

# 1<sup>st</sup> STOP CHECKLIST: CREDIT SERVICES ORGANIZATION/ DEBT POOLING/CONSOLIDATING SERVICES

## REQUIREMENTS & REGULATIONS

- [] A CREDIT SERVICES ORGANIZATION is “any person that charges or receives, directly from the buyer, money or other valuable considerations readily convertible into money, and that sells, provides, or performs...any of the following services:
  - a) improving a buyer’s credit record, history, or rating;
  - b) obtaining an extension of credit for a buyer
  - c) providing advice or assistance to a buyer in connection with a) or b)
  - d) removing adverse credit information that is accurate and not obsolete from the buyer’s credit, history, or rating;
  - e) altering the buyer’s identification to prevent the display of the buyer’s credit record, history, or rating” (**Ohio Revised Code Section 4712.01**).
  
- [] Credit services organizations must register with the **Ohio Department of Commerce’s Division of Financial Institutions**. Contact the division at **(614) 728-8400**. Information is also available on-line at [www.com.state.oh.us/fiin](http://www.com.state.oh.us/fiin)
  
- [] A DEBT POOLING or CONSOLIDATING SERVICE is defined as “budget counseling, debt management, prorating...or providing services to debtors in the management of their debts” for a fee (**Ohio Revised Code Section 4710.01**).
  
- [] There are no state-level licenses for debt pooling or consolidating services. Check locally for requirements. **\*Remember to check local government agencies\***
  
- [] Credit service organizations and debt pooling or consolidating businesses should also be aware of the **Federal Trade Commission’s (FTC)** Fair Credit Reporting Act. Information is available on-line at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov). For more information, or if you have questions, contact the FTC’s Cleveland Regional Office at **(216) 263-3410**.

**For more help, contact your local Small Business Development Center (SBDC).**

[www.ohisbdc.ohio.gov](http://www.ohisbdc.ohio.gov)

Remember to check local and federal laws.

**THIS CHECKLIST IS ABOUT STATE REQUIREMENTS.**