing the license.

I have asked for this information because I have some questions. I need to hear from you to make an informed decision about your claim that I owe this money. I am open to communicating with you for this purpose. In order to make sure that I am not put at any disadvantage, in the meantime please treat this debt as being in dispute and under discussion between us.

In addition to providing the information requested above, please let me know whether you are prepared to accept less than the balance you are claiming is owed. If so, please tell me in writing your offer with the amount you will accept to fully resolve the account.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

[*Your name*]