



90 MINUTE WORKSHOP

Credit 101: The Essentials of Your Financial Reputation

FACILITATOR GUIDE

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OVERVIEW

& OBJECTIVES

Workshop Title: Credit 101: The Essentials of Your Financial Reputation

Target Audience: Adults age 18+ who want to improve their financial health and learn more about how credit works.

Duration: 90 minutes

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

1. Understand what credit is and why it is essential to their financial lives.
2. Learn the key components of a credit report and a credit score.
3. Brainstorm and learn concrete steps to build and maintain a strong credit history.
4. Understand how to check and protect their credit.
5. Know where to find additional resources to boost financial wellness.

AGENDA

& TIMELINE

#	Duration/Time	Activity	Facilitator	Materials
1	5 minutes	Your Financial Reputation		
2	5 minutes	Lesson: The Two Pillars of Credit		
3	5 minutes	Lesson: Credit Score Breakdown		
4	15 minutes	Activity: Banzai Loan Calculator		
5	10 minutes	Lesson: Building & Maintaining Good Credit		
6	20 minutes	Coach: How Do I Build Credit?		
8	15 minutes	Lesson: Protecting Your Credit		
9	10 minutes	Lesson: Wrap up & Conclusion		

PREPARATION

REQUIREMENTS

Materials Prep

Copies to Make

Print copies of the following handout and worksheets for participants.

- ☐ Worksheet: The Power of a Good Credit Score
- ☐ Worksheet: My Credit Building Game Plan

Supplies

Gather the following supplies for the presentation.

Icebreaker activity:

- ☐ A clear, empty wallet or ID holder.
- ☐ Popsicle sticks or colored index cards in three colors (e.g., Green, Yellow, Red)

Supplies for each participant:

- ☐ Folder with printed materials for workshop
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Privacy tri-fold
- ☐ Notepad and pen for taking notes

Technology Prep

Presenter Slides

Copy the slideshow to your Google Drive or add them to your slideshow app and make the following customizations:

- ☐ Add presenter name on slide 1 (“PRESENTED BY”)
- ☐ Add logo on slides 1, 2, 5, 7, 23, 25 (“YOUR LOGO HERE”)
- ☐ Update subdomain in links on slides 14, 19, and 24 (“yoursubdomain”)
- ☐ Add contact information on slide 25

Online Links

Have the following pages open and ready (all accessible via your Banzai Wellness Center):

- Auto Loan Calculator
- How Do I Build Credit? Coach

Room Setup and Logistics

Equipment Requirements

- Computer for slides
- Projector/TV to display slides and resources
- Whiteboard and markers
- Participants: computer or device and Wi-Fi accessibility, if you want them to complete activities on their own device

Room Layout Suggestions

- Tables and chairs facing whiteboard/projector wall
- Table at entry point with name tags for participants
- Table at the back with any additional handouts and resources

At Each Seat

- Folder with printed materials for workshop
- Water bottle
- Privacy tri-fold
- Notepad and pen for taking notes

FACILITATOR

TIPS

Presentation Style and Tone

Approachable and relatable. Avoid jargon and overly technical financial terms. Explain concepts in simple, everyday language—the script in the workshop outline will strike the right tone.

Friendly and welcoming. Create a comfortable and non-judgmental atmosphere where participants feel safe to ask questions and share their experiences. Smile!

Optimistic and enthusiastic. Frame credit awareness as a tool for achieving financial goals. Let them know they can repair credit, if needed.

Practical and knowledgeable. Focus on actionable steps and real-world examples that participants can implement immediately.

Resourceful. Be prepared to offer helpful resources, tools, and tips beyond the core content.

Presentation & Engagement Techniques

Rotate presenters often. Consider rotating presenters for every segment of the workshop. This keeps participants' interest, and different styles of presenting can speak to different attendees.

Keep stories brief. Share personal anecdotes to illustrate points and build connections, but keep stories to a few minutes or less.

Use breaks if necessary. For longer workshops, build in 5-minute breaks for participants to stretch their legs and check their phones.

Vary presentation styles. Include icebreakers, large and small group discussions, visual aids, and more.

