



IAPD Report

JOSEPH FRANCIS FESSLER

CRD# 1889126

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When communicating online or investing with any professional, make sure you know who you're dealing with. [Imposters](#) might link to sites like BrokerCheck from [phishing](#) or similar scam websites, or through [social media](#), trying to steal your personal information or your money.

Please contact FINRA with any concerns.



IAPD Information About Representatives

IAPD offers information on all current-and many former representatives. Investors are strongly encouraged to use IAPD to check the background of representatives before deciding to conduct, or continue to conduct, business with them.

What is included in a IAPD report?

IAPD reports for individual representatives include information such as employment history, professional qualifications, disciplinary actions, criminal convictions, civil judgments and arbitration awards.

It is important to note that the information contained in an IAPD report may include pending actions or allegations that may be contested, unresolved or unproven. In the end, these actions or allegations may be resolved in favor of the representative, or concluded through a negotiated settlement with no admission or finding of wrongdoing.

Where did this information come from?

The information contained in IAPD comes from the Investment Adviser Registration Depository (IARD) and FINRA's Central Registration Depository, or CRD, (see more on CRD below) and is a combination of:

- information the states require representatives and firms to submit as part of the registration and licensing process, and
- information that state regulators report regarding disciplinary actions or allegations against representatives.

How current is this information?

Generally, representatives are required to update their professional and disciplinary information in IARD within 30 days.

Need help interpreting this report?

For help understanding how to read this report, please consult NASAA's IAPD Tips page <http://www.nasaa.org/IAPD/IARReports.cfm>

What if I want to check the background of an Individual Broker or Brokerage Firm?

To check the background of an Individual Broker or Brokerage firm, you can search for the firm or individual in IAPD. If your search is successful, click on the link provided to view the available licensing and registration information in FINRA's BrokerCheck website.

Are there other resources I can use to check the background of investment professionals?

It is recommended that you learn as much as possible about an individual representative or Investment Adviser firm before deciding to work with them. Your state securities regulator can help you research individuals and certain firms doing business in your state. The contact information for state securities regulators can be found on the website of the North American Securities Administrators Association <http://www.nasaa.org>



Report Summary

JOSEPH FRANCIS FESSLER (CRD# 1889126)

The report summary provides an overview of the representative's professional background and conduct. The information contained in this report has been provided by the representative, investment adviser and/or securities firms, and/or securities regulators as part of the states' investment adviser registration and licensing process. The information contained in this report was last updated by the representative, a previous employing firm, or a securities regulator on **01/05/2026**.

CURRENT EMPLOYERS

	Firm	CRD#	Registered Since
B	MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH INCORPORATED	CRD# 7691	11/23/1988
IA	MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH INCORPORATED	CRD# 7691	11/29/1989

QUALIFICATIONS

This representative is currently registered in **6** SRO(s) and **47** jurisdiction(s).

Is this representative currently Inactive or Suspended with any regulator? **No**

Note: Not all jurisdictions require IAR registration or may have an exemption from registration.

Additional information including this individual's qualification examinations and professional designations is available in the Detailed Report.

REGISTRATION HISTORY

This representative was previously registered with the following firm(s):

FIRM	CRD#	LOCATION	REGISTRATION DATES
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No information reported.

For additional registration and employment history details as reported by the individual, refer to the Registration and Employment History section of the Detailed Report.

DISCLOSURE INFORMATION

Disclosure events include certain criminal charges and convictions, formal investigations and disciplinary actions initiated by regulators, customer disputes and arbitrations, and financial disclosures such as bankruptcies and unpaid judgments or liens.

Are there events disclosed about this representative? **Yes**

The following types of events are disclosed about this representative:

Type	Count
Customer Dispute	2



Qualifications

REGISTRATIONS

This section provides the SRO, states and U.S. territories in which the representative is currently registered and licensed, the category of each registration, and the date on which the registration becomes effective. This section also provides, for each firm with which the representative is currently employed, the address of each location where the representative works. This individual is currently registered with **47** jurisdiction(s) and 6 SRO(s) through his or her employer(s).

