

**Item 1. Cover Page**

**Part 2A of Form ADV:  
Firm Brochure**

**Dated November 2012**

**HighMark Wealth Management LLC  
30 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 3535  
St. Paul, MN 55101**

**Firm Contact: Todd E. Arens, President and Chief Compliance Officer**

**Firm Website Address: [www.highmarkwealth.com](http://www.highmarkwealth.com)**

**This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of HighMark Wealth Management LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us by telephone at 651-829-3300 or email [todd@highmarkwealth.com](mailto:todd@highmarkwealth.com). The information in this brochure has not been approved or verified by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or by any State Securities Authority.**

**Additional information about HighMark Wealth Management LLC is also available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov).**

**Please note that the use of the term “registered investment adviser” and description of HighMark Wealth Management LLC and/or our associates as “registered” does not imply a certain level of skill or training. You are encouraged to review this Brochure and Brochure Supplements for our firm’s associates who advise you for more information on the qualifications of our firm and our employees.**

## **Item 2. Material Changes**

**HighMark Wealth Management LLC** is required to advise you of any material changes to our Firm Brochure (“Brochure”) from our last annual update, identify those changes on the cover page of our Brochure or on the page immediately following the cover page, or in a separate communication accompanying our Brochure. We must state clearly that we are discussing only material changes since the last annual update of our Brochure, and we must provide the date of the last annual update of our Brochure.

Please note that we do not have to provide this information to a client or prospective client who has not received a previous version of our brochure. At this time, there are no material changes to report about our Brochure.

### **Item 3. Table of Contents**

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#### **Item 4. Advisory Business**

We specialize in the following types of services: pension consulting and referrals to third party money managers. Our assets under management are \$219,911,000 as of November 12, 2012.

A. Description of our advisory firm, including how long we have been in business and our principal owner(s)<sup>1</sup>.

We are dedicated to providing individuals and other types of clients with a wide array of investment advisory services. Our firm is a limited liability company formed in the State of Minnesota. Our firm has been in business as an investment adviser since 2012 and is wholly owned by Todd E. Arens.

B. Description of the types of advisory services we offer.

(i) Pension Consulting:

We provide pension consulting services to employer plan sponsors on a one-time or ongoing basis. Generally, such pension consulting services consist of assisting employer plan sponsors in establishing, monitoring and reviewing their company's participant-directed retirement plan. As the needs of the plan sponsor dictate, areas of advising could include: investment options, plan structure and participant education.

All pension consulting services shall be in compliance with the applicable state law(s) regulating pension consulting services. This applies to client accounts that are pension or other employee benefit plans ("Plan") governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended ("ERISA"). If the client accounts are part of a Plan, and we accept appointments to provide our services to such accounts, we acknowledge that we are a fiduciary within the meaning of Section 3(21) of ERISA (but only with respect to the provision of services described in section 1 of the Pension Consulting Agreement).

(ii) Referrals to Third Party Money Managers:

We provide clients with a list of investment advisory services of third party professional Portfolio Management firms for the individual management of client accounts. As part of this process, we assist clients in identifying an appropriate third party money manager. We

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that: (1) For purposes of this item, our principal owners include the persons we list as owning 25% or more of our firm on Schedule A of Part 1A of Form ADV (Ownership Codes C, D or E). (2) If we are a publicly held company without a 25% shareholder, we simply need to disclose that we are publicly held. (3) If an individual or company owns 25% or more of our firm through subsidiaries, we must identify the individual or parent company and intermediate subsidiaries. If we are a state-registered adviser, on Form ADV Part 2A Page 2, we must identify all intermediate subsidiaries. If we are an SEC-registered adviser, we must identify intermediate subsidiaries that are publicly held, but not other intermediate subsidiaries.

provide initial due diligence on third party money managers and ongoing reviews of their management of your account.

In order to assist clients in the selection of a third party money manager, we typically gather information from the client about their financial situation, investment objectives, and reasonable restrictions they can impose on the management of the account, which are often very limited. It is important to note that we do not offer advice on any specific securities or other investments in connection with this service. Investment advice and trading of securities is only offered by or through the third party money managers to clients.

We periodically review third party money managers' reports provided to the client, but no less often than on an annual basis. Our associates contact the clients from time to time, as agreed to with the client, in order to review their financial situation and objectives; communicate information to third party money managers as warranted; and, assist the client in understanding and evaluating the services provided by the third party money manager. The client will be expected to notify us of any changes in his/her financial situation, investment objectives, or account restrictions that could affect their account. The client may also directly contact the third party money manager managing the account or sponsoring the program.

