

# The Road to Financial Freedom

## THE LOWDOWN ON LEASING



**W**hat does it mean to lease a car, as opposed to buying? Leasing a car is similar to renting an apartment or a house. According to Autos.com, an online resource that offers car-buying research information, “When you buy you are paying to own the car; when you lease you are paying to use the car.”

When it is time for you to purchase another vehicle is leasing a good option? This article should give you a brief introduction if you consider leasing.

### Pros Of Leasing A Vehicle

- **Leases usually have lower monthly payments.** CarBuyingTips.com, an online guide for car buying, leasing, and avoiding dealer



scams, states that monthly payments are usually lower than a financed vehicle because

you only pay for depreciation during the lease term. However, be aware that just because your monthly payments are lower with a lease it doesn't necessarily mean that you are getting a better deal than buying. Empowering yourself with as much information as possible before you shop for a vehicle is the best defense against misinformation from car dealers.

- **Leases require little money down.** In most cases, you do not have to come up with a costly down payment to lease a car.



You may be required to pay a security deposit. Be cautious of dealers that require you to put down thousands of dollars for a car lease. This may be a scam to charge you more money.

- **You have a good warranty.** Leased vehicles usually come with a comprehensive warranty, so you pay very little for repair bills. If you buy a car, you may eventually pay it off, but you will still be responsible for repair bills, which can become frequent and expensive as a vehicle ages.

### Things To Consider

- **Gap Insurance.** According to Edmunds.com, if your leased car is stolen or totaled in an accident, there could be a gap between what your insurance company agrees to pay for the loss and the actual amount you are required to pay to the leasing company. Gap insurance helps cover you for this loss.

- **You have mileage restrictions.** If you travel a lot, you may want to reconsider leasing and weigh your options. According to CarBuyingTips.com, the average lease allows drivers 12,000 miles per year. If you exceed your mileage, you may be charged from 10 to 15 cents for each mile over the limit allowed. Consider asking a dealer if you can buy extra miles up front which may be rolled into your lease payment.

- **Read all fine print.** If you decide to lease, make sure you are aware of all clauses included in your agreement. A car that looks like it has “excessive” wear and tear may allow the dealer to keep your security deposit. It is important to have all scheduled maintenance performed at an authorized dealer. In addition, some leases may not allow you to make any alterations to your vehicle.

Before signing the lease agreement, be sure to read all of the clauses carefully so that you are aware of the rules that pertain.



## Leasing Checklist

**K**eep yourself on track with this simple leasing checklist.



- Find a vehicle-savvy friend who can help you with the process of finding a new car.
- Shop around and research your options thoroughly before you settle on a particular vehicle.
- Call your insurance carrier to get a price quote on the car you want to lease.
- Research lease specials by going to websites such as Edmunds.com or USNews.com.
- Review the Lease Agreement. Pay attention to these details once you get to an agreement:

The length of the lease in months (Edmunds.com recommends 36 months).

- The amount due at signing (Edmunds.com suggests no money down).
- The number of miles allowed per year (usually 12,000).
- The monthly payment, including taxes and all fees.
- The inclusion of gap insurance in the contract.
- Read all the fine print. Be sure to find a deal that requires no down payment at all or a down payment that is very low. Make sure you are clear about all fees and details. If a dealer offers you a “better deal,” pay close attention to the specifics of the pricing.



**"I think all of us create  
our own miracles."**

**- Michael Landon**

## Inspiring Thoughts

**A**t times you may find yourself reflecting on the past while considering goals and aspirations for the future. It is important to have goals, follow your dreams and keep moving forward. The great thing about life is that we can make resolutions for personal change anytime - whether it's the beginning of a new year or the beginning of a new day. Perhaps now is the time for you to come to terms with past mistakes so you can achieve your highest aspirations.

**Set A Goal.** What do you want to achieve? Seeing the beauty of what you want and where you want to go could provide you with the strength needed to fulfill your purpose.

**Believe You Are Worth It!** Try to remind yourself that you are worthy of achieving your goals, dreams and desires.

**Learn From Setbacks.** Perhaps past mistakes are holding you back from following your dream. Try to keep in mind poor decisions do not define who you are. Everyone makes mistakes.

It may be beneficial to reflect on past mistakes, without dwelling on them, to consider what you did right or if you could have done anything different to change the outcome. This self-reflection could help give you some closure, enabling you to learn from your mistake and move forward.

**Choose To Be Happy.** Although we may not always be in control of the path our lives take, we can be in control of how we react to difficulties, how we treat others and how we treat ourselves. As Abraham Lincoln quipped, "Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be."

**Maintain Trust.** If disappointments occur on your journey to achievement, try to look for the reasons why and consider what can be learned. Keep in mind disappointments can be tests of our determination and resolve. How badly do you want to achieve what you are working so hard to accomplish? Try to find trust and strength in yourself and your dreams.

