

OMBUDSMAN FOR BANKING SERVICES AND INVESTMENTS (OBSI)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT IS OBSI?

OBSI is a free-to-the-public, independent and impartial alternative to the court system for aggrieved investors. OBSI has the power to issue non-binding recommendations in instances of misconduct by financial institutions that result in financial harm to investors. Non-binding means that both parties have the right to refuse the recommendation. If a firm does not pay the recommended sum, OBSI will make the non-compliance of the firm public. The limit on OBSI settlements is \$350,000.



ELIGIBILITY FOR OBSI DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Investors can use OBSI as an alternative to the court system when a bank or investment firm has acted unfairly, made an error, or provided poor advice, and the investor loses money as a result (1). OBSI complaints can be related to credit card, banking and loan, and investment problems (2).

Before initiating the OBSI dispute resolution process, aggrieved investors are required to submit a complaint to the firm responsible for the alleged misconduct. Complaints are related to issues investors knew or should have known of within 6 years of the alleged wrongdoing (3). After 90 days of the complaint, whether the firm has responded or not, the aggrieved investor can initiate proceedings with OBSI if they are not satisfied. If an investor has received a response from a firm in writing, they then have 180 days to initiate proceedings with OBSI (2). If the subject matter of the complaint is already before the courts, OBSI will not proceed (4).

THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

If the specific firm is registered with OBSI and the time limits are satisfied, an aggrieved investor can launch a complaint by calling OBSI or using an online form. The online form will ask for the details of the complaint, the type of resolution requested, and supporting documentation related to the matter.

Once the investor provides consent, OBSI representatives will investigate an investor's claim by following up with the investor and the specific firm involved. OBSI seeks "fair" resolutions to claims and will ask the client further questions or for additional documentation if the situation warrants it. If an investor is not content with OBSI's recommendation, they can pursue a legal action or take their claim to a regulator. The investor can also submit complaints about OBSI to OBSI (5).



TIPS FOR FILING A COMPLAINT

OBSI's resolution process is designed for investors to pursue a claim without the advice of counsel. The OBSI website provides case studies where an investor's claim is successful to guide complainants. As a rule of thumb, over-sharing info is preferable to under-sharing if an investor is without counsel.