

Can't afford your student loans? Worried about your credit score?

If you're struggling with student loan debt, it's important to explore your federal student loan repayment options.

You may find that you have **surprisingly affordable options** to lower your monthly payment, avoid default, and preserve your credit score.

Your repayment options depend upon your loan type and repayment status.

There are also very limited circumstances in which your debt can be cancelled.

Managing student loan debt isn't easy. But you should never pay companies for student loan help.

To get free help with your student loans, file a Student Loan Help Request on our website: WWW.MASS.GOV/AGO/STUDENTLOANS or call our Student Loan Helpline at 1-888-830-6277.

**Student Loan Helpline:
1-888-830-6277**



Maura Healey Attorney General

If you're struggling with student loan debt, you may have options.

File a Student Loan Help Request on our website: www.mass.gov/ago/studentloans or call our Student Loan Helpline for free help and information:
1-888-830-6277

WWW.MASS.GOV/AGO/STUDENTLOANS

Maura Healey Attorney General



Student Loan Repayment Guide

*File a Student Loan
Help Request with the
Attorney General's
Student Loan
Ombudsman*

WWW.MASS.GOV/AGO/STUDENTLOANS

Call the Student Loan
Helpline
1-888-830-6277



STEP 1: DETERMINE YOUR LOAN TYPE AND STATUS.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of student loans—federal loans and private loans. Federal loans typically offer more **flexible and affordable repayment options**, including payments based on income.

To find out if you have federal loans and see details about them, you can create an account on the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid website at: studentaid.gov or call the Department at 1-800-433-3243.

CHECK YOUR CREDIT REPORT TO FIND YOUR PRIVATE LOANS

Once logged in to your studentaid.gov account, you will see a full list of your federal student loans, along with servicer contact information, loan type, interest rates, and balances. You will also be able to see if your federal loans are in default.

Default occurs when a federal loan is 270 days past due. Defaulted federal loans can be collected through wage garnishment and tax refund interception. To get out of default, you can consolidate or rehabilitate your federal loans and **enroll in an income-driven repayment** plan to help lower your monthly payments.

To learn how to get back on track with **defaulted federal loans**, visit the U.S. Department of Education's website at: studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/default

STEP 2: EXPLORE FEDERAL LOAN REPAYMENT OPTIONS.

Income-driven repayment plans (**IDR plans**) base payments on income and family size. Payments can be **as low as \$0 per month**. IDR plans also offer potential **interest subsidies** and the possibility of **loan forgiveness** after 20 or 25 years of qualifying payments.

FIND THE RIGHT REPAYMENT PLAN USING THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S LOAN SIMULATOR: [STUDENTAID.GOV/LOAN-SIMULATOR](https://studentaid.gov/loan-simulator)

While IDR plans are helpful for managing unaffordable debt, they're not for everyone. Depending on how income and family size change, IDR plans can increase overall loan costs by extending your repayment term. Nevertheless, it's better to enroll in an IDR plan than to default on a federal student loan or make frequent use of forbearance.

Under **Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)**, borrowers with **Direct Loans** who work full time for a qualifying employer can receive forgiveness of any balance that remains after making 10 years of qualifying payments under an **IDR plan** or the 10-year standard plan.

LEARN ABOUT PSLF: [STUDENTAID.GOV/PUBLICSERVICE](https://studentaid.gov/publicservice)

The PSLF program has many detailed requirements. Borrowers should learn about all the requirements and find out if they're on track by annually submitting a **PSLF Certification & Application**: studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/public-service-application-for-forgiveness.pdf

If you enroll in an IDR plan, you need to **recertify income information each year**. Failure to annually recertify will undo many of the benefits of enrolling.

To learn more about federal loan **repayment options**, including IDR plans, visit the U.S. Department of Education's website at: studentaid.gov/manage-loans/repayment/plans

You can also find out what circumstances qualify your federal loan for **forgiveness, cancellation, or discharge** at: studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation

STEP 3: CONTACT YOUR SERVICER. After exploring repayment plans on the U.S. Department of Education's website, call your loan servicer to discuss your options. If your loan is in default, call the company collecting the debt. Even with a defaulted loan, you have options to stop or avoid wage garnishment and tax refund interception.

FIND YOUR FEDERAL SERVICER'S CONTACT INFORMATION: [STUDENTAID.GOV/MANAGE-LOANS/REPAYMENT/SERVICERS](https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/repayment/servicers)

AVOID STUDENT LOAN "DEBT RELIEF" SCAMS.

Student loan "debt relief" companies charge fees for helping federal student loan borrowers enroll in IDR plans, consolidate loans, or get out of default. There is nothing these companies can do for you that you can't do on your own for free.

NEED HELP? CALL THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE. If you need help understanding your options or are having difficulties with a servicer or debt collector, **call the Attorney General's Student Loan Helpline** at 1-888-830-6277 or file a Student Loan Help Request at: www.mass.gov/ago/studentloans