C. Explanation of whether (and, if so, how) we tailor our advisory services to the individual needs of clients, whether clients may impose restrictions on investing in certain securities or types of securities.

(i) Individual Tailoring of Advice to Clients:

We offer general investment advice to clients utilizing the following services offered by our firm: Pension Consulting and Referrals to Third Party Money Managers.

(ii) Ability of Clients to Impose Restrictions on Investing in Certain Securities or Types of Securities:

We usually do not allow clients to impose restrictions on investing in certain securities or types of securities due to the level of difficulty this would entail in managing their account.

D. Participation in wrap fee programs.

We offer wrap fee programs as further described in Part 2A, Appendix 1 (the "Wrap Fee Program Brochure") of our Brochure. Our wrap fee and non-wrap fee accounts are managed on an individualized basis according to the client's investment objectives, financial goals, risk tolerance, etc. We do not manage wrap fee accounts in a different fashion than non-wrap fee accounts. As further described in our Wrap Fee Program Brochure, we receive a portion of the wrap fee for our services.

E. Disclosure of the amount of client assets we manage on a discretionary basis and the amount of client assets we manage on a non-discretionary basis.

We manage<sup>2</sup> \$92,000,000 on a discretionary basis and \$127,911,000 on a non-discretionary basis as of November 12, 2012.

**Item 5. Fees and Compensation**

We are required to describe our brokerage, custody, fees, and fund expenses so you will know how much you are charged and by whom for our advisory services provided to you. Our fees may be negotiable under unique circumstances.

A. Description of how we are compensated for our advisory services provided to you.

(i) Pension Consulting:

We charge a percentage of assets under management as described in the following fee schedule:

<u>Assets under management</u>	<u>Annual Percentage of Assets Charge*:</u>
Under \$1,000,000	1.00%
\$1,000,000 - \$4,999,999	0.50%
\$5,000,000 - \$49,999,999	0.25%
\$50,000,000 - \$99,999,999	0.10%
\$100,000,000+	0.05%

(ii) Referrals to Third Party Money Managers:

We are paid by third party money managers when we refer you to them and you decide to open a managed account. Third party money managers pay us a portion of the investment advisory fee that they charge you for managing your account. Fees paid to us by third party money manager are generally ongoing. All fees we receive from third party money managers and the written separate disclosures made to you regarding these fees comply with applicable state statutes and rules. The separate written disclosures you need to be provided with include a copy of the third party money manager's Form ADV Part 2, all relevant Brochures, a Solicitation Disclosure Statement detailing the exact fees we are paid and a copy of the third party money manager's privacy policy. The third party money managers we recommend will not directly charge you a higher fee than they would have charged without us introducing you to them.

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that our method for computing the amount of "client assets we manage" can be different from the method for computing "assets under management" required for Item 5.F in Part 1A of Form ADV. However, we have chosen to follow the method outlined for Item 5.F in Part 1A of Form ADV. If we decide to use a different method at a later date to compute "client assets we manage," we must keep documentation describing the method we use and inform you of the change. The amount of assets we manage may be disclosed by rounding to the nearest \$100,000. Our "as of" date must not be more than three months before the date we last updated our Brochure in response to Item 4.E of Form ADV Part 2A.

B. Description of whether we deduct fees from clients' assets or bill clients for fees incurred.

(i) Pension Consulting:

Our firm's fees are billed on a pro-rata annualized basis quarterly in advance based on the value of your account on the last day of the previous quarter. Fees will generally be automatically deducted from your managed account\*. As part of this process, you understand and acknowledge the following:

- a) Your independent custodian sends statements at least quarterly to You showing all disbursements for your account, including the amount of the advisory fees paid to us;
- b) You provide authorization permitting us to be directly paid by these terms;
- c) If we send a copy of our invoice to You, we send a copy of our invoice to the independent custodian at the same time we send the invoice to You;
- d) If we send a copy of our invoice to You, our invoice includes a legend as required by paragraph (a)(2) of Rule 206(4)-2 under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940. The legend urges the client to compare information provided in their statements with those from the qualified custodian in account opening notices and subsequent statements sent to the client for whom the adviser opens custodial accounts with the qualified custodian.

\*In rare cases, we will agree to direct bill clients.

(ii) Referrals to third party money managers:

Third party money managers establish and maintain their own separate billing processes which we have no control over. In general, they will directly bill you and describe how this works in their separate written disclosure documents.

C. Description of any other types of fees or expenses clients may pay in connection with our advisory services, such as custodian fees or mutual fund expenses.

