



Consumer Financial  
Protection Bureau

# CFPB Monthly Complaints Snapshot Spotlights Credit Reporting Complaints

Report Also Includes In-Depth Look at Consumer Complaints in New Mexico

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) released its monthly consumer complaint snapshot, highlighting credit reporting complaints. The report shows that consumers continue to complain about incorrect information on their credit reports as well as difficulty having errors resolved. This month’s report also highlights trends seen in complaints coming from New Mexico. As of May 1, 2016 the Bureau has handled over 882,800 total complaints across all products.

“Credit reports are the foundation of consumers’ financial lives” said CFPB Director Richard Cordray. “Consumers continue to express their frustration about inaccurate information on their credit reports and difficulty in getting these errors fixed. We will continue to work to ensure that credit report disputes are investigated, errors are fixed, and consumers are treated fairly.”

The Monthly Complaint Report can be found at:

[http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/201605\\_cfpb\\_monthly-complaint-report-vol-11.pdf](http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/201605_cfpb_monthly-complaint-report-vol-11.pdf)

## Product Spotlight: Credit Reporting

Consumer reporting companies track a consumer's credit history and other information about the consumer. Errors in a consumer's file can affect everything from a consumer's eligibility to take out a mortgage to whether they are eligible for a job. Since the CFPB began accepting credit reporting complaints in October 2012, the Bureau has handled approximately 143,700 credit reporting complaints. Some of the findings in the snapshot include:

- **Consumers complain about incorrect information on credit reports:** Over three quarters of credit reporting complaints—77 percent—submitted to the Bureau by consumers are related to incorrect information appearing on their reports. Frequently, these complaints are about a debt collection item that has been paid but appears as an unpaid debt on the report, a debt that is not recognized by the consumer, or a debt that is no longer due because it has passed the point of being enforceable in court.
- **Consumers report difficulty disputing inaccuracies:** Consumers consistently report difficulties disputing inaccuracies on their credit report. Consumers complained about experiencing long delays trying to speak to a representative at the consumer reporting company that created the report or the company that furnished the information. Other consumers complained of negative customer service experiences when they were able to get through to a representative.
- **High-volume complaint companies:** Out of all credit reporting complaints submitted to the Bureau between December 2015 and February 2016, 95 percent involved the three nationwide credit reporting companies—Equifax, Experian, and Transunion. Some of these complaints are related to information companies furnished to the credit reporting companies.
- **Specialty consumer reporting companies:** In addition to complaints against the three nationwide credit reporting companies, consumers have submitted more than 2,000 complaints regarding specialty consumer reporting companies. These companies

specialize in providing reports in areas including background and employment screening, checking account screening, rental screening, and insurance screening.

Because of the significance of credit reports, consumer reporting companies have been a major focus for the CFPB. The Bureau has published tips and guidance for how consumers can review their credit report and can get and keep a good credit score, which can be found

at: [http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/2011/07/CFPB\\_20110719\\_CreditScoresFlyer.pdf](http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/2011/07/CFPB_20110719_CreditScoresFlyer.pdf)

## National Complaint Overview

As of May 1, 2016 the CFPB has handled 882,800 complaints nationally. Some of the findings from the statistics being published in this month's snapshot report include:

- **Complaint volume:** For April 2016, the most-complained-about financial product or service was debt collection. Of the 23,870 complaints handled in April, approximately 7,330 of them were about debt collection. The second most-complained-about consumer product was credit reporting, which accounted for approximately 4,587 complaints. The third most-complained-about financial product or service was mortgages, accounting for approximately 4,347 complaints. These three products accounted for about 68 percent of complaints submitted in April 2016.
- **Product trends:** In a year-to-year comparison examining the three month time period of February to April 2016 versus the same time period 12 months before, student loan complaints showed the greatest increase—48 percent—of any product or service. The Bureau received 669 student loan complaints between February and April 2015, while it received 992 complaints during the same time period in 2016.
- **State information:** New Mexico, Minnesota, and Indiana experienced the greatest year-to-year complaint volume increases from the February to April 2016 period versus the same time period 12 months before; with New Mexico up 41 percent, Minnesota up 33 percent, and Indiana up 26 percent.
- **Most-complained-about companies:** The top three companies that received the most complaints from December 2015 through February 2016 were credit reporting companies Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion.

## Geographic Spotlight: New Mexico

This month, the CFPB highlighted complaints from New Mexico for the report's monthly geographic spotlight. As of May 1, 2016, consumers in New Mexico have submitted 4,700 of the 882,800 complaints the CFPB has handled. Findings from the New Mexico complaints include:

- **Debt collection is the most-complained-about product or service:** Consumers in New Mexico submit more complaints about debt collection than any other financial product or service. Debt collection accounted for 31 percent of the complaints submitted to the Bureau by New Mexicans, while nationally debt collection complaints account for 27 percent of complaints.
- **Rate of mortgage complaints lower than national rate:** While mortgage-related complaints make up about 26 percent total volume nationally, consumer complaints about mortgage made up only 19 percent of total complaints from New Mexico.
- **Most-complained-about companies:** In the March 2015 to February 2016 time period, the three most complained about companies by New Mexicans were TransUnion, Experian, and Equifax.

The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, which created the CFPB, established consumer complaint handling as an integral part of the CFPB's work. The CFPB began accepting complaints as soon as it opened its doors in July 2011. It currently accepts complaints on many consumer financial products, including credit cards, mortgages, bank accounts and services, private student loans, vehicle and other consumer loans, credit reporting, money transfers, debt collection, and payday loans.

In June 2012, the CFPB launched its Consumer Complaint Database, which is the nation's largest public collection of consumer financial complaints. When consumers submit a complaint they have the option to share publicly their explanation of what happened. For more individual-level complaint data and to read consumers' experiences, visit the Consumer Complaint Database at:

[www.consumerfinance.gov/complaintdatabase/](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/complaintdatabase/).

Company-level complaint data in the report uses a three-month rolling average of complaints sent by the Bureau to companies for response. This data lags other complaint data in this report by two months to reflect that companies are expected to close all but the most complicated complaints within 60 days. After the CFPB forwards a complaint to a company, the company also has 15 days to respond, confirming a commercial relationship with the consumer. Company-level information should be considered in the context of company size.

To submit a complaint, consumers can:

- Go online at [www.consumerfinance.gov/complaint/](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/complaint/)
- Call the toll-free phone number at 1-855-411-CFPB (2372) or TTY/TDD phone number at 1-855-729-CFPB (2372)
- Fax the CFPB at 1-855-237-2392
- Mail a letter to: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, P.O. Box 4503, Iowa City, Iowa 52244
- Additionally, through “Ask CFPB,” consumers can get clear, unbiased answers to their questions at [consumerfinance.gov/askcfpb](http://consumerfinance.gov/askcfpb) or by calling 1-855-411-CFPB (2372).