Employment 1 of 1

Firm Name: **MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH INCORPORATED**
Main Address: ONE BRYANT PARK
NEW YORK, NY 10036
Firm ID#: 7691

Regulator	Registration	Status	Date
B Cboe BYX Exchange, Inc.	General Securities Representative	Approved	05/13/2014
B Cboe BZX Exchange, Inc.	General Securities Representative	Approved	05/13/2014
B Cboe Exchange, Inc.	General Securities Representative	Approved	03/03/1991
B Cboe Exchange, Inc.	General Securities Sales Supervisor	Approved	04/12/1991
B FINRA	General Securities Representative	Approved	11/23/1988
B FINRA	General Securities Sales Supervisor	Approved	04/12/1991
B Nasdaq Stock Market	General Securities Representative	Approved	07/12/2006
B Nasdaq Stock Market	General Securities Sales Supervisor	Approved	07/12/2006
B New York Stock Exchange	General Securities Representative	Approved	11/23/1988
B New York Stock Exchange	General Securities Sales Supervisor	Approved	10/01/2018
B Alabama	Agent	Approved	01/02/2025
B Arizona	Agent	Approved	10/17/1997
B California	Agent	Approved	09/01/1995



Qualifications

Regulator	Registration	Status	Date
B Colorado	Agent	Approved	09/05/1995
B Connecticut	Agent	Approved	09/05/1995
B Delaware	Agent	Approved	01/09/2025
B Florida	Agent	Approved	11/29/1989
IA Florida	Investment Adviser Representative	Approved	11/29/1989
B Georgia	Agent	Approved	01/10/1994
B Hawaii	Agent	Approved	11/22/2019
B Idaho	Agent	Approved	11/24/2021
B Illinois	Agent	Approved	09/05/1995
B Indiana	Agent	Approved	11/23/2021
B Iowa	Agent	Approved	01/03/2025
B Kansas	Agent	Approved	11/03/2009
B Kentucky	Agent	Approved	02/23/1998
B Louisiana	Agent	Approved	02/26/2021
B Maine	Agent	Approved	08/22/1995
B Maryland	Agent	Approved	11/14/1991
B Massachusetts	Agent	Approved	01/18/1994
B Michigan	Agent	Approved	01/03/1989
B Minnesota	Agent	Approved	04/30/1997



Qualifications

Regulator	Registration	Status	Date
B Mississippi	Agent	Approved	01/06/2025
B Missouri	Agent	Approved	09/06/1995
B Montana	Agent	Approved	11/23/2021
B Nebraska	Agent	Approved	11/23/2021
B Nevada	Agent	Approved	08/11/2020
B New Hampshire	Agent	Approved	01/31/2013
B New Jersey	Agent	Approved	11/14/1991
B New Mexico	Agent	Approved	03/09/2001
B New York	Agent	Approved	11/14/1991
B North Carolina	Agent	Approved	11/14/1991
B Ohio	Agent	Approved	09/05/1995
B Oklahoma	Agent	Approved	01/07/2026
B Oregon	Agent	Approved	02/10/1997
B Pennsylvania	Agent	Approved	08/17/1995
B Puerto Rico	Agent	Approved	09/16/2025
B Rhode Island	Agent	Approved	11/30/2021
B South Carolina	Agent	Approved	04/22/1994
B Tennessee	Agent	Approved	08/08/1997
B Texas	Agent	Approved	02/03/1997



Qualifications

Regulator	Registration	Status	Date
IA Texas	Investment Adviser Representative	Restricted Approval	02/03/1997
B Vermont	Agent	Approved	09/05/1995
B Virgin Islands	Agent	Approved	01/05/2026
B Virginia	Agent	Approved	11/19/1993
B Washington	Agent	Approved	09/06/1995
B West Virginia	Agent	Approved	12/02/2021
B Wisconsin	Agent	Approved	05/27/1994
B Wyoming	Agent	Approved	04/03/2023

Branch Office Locations

**MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH
INCORPORATED**
660 BEACHLAND BLVD
VERO BEACH, FL 32963



Qualifications

PASSED INDUSTRY EXAMS

This section includes all industry exams that the representative has passed. Under limited circumstances, a representative may attain registration after receiving an exam waiver based on a combination of exams the representative has passed and qualifying work experience. Likewise a new exam requirement may be grandfathered based on a representative's specific qualifying work experience. Exam waivers and grandfathering are not included below.

