

## **Investor Protection**

Protect Your Assets, Investigate Before You Invest

## What to Do Before You Choose a Broker:

- Verify that the broker-dealer you are considering is registered and in good standing by requesting broker information from the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) or by searching for broker records on FINRA's BrokerCheck system (http://www.finra.org/Investors/ToolsCalculators/BrokerCheck/index.htm).
- Contact the Securities Investor Protection Agency (www.SIPC.org) to confirm that the broker is a SIPC member. SIPC offers account protection in the event of broker failure or malfeasance. Check if the broker offers protection in excess of SIPC's coverage.
- Contact your state, district or territorial Securities Administrator, whose contact info can be found at www.nasaa.org, to verify the broker is in good standing with local authorities. Check that the broker is properly licensed to engage in the securities business in your state and request information on the broker's disciplinary action history.
- Contact the Better Business Bureau's reports (www.bbb.org) to gauge the broker's commitment to service and honest practices. Review complaint and resolution history.
- If you are considering hiring an investment advisor, confirm that the advisor is registered by searching the SEC's Investment Advisor Disclosure system (http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov/IAPD/Content/Search/iapd\_OrgSearch.aspx).
- Contact any regional exchanges to which the broker claims membership. This is especially true if the broker is registered only with an exchange and not with FINRA.

## What to Do Once You Have Chosen A Broker:

- Read and retain your monthly account statements and confirmations.
- Research all products, prospectuses and offering statements thoroughly before making investment decisions.
- Question your broker or your broker's compliance department about any questionable or unauthorized activity
  in your account such as excessive trading ("churning"), movements of funds, misrepresentations or failure to
  disclose material information, excessive markups, markdowns and commissions etc.
- If you feel you have been wronged or mislead or if you feel there has been a breach of fiduciary duty on the part
  of your broker, submit a formal written complaint to your brokerage firm. Keep copies of any correspondence
  regarding your complaint.

## What to Do in the Event of Broker Failure or Malfeasance:

- Submit a formal complaint to FINRA (www.finra.org/complaint), the SEC, your local Securities Administrator and/or the BBB.
- Although potentially costly, file an arbitration through FINRA's Dispute Resolution process (www.finra.org/ArbitrationMediation/index.htm).

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