

I am in financial trouble... what are my options?

What is insolvency?

Insolvency means either or both of the following:

- you cannot pay your debts when they are due (i.e. your outgoings are more than your income)
- you owe more than you own (your liabilities are more than your assets)

Do you know how much you owe?

The insolvency options available to you depend on your total debts. You should gather together all documentation such as statements, invoices, and contracts so the Official Assignee can confirm your financial position and determine your eligibility.

If you do not have documentation the creditor is required by law, to send you copies.

To work out your total debts, [use the handy budget calculator](#) found on this website.

What options do I have?

[Compromise](#)

[Proposal](#)

[Summary instalment order](#)

[Bankruptcy](#)

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Which of these options are available to you depend on the amount of debts, the value of assets, what the debts are for and whether you have been insolvent before and the options (if any) used then.

Compromise

This is an informal agreement with creditors that you will pay some (if not all) the money owed. It is not administered by the Official Assignee or Court but a budget advisor, lawyer or accountant would be able to help.

Proposal

This is a formal agreement between you and your creditors that needs to be approved by a Court. You will require the assistance of a lawyer or accountant in drafting the necessary documentation and having it approved by a Court.

Creditors first need to approve the terms of the proposal which may include offering to assign all or some of your property to a trustee for the benefit of creditors, or offering part or full payment of your debts by instalment. Your trustee will need to call a meeting of creditors to discuss the terms of the proposal and seek their agreement.

Once creditors have agreed to the terms of the proposal, the Court will approve it. Once approved, the proposal is binding on all creditors affected by the proposal. Those creditors cannot pursue you for their debts without the Court's permission for the life of the proposal.

If you are considering a proposal, you should seek independent legal advice and assistance.

Summary instalment orders (SIOs)

This is a formal agreement with creditors that you will pay some (if not all) the money owed. It lasts for three years (or five years in some circumstances) and means you have to pay agreed instalments. How much you pay is negotiated with the creditors who cannot take further action as long as you follow the agreement exactly. Application for entry is made to the Official Assignee. Management is by an Approved Supervisor.

Granting an SIO

You or any of your creditors (with your consent) may apply for your entry into an SIO. The Official Assignee may grant an SIO if:

1. Your total unsecured debts (excluding student loans, fines, penalties, and reparation orders) are less than \$NZ40,000
2. You are unable to pay those debts immediately.

Before granting an SIO, the Official Assignee will allow you and your creditors to make representations about the making of the order.

Bankruptcy

Bankruptcy is a legal proceeding which allows people who cannot pay their bills to get a fresh financial start. The right to file for bankruptcy is provided by law. Filing for bankruptcy immediately stops all of your creditors from seeking to collect debts from you.

In some cases a creditor will apply to the Court to have you adjudicated bankrupt. If you have not paid the outstanding amount by a specific date, you may have committed an 'act of bankruptcy' and the creditor can ask the judge to make you bankrupt. You will be served with a notice of hearings and can attend Court and make representations. You are entitled to have legal representation at the hearing. If you do not attend, the bankruptcy proceedings will proceed in your absence. Once you are bankrupt an Insolvency Officer from the Insolvency and Trustee Service will administer the estate.

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- File an acceptable Statement of Affairs
- Cooperate fully with the Official Assignee at all times
- Comply with all requests for information
- Notify the Official Assignee whenever you change your name, address, employment or terms of employment; income and/or expenditure
- Fulfil all your legal obligations.

During bankruptcy if required you must:

- Make payments toward your debts
- Vacate land and/or buildings
- Attend interviews or examinations on oath.

During bankruptcy you may not:

- Withhold information or mislead
- Incur credit of \$NZ1,000 or more without disclosing you are bankrupt
- Conceal assets
- Stop, attempt to stop, or hamper the Official Assignee dealing with any property or assets.

During bankruptcy you may not without consent:

Leave New Zealand

Enter into, carry on, or take part in the management or control of any business

Be employed by a relative or entity owned, managed, or controlled by a relative.

Failure to adhere to these responsibilities and restrictions can result in a fine, imprisonment, or both.

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No asset procedure (NAP)

This is a new option available since December 2007 and is not formal bankruptcy. Application for entry is made to the Official Assignee who then administers the No Asset Procedure in much the same way as a bankruptcy. You can only use the No Asset Procedure ONCE – ever!

Applying for a No Asset Procedure

Applications are made to the Official Assignee, either electronically or manually. An application and Statement of Affairs must be completed to a standard acceptable to the Official Assignee.

To qualify for entry you must:

have no realisable assets (realisable assets exclude cash up to \$NZ1,000, a motor vehicle up to \$NZ5,000, tools of trade, and personal and household effects)

not previously been admitted to the no asset procedure

not previously have been adjudicated bankrupt

have total debts (excluding student loan) not less than \$NZ1,000 and not more than \$NZ40,000

complete a means test showing you have no means of repaying any amount towards your debts.