Wrap fee clients will receive our Form ADV, Part 2A, Appendix 1 (the "Wrap Fee Program Brochure"). Wrap fee clients will not incur transaction costs for trades. More information about this is disclosed in our separate Wrap Fee Program Brochure.

D. We must disclose if client's advisory fees are due quarterly in advance. Explain how a client may obtain a refund of a pre-paid fee if the advisory contract is terminated before the end of the billing period. Explain how you will determine the amount of the refund.

We charge our advisory fees quarterly in advance. In the event that you wish to terminate our services, we will refund the unearned portion of our advisory fee to you. You need to contact us in writing and state that you wish to terminate our services. Upon receipt of your letter of termination, we will proceed to close out your account and process a pro-rata refund of unearned advisory fees.

#### E. Commissionable securities sales.

In non-advisory accounts we may offer securities for a commission because our supervised persons are registered representatives of Purshe Kaplan Sterling Investments, Inc. (“PKS”), a registered broker-dealer and Member FINRA/SIPC. PKS clears through National Financial Services (NFS). Our supervised persons may accept compensation for the sale of securities or other investment products, including distribution or service (“trail”) fees from the sale of mutual funds. You should be aware that the practice of accepting commissions for the sale of securities:

- 1) Presents a conflict of interest and gives our firm and/or our supervised persons an incentive to recommend investment products based on the compensation received, rather than on your needs. We generally address commissionable sales conflicts that arise:
  - a) when explaining to clients that commissionable securities sales creates an incentive to recommend products based on the compensation we and/or our supervised persons may earn and may not necessarily be in the best interests of the client;
  - b) when recommending commissionable mutual funds, explaining that “no-load” funds are available through our firm if the client wishes to become an investment advisory client.
- 2) In no way prohibits you from purchasing investment products recommended by us through other brokers or agents which are not affiliated with us.

#### **Item 6. Performance-Based Fees and Side-By-Side Management**

Our firm may charge qualified clients<sup>3</sup> “performance fees” – that is, fees based on a share of capital gains on or capital appreciation of the managed assets of a client. We charge a performance based fee quarterly in arrears at the end of each quarter as follows:

- Management fee of 2% and an incentive fee of 20% of the net profits (i.e., profits after our management fee has been deducted) achieved for the previous quarter of account management.

In charging performance fees to some of our client accounts, we face a conflict because we can potentially receive greater fees from client accounts having a performance-based compensation structure than from those accounts we only charge a fee unrelated to performance (e.g., an asset-based fee). As a result, we may have an incentive to direct the best investment ideas to, or to allocate or sequence trades in favor of, the account that pays a performance fee.

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<sup>3</sup> We are currently permitted to charge performance based fees only to clients with at least \$1,000,000 under management with our firm or a net worth of at least \$2,000,000. It is expected that the SEC will revisit this standard in the near future and tie the definition of a qualified client to inflation. It is unclear at this time whether the SEC will grandfather or exempt existing qualified clients being charged performance based fees from a greater financial threshold for meeting the qualified client standard should the definition change.



We have taken several important steps to ensure that our performance based accounts are not favored over our client's non-performance fee based accounts. These steps include:

- 1) A periodic comparison of our performance based and non-performance accounts. Our comparison will entail a review of our ten most profitable and ten least profitable (including unrealized gain or loss) investment decisions based on total return of positions opened and closed for each investment strategy or mandate offered to clients. We keep track of securities ticker symbol, purchase date, sale date, percentage of gain and/or loss, and dollar amount of the gain and/or loss. In the event that we find performance based accounts are being unduly (i.e., consistently) favored over non-performance based accounts, we would take action to address the situation. This could include allowing non-performance based accounts to trade before performance based accounts to the extent practicable, or if the problem persists, not allowing new performance based accounts, waiving our performance based fees or cancelling our performance based fee arrangements altogether and in some cases, termination of firm personnel.
- 2) The use of block trades and allocations made based on client's risk tolerance, investment objectives and restrictions. A periodic review of the block trade allocations to detect whether profitable trades are being disproportionately allocated to performance based accounts, while unprofitable trades are being disproportionately allocated to pure-fee based accounts with no performance fee. If our firm detects a problem in the allocation of block trades, our remedies are the same as those outlined above.

#### **Item 7. Types of Clients and Account Requirements**

We have the following types of clients:

- Individuals and High Net Worth Individuals;
- Pension and Profit Sharing Plans; and
- Corporations, limited liability companies and/or other business types.

