

Know Your Rights!

KNOW
YOUR
RIGHTS

Predatory Debt Collectors Want Your Money!

Are debt collectors harassing you? Have debt collectors sued you or threatened to take money from your bank account or paycheck? If so, you're not alone. Debt collectors use harassment, abuse, and fraud to take New Yorkers' money, often targeting low-income New Yorkers of color, especially older adults, women, and immigrants.

How Can I Protect Myself Against Abusive Debt Collection?

Here are four important things you should know if a debt collector contacts you, sues you, or threatens to take money from your bank account or paycheck. In general:

- 1. You have a right to information about a debt you supposedly owe.** If a debt collector claims you owe a debt, you can send the debt collector a letter disputing the debt and asking for more information about the debt. The debt collector must stop trying to collect from you until it sends you more information about the debt. Check out fjhotline.nyc for a sample dispute letter.
- 2. Debt collectors must stop contacting you upon your request.** Debt collectors often try to pressure you into paying debts you can't or don't have to pay. If you want a debt collector to stop contacting you, you can send a letter telling them to stop.
- 3. Don't ignore court papers.** If you receive court papers saying you owe a debt, seek legal advice. If you don't respond to the court papers, the debt collector could easily get a court judgment against you and use that to try to take money from your bank account or paycheck.
- 4. Your income may be legally protected from debt collection.** New York and federal law protects or "exempts" certain kinds of income from debt collection, including government benefits and most of your recent wages. In general, a debt collector cannot take exempt funds from you to pay a debt.

Predatory debt collection is a major economic and racial justice issue – just one of many ways that financial services companies target and extract wealth from people living in low-income, Black and brown neighborhoods.

For more info, call the NYC Financial Justice Hotline: 212-925-4929

The hotline provides free legal advice to low-income NYC residents.

Hotline hours: M 4-6 pm | T, W, Th 12-2 pm *Se habla español.*



Find more Know Your Rights info for New Yorkers at fjhotline.nyc

This flyer is intended to provide general information to New Yorkers, and is not intended as legal advice.

New Economy Project operates the NYC Financial Justice Hotline, a free legal assistance hotline for low-income New Yorkers. New Economy Project's mission is to build a just economy that works for all, rooted in racial and gender justice, cooperation, neighborhood equity, and ecological sustainability. © 2024 New Economy Project | neweconomynyc.org