HR

HUSTLE ROOM ACADEMY

The Funding Playbook

A cleaner way to read your credit, choose the right lenders, and move through your applications.

SECTION 01

File Types

Limited Credit File

A file may be considered limited when:

- There are fewer than 3 open accounts
- Most accounts are newer than 24 months
- The file is mostly authorized-user accounts
- There is little or no primary account history
- There are no higher-limit accounts reporting
- The requested amount is much higher than anything already reporting

A limited file may still work for:

- Auto loans, because the vehicle helps secure the loan
- Mortgage lending, because many mortgage programs can work with thinner credit files
- Smaller personal loan or credit card approvals, depending on the lender and income
- Stacking smaller approvals from different lenders instead of asking one lender for a large amount

Smart strategy for limited files:

- Start with smaller requests, usually around $5,000 – $10,000
- Let the lender approve or counter the amount
- If the full amount is approved, ask if an increase is available
- Use approvals to build stronger primary account history over time

Strong Credit File

A file may be considered strong when:

- There are 2 or more accounts with at least 24 months of perfect payment history
- The file includes an auto loan, mortgage, personal loan, or unsecured loan
- Any auto loan, mortgage, personal loan, or unsecured loan has at least 12 months of perfect payment history
- The file shows a stronger history of managing credit beyond newer or smaller accounts

Note

Make sure the file has:

- Minimum to no inquiries
- Minimum to no new or recently opened accounts
- Credit cards and revolving balances not reporting high utilization

SECTION 02

Amount Strategy

Safe starting points

- Limited files: start around $5,000 – $10,000
- Strong files, unsecured personal loans or lines of credit: start around $20,000
- Strong files, credit cards: start around $25,000
- Auto loans: higher requests are on the table because the vehicle is collateral

How to move

- Let the lender approve or counter the amount
- If they clear the full ask, ask if an increase is available
- If they deny the higher number, try a smaller request or move to a different lender

SECTION 03

Loan Types

Personal Loan

A lump sum paid out at once. Usually unsecured — no collateral — repaid in fixed monthly payments over a set term.

Line of Credit

A flexible borrowing limit you draw from as needed. Only use what you need; as you pay it down, the available credit opens back up.

Credit Card

Revolving credit up to an approved limit. Use it, pay it down, use it again — as long as the account stays open and in good standing.

Auto Loan

Financing to buy a vehicle. The vehicle is collateral, which can make the lender more flexible than an unsecured loan.

Secured Loan

Backed by collateral — money in a savings account, a vehicle, or another asset. Easier to approve because the lender has something securing the loan.

Pledge Loan

A secured loan where money in a savings account or certificate backs the loan. Good for building payment history while keeping risk low for the lender.

SECTION 04

Before You Apply

Have this ready

- Full legal name
- Date of birth
- Social Security number
- Current address and time at address
- Rent or mortgage amount
- Employment info, job title, time on the job
- Annual income or hourly pay
- Loan purpose, requested amount, desired term

Documents to have close

- Recent pay stubs
- W-2s
- Tax return
- Bank statements
- Proof of address
- Driver's license or state ID
- Employment verification

Loan purpose examples

- Medical procedure
- Dental procedure
- Furniture and appliances
- Family emergency
- Wedding expenses

SEE THE SAMPLE APPLICATION ON THE NEXT PAGE →

SECTION 05

Sample Application

Borrower Information	
Full Legal Name	Sample Borrower
Date of Birth	01/15/1988
Social Security Number	XXX-XX-1234
Phone Number	555-010-2222
Email Address	sample.borrower@email.com
Current Address	123 Main Street, Charlotte, NC 28202
Time at Address	4 years, 2 months
Housing Status	Rent
Monthly Rent / Mortgage	$1,000
Employment Information	
Employer	Main Street Logistics
Job Title	Operations Manager
Time on Job	3 years
Employment Type	Full-time
Annual Income	$85,000
Loan Request	
Loan Type	Personal Loan
Requested Amount	$10,000
Loan Purpose	Medical Procedure
Desired Term	60 months
Documents Ready	
Income Documents	Recent pay stubs
ID	Driver's license or state ID
Proof of Address	Utility bill or bank statement, if requested

SECTION 06

Fraud Alerts & ChexSystems

Fraud alerts and locked reports

Confirm the bureau the lender will pull is unlocked before you apply. Remove old fraud alerts — they trigger extra verification and can auto-deny.

- Equifax: 888-836-6351
- TransUnion: 800-916-8800
- Experian: 888-397-3742

ChexSystems

ChexSystems is a consumer reporting system that banks and credit unions may check before opening accounts or approving certain products. It can show closed bank accounts, unpaid balances, overdraft issues, and bank-related inquiries.

