



Climate-Friendly Credit Cards

How to find a credit card to ensure you are contributing the *least possible* into the money pipeline funding the extraction, production or distribution of fossil fuel.¹

1. Best Option: card *issued* by your local credit union or community bank

The easiest way to get a climate-friendly credit card is to bank with a credit union or community bank² that *issues* its own credit card.

Finding an alternative to a mega-bank that is funding fossil fuel companies is relatively easy as there are several options within most communities. Look for a credit union or community bank that is headquartered within your state or region. Banking locally is a simple yet effective way to support your community³. Simply put: Shop Local - Eat Local - Bank Local.

There are reliable internet tools - such as [Mighty Deposits](#) - that aid in finding a credit union or community bank that will use your deposits to fund local businesses and farms, build local housing, and invest in your community... and not fossil fuel projects.

Nevertheless, many credit unions and community banks do not *issue* their own credit cards but offer *co-branded* credit cards that are issued by other banks or financial institutions. Finding a credit card that is not issued by one of the mega-banks may not be so easy.

¹ This guide is informed by research on banks and other financial institutions that are not major funders of the fossil fuel industry. Contributing groups include Green America, THIS! Is What We Did, Third Act Massachusetts, Third Act San Francisco, Third Act Maine, and 350Mass. Comments and suggestions are welcome: upstateNY@thirdact.org

² Explanation of "community bank": <https://www.fdic.gov/resources/community-banking/report/2012/2012-cbi-study-1.pdf>

³ Five reasons to bank local: <https://banklocal.info/why-bank-local>

You will need to find an alternative source for a credit card if:

- your credit union or community bank does not offer a credit card; or,
- your credit union or community bank offers a credit card issued by another financial institution that funds the fossil fuel industry (e.g. Elan Financial Services).

2. Next Best Option: card *issued* by another credit union

If you need to look outside your community for a credit union, below is a sampling⁴ of credit unions that *issue* their own credit cards. Note: membership in most credit unions is limited to a specific location and you must reside in that location, but there are a few credit unions that accept members nationwide - regardless of location.

restricted membership - specific location	open membership - nationwide (states with branch locations)
Self-Help CU (NC, SC, FL)	Self-Help Federal CU (CA, IL, WA, WI)
Patelco (Northern California)	Hope Credit Union (MS, LA, AR, AL, TN)
Lower East Side People's FCU (NYC)	Alliant Credit Union (internet only)
Greylock FCU (Western Mass)	Affinity Plus FCU (Minnesota)
Clearwater Credit Union (Montana)	Agricultural Federal CU (DC, MD)

Many credit unions offer credit cards featuring their logo but outsource the issuing and servicing to an “**agent credit card issuer**”. The three credit card issuers listed below are owned by credit unions associations and are not involved in funding fossil fuel companies.

America's Credit Unions (formerly CUNA - trade association owned by credit unions)

PSCU | COOP Solutions (private company owned by credit unions)

CSCU - Card Services for Credit Unions (private company owned by credit unions)

ALERT: Elan Financial Services- a subsidiary of U.S. Bank - is the agent credit card issuer for over 300 credit unions. U.S. Bank is a major funder of fossil fuel companies.

⁴ The credit unions listed here have climate and/or social justice within their values and mission statements.

3. Good Option: co-branded card *issued* by FNBO or TCM

Many community banks offer credit cards featuring their logo but outsource the issuing and servicing to an “**agent credit card bank**”. Two of these banks are acceptable alternatives to the mega-banks: FNBO (First National Bank of Omaha) and TCM Bank; neither issue loans to or have assets invested in the fossil fuel industry. Bank of Missouri also issues cards for several local community banks in the central states.

Here is a small sampling of some of the community banks, retailers, and organizations that have cards issued by FNBO or TCM:

FNBO - First National Bank of Omaha	TCM Bank
Amalgamated Bank (NYC, DC)	<u>Native American Bank</u>
Community Bank, N.A. (NY, VT, PA)	Abacus Federal Savings Bank (NY, NJ, PA)
Flagstar (MI, NYC, FL)	Bank of Montgomery (LA, TX)
Wintrust Bank, N.A. (Chicago area)	Evertrust Bank (CA)
Glacier Bancorp (WA, MT, ID, UT, WY, CO, AZ, NV)	Farmers and Merchants Bank (MD)
<u>SEIU</u> - labor union	<u>Green America</u>

TCM Bank is owned by Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA), which is a trade group of community banks. TCM issues credit cards for over 750 community banks, also several non-profit organizations.

Note: a few climate groups have “downlisted” credit cards issued by TCM due to an [ICBA report](#) on climate change regulation that said: “ICBA will oppose any climate risk regulation that adversely impacts community banks and their ability to support their communities and customers.” However, there are no indications that TCM or ICBA issue loans to or have assets invested in the fossil fuel industry.

ALERT: Elan Financial Services- a subsidiary of U.S. Bank - is the agent credit card bank for over 1300 banks. U.S. Bank is a major funder of fossil fuel companies. Elan Financial issues credit cards for Sunrise Bank, Southern Bancorp, and Androscoggin Savings Bank, which are B-Corp certified; also a few “climate-friendly” banks such as Berkshire Bank.

4. Corporate Option: card *issued* by AMEX, Bread, Synchrony, etc.

There are many credit cards *issued* by large financial institutions where there is no indication of *direct* loans or investments in the fossil fuel industry; but they also do not invest in local communities.

American Express

Discover

Diners Club (subsidiary of Discover)

Bread Bank - formerly Comenity (issues “store” cards for 100+ large retail chains)

Synchrony Bank (issues cards for Sam’s Club, PayPal, Venmo)

ServisFirst Bank

UMB Bank

Capital One (relatively minor lender to fossil fuel companies)

Nevertheless, a significant percentage of the shares in these “banks” are under management by large asset managers such as BlackRock, Vanguard, and Berkshire Hathaway. These multinational investment companies also manage shares in most fossil fuel companies.

For example, BlackRock, Vanguard, and Berkshire Hathaway hold over one-third of the shares in American Express on behalf of their investors.

Vanguard, BlackRock, Bank of America are among the top institutional holders of shares in Synchrony, which issues cards for Sam’s Club, PayPal, and Venmo.

5. Worst Option: card issued by mega-bank

Credit cards issued by mega-banks lending and underwriting billions of dollars in the fossil fuel industry - listed by amount of financing⁵

- 1 - JPMorgan Chase
- 2 - Citigroup
- 3 - Bank of America
- 5 - Wells Fargo
- 7 - Royal Bank of Canada (RBC)
- 8 - Barclays (UK)
- 10 - UBS (Switzerland)
- 11 - ScotiaBank (Canada)
- 12 - HSBC (UK)
- 14 - Goldman Sachs
- 15 - Morgan Stanley
- 16 - Toronto Dominion (TD) Bank
- 18 - BMO Financial Group (Bank of Montreal)
- 25 - PNC Financial Group
- 27 - Truist Financial
- 34 - US Bancorp (parent company for Elan Financial)

⁵ Banking on Climate Chaos - <https://www.bankingonclimatechaos.org/>

Resources:

Credit Unions

[Credit Union Locator](#) - National Credit Union Administration (NCUA)

[Research a Credit Union](#) - National Credit Union Administration (NCUA)

Community Banks

[Community Bank Search](#) - Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)

[Bank Find](#) - Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). If you cannot find a particular bank, it is not regulated by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC). It may be a credit union, state-regulated bank, or other type of institution.

Partners:

Green America: <https://www.greenamerica.org/finance>

THIS! Is What We Did: <https://thisiswhatwedid.org/move-your-money/>