Our requirements for opening and maintaining accounts or otherwise engaging us:

- We require a minimum account balance of \$500,000. Generally, this minimum account balance requirement is negotiable and would be required throughout the course of the client's relationship with our firm.

## **Item 8. Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies and Risk of Loss**

- A. Description of the methods of analysis and investment strategies we use in formulating investment advice or managing assets.

### **Methods of Analysis**

We use the following methods of analysis in formulating our investment advice and/or managing client assets:

***Charting.*** In this type of technical analysis, we review charts of market and security activity in an attempt to identify when the market is moving up or down and to predict when how long the trend may last and when that trend might reverse.

***Fundamental Analysis.*** We attempt to measure the intrinsic value of a security by looking at economic and financial factors (including the overall economy, industry conditions, and the financial condition and management of the company itself) to determine if the company is underpriced (indicating it may be a good time to buy) or overpriced (indicating it may be time to sell). Fundamental analysis does not attempt to anticipate market movements. This presents a potential risk, as the price of a security can move up or down along with the overall market regardless of the economic and financial factors considered in evaluating the stock.

***Technical Analysis.*** We analyze past market movements and apply that analysis to the present in an attempt to recognize recurring patterns of investor behavior and potentially predict future price movement. Technical analysis does not consider the underlying financial condition of a company. This presents a risk in that a poorly-managed or financially unsound company may underperform regardless of market movement.

***Cyclical Analysis.*** In this type of technical analysis, we measure the movements of a particular stock against the overall market in an attempt to predict the price movement of the security.

***Risks for all forms of analysis.*** Our securities analysis methods rely on the assumption that the companies whose securities we purchase and sell, the rating agencies that review these securities, and other publicly-available sources of information about these securities, are providing accurate and unbiased data. While we are alert to indications that data may be incorrect, there is always a risk that our analysis may be compromised by inaccurate or misleading information.

### **Investment Strategies**

We use the following strategies in managing client accounts, provided that such strategies are appropriate to the needs of the client and consistent with the client's investment objectives, risk tolerance, and time horizons, among other considerations. Typically we employ this strategy when:

- we believe the securities to be currently undervalued, and/or
- we want exposure to a particular asset class over time, regardless of the current projection for this class.

***Long-term purchases.*** When utilizing this strategy, we may purchase securities with the idea of holding them for a relatively long time (typically held for at least a year). A risk in a long-term purchase strategy is that by holding the security for this length of time, we may not take advantages of short-term gains that could be profitable to a client. Moreover, if our predictions are incorrect, a security may decline sharply in value before we make the decision to sell.

***Short-term purchases.*** When utilizing this strategy, we may also purchase securities with the idea of selling them within a relatively short time (typically a year or less). We do this in an attempt to take advantage of conditions that we believe will soon result in a price swing in the securities we purchase.

***Trading.*** We purchase securities with the idea of selling them very quickly (typically within 30 days or less). We do this in an attempt to take advantage of our predictions of brief price swings.

***Short sales.*** We borrow shares of a stock for your portfolio from someone who owns the stock on a promise to replace the shares on a future date at a certain price. Those borrowed shares are then sold. On the agreed-upon future date, we buy the same stock and return the shares to the original owner. We engage in short selling based on our determination that the stock will go down in price after we have borrowed the shares. If we are correct and the stock price has gone down since the shares were purchased from the original owner, the client account realizes the profit.

***Margin transactions.*** We will purchase stocks for your portfolio with money borrowed from your brokerage account. This allows you to purchase more stock than you would be able to with your available cash, and allows us to purchase stock without selling other holdings.

***Option writing.*** We may use options as an investment strategy. An option is a contract that gives the buyer the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell an asset (such as a share of stock) at a specific price on or before a certain date. An option, just like a stock or bond, is a security. An option is also a derivative, because it derives its value from an underlying asset. The two types of options are calls and puts:

- A call gives us the right to buy an asset at a certain price within a specific period of time. We will buy a call if we have determined that the stock will increase substantially before the option expires.
- A put gives us the holder the right to sell an asset at a certain price within a specific period of time. We will buy a put if we have determined that the price of the stock will fall before the option expires.

We will use options to "hedge" a purchase of the underlying security; in other words, we will use an option purchase to limit the potential upside and downside of a security we have purchased for your portfolio.

We use "covered calls", in which we sell an option on security you own. In this strategy, you receive a fee for making the option available, and the person purchasing the option has the right to buy the security from you at an agreed-upon price.

We use a "spreading strategy", in which we purchase two or more option contracts (for example, a call option that you buy and a call option that you sell) for the same underlying security. This effectively puts you on both sides of the market, but with the ability to vary price, time and other factors.