Before applying with a lender that checks ChexSystems:

- Go to ChexSystems.com
- Request your consumer disclosure report
- Review any negative banking history
- Dispute inaccurate information
- Pay small balances if needed and ask the bank to update the balance to zero

If you are in ChexSystems, avoid lenders that require a clean ChexSystems file unless you have already cleaned it up.

Membership

Credit unions almost always require membership before finalizing the loan. Eligibility runs through location, employer, family relationship, association, or opening a small savings account. When none of those fit, the American Consumer Council is a common bridge — a low-cost association membership many credit unions accept. Some lenders let you apply first and become a member at closing; others require membership before you can start the application.

SECTION 07

Strategy

Bureau Strategy

Before applying, know which bureau the lender is likely to pull.

- If Equifax is strongest, focus on Equifax lenders
- If TransUnion is strongest, focus on TransUnion lenders

- If Experian is strongest, focus on Experian lenders
- If one bureau has too many inquiries, use lenders that pull a different bureau
- If one bureau has stronger history or fewer negatives, start there first

This helps avoid wasting applications on lenders pulling the wrong report.

Stacking Strategy

Stacking means applying with more than one lender to build the total funding amount.

This can help when:

- One lender will not approve the full amount needed
- The file is limited but still has approval potential
- Smaller approvals are easier than one large approval
- Different lenders pull different bureaus

The goal is to use the strongest bureau first and avoid unnecessary denials.

If You Get Denied

A denial does not always mean the file cannot get funding. It may mean the lender was not the right fit, the request was too high, or another lender may be a better option.

Check the reason for denial so you understand what happened, then keep going with different lenders.

Common denial reasons:

- Limited credit history
- Too many recent inquiries
- Too many new accounts
- High revolving utilization
- Recent late payments or negative accounts
- ChexSystems issues
- Fraud alert or locked report
- Income documents not accepted

Rebuilding Before Applying

If the file is not ready, build first. These options do not fund you today. They strengthen the file for the next round of applications.

- Chime Credit Builder
- Kikoff
- Rent reporting
- Secured credit card
- Pledge loan
- Secured loan through a bank or credit union

SECTION 08

Lender Lists

Equifax Lenders

- Digital Credit Union
- Coastal Credit Union
- Truliant
- Civic Federal Credit Union
- PenFed
- Mariner Finance
- NASA Federal Credit Union (may also pull Experian)
- Truist Bank (best in person, open account first)
- Citizens Bank
- Synovus
- Anderson Brothers Bank (SC and NC residents)
- 1st Franklin Financial (SC residents)
- Carolina Telco
- KeyBank
- Justice Federal Credit Union (limited-credit friendly)
- Service Credit Union
- Alliant Credit Union (limited-credit friendly)
- Langley Federal Credit Union
- Consumers Credit Union
- NIH Federal Credit Union
- Wells Fargo (may also pull Experian)

TransUnion Lenders

- Grow Financial Credit Union (can apply by phone before membership; checks ChexSystems)
- SAFE Federal Credit Union
- Skyla Credit Union
- Navy Federal Credit Union (access number or eligible relative)
- Liberty Federal Credit Union
- Veridian Credit Union

- US Bank
- TD Bank (soft pull; strong for credit cards, especially Visa Platinum)
- Tower Federal Credit Union
- Alliant Credit Union
- LightStream (apply under $20K for easier approvals)
- Upstart
- Upgrade
- USPS Federal Credit Union
- Horizon Hobby Credit Union (recreational vehicle lending)
- Founders Credit Union
- Eastman Credit Union

Experian Lenders

- Bank of America
- Broadview Federal Credit Union
- AdelFi Credit Union
- American Express Blue
- Wells Fargo (may also pull Equifax)
- Chase (credit card applications)
- NASA Federal Credit Union

Soft Pull Options

- NASA Federal Credit Union
- PenFed
- Apple Card
- Bank of America
- American Express Blue
- TD Bank (soft pull; strong for credit cards, especially Visa Platinum)

Lenders can change requirements, bureau pulls, membership rules, and documentation asks at any time. Verify before you apply.

SECTION 09

Auto Approval Strategy

- Signature Federal Credit Union
- Digital Credit Union (great limits on limited credit; phone applications before membership)
- Navy Federal Credit Union (high limits with prior auto or bank relationship)
- Chase (soft-pull preapproval)
- Capital One Auto (may pull all three bureaus)
- LightStream (apply under $20K for easier approvals)
- Fifth Third Bank
- Coastal Credit Union
- US Bank
- Carvana
- Bank of America
- PNC Bank

“This process will require patience. If a lender says no, don’t get discouraged. Stay optimistic. Keep going.”

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