This individual has passed 3 principal/supervisory exams, 3 general industry/product exams, and 2 state securities law exams.

Principal/Supervisory Exams

Exam	Category	Date
General Securities Sales Supervisor - General Module Examination (S10)	Series 10	01/02/2023
General Securities Sales Supervisor - Options Module Examination (S9)	Series 9	01/02/2023
General Securities Sales Supervisor Examination (Options Module & General Module) (S8)	Series 8	04/09/1991

General Industry/Product Exams

Exam	Category	Date
Securities Industry Essentials Examination (SIE)	SIE	10/01/2018
National Commodity Futures Examination (S3)	Series 3	10/30/1992
General Securities Representative Examination (S7)	Series 7	11/19/1988

State Securities Law Exams

Exam	Category	Date
Uniform Investment Adviser Law Examination (S65)	Series 65	09/20/1996
Uniform Securities Agent State Law Examination (S63)	Series 63	12/28/1988

PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATIONS

This section details that the representative has reported **0** professional designation(s).

No information reported.



Registration & Employment History

PREVIOUSLY REGISTERED WITH THE FOLLOWING FIRMS

This representative held registrations with the following firms:

No information reported.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Below is the representative's employment history for up to the last 10 years.

Employment Dates	Employer Name	Position	Investment Related	Employer Location
08/2011 - Present	BANK OF AMERICA, N.A.	WEALTH MANAGEMENT ADVISOR	Y	VERO BEACH, FL, United States
01/1984 - Present	MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH INCORPORATED	NOT PROVIDED	Y	VERO BEACH, FL, United States

OTHER BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

This section includes information, if any, as provided by the representative regarding other business activities the representative is currently engaged in either as a proprietor, partner, officer, director, employee, trustee, agent, or otherwise. This section does not include non-investment related activity that is exclusively charitable, civic, religious, or fraternal and is recognized as tax exempt.

No information reported.



Disclosure Summary

Disclosure Information

What you should know about reported disclosure events:

(1) Certain thresholds must be met before an event is reported to IARD, for example:

- A law enforcement agency must file formal charges before an Investment Adviser Representative is required to report a particular criminal event.;
- A customer dispute must involve allegations that an Investment Adviser Representative engaged in activity that violates certain rules or conduct governing the industry and that the activity resulted in damages of at least \$5,000.

(2) Disclosure events in IAPD reports come from different sources:

As mentioned in the "About IAPD" section on page 1 of this report, information contained in IAPD comes from Investment Adviser Representatives, firms and regulators. When more than one of these sources reports information for the same disclosure event, all versions of the event will appear in the IAPD report. The different versions will be separated by a solid line with the reporting source labeled.

(3) There are different statuses and dispositions for disclosure events:

- A disclosure event may have a status of *pending*, *on appeal*, or *final*.
 - A "pending" disclosure event involves allegations that have not been proven or formally adjudicated.
 - A disclosure event that is "on appeal" involves allegations that have been adjudicated but are currently being appealed.
 - A "final" disclosure event has been concluded and its resolution is not subject to change.
- A final disclosure event generally has a disposition of *adjudicated*, *settled* or *otherwise resolved*.
 - An "adjudicated" matter includes a disposition by (1) a court of law in a criminal or civil matter, or (2) an administrative panel in an action brought by a regulator that is contested by the party charged with some alleged wrongdoing.
 - A "settled" matter generally represents a disposition wherein the parties involved in a dispute reach an agreement to resolve the matter. Please note that Investment Adviser Representatives and firms may choose to settle customer disputes or regulatory matters for business or other reasons.
 - A "resolved" matter usually includes a disposition wherein no payment is made to the customer or there is no finding of wrongdoing on the part of the Investment Adviser Representative. Such matters generally involve customer disputes.