**Stay Focused.** Have faith in your goals until your dream is realized. Consider finding something that gives you the energy and hope to keep going. If you allow it, your faith could help you get to wherever you want to go in life.

## New Program!! Clients Benefit

**O**ne of the major concerns clients have after a settlement is whether or not the creditor updates information to the credit bureaus. According to feedback from our clients, many creditors are not doing this on a timely basis. In response to those concerns, we have developed the Credit Bureau Letter Program (CBLP). This is an important step in resolving creditor issues, and getting credit scores back up.

The Credit Bureau Letter Program is NOT credit repair. For a nominal fee, we prepare and mail the three major credit bureaus information on your behalf that one or more accounts are settled, and ask that they update this information in their systems.

The credit bureaus don't take our (or the client's) word for it, so this instigates an inquiry from the Credit Bureaus to the Creditors to either confirm or deny the account status as settled. Once the creditor has replied to the Credit Bureaus, generally the status of the account is changed from "Delinquent" to "Account Settled" or "Zero Balance". This status change will ultimately have a positive effect on your credit rating.

If you would like to learn more about this program, please contact us at CNI Settlement Services, 1-888-913-8784 Option 4 or by email at [CustomerCare@SettlementServices.biz](mailto:CustomerCare@SettlementServices.biz).

**UCAN**  
UNITED CONSUMER ADVOCACY NETWORK

## Corner

### UCAN Services Overview

**I**f you are new to your debt settlement program you may be asking yourself, "How Do I Begin Using UCAN Services?"

In order to use your UCAN services, you simply need to contact us. We can start assisting you immediately with the collector harassment that you are experiencing.

Your welcome packet contained important documents which we need in order to contact creditors on your behalf.

### What Is The Difference Between My Settlement Company And UCAN?

UCAN specializes in consumer advocacy issues. For example, we assist with collection calls, threatening messages, or any other collector harassment that you may be receiving. If you have any questions regarding your debt settlement program, negotiations, or financial inquiries, please contact your settlement company directly.

### Will All My Collection Calls Stop When I Enroll With UCAN?

Most calls can be reduced or eliminated, but they may not stop completely. UCAN and your settlement company will make every effort to help minimize calls that you may be receiving.

### What Are "Call Logs" And Why Do I Need To Complete Them?

A "call log" is a form provided by UCAN that we recommend clients use to keep track of collector calls. When you get collection calls, we ask that you log as much information as possible about the content of the conversation. We ask that you fax or mail these documents to us once a week. You may also enter your "call log" information at [www.ucan.net](http://www.ucan.net).

**How Do I Contact UCAN?** Call us at 1-877-462-8226 or e-mail us at [info@ucan.net](mailto:info@ucan.net). Our FAX number is 1-877-895-7577. Regular business hours are Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST and Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST.



# A Financial Organization Fact File

## Create a financial 'To Do' list

Try posting your goals in places where you can see them often (the charts at right can be cut out and placed in your purse, wallet, desk drawer, etc). When you see something you want, try to stay focused and consider your goals. Is the purchase you are considering something that you really need?



If you keep track of your daily appointments, try doing the same thing for your finances.

You could make a list of goals and mark them 'High Priority' 'Medium Priority' and 'Low Priority'. To get you started we've provided the worksheets at right.

Throughout the process of reorganizing, consider your financial goals. It may be a good idea to write your goals down on several sheets of paper.

Consider your income. Some people spend more than they actually make. You might want to ask yourself if you live within your means. Sticking to a budget can be enlightening. If you receive a raise, an inheritance or some other 'extra' amount of money, consider putting those funds toward your settlement company account instead of purchasing something you don't need.

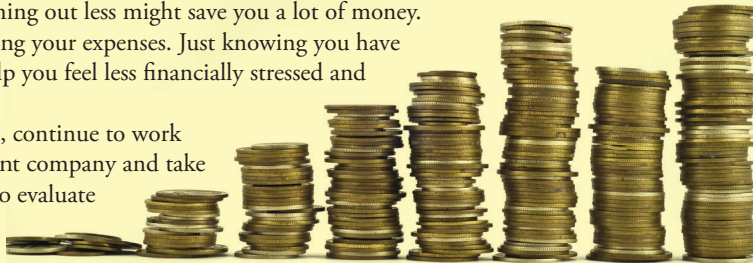
## Budget, Budget, Budget

from you bank, or inexpensive ledger might also work for you.

Consider what expenses could be eliminated or cut back on. For example, taking lunch to work more often and dining out less might save you a lot of money.

Think about tracking your expenses. Just knowing you have a budget might help you feel less financially stressed and more in control.

If you have debt, continue to work with your settlement company and take time each month to evaluate your progress.



Once you define your financial goals and consider your income, it may be a good idea to create a budget.