**Please note:**

Investing in securities involves risk of loss that clients should be prepared to bear. While the stock market may increase and your account(s) could enjoy a gain, it is also possible that the stock market may decrease and your account(s) could suffer a loss. It is important that you understand the risks associated with investing in the stock market, are appropriately diversified in your investments, and ask us any questions you may have.

**Item 9. Disciplinary Information**

We are required to disclose whether there are legal or disciplinary events that are material to a client's or prospective client's evaluation of our advisory business or the integrity of our management. There are a number of specific legal and disciplinary events that we must presume are material for this Item. If our advisory firm or a management person has been involved in one of these events, we must disclose it under this Item for ten years following the date of the event, unless (1) the event was resolved in our or the management person's favor, or was reversed, suspended or vacated, or (2) the event is not material. For purposes of calculating this ten-year period, the "date" of an event is the date that the final order, judgment, or decree was entered, or the date that any rights of appeal from preliminary orders, judgments or decrees lapsed.

The SEC and/or State Regulators have not provided us with an exclusive list of material disciplinary events, which need to be disclosed. If our advisory firm or a management person has been involved in a legal or disciplinary event that is not specifically required to be disclosed, but nonetheless is material to a client's or prospective client's evaluation of our advisory business or the integrity of our management, we must disclose the event. Similarly, even if more than ten years has passed since the date of the event, we must disclose the event if it is so serious that it remains currently material to a client's or prospective client's evaluation of our firm or management.

Not applicable.

## **Item 10. Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations**

- A. Our firm or our management persons are registered, or have an application pending to register, as a broker-dealer or a registered representative of a broker-dealer. The details are as follows:

Mr. Todd E. Arens is a registered representative with Purshe Kaplan Sterling Investments, Inc. ("PKS"), a registered broker-dealer and Member FINRA/SIPC. In order to comply with FINRA Conduct Rule 3040, PKS as an unaffiliated broker-dealer may periodically review the investment advisory transactions of our firm. This information will be viewed by PKS' compliance department personnel for supervisory purposes only. No information viewed will be utilized for purposes of solicitation or shared with any affiliation outside the scope of regulatory compliance.

- B. Our firm or our management persons are registered, or have an application pending to register, as a futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator, a commodity trading advisor, or an associated person of the foregoing entities. The details are as follows:

Not applicable.

- C. Description of any relationship or arrangement that is material to our advisory business or to our clients, that we or any of our management persons have with any related person<sup>4</sup> listed below. We are required to identify the related person and if the relationship or arrangement creates a material conflict of interest with clients, describe the nature of the conflict and how we address it.

Our management persons are also licensed insurance agents and may offer insurance products and receive normal and customary fees as a result of insurance sales. A conflict of interest may arise as these insurance sales may create an incentive to recommend products based on the compensation adviser and/or our management persons may earn and may not necessarily be in the best interests of the client. In order to minimize this conflict of interest, our management persons will place client interests ahead of their own interests and adhere to our firm's Code of Ethics as well as clearly explaining this conflict when recommending any such products to our clients. Clients are not obligated to purchase these products.

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<sup>4</sup> Our Related Persons are any advisory affiliates and any person that is under common control with our firm. Advisory Affiliate: Our advisory affiliates are (1) all of our officers, partners, or directors (or any person performing similar functions); (2) all persons directly or indirectly controlling or controlled by us; and (3) all of our current employees (other than employees performing only clerical, administrative, support or similar functions). Person: A natural person (an individual) or a company. A company includes any partnership, corporation, trust, limited liability company ("LLC"), limited liability partnership ("LLP"), sole proprietorship, or other organization.

- D. If we recommend or select other investment advisers for our clients and we receive compensation directly or indirectly from those advisers, or we have other business relationships with those advisers, we are required to describe these practices and discuss the conflicts of interest these practices create and how we address them.

The compensation paid to us by third party managers may vary, and thus, there may be a conflict of interest in recommending a manager who shares a larger portion of its advisory fees over another manager. Our firm's fees are not higher than they would have been had our client obtained services directly from the third party money manager. Prior to referring clients to third party advisors, we will ensure that third party advisors are licensed or notice filed with the respective authorities. A potential conflict of interest in utilizing third party advisors may be an incentive to us in selecting a particular advisor over another in the form of fees or services. In order to minimize this conflict our firm will make our selections in the best interest of our clients.

#### **Item 11. Code of Ethics, Participation or Interest in Client Transactions and Personal Trading**

- A. Brief description of our Code of Ethics adopted pursuant to SEC rule 204A-1 and offer to provide a copy of our Code of Ethics to any client or prospective client upon request.