Stay on the clock. Be mindful of the time—even use a stopwatch—to keep the workshop from dragging.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

FACILITATOR GUIDE

INTRO

YOUR FINANCIAL REPUTATION

Duration: 5 minutes

Key Messages

- Credit is your "financial reputation" and a tool that opens doors.

Script & Instructions

Begin slideshow on slide 1—Welcome

"Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us for this presentation on Credit 101."

Before you begin, let participants know where the bathrooms are, where they can find water/snacks, and any expected break times.

Advance to slide 2—Icebreaker

(Place the empty wallet on a table where everyone can see it.)

"I want you to think of this empty wallet as your 'Financial Reputation.' When you turn 18 and are just starting out, it's mostly empty. It's a clean slate. Your job over time is to fill it with proof that you are a trustworthy person when it comes to borrowing money."

(Hold up a green stick/card.)

"Let's say this green stick represents a positive financial action. You get your first credit card, and you pay the bill on time. That's one positive mark in your reputation."

(Place a green stick in the wallet.) "You do it again the next month, and the next. Each on-time payment builds a stronger history of trust."

(Add two more green sticks.)

(Hold up a yellow stick/card.)

"Now, let's say you're shopping for a car and apply for five different loans in one week. Lenders see that and it looks a bit risky, so you add a few 'caution' sticks to your wallet." *(Add two yellow sticks.)* "It doesn't erase the green, but it's part of the picture."

(Hold up a red stick/card.)

Continued on page 10

"Then, you have a busy month and you completely forget to pay a bill until it's 30 days late. That adds a red 'high-risk' stick to your reputation." (Add one red stick.)

(Hold the wallet up for the audience to see.)

"When a lender looks at your credit, they don't just see one stick; they see the whole collection. They see your entire financial reputation. Our goal today is to learn the simple, consistent habits that will fill your wallet with as many green sticks as possible. By the end of our 90 minutes, you'll have a clear plan for building a reputation that saves you money and opens doors."

Advance to slide 3 — Agenda

"This is the agenda for today's workshop. We will leave time at the end for questions."

LESSON

THE TWO PILLARS OF CREDIT

Duration: 5 minutes

Key Messages

- Your Credit Report is your financial resume; your Credit Score is its grade.
- Your payment history and the amount of debt you carry are the two biggest factors in your score.

Script & Instructions

Advance to slide 4 - Two Pillars of Credit

"There are two main pillars of your personal credit: your credit report, and your credit score. These are two distinct items but are fundamentally linked. Your credit score is the numerical summary of your credit report. Think of it like your credit report is the report card and your credit score is the GPA.

Advance to slide 5 - Your Credit Report

"Alright, so let's dive into the first pillar of your financial reputation: your credit report. As we said earlier, this is like your financial report card, or resume.

Just like a job resume shows a potential employer your work history and qualifications, your credit report shows a potential lender your borrowing history. It tells the story of how you've handled money that you've borrowed in the past. It's a detailed, multi-page document that includes four main sections:

- First, your Personal Information, like your name, addresses, and Social Security number.
- Second, your Credit Accounts. This is the core of the report, listing your credit cards, car loans, mortgages, and student loans. It shows who the lender is, your payment history, your current balance, and your credit limit.
- Third, Public Records, which includes things like bankruptcies.
- And finally, Credit Inquiries, which is a list of who has recently requested to see your report.

Advance to slide 6- Credit Bureaus

This financial resume is compiled and maintained by three major, nationwide companies called credit bureaus: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. They are separate, competing businesses, so the information on each report might be slightly different. That's why it's so important to check all three.

And the best part is, you are entitled to a free copy of your report from all three bureaus every single week from the one and only official, government-mandated site: AnnualCreditReport.com. Be very careful of imposter sites with similar names—this is the official one, and it's completely free. Checking your own report, by the way, does not hurt your score."

Continued on page 12

(Pause briefly before transitioning)

"So, if the credit report is the long, detailed storybook of your financial life, that can feel like a lot to read through. That's why there's a much simpler summary..."

Advance to slide 7 - Your Credit Score

"And that summary is your credit score. If the report is your financial resume, think of your credit score as your financial GPA.

Just like a GPA summarizes all your grades into one simple number, your credit score summarizes all the detailed information in your credit report into one powerful, three-digit number. This number, typically ranging from 300 to 850, gives lenders a quick snapshot of your credit risk. The higher the number, the better your financial reputation.