Kiplinger.com suggests using Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Money or Quicken to organize your finances.

A check register, which is usually free of charge

## Create a filing system

and documents safely filed, labeled and organized. Taking the time to complete this simple step may help you find documents and records quickly when you need them.

If you have trouble remembering when your bills are due, perhaps it would help to get a calendar and highlight all bills and due dates. You could keep the calendar in a place where it catches your attention.

You might want to make budgeting a family activity. Discussing finances and ways to avoid debt as a group can foster financial learning in children and may help you feel like you aren't alone in your journey toward financial freedom. If you are in a relationship, try not to keep your financial issues a secret from your significant other. If you are married, keeping your finances separate until you learn better spending habits may help you become more financially organized.

You might check out garage sales, flea markets or thrift stores for a small filing cabinet where you can keep all receipts, financial statements

# Personalized Spending Plan

## High Priority

Write down goals that you plan to accomplish within the next year.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

## Medium Priority

Write down some ways that you plan to achieve these goals.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

## Low Priority

Write down goals that you plan to accomplish within the next five years.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

# Car Buying Basics For The Budget Conscious



If you decide to purchase a vehicle rather than lease one, here are some tips that could help you.

**Make A List Of Expenses.** Establishing a budget will assist you in determining how much of a car payment you can afford. It is likely that you want a car that is safe, comfortable and stylish.

However, you should also be sure to consider fuel efficiency, insurance costs, registration and other fees and expenses.

**Cover All Your Bases.** Be sure to check magazines, newspapers and websites such as [www.AutoTrader.com](http://www.AutoTrader.com), [www.AutoWeb.com](http://www.AutoWeb.com), [www.Cars.com](http://www.Cars.com), and [www.CarsDirect.com](http://www.CarsDirect.com) to search for vehicles in your area and research makes and models.



not to let a dealer or individual talk you into anything that you aren't comfortable with.

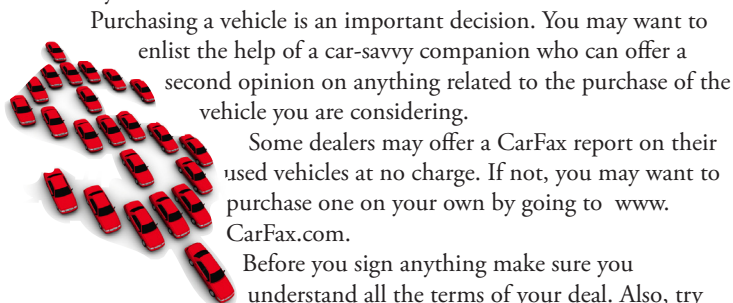
**New Or Used?** Used cars may be less expensive to insure.

Try to look for a late model car that is about two or three years old. Consider cars that have consistent records of little maintenance needed at 100,000 miles or more.

Keep in mind that an older car with lower mileage may be a better buy than a newer car with high mileage.

Good sources for this research are Consumer Reports, [www.Autobytel.com](http://www.Autobytel.com) or [www.Edmunds.com](http://www.Edmunds.com).

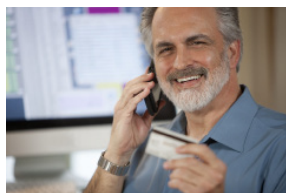
If you prefer to buy a vehicle, a good savings method would be to continue making your car payment even after the vehicle is paid in full. Instead of sending it to the lender, deposit the money into your savings or settlement account so you can pay off your debt faster. You may not miss the money as much because you are accustomed to making your car payment.



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## Company Announcements



**Concerned About Your Credit Score?** Completing a debt settlement program can be a rewarding experience. However, once you have graduated from your program, you may be concerned about your credit rating. Century Negotiations has partnered with Century Credit Services whose vision is to provide a low cost, yet highly effective, credit restoration program to clients who have inconsistent or inaccurate information reporting on his or her credit report. CCS staff members would like to speak with you! CCS offers a free consultation and will help you in reviewing your current credit report. If your report includes any incorrect items, it may be determined that you are a good candidate for credit restoration. **CCS has a pay per deletion policy and many clients see improvements after the first month.** Call **877-809-6610** today!.

**Online Settlement Offers:** Have you ever missed calls from us because you weren't home or couldn't get away from your desk? Have you ever lost an important e-mail from your settlement company? You can now approve your settlements online! All you need to do is go to [www.Centuryni.com](http://www.Centuryni.com) and click 'Client Login' (or click 'First Time Users') to get your CNI ID and password). If there is a settlement awaiting your approval you can review the details and approve it immediately! Your approvals are sent back 'real-time' to our representatives, so we can act on your behalf as soon as we hear from you. If you've received a call, an e-mail or text message about your program but haven't had the time to get back to us, approving and managing your offers online is an easy way for you stay uninterrupted while we make your settlement program a success!



## Coming Soon: Live Chat!



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