The Official Assignee can refuse entry into the NAP if:

- your creditor(s) object to entry; or
- bankruptcy proceedings have been initiated and the likely outcome for the creditor would be materially better if the proceedings continued; or
- you have concealed assets; or
- you have committed an act that would be an offence under the Insolvency Act 2006 were you bankrupt; or
- you have incurred debts knowing you had no means to pay them.



Note

The Official Assignee can only assess one application for you at a time, so please ensure only one application (No Asset Procedure, Bankruptcy or Summary Instalment Order) is completed and sent to the Insolvency and Trustee Service.

The information you need to collect before beginning

You may complete Insolvency and Trustee applications, forms and statement of affairs on line, or in person with telephone assistance from ITS. Before you begin, it is suggested that you gather together all relevant documentation. We have provided for your guidance a list of information that you may find necessary to have at hand when completing a form or statement of affairs:

Personal details

- Full name and list of any other names used in the last 10 years or commonly known by
- Your address, the date you moved into this address, and if less than 2 years ago, your previous addresses
- Whether you own or rent (amount paid per week) and person to whom payment is made
- Passport number and country of issue
- Firearms licence details
- IRD number, period of last tax return
- Employment details
- Income – type, amount, and name and address of person providing income – a payslip must be included
- Spouse's details – their name, occupation, and income
- Dependant's details
- Court fine details – monthly payments
- Reparation order details – monthly payments
- Child support details – monthly payments and details of arrears
- Weekly or monthly budget

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Background to insolvency – details of:

- Previous bankruptcies, No Asset Procedures or Summary Instalment orders - dates and numbers
- Reasons for insolvency
- Details of steps taken to resolve financial problems
- Solicitor's and accountant's details (past and present)
- Property which has been repossessed or seized

- Property given away in the last two (2) years
- Property given to you by other people
- Money or property owed to you
- Payments made to creditors in the last month
- Details of finance (loans and debts) raised in the last one (1) year
- Betting and gambling in the last one (1) year
- Current court cases you are involved with – nature of case, name of other party, solicitor(s) involved
- Relationship property settlements in the last five (5) years

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Financial circumstances – details of:

- Bank, building society, credit union and TAB accounts, and overseas funds – Name of account, bank and branch, account type, current balance
- Inflation and bonus bonds, unit trusts and public company shares – Name of company, number of shares, location of share certificate or FIN number, approximate value
- Life insurance policies – Name of insured, policy number, insurance company, date paid up to, surrender value
- Superannuation funds – Name of fund, address of holder, policy number, date commenced, estimated value
- Trusts of which you are a trustee, settlor or beneficiary – Name of trust, trustee's names and addresses – Personal assets transferred to the trust – copy of the trust deeds are required
- Beneficiary of other trusts – date and value of benefit received
- Securities held – Type, name and address of property owner, value, description of property secured
- Deceased estate interests – Name of deceased and relationship, value of interest, name and address of executor
- Personal belongings and household effects – Description, location, value
- Real estate – Address, interest, mortgagee, market value, mortgage outstanding – whether insured, Joint Family Home, on market or rented out
- Asset disposals in the last two (2) years – Description of asset, amount received, where money went, name and address of agent involved
- Motor vehicles – Type, registration, make, model, year, location, registered owner, insurer, insured value, condition, odometer, estimated value, HPs and/or securities
- Other assets – Description, cost, approximate value
- Secured and HP debts – Creditor, address, type of security, description of goods, present value, amount owed
- Student loans – Reference number, tertiary qualification funded
- Credit cards – Name of lender, amount owed
- Other debts – Creditor, address, date incurred, goods received, amount owed [Top](#)

Business details – details of:

- Trading or company name – physical and postal address, phone and fax numbers
- Premises – Landlord, lease details, rent paid to, amount paid, arrears, lease agreement.
- Nature of business – date started, date ceased, uncompleted contracts
- Partnerships – partner's names, addresses, phone numbers
- GST registration
- Accountant
- Location of records
- Business assets – Bank accounts, plant and equipment, stock – Motor vehicles
- Book debts – Name, address, goods/services provided, date, amount owed
- Goodwill
- Preferential business creditors – Name, address, goods/services provided, date, amount owed
- Secured business creditors – Name, address, goods/services provided, date, amount owed
- Unsecured business creditors – Name, address, goods/services provided, date, amount owed

If you do not have any of the information, contact the appropriate bodies for copies. Failure to provide any information may delay your application.

Further information

[Case studies](#)

Case studies outlining some of the different options available.

[Comparison tool](#)

A comparison of the features of Summary Instalment Orders, No Asset Procedures, Creditors Petitions, and Proposals.

[Budget tool](#)

To assist in determining where your income is going and to assist in compiling a budget, you can use our budget calculator.

[Interactive guide](#)

This guide allows you to select Yes and No answers to set question assisting you in your decision making process.

[Personal insolvency information brochure \[592 kB PDF\]](#)

What you need to know about personal insolvency.