Now, you might see different scores from different places, because there are different scoring models, like FICO and VantageScore. But they all use the same data from your credit report to calculate that score. So, the question then becomes: what actions and habits in your report lead to a higher score? Let's take a look..."

LESSON

CREDIT SCORE BREAKDOWN

Duration: 5 minutes

Key Messages

- A practical demonstration of *why* a credit score matters, translating the three-digit number into real-world dollars and cents.

Script

Advance to slide 8 - Breakdown

"Scores are calculated based on five factors: payment history, amounts owed, length of credit history, new credit, and credit mix."

Advance to slide 9 - Payment History

Payment History (35%): This is the biggest piece. Are you paying your bills on time? Every on-time payment is a positive mark that builds trust. Conversely, a single payment that is 30 days late can significantly damage your score, and the impact gets worse at 60 or 90 days. But don't panic—everyone makes mistakes.

Advance to slide 10 - Amounts Owed

Amounts Owed (30%): How much of your available credit are you using? This is called credit utilization. For example, if you have one credit card with a \$1,000 limit and a \$500 balance, your utilization on that card is 50%. Lenders see high utilization as a sign of risk, suggesting you might be overextended. A good rule of thumb is to keep your overall utilization below 30%. Lower is always better.

Advance to slide 11 - Length

Length of Credit History (15%): How long have your accounts been open? Lenders prefer a long credit history, and look at the age of your oldest account, your newest account, and the average age of all your accounts combined. This leads to a crucial piece of advice: try not to close your oldest credit card accounts, even if you don't use them much. Closing an old account can shorten your credit history and cause your score to drop."

Advance to slide 12 - New Credit

New Credit (10%): Have you applied for a lot of credit recently? When you apply for a credit card or a loan, it often results in a 'hard inquiry' on your report. One or two inquiries here and there are perfectly normal. But a lot of hard inquiries in a short period can look risky, suggesting you might be in financial trouble. The advice here is to apply for new credit sparingly and only when you truly need it.

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Advance to slide 13 - Credit Mix

Credit Mix (10%): Lenders like to see that you can responsibly manage different types of credit. The two main types are revolving credit, like credit cards where you can borrow and repay repeatedly, and installment loans, like a car loan or mortgage, where you have a fixed payment for a set term. While a healthy mix is a good thing, you should never take out a loan you don't need just to improve your credit mix.

Discussion Prompts

Was there any factor in this breakdown that surprised you or went against something you previously believed about credit?

Payment History and Amounts Owed (Credit Utilization) are the two biggest pieces of your score. Why do you think lenders place so much more importance on those two factors compared to the others?

ACTIVITY

BANZAI LOAN CALCULATOR

Duration: 15 minutes

Key Messages

- A practical demonstration of *why* a credit score matters, translating the three-digit number into real-world dollars and cents.

Script

Advance to slide 14- Loan Calculator

"So we've talked about the theory—what a credit score is and the factors that make it up. But what does it actually do for you? Let's see the real-world impact in dollars and cents. We're going to use the Banzai Auto Loan Calculator to see how a credit score affects the cost of a common purchase: a car loan."

Project the "Auto Loan Calculator" tool (using *(your subdomain).banzai.org/wellness/resources/auto-loan-calculator*)

Have attendees refer to their worksheet, "The Power of A Good Credit Score" and follow along to fill in the blanks.

Execution:

1. Scenario: "Let's imagine two people, Morgan and Bailey. They are both buying the exact same car for \$20,000 and they both need a 60-month (5-year) loan."
2. Run Scenario A (Good Credit): "Morgan has a good credit score of 740. Because of this, the financial institution offers Morgan a good interest rate, let's say 6.5%."
 - Enter the loan amount (\$20,000), loan term (60 months/5 years), and interest rate (6.5%) into the calculator. Leave the down payment and extra payment fields blank.
 - Point out the results: "Okay, as you can see, Morgan's monthly payment is about \$391, and look here—the total interest paid over the five years is \$3,479."
3. Run Scenario B (Lower Credit): "Now let's look at Bailey. Bailey has a lower credit score, around 620. The financial institution sees Bailey as a riskier borrower, so they offer a higher interest rate, let's say 13.5%."
 - Change only the interest rate in the calculator to 13.5%.
 - Point out the results: "Wow, look at the difference. Bailey's monthly payment is now \$460, which is almost \$70 more per month. But the shocking number is the total interest paid: \$7,611."
4. Compare and Conclude: "This is the power of your financial reputation. By having a good credit score, Morgan saves over \$4,000 on the exact same car. That's real money that Morgan can put toward savings, a vacation, or paying off the car faster. A good credit score doesn't just get you approved; it saves you a significant amount of money."