We recognize that the personal investment transactions of members and employees of our firm demand the application of a high Code of Ethics and require that all such transactions be carried out in a way that does not endanger the interest of any client. At the same time, we believe that if investment goals are similar for clients and for members and employees of our firm, it is logical and even desirable that there be common ownership of some securities.

Therefore, in order to prevent conflicts of interest, we have in place a set of procedures (including a pre-clearing procedure) with respect to transactions effected by our members, officers and employees for their personal accounts<sup>5</sup>. In order to monitor compliance with our personal trading policy, we have a quarterly securities transaction reporting system for all of our associates.

Furthermore, our firm has established a Code of Ethics which applies to all of our associated persons. An investment adviser is considered a fiduciary. As a fiduciary, it is an investment adviser's responsibility to provide fair and full disclosure of all material facts and to act solely in the best interest of each of our clients at all times. We have a fiduciary duty to all clients. Our fiduciary duty is considered the core underlying principle for our Code of Ethics which also includes Insider Trading and Personal Securities Transactions Policies and Procedures. We require all of our supervised persons to conduct business with the highest level of ethical standards and to comply with all federal and state securities laws at all times. Upon employment or affiliation and at least annually thereafter, all supervised persons will sign an

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<sup>5</sup> For purposes of the policy, our associate's personal account generally includes any account (a) in the name of our associate, his/her spouse, his/her minor children or other dependents residing in the same household, (b) for which our associate is a trustee or executor, or (c) which our associate controls, including our client accounts which our associate controls and/or a member of his/her household has a direct or indirect beneficial interest in.

acknowledgement that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with our Code of Ethics. Our firm and supervised persons must conduct business in an honest, ethical, and fair manner and avoid all circumstances that might negatively affect or appear to affect our duty of complete loyalty to all clients. This disclosure is provided to give all clients a summary of our Code of Ethics. However, if a client or a potential client wishes to review our Code of Ethics in its entirety, a copy will be provided promptly upon request.

- B. If our firm or a related person recommends to clients, or buys or sells for client accounts, securities in which our firm or a related person has a material financial interest (excluding an interest as a shareholder of an SEC-registered, open-end investment company), we must describe our practice and discuss the conflicts of interest it presents.

Not applicable.

- C. If our firm or a related person invests in the same securities (or related securities, e.g., warrants, options or futures) that our firm or a related person recommends to clients, we are required to describe our practice and discuss the conflicts of interest this presents and generally how we address the conflicts that arise in connection with personal trading.

Not applicable.

- D. If our firm or a related person recommends securities to clients, or buys or sells securities for client accounts, at or about the same time that you or a related person buys or sells the same securities for our firm's (or the related person's own) account, we are required to describe our practice and discuss the conflicts of interest it presents. We are also required to describe generally how we address conflicts that arise.

Not applicable.

## **Item 12. Brokerage Practices**

- A. Description of the factors that we consider in selecting or recommending broker-dealers for client transactions and determining the reasonableness of their compensation (e.g., commissions).

Our firm has an arrangement with National Financial Services LLC and Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC (collectively, and together with all affiliates, "Fidelity") through which Fidelity provides our firm with "institutional platform services." The institutional platform services include, among others, brokerage, custody, and other related services. Fidelity's institutional platform services that assist us in managing and administering clients' accounts include software and other technology that (i) provide access to client account data (such as trade confirmations and account statements); (ii) facilitate trade execution and allocate aggregated trade orders for multiple client accounts; (iii) provide research, pricing and other market data; (iv) facilitate payment of fees from its clients' accounts; and (v) assist with back-office functions, recordkeeping and client reporting.

Fidelity also offers other services intended to help our firm manage and further develop its advisory practice. Such services include, but are not limited to, performance reporting, financial planning, contact management systems, third party research, publications, access to educational conferences, roundtables and webinars, practice management resources, access to consultants and other third party service providers who provide a wide array of business related services and technology with whom we may contract directly.

Our firm is independently operated and owned and is not affiliated with Fidelity.

Fidelity generally does not charge its advisor clients separately for custody services but is compensated by account holders through commissions and other transaction-related or asset-based fees for securities trades that are executed through Fidelity or that settle into Fidelity accounts (i.e., transactions fees are charged for certain no-load mutual funds, commissions are charged for individual equity and debt securities transactions). Fidelity provides access to many no-load mutual funds without transaction charges and other no-load funds at nominal transaction charges.

