

Debt Management Relies On Good Record Keeping

Managing your debt effectively and repaying your medical school loans wisely is easier when you keep good records. It is important to know how much you owe, the terms and conditions of each loan type, and what agencies are servicing your loans. You need to know what documents to save, where to find them when you need them, and who you may need to contact if you have a question or concern.

While in School

Keep a copy of the promissory note you receive; it is your legal promise to repay your loans and it covers your rights and responsibilities as a borrower.

In addition to the promissory note, keep a copy of the disclosure statements you receive. The amounts and terms of each loan are spelled out in this document, and it will be useful later on when you enter repayment.

Upon Graduation

Shortly before you begin repayment, your lender will send you a repayment schedule, explaining the number and amount of monthly payments required to fulfill your loan obligation. Be sure to keep a copy of this repayment schedule to help with budgeting.

At this point, you will be responsible for keeping track of your loan portfolio. The [MedLoans® Organizer and Calculator \(MLOC\)](#) can help you stay organized. It is a great tool to organize your loans and view repayment scenarios. You can even import your student loan data directly from the [National Student Loan Data System \(NSLDS\)](#), the Department of Education's central database of student aid, right into the organizer and calculator.

Residency and Beyond

Once you're a resident, you will want to take the time to either set up a logical filing system or re-organize your existing one so that it works for you and your current situation. Whether you choose manila folders, filing boxes, accordion files, or some other system, be sure to organize all your information and paperwork. Keep the servicers addresses, phone numbers, websites and email addresses all in one central place for easy access. Don't forget to file the promissory note and other papers relating to each loan you received. You may even want to scan and save backup copies of important paperwork.

Moving, Mail and Communication

Be sure that the folder, notebook, or spreadsheet that you use to record your financial information stays with you throughout your years of internship, residency, fellowship, and practice. Each time you move, keep your servicers informed of your new address and keep a communication log of conversations that you have with your servicer. It may be helpful in the future.

Keep copies of any forms that you mail to your servicer and note the date that you mailed the form. Consider using registered mail, and a return reply card so that you know your mail was delivered and who signed for it. If you send an email message, be sure to keep a file for email correspondence.

A mistake some borrowers make is not keeping up with their mail. It is very **important** to open and read all of your mail (this includes email). You may accidentally miss a deadline or a notice about a loan status change if you don't acknowledge this communication promptly and it could have negative consequences on your credit history or on your ability to obtain future loans.

Planning and Preparing

It's a good idea to set up a long-range calendar that covers the length of your residency. Plan for important deadlines and mark them on your calendar. Keep track of dates that deferment and forbearance forms are due so that you meet eligibility requirements. If you're using an electronic calendar to stay organized, set up automatic reminders. Keeping good records can help simplify your life now and in the future.