


MASTER YOUR CARD

A community empowerment program sponsored by  **mastercard**

GET CARDED

Whether you're in school, working or both—now is the time to get a prepaid, debit or credit card and start getting more from your money. Cards save you time and money, make you safer, and make your life a lot easier—but only when used correctly. Some people use all three types, while others rely on just one or two. The trick is to pick the one that is right for you and your needs. All cards provide some basic benefits, including:



- Easy access to your money—anytime and anywhere.
- Zero liability (with a Mastercard).
- Protections from theft, loss and fraud.
- Access to online and remote shopping.
- Budgeting, accounting and immediate access to fund balances.
- Savings of time and money associated with check payments, money orders and carrying cash.





CHOOSE THE RIGHT CARD FOR YOU

CREDIT CARDS

- Credit cards let you make purchases by borrowing money from the bank that issued the card and set the terms of use.
- Wise use of your credit card helps you establish or improve your credit rating, which lowers your interest rate—whether you’re buying your first car, renting your first apartment or starting your first job.
- Find a card with fees, rates and rewards that work for you, then use your credit card to delay payment until the end of the month. Only extend payments on larger purchases you need to pay off over time.
- Keep low balances and make payments on time to build good credit. Remember: if you pay off your balance at the end of the month, you get interest-free credit.
- Your card will come with fraud protection so your funds will be instantly restored once you report theft or charges you didn’t make. You’ll also be able to contest charges by businesses that don’t deliver the products or services they promised.

DEBIT CARDS

- Debit cards let you make payments and purchases from the money available in your checking account—anytime and anywhere.
- Find a bank that will give you free checking and a free debit card with a low (or no) monthly balance requirement and the fewest limits on how often you can get cash and how much cash you can withdraw without fees.
- Find the lowest cost for overdraft protection and link your accounts—or consider declining overdraft protection altogether—to avoid fees.
- Track your money and spending online, over the phone or at an ATM machine. You can also get cash from ATMs, but it’s safer and cheaper to use your card instead of cash whenever possible.
- Your card will come with fraud protection against theft and charges you didn’t make, but it may take some time for you to get your money back. It will also let you contest charges from businesses that don’t deliver the products and services they promised.

PREPAID CARDS

- You may already receive your paycheck on a prepaid payroll card from your employer, or maybe you’ve seen prepaid cards sold at a local shop.
- Automatic loading of funds means your money is instantly available—just use your card like cash to avoid ATM charges.
- Prepaid cards give you the safety of debit cards and are just as easy to use—even if you don’t have a bank account.
- Good prepaid cards are safer and cheaper to use than cash, letting you buy online, in-person or over the phone—and avoid check-cashing fees.
- Look for cards with low start-up costs, frequent balance checking, no monthly maintenance, and low-cost, easy reloading online, in-person or over the phone.
- Find a card that is FDIC-insured and has fraud protection that will replace your money—and the card—if lost or stolen.