Fidelity is providing our firm with certain brokerage and research products and services that qualify as "brokerage or research services" under Section 28(e) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Exchange Act").

1. Research and Other Soft Dollar Benefits. If we receive research or other products or services other than execution from a broker-dealer or a third party in connection with client securities transactions ("soft dollar benefits"), we are required to disclose our practices and discuss the conflicts of interest they create. Please note that we must disclose all soft dollar benefits we receive, including, in the case of research, both proprietary research (created or developed by the broker-dealer) and research created or developed by a third party.

Our firm has an arrangement with Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC ("Fidelity") which provides our firm with Fidelity's "platform" services. The platform services include, among others, brokerage, custodial, administrative support, record keeping and related services that are intended to support our firm in conducting business and in serving the best interests of our clients but that may benefit our firm.

- a. Explanation of when we use client brokerage commissions (or markups or markdowns) to obtain research or other products or services, and how we receive a benefit because our firm does not have to produce or pay for the research, products or services.

As part of the arrangement described in Item 12A1, Fidelity also makes certain research and brokerage services available at no additional cost to our firm. These services include certain research and brokerage services, including research services obtained by Fidelity directly from independent research companies, as selected by our firm (within specific parameters). Research products and services provided by Fidelity to our firm may include research reports on recommendations or other information



about, particular companies or industries; economic surveys, data and analyses; financial publications; portfolio evaluation services; financial database software and services; computerized news and pricing services; quotation equipment for use in running software used in investment decision-making; and other products or services that provide lawful and appropriate assistance by Fidelity to our firm in the performance of our investment decision-making responsibilities. The aforementioned research and brokerage services are used by our firm to manage accounts for which we have investment discretion. Without this arrangement, our firm might be compelled to purchase the same or similar services at our own expense.

- b. Incentive to select or recommend a broker-dealer based on our interest in receiving the research or other products or services, rather than on our clients' interest in receiving best execution.

As a result of receiving the services discussed in 12A(1)a of this Firm Brochure for no additional cost, we may have an incentive to continue to use or expand the use of Fidelity's services. Our firm examined this potential conflict of interest when we chose to enter into the relationship with Fidelity and we have determined that the relationship is in the best interest of our firm's clients and satisfies our client obligations, including our duty to seek best execution.

Fidelity charges brokerage commissions and transaction fees for effecting certain securities transactions (i.e., transaction fees are charged for certain no-load mutual funds, commissions are charged for individual equity and debt securities transactions). Fidelity enables us to obtain many no-load mutual funds without transaction charges and other no-load funds at nominal transaction charges. Fidelity's commission rates are generally discounted from customary retail commission rates. However, the commission and transaction fees charged by Fidelity may be higher or lower than those charged by other custodians and broker-dealers.

- c. Causing clients to pay commissions (or markups or markdowns) higher than those charged by other broker-dealers in return for soft dollar benefits (known as paying-up).

Our non-wrap fee program clients may pay a commission to Fidelity that is higher than another qualified broker dealer might charge to effect the same transaction where we determine in good faith that the commission is reasonable in relation to the value of the brokerage and research services received. In seeking best execution, the determinative factor is not the lowest possible cost, but whether the transaction represents the best qualitative execution, taking into consideration the full range of a broker-dealer's services, including the value of research provided, execution capability, commission rates, and responsiveness. Accordingly, although we will seek competitive rates, to the benefit of all clients, we may not necessarily obtain the lowest possible commission rates for specific client account transactions.

- d. Disclosure of whether we use soft dollar benefits to service all of our clients' accounts or only those that paid for the benefits, as well as whether we seek to allocate soft dollar benefits to client accounts proportionately to the soft dollar credits the accounts generate.

Although the investment research products and services that may be obtained by our firm will generally be used to service all of our clients, a brokerage commission paid by a specific client may be used to pay for research that is not used in managing that specific client's account.

- 2) Brokerage for Client Referrals. If we consider, in selecting or recommending broker-dealers, whether our firm or a related person receives client referrals from a broker-dealer or third party, we are required to disclose this practice and discuss the conflicts of interest it create.

Our firm does not receive brokerage for client referrals.

- 3) Directed Brokerage.
  - a. If we routinely recommend, request or require that a client directs us to execute transactions through a specified broker-dealer, we are required to describe our practice or policy. Further, we must explain that not all advisers require their clients to direct brokerage. If our firm and the broker-dealer are affiliates or have another economic relationship that creates a material conflict of interest, we are further required to describe the relationship and discuss the conflicts of interest it presents by explaining that through the direction of brokerage we may be unable to achieve best execution of client transactions, and that this practice may cost our clients more money.

