

CREDIT REPORT CHALLENGES FOR TRANS CONSUMERS

FACT SHEET

When trans consumers change their first and last names, they can encounter [several problems](#) with credit reports.

What is a credit report?



A credit report is a document generated from a consumer's file made at a consumer reporting agency (a "CRA") that collects information about consumers' history with credit. There are three big CRAs in the United States:

Equifax, Experian, & Transunion. These three "credit bureaus" make credit reports by collecting data about consumers' accounts furnished by creditors and gathered from public records. Credit reports include information about a consumer's: (1) trade lines, e.g., loan amounts & payment history for loans, credit cards, and mortgages; (2) collections & public records, primarily bankruptcies; (3) personally-identifying information, e.g., current and previous names & addresses; (4) inquiries from users who accessed the credit report.

Credit bureaus sell credit reports to creditors, landlords, and employers to evaluate consumers prospectively for loans, rentals, or jobs. Credit bureaus and other companies also sell credit scores made with credit report data to (purportedly) estimate the risk of lending to a consumer.

Problems Encountered by Trans Consumers

Updating Their Full Name



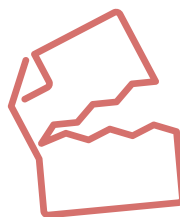
Although credit bureaus have facilitated name changes on credit reports for consumers' last names because of marriage or divorce for decades, the process to update full names with the bureaus is opaque. Experian and

Transunion offer no public guidance for how consumers can add a new full name to their credit reports. Equifax only [recently announced](#) that consumers can file a dispute and provide documents to verify their social security number, address, legal name, and date of birth to

update their credit report with their full name.

Because the bureaus create credit reports from data furnished by creditors, to update the name on their report trans consumers have been advised to contact each of their creditors to update the name those creditors have on file. This time-consuming process requires trans consumers to repeatedly out themselves to creditors and provide documentation to update each of their accounts. Additional problems can arise during this process, including harassment by their creditors and fragmented credit reports.

Fragmented Credit Reports



Sometimes when a trans consumer applies for a loan in their new name or updates their name with a creditor, the bureaus create an entirely new credit report in that name. Instead of including all of their credit history, only accounts in

the new name are shown. The fragmented credit report and the resulting loss of credit history can lead to a significant drop in credit score for the consumer—and denials for credit, housing, or employment due to a lack of good credit history. Additionally, because companies use credit reports for marketing products to new customers, trans customers may continue to receive offers for credit addressed to their previous name.

Being Outed



Even when trans consumers successfully update the name on their credit report, credit bureaus continue to include their previous name(s) on the report as personally-identifying information.

Disclosing the consumer's prior name can "out" the consumer by enabling a person who receives the report to infer their trans identity, which leaves them vulnerable to discrimination and harassment in credit, housing, and jobs by discriminatory creditors, landlords, or employers.

