Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Advisory Committee Meeting Discussion Outline

May 1st, 2020

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (or CFPB) has taken numerous steps to protect and assist consumers during the COVID-19 national emergency including making it easier for consumers to receive economic impact payments; informing consumers about their options as it relates to mortgage forbearance; ensuring consumers will be able to continue to send remittance transfers without disruption; releasing a policy statement outlining the responsibility of credit reporting companies and furnishers; and, providing needed flexibility to enable financial companies to work with customers in need. The Bureau continues to process consumer complaints through the consumer complaint system. Through the consumer complaint system, the CFPB gets responses from companies to resolve consumer issues and takes the information into account in supervisory and enforcement work. The CFPB has also released timely information on new programs aimed at helping struggling consumers during this time. These programs include student loan payment suspension; mortgage forbearance; stimulus payments; and the paycheck protection program.

Additionally, the Bureau has a centralized webpage with information on how consumers can protect their finances during the pandemic. The webpage contains several guides and tools, including the CARES Act Mortgage forbearance video, to help consumers understand what resources are available to them. Find more on the Bureau's continued work during this crisis by visiting the newsroom with updated press releases.

Over the past two months, the CFPB has actively engaged with advisory committee members, regulated entities, consumer groups, small institutions, trade associations, state partners, and other stakeholders to ensure we receive timely feedback and are providing appropriate resources to consumers and institutions. Today's meeting provides another opportunity to garner important feedback on COVID19 and how it has impacted consumers and financial markets.

During today's discussion, the Bureau is interested in hearing from advisory committee members about how this crisis is impacting communities across the country. Below are key questions to help facilitate the discussion. Questions are presented in alignment with the agenda and broken down by product and special population. There will not be enough time to cover each question during our discussions. However, please use these questions as a guide to provide your feedback.

Discussion Questions

I. The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Consumers and the Financial Marketplace

Consumer Response

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- What are some of the key COVID-19 related risks to consumers that Consumer Response should expect to see next in consumer complaints?

- The Bureau's consumer complaint process generally expects companies to provide a response to consumer complaints within 15 days. However, companies have the option, and may understandably need to use, the existing "In progress" feature in the Company Portal to provide their customers with an interim response and close the complaint with a final substantive response within 60 days of when the complaint was sent the company.

  As noted in the presentation from Consumer Response, companies have not yet expressed any concerns or challenges in responding to consumer complaints and the timely response rate is holding steady. Do advisory committee members envision a scenario where companies would not be able/should not be expected to provide a final response to consumer complaints in 60 days?

Research

- What are you seeing anecdotally in credit markets that you think merits a deeper exploration in data?

Consumer Credit, Payments and Deposits Markets

- What real and potential harms for consumers or problems for industry related to COVID-19 are you most concerned about in each of the following areas?

  - Auto Lending
  - Credit Card
  - Installment Lending
  - Payments
  - Deposits

- Can you share your observations on steps taken by consumers and other financial service stakeholders to mitigate COVID-19 related impacts?

Mortgage Markets

- What are some of the current key trends and data points for mortgages in the context of COVID-19?
- What are some areas of current or future consumer harm in mortgages resulting from the pandemic?

Small Business Lending Markets

- What are current conditions for small businesses in the context of COVID-19?

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- What are some areas of concern for the Bureau?

II. The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Special Populations

Older Americans

- Are there any innovative examples of providing older Americans the financial information and services they need given the current state of large-scale avoidance of in-person settings and limitations on print publication distribution?
- What are the likely long-term impacts of the current economic crisis on older Americans (those 62 and over) who have a need to be in the workforce either full or part-time?

Community Affairs

- As the coronavirus crisis changes from day to day, so does the need for reliable and accurate information about stimulus payments and other financial education resources (like YMYG) geared toward financially protecting consumers. I think I can safely say that the CFPB is here to help you in this unprecedented time. We have made our financial education guides and resources about credit, debt, and more available for cobranding and white labeling. What do you anticipate will be the need around financial education materials specific to COVID-19?

- Many industries in the US have extended help to customers experiencing hardships as a result of Covid-19. Some utilities are suspending disconnections and waiving late fees for affected customer that are unable to pay. And of course, some financial institutions are actively working with their customers to (in some cases) temporarily wave overdraft fees, expand limits on savings account transactions and to defer auto and mortgage payments for several months. What measures has your institution considered and what are you hearing from your customers and the people you serve about their unique challenges and needs during this time?

- A lot of the relief available to customers by financial institutions is dependent on customers being proactive to contact the financial institution if they're unable to pay their loans/debts. But some customers may not be aware of their need to do so and their credit may be negatively impacted. Do you think the credit reporting industry has sufficiently informed consumers about measures to take to protect their credit?
    - And what do you foresee being the long-term impact on people's credit history from the COVID-19 crisis?
    - What kind of measures can financial institutions employ to better protect customers credit during this crisis?
    - Should customers credit scores and credit histories be negatively affected during the COVID 19 crisis, are there measures financial institutions can take to mark/code or otherwise delineate that those negative events occurred during the

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designation of a national emergency? Doing so would give future landlords, employers, and creditors a frame of reference if they run a credit check.

Servicemember Affairs

- The majority of military members and families are eligible to receive a stimulus check(s). We have heard about a number of challenges with these checks being delayed or possibly not reaching their intended recipients in some cases. What have you heard are some of the most common reasons for the delays?

- Some military members are facing challenges with the stop movement order whereby they are unable to move to their new duty station. As a result, this has created some challenging financial situations where servicemembers may be forced to maintain multiple households. The military is now, in some cases, cutting new orders for servicemembers so that they can terminate their lease agreements with new permanent-change-of-station orders under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act or SCRA. What other forms of assistance are available to renters stuck in leasing disputes?

Students

- The CARES Act implemented a series of benefits for certain federal student loans but not all federal student loans and excludes private student loans. We know that this caused confusion in the early days after passing of the CARES Act. Has anyone heard from consumers that they continue to experience confusion about which benefits apply to their student loans?

- Have advisory committee members heard of a rise in scams or fraudulent market players related to student loans schemes in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic?

III. Suggested Pre-Reads:

- CFPB Covid-19 Resource Page: https://www.consumerfinance.gov/coronavirus/
- CFPB Newsroom: https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/newsroom/

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