

## What should I do if a collection agency or company keeps calling me about my debt?

Consult our “Collection Agency Tip Sheet” <https://communitylegalcentre.ca/tcodownloads/collection-agencies-tip-sheet/>. This tip sheet explains what to do if you disagree that you owe the debt, how and when the collection agency can contact you, and may answer a number of other questions that you may have.

**Note:** If it has been more than 2 years since you last paid the debt or last admitted to owing the debt, **do not take any steps that may indicate you owe this debt.**

If you want a collection agency or company to stop contacting you about a debt, an option is to send a letter that includes:

- The name and address of the collection company
- Your name and account number
- The name of the original creditor (the company you originally owed the debt to)
- The reasons why you deny owing the debt
- The date
- Your signature

You may also choose to inform them that you are low-income. They may stop calling if they know about your financial situation. **You should keep a copy of the letter for your records.**

## Who can I contact for help to manage my debt?

Credit Counsellors and Licenced Insolvency Trustees (LITs) are can help you manage your financial troubles. There are also services available at reduced costs to low-income individuals.

### Resolve Credit and Financial Counselling

Resolve is a non-profit credit counselling service. They are a reliable resource for qualified and confidential advice on managing money and overcoming debt.

Resolve’s ‘Dollars and Sense’ information booklet is a resource for general financial planning. It can be found here: <https://resolvecounselling.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/RCScreditWeb17.pdf>

Resolve can help you to with a 'Debt Management Plan' (DMP) to pay off your debt. Clients can choose to pay off an outstanding balance as quickly (or slowly) as they please. With a DMP, Resolve will contact your creditors and negotiate payment arrangements and try to stop or reduce interest charges.

There are offices in: **Kingston, Belleville, Brockville, Gananoque, Napanee, Ottawa, and Smiths Falls**

To get started with Resolve, fill out their free online assessment at: <https://resolvecounselling.org/credit-financial-counselling-services/>

### Licensed Insolvency Trustees (LITs)

LITs provide financial advice, help you understand how to pay back your debt, and explore other options such as filing consumer proposals and for bankruptcy. Once a proposal or bankruptcy is filed, the LIT will deal directly with creditors on your behalf and unsecured creditors cannot continue or initiate collection actions or legal proceedings against you.

For more information, and to find a LIT near you, visit Bankruptcy Canada's website at: <https://www.bankruptcy-canada.ca/licensed-insolvency-trustee>

### What should I do if I am being sued for money I owe?

If you are being sued for a debt you will be served with a Plaintiff's Claim. You have 20 days to file a Defence. **If you do not reply (defend) the Claim, a default judgment may be made against you.**

Steps-to-Justice is a reliable resource for any legal questions you may have. They have a section devoted to the Small Claims Court found at: <https://stepstojustice.ca/legal-topic/tribunals-and-courts/small-claims-court>

The Ministry of the Attorney General has a guide to replying to a Small Claims Court Claim, found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/guide-procedures-small-claims-court/replying-claim>.