

The CFPB: Six years serving consumers

The CFPB was created in the wake of the financial crisis to stand up for consumers and make sure they are treated fairly in the financial marketplace. Since opening its doors six years ago, we have handled consumer complaints about problems with their financial companies, created new consumer protections for financial products and services, held bad actors accountable for breaking the law, and provided new resources to help consumers make informed financial decisions. In observance of six years serving consumers, here are six ways we've made consumers count.

The CFPB's actions have resulted in nearly \$12 billion in relief for more than 29 million harmed consumers.

Consumers have the right to be treated fairly in the financial marketplace. We've worked to stamp out illegal and predatory practices in the marketplace by supervising financial companies and enforcing consumer protections. Over the past six years, our actions have resulted in billions in relief for millions of consumers harmed by financial companies and individuals that broke the law. We've taken legal action against:

- **Banks** for opening deposit and credit card accounts without consumers' authorization and for charging overdraft fees to consumers who had not agreed to overdraft services
- **Credit card companies** for engaging in unfair and deceptive practices related to marketing, billing, and enrollment for credit add-on products and services
- **Mortgage companies** for wrongly foreclosing on consumers' homes
- **Debt collectors** for using illegal tactics to intimidate consumers into paying debts they may not owe

- **Student loan servicers** for illegal servicing practices and for failing borrowers at every stage of repayment
- **Prepaid card companies** for preventable breakdowns that cut off consumers' access to their funds

The CFPB has handled more than 1.2 million consumer complaints.

Consumers have the right to be heard when they have a problem with a financial product or service. They can submit a complaint to us and we will work to make sure they get a response from the company. Since we opened our doors, we've handled over 1.2 million complaints (1,242,800+) from consumers around the country about problems with their credit cards, bank accounts, credit reports, mortgages, prepaid cards and more. We also publish complaints to amplify consumers' voices and improve the consumer financial marketplace. Our online Consumer Complaint Database is the nation's largest public collection of consumer financial complaints.

- **25,000+** consumer calls handled every month in 2017, of which **17,000+** were consumer questions
- **97 percent** of complaints received a timely company response
- **103,000+ complaints** from older consumers handled
- **74,700+ complaints** from servicemembers handled

The CFPB put in place strong protections for prepaid account consumers.

Consumers have the right to safe access to their money. Consumers can use prepaid products to make payments, store funds, get cash at ATMs, receive direct deposits, or send funds to other consumers. For many consumers, prepaid accounts are an alternative to traditional checking accounts, but until now they had only limited federal protections. The CFPB's new rule requires financial institutions to limit consumers' losses when funds are stolen or cards are lost, investigate and resolve errors, and give consumers free and easy access to account information. We also put in place new *Know Before You Owe* disclosures for prepaid accounts to give consumers clear, upfront information about fees and other key details. Finally, prepaid companies must now generally offer protections similar to those for credit cards if consumers are allowed to use credit on their accounts to pay for transactions that they lack the money to cover.

The CFPB has banned financial companies from using arbitration clauses that deny groups of consumers their day in court.

Consumers have the right to join together to pursue justice and relief through group lawsuits. Many consumer financial products like credit cards and bank accounts have arbitration clauses in their contracts that make it nearly impossible for people to take companies to court when things go wrong. Mandatory arbitration clauses that block group lawsuits are bad for consumers. They allow companies to avoid accountability by forcing people to give up or go it alone – usually over small amounts not worth pursuing. By sidestepping the courts, companies can avoid paying out big refunds and continue harmful practices. The CFPB's rule bans financial companies from using mandatory arbitration clauses to deny groups of consumers their day in court.

The CFPB put in place rules to make the mortgage market safer for consumers.

Consumers have the right to a safer mortgage market. We created new “back-to-basics” mortgage rules to address the risky lending and shoddy mortgage servicing that helped cause the financial crisis. Our new rules protect consumers at every stage of the process—from shopping for a loan, to closing on a mortgage, to paying it back. Our *Know Before You Owe* mortgage disclosure rules give consumers clear, easy-to-understand information so they can understand the terms of the deal and comparison shop. Our ability-to-repay rule protects consumers from dangerous lending practices by requiring lenders to verify that consumers can actually afford to pay back the mortgages they are offered. Our mortgage servicing rules protect consumers from surprises and runarounds while paying back their mortgage, and provide additional protections for homeowners who fall behind on their mortgage payments.

- **More than 52 million mortgages** benefit from our mortgage servicing protections
- **More than 25 million mortgages** have been covered by our Ability-to-Repay rule's protections and that number grows every month

The CFPB has empowered millions of consumers to *Know Before You Owe*.

Consumers have the right to clear, reliable information about financial products and services so they can make informed financial decisions. Our *Know Before You Owe* initiative is making information about mortgages, student loans, auto loans, prepaid accounts, and other financial products and services more understandable to consumers.

- Consumers closed on **10.5 million** mortgages since early 2016 and received our new Loan Estimate and Closing Disclosure forms to help them understand the true cost of borrowing
- **3,270+ colleges** are voluntarily adopting the financial aid shopping sheet developed by the Department of Education and the CFPB that helps students better understand the type and amount of grants and loans they qualify for
- Our auto loan shopping sheet and online guide are available to the **28+ million consumers** shopping for an auto loan each year, who can use these tools to do an apples-to-apples comparison of loan products
- **100 million+ prepaid cards** will soon have fee disclosures on the packaging so consumers will have clear information before they purchase and sign up

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The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is a 21st century agency that helps consumer finance markets work by making rules more effective, by consistently and fairly enforcing those rules, and by empowering consumers to take more control over their economic lives. For more information, visit consumerfinance.gov.