(4) You may wish to contact the Investment Adviser Representatives to obtain further information regarding any of the disclosure events contained in this IAPD report.



DISCLOSURE EVENT DETAILS

When evaluating this information, please keep in mind that some items may involve pending actions or allegations that may be contested and have not been resolved or proven. The event may, in the end, be withdrawn, dismissed, resolved in favor of the Investment Adviser Representative, or concluded through a negotiated settlement with no admission or finding of wrongdoing.

This report provides the information exactly as it was reported to the Investment Adviser Registration Depository. Some of the specific data fields contained in the report may be blank if the information was not provided.

The following types of events are disclosed about this representative:

Type	Count
Customer Dispute	2

Customer Dispute

This section provides information regarding a customer dispute that was reported to the Investment Adviser Registration Depository (IARD) by the Investment Adviser Representative (IAR), an investment adviser and/or securities firm, and/or a securities regulator. The event may include a consumer-initiated, investment-related complaint, arbitration proceeding or civil suit that contains allegations of sales practice violations against the individual.

The customer dispute may be pending or may have resulted in a civil judgment, arbitration award, monetary settlement, closure without action, withdrawal, dismissal, denial, or other outcome.

Disclosure 1 of 2

Reporting Source:	Individual
Employing firm when activities occurred which led to the complaint:	Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated
Allegations:	The Customers allege unsuitable investment recommendations and misrepresentation.
Product Type:	Equity-OTC Equity Listed (Common & Preferred Stock)
Alleged Damages:	\$470,000.00
Is this an oral complaint?	No
Is this a written complaint?	No
Is this an arbitration/CFTC reparation or civil litigation?	Yes
Arbitration/Reparation forum or court name and location:	FINRA
Docket/Case #:	16-01753
Filing date of arbitration/CFTC reparation or civil litigation:	06/15/2016

Customer Complaint Information

Date Complaint Received:	06/22/2016
Complaint Pending?	No



Status: Settled
Status Date: 05/01/2017
Settlement Amount: \$70,000.00
Individual Contribution Amount: \$0.00
Broker Statement This matter was settled in order to avoid the cost and uncertainty of litigation. The Financial Advisor did not contribute monetarily towards the settlement.

Disclosure 2 of 2

Reporting Source: Individual
Employing firm when activities occurred which led to the complaint: MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH INC.
Allegations: CLAIMANTS ALLEGE FA MADE UNSUITABLE INVESTMENTS AND EXCESSIVE USE OF MARGIN ACCOUNT.
Product Type: Equity - OTC
Other Product Type(s): MUTUAL FUND(S)
Alleged Damages: \$349,822.00

Customer Complaint Information

Date Complaint Received: 01/09/2004
Complaint Pending? No
Status: Arbitration/Reparation
Status Date: 01/09/2004
Settlement Amount:
Individual Contribution Amount:

Arbitration Information

Arbitration/Reparation Claim filed with and Docket/Case No.: NASD DISPUTE RESOLUTION CASE NO. 03-08789
Date Notice/Process Served: 01/09/2004
Arbitration Pending? No
Disposition: Settled
Disposition Date: 09/27/2005
Monetary Compensation Amount: \$66,000.00
Individual Contribution Amount: \$0.00
Broker Statement AFTER RECEIVING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, THE CUSTOMERS DETERMINED THAT ALL CLAIM'S AGAINST MR. FESSLER SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN AND/OR DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE. THE CUSTOMERS HAVE STATED THAT THEY CONSENT TO EXPUNGEMENT OF THIS MATTER



FROM MR. FESSLER'S RECORD. MERRILL LYNCH AND MR. FESSLER INTEND TO SEEK EXPUNGEMENT. MERRILL LYNCH ULTIMATELY SETTLED THIS MATTER TO AVOID THE COSTS AND VAGARIES OF ARBITRATION.



End of Report

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