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Discussion Prompts

Which number was more surprising to you: the difference in the monthly payment, or the thousands of dollars in extra interest paid over the life of the loan? Why?

Thinking about that difference in total interest—over \$4,000 in our example—what could you do with that extra money? What goal could that help you achieve?

How does seeing this direct financial consequence motivate you to take the steps we discussed earlier, like consistently paying bills on time or keeping credit card balances low?

Before today, did you think more about your credit score in terms of simply *getting approved* for a loan, or did you also consider how it would affect the *total cost*?

LESSON

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING GOOD CREDIT

Duration: 10 minutes

Key Messages

- Building good credit is about developing consistent, positive habits over time.

Script

Advance to slide 15 - Rule 1

"Now that we know what goes into a score, we can create a game plan in the form of practical rules to follow. If you haven't done this perfectly in the past, don't stress; just start now and do your best to move in the right direction."

- Rule #1: Pay Every Bill on Time. This is the most important habit. A single payment reported as 30 days late can drop your score significantly and stays on your report for seven years. The best way to prevent this is to create a safety net. Set up automatic payments for at least the minimum amount due.

Advance to slide 16 - Rule 2

- Rule #2: Keep Credit Card Balances Low. A good rule of thumb is to use less than 30% of your credit limit. For example, on a card with a \$1,000 limit, you should aim to keep your balance under \$300. Why? Because lenders see low utilization as a sign that you are not over-reliant on credit to make ends meet. The balance on your monthly statement is often what's reported to the bureaus, so even if you pay your bill in full each month, a high statement balance can still temporarily lower your score."

Advance to slide 17 - Rule 3

- "Rule #3: Don't Close Old Accounts. A longer credit history is a better history. Closing your oldest credit card is like erasing the best success story from your financial resume—it lowers the average age of all your accounts. A better strategy for an old, unused card is to use it for a small, recurring purchase—like a single streaming service—and set up auto-pay to keep it active and working in your favor."

Advance to slide 18 - Rule 4

- "Rule #4: Apply for New Credit Sparingly. Only apply for credit you actually need. Every time you formally apply for a loan or credit card, it creates a 'hard inquiry' on your report. While 1-2 inquiries a year won't have a big impact, a lot of them in a short period can be a red flag for lenders, suggesting you might be in financial distress. Do your research *before* you apply, especially in the 12-18 months before a major purchase like a home."

Discussion Prompts

Have attendees use the [My Credit Building Game Plan worksheet](#) to assess their current habits. Discuss the results.

ACTIVITY

COACH: HOW DO I BUILD CREDIT?

Duration: 20 minutes

Key Messages

- Your daily financial decisions have a direct and measurable impact on your credit score.

Script

Advance to slide 19 - Coach: How Do I Build Credit?

"It's one thing to talk about what goes into building credit, but it's another to see them in action. Let's use the Banzai 'How Do I Build Credit' Coach to see how different choices affect a score. This tool works by asking a few simple questions to provide a personalized recommendation."

Project the "How Do I Build Credit Coach" (using *(your subdomain).banzai.org/wellness/resources/how-do-i-build-credit-coach*)

Click Get Started to begin the Coach.

Persona 1 (The Student): "Let's start with our first persona: 'Maria.' Maria is a 19-year-old college student. She has a part-time job but no credit cards or loans in her name."

- Answer the Coach's prompts based on Maria's situation.
- Discuss the Recommendation: The Coach will likely suggest becoming an authorized user or applying for a student or secured credit card. Briefly explain what these are. "As you can see, for a student like Maria, becoming an authorized user on a parent's card is a great option because she can benefit from their good history. A secured card is another top choice because it's a card secured by her own deposit."

