

# MONEYWISE

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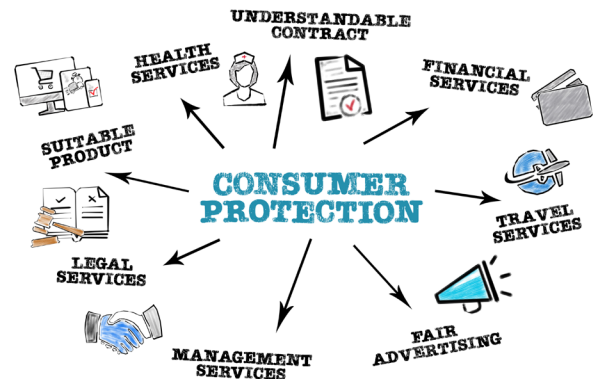
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## FAIR AND SAFE: THE ROLE OF CONSUMER PROTECTION AGENCIES

When you shop, you probably expect that the seller will treat you fairly, offer a reasonable price, and sell a safe product. Consumer protection agencies exist to ensure that these expectations are true. They safeguard your rights and interests as a buyer. Three of these agencies are the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Let's explore how these agencies help keep the marketplace balanced and secure.

### FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION (FTC)

The FTC makes sure that competition is fair and that buyers are protected in different industries. They investigate and stop unfair competition, scams, and misleading advertising. For example, if someone tries to trick people into buying something with false claims, the FTC steps in to stop it. They also help people who have had their identity stolen by providing resources, assisting in recovery, and raising awareness. In 2021, they helped nearly 24 million identity theft victims, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. By promoting fair competition, the FTC encourages lower prices and better-quality products, giving consumers more choices. They also teach people about their



rights and give information to help them make smart choices, especially with big purchases or money matters.

### CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU (CFPB)

The CFPB is a government agency that monitors how consumers interact with banks, mortgage companies, payday lenders, and other financial businesses. Their main job is to make sure consumers are treated fairly by enforcing laws that protect them from being financially harmed or deceived. If you have a problem with a financial product or service, like a bank account or a loan, you can reach out to the CFPB for help. By filing a complaint online or over the phone, they will investigate and try to resolve the issue. The CFPB also provides educational



## **THE FTC, CFPB, AND FDA ARE ONLY A FEW U.S. CONSUMER PROTECTION AGENCIES.**



# CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION

resources to help people better understand their financial choices. They offer tools and programs to teach consumers about important financial topics such as managing money, understanding credit, and avoiding financial scams. For instance, the CFPB ensures that mortgage companies follow rules to prevent people from losing their homes through foreclosure. They also require credit card companies to clearly explain their fees and terms so consumers can make informed decisions.

### **FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA)**

The FDA is another federal agency that looks after the safety and effectiveness of products that we use every day, like food, medicines, and medical devices. They play an important role ensuring the food we buy is safe to eat and food labels are accurate. The FDA also verifies the safety of new medicines and medical devices before they are sold to the public. This protects consumers from using products that could be dangerous or might not work as they should. Along with their role in product safety, the FDA teaches

people about important health topics. They provide information on how to use medications safely and how to handle food to avoid getting sick. They also warn about the dangers of risky behaviors like smoking. By setting rules and making sure companies follow them, the FDA plays a key part in keeping consumers healthy and informed.

The FTC, CFPB, and FDA are only a few U.S. consumer protection agencies. Understanding the functions and roles of agencies like these helps consumers make informed decisions and avoid or address problematic issues with services and products.

### **REFERENCES:**

Federal Trade Commission.  
<https://www.ftc.gov/>

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.  
<https://www.consumerfinance.gov>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration.  
<https://www.fda.gov/>

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