

Request Hardship Assistance



This information gives you important background that you should read before you complete a Hardship Assistance form. Getting it right means you have put your best foot forward for applying for hardship relief.

If you're in a situation where you're unable to meet your credit contract obligations, these are some of the ways we may be able to help you:

- Deferring repayments for a period of time
- Increasing the loan's term
- Changing the loan to Interest Only
- Varying your set up in other ways

It's important to know that our Hardship Assistance is not a long-term solution.

It allows you to access short-term relief while you get through a rough patch, before resuming your repayments. We look at all applications on a case-by case basis and take them very seriously. We may reject your request or ask for additional information if:

- You don't give us enough information to make a proper assessment, or you fail to respond to our request to provide additional data to enable us to make our assessment

Note: Free, confidential, independent financial advice is also available to you through the National Debt Helpline **1800 007 007**

Our promise

We'll help you by:

- Encouraging you to advise us quickly of any change in your position
- Ensuring that you understand any long-term consequences of any variation to your original loan set-up
- Having hardship policies and programs that genuinely help you
- Responding in a consistent, timely, efficient and fair manner

How it works

1. Tell us about your situation

Download the PDF and complete your current financial situation so that we can assess your situation.

Once complete, email it to assist@athena.com.au.

2. Gather your supporting documents

Depending on your situation, we will need you to send through some supporting documents. We'll tell you which ones in the PDF hardship assistance request form.

3. Send your completed PDF & supporting docs to us

Once you've completed the PDF request form, email us at assist@athena.com.au along with your supporting documents so that we can assess your situation.

4. We'll get back to you as soon as possible

We'll do our best to get back to you as soon as possible. Please be patient as it can take up to 3 weeks, but rest assured we're on it. We'll ping you if we need anything else from you in the meantime.

What we can do

If you're experiencing financial or non-financial hardship, and it's in your best interests to receive some form of assistance, here's what options are available:

1. Switch your product

If your loan is Principal & Interest, we may convert it to Interest Only to reduce your repayments during times of financial constraint.

2. Reduce your scheduled payments

Depending on your circumstances, we may be able to reduce your repayments for a while to help you through tough periods.

3. Request assistance

We'll check out if this works once you've sent across a completed Hardship Assistance Form. Athena Assist will assess your position and seek to find a solution that's most suitable for you.

How financial hardship impacts your Credit Score

For customers who enter a hardship arrangement with Athena, we are required to report this on your credit report. Before July 2022, your credit report might have shown you had missed repayments during the arrangement, without making it clear that this was due to financial hardship and done with the agreement of the lender.

With this new reporting requirement your repayment history information on your credit report will reflect what was agreed under the financial hardship arrangement.

For example, if we agreed to temporarily reduce your repayments, your credit report will show that the payment has been made if you meet that agreement. It will also put a "flag" alongside your repayment history information for the length of time we have agreed to reduce your repayments – in the credit report this will be referred to as "financial hardship information".

This means that because of this reporting, customers obtaining financial hardship assistance will avoid having their repayment history adversely impacted. If you were to subsequently apply for a new loan with a different lender, they would understand that you had received assistance and would likely want to discuss your up-to date circumstances. It also means that your credit score will not be impacted by your hardship request.

Athena's view is that it is better for a customer to have a financial hardship arrangement reported on their file than a missed payment.

If you would like more information about your credit report and how hardship impacts it please visit the CreditSmart website (<https://creditsmart.org.au>).

Speak to someone first?

If you're concerned about your financial situation and just want to speak to someone first. We're always here to help.

 Local call **13 13 32**

 SMS **0485 080 772**

 **hello@connective.athena.com.au**

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