Run Persona 2 (The Debit Card User): "Next, let's look at 'David.' David is 28, has a full-time job, but has always preferred using his debit card for everything. Now he wants to build credit to qualify for a good car loan in a year."

- Answer the Coach's prompts based on David's situation.
- Discuss the Recommendation: The Coach will likely recommend a secured credit card or a credit-builder loan. Explain the difference. "For David, the Coach again points to a secured card as a primary tool. It also mentions a credit-builder loan, which is like a loan in reverse—you make payments into a savings account, and those payments are reported to the credit bureaus. After the term, you get the money back."

Optional: Give attendees 5-10 minutes to run through the Coach on their own, using their current credit status

LESSON

PROTECTING YOUR CREDIT

Duration: 5 minutes

Key Messages

- Regularly monitoring your credit is a key part of protecting yourself from fraud and identity theft.

Script

Advance to slide 20 - Protecting Your Credit

"Alright, we've covered how to build and maintain a strong credit history. But finally, let's talk about protection. Just like you lock the doors to your house, you need to lock down your financial reputation. Your credit file, with its treasure trove of personal information, is a primary target for identity thieves.

That's why regularly checking your credit report is your single best defense. Think of it as your own personal quality control. When you get your free reports from AnnualCreditReport.com, you aren't just looking for a score. You are inspecting the details for any signs of trouble."

"Here is a quick checklist of what to look for:

- First, check your Personal Information. Is your name spelled correctly? Are your current and past addresses correct? Is your Social Security number accurate?
- Second, review your Account History. Go through every single account listed. Do you recognize all of them? Are there any accounts that don't belong to you? Are the balances and credit limits correct? Most importantly, are any accounts incorrectly marked as late or in collections?
- Finally, look at the Hard Inquiries. These are formal requests to see your credit, usually when you apply for a loan or credit card. If you see inquiries from companies you've never done business with, it could be a sign that someone is trying to open accounts in your name."

"So, what do you do if you find something wrong?

If it's an error—a wrong address or an incorrect balance—you have the right to dispute it directly with the credit bureau. They are legally required to investigate your claim, typically within 30 days.

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Advance to slide 21 - Alert Vs. Freeze

But if you suspect fraud, you need to take stronger, more immediate action. Beyond just disputing the account, you should proactively protect your file from any further damage.

You have two main tools for this: a Fraud Alert and a Credit Freeze.

- A Fraud Alert is like putting a note in your file that tells lenders to take extra steps to verify your identity before opening a new account.
- A Credit Freeze, however, is much stronger. A credit freeze is a lockdown. It restricts access to your credit report, which means thieves can't open new accounts in your name because the lender can't check your credit. We strongly recommend a credit freeze as your primary tool. It's free to place and lift a freeze, and it provides the highest level of protection.

To place a freeze, you must contact all three major credit bureaus individually: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. The freeze will stay in place until you remove it.

Remember, taking these protective steps is not a one-time event, but an ongoing part of your financial life. Protecting your credit is just as important as building it."

Discussion Prompts

Before this session, had you heard of the difference between a credit freeze and a fraud alert? Based on what we just discussed, what seems to be the biggest advantage of using a credit freeze?

Thinking of your credit report as a security system for your identity, what is one reason it's important to check it regularly, even if you don't think anything is wrong?

WRAP UP

& CONCLUSION

Duration: 10 minutes

Key Message

- You are in control of your credit, and taking one small step today can lead to significant long-term benefits.

Script

Advance to slide 22 - What We Learned

"Before we wrap up, let's review the most important takeaways for building a great financial reputation."

- "Pay on Time, Every Time. "
- "Keep Balances Low. Your credit utilization matters."
- "Check Your Reports Regularly. Be your own best advocate."

Advance to slide 23 - Personal Plan

"I want you to write down ONE thing you will do this week to improve your credit health."

"Any final questions before we close?"

Advance to slide 24—Resources

"Here are some additional online resources we provide related to your credit, accessed via our Wellness Center."

Feel free to note other websites, seminars, and workshops provided by your financial institution.

Advance to slide 25—Contact Info

Provide contact information for further assistance. "Thank you for participating today. "