In certain instances, clients may seek to limit or restrict our discretionary authority in making the determination of the brokers with whom orders for the purchase or sale of securities are placed for execution, and the commission rates at which such securities transactions are effected. Any such client direction must be in writing (often through our advisory agreement), and may contain a representation from the client that the arrangement is permissible under its governing laws and documents, if this is relevant.

We provide appropriate disclosure in writing to clients who direct trades to particular brokers, that with respect to their directed trades, they will be treated as if they have retained the investment discretion that we otherwise would have in selecting brokers to effect transactions and in negotiating commissions and that such direction may adversely affect our ability to obtain best price and execution. In addition, we will inform you in writing that your trade orders may not be aggregated with other clients' orders and that direction of brokerage may hinder best execution.

### **Special Considerations for ERISA Clients**

A retirement or ERISA plan client may direct all or part of portfolio transactions for its account through a specific broker or dealer in order to obtain goods or services on behalf of the plan.

Such direction is permitted provided that the goods and services provided are reasonable expenses of the plan incurred in the ordinary course of its business for which it otherwise would be obligated and empowered to pay. ERISA prohibits directed brokerage arrangements when the goods or services purchased are not for the exclusive benefit of the plan. Consequently, we will request that plan sponsors who direct plan brokerage provide us with a letter documenting that this arrangement will be for the exclusive benefit of the plan.

- b. If we permit a client to direct brokerage, we are required to describe our practice. If applicable, we must also explain that we may be unable to achieve best execution of your transactions. Directed brokerage may cost clients more money. For example, in a directed brokerage account, you may pay higher brokerage commissions because we may not be able to aggregate orders to reduce transaction costs, or you may receive less favorable prices on transactions.

See Item 12A(3) of this Brochure.

### **Special Considerations for Sub-advisory Management Clients**

- a. We select brokers and dealers for any purchase or sale of assets of Client Accounts and are responsible for obtaining best execution for transactions. Consistent with this idea, we may, in the allocation of portfolio brokerage business and the payment of brokerage commissions, consider the brokerage and research services furnished the Sub-Adviser by brokers and dealers, in accordance with the provisions of Section 28(e) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. Such research generally will be used to service all of our clients, but brokerage commissions paid by the Client Accounts may be used to pay for research that is not used in managing the Client Accounts.
- b. Should a Client direct in writing that the Adviser or our firm use a particular broker or dealer, then such Client will negotiate terms and arrangements for their Account with that broker or dealer and we will not seek better execution services or prices from other broker-dealers. As a result, such Client Account may pay higher commissions or greater spreads, or receive less favorable net prices, on transactions for the Client Account than would otherwise be the case.
- c. Adviser and our firm are not responsible or liable for the acts or omissions of any broker-dealer.

- B. Discussion of whether, and under what conditions, we aggregate the purchase or sale of securities for various client accounts in quantities sufficient to obtain reduced transaction costs (known as bunching). If we do not bunch orders when we have the opportunity to do so, we are required to explain our practice and describe the costs to clients of not bunching.

We perform investment management services for various clients. There are occasions on which portfolio transactions may be executed as part of concurrent authorizations to purchase or sell the same security for numerous accounts served by our firm, which involve accounts with similar investment objectives. Although such concurrent authorizations potentially could be either advantageous or disadvantageous to any one or more particular accounts, they are effected only when we believe that to do so will be in the best interest of the affected accounts. When such concurrent authorizations occur, the objective is to allocate the executions in a manner which is deemed equitable to the accounts involved. In any given situation, we attempt to allocate trade executions in the most equitable manner possible, taking into consideration client objectives, current asset allocation and availability of funds using price averaging, proration and consistently non-arbitrary methods of allocation.

### **Item 13. Review of Accounts or Financial Plans**

- A. Review of client accounts or financial plans, along with a description of the frequency and nature of our review, and the titles of our employees who conduct the review.

Third Party Money Management clients receive at least quarterly reviews. The nature of these reviews is to learn whether clients' accounts are in line with their investment objectives, appropriately positioned based on market conditions, and investment policies, if applicable. Only our Financial Advisors or Portfolio Managers will conduct reviews.

Pension consulting clients receive reviews of their pension plans for the duration of the pension consulting service. We also provide ongoing services to pension consulting clients where we meet with such clients upon their request to discuss updates to their plans, changes in their circumstances, etc.

- B. Review of client accounts on other than a periodic basis, along with a description of the factors that trigger a review.

We may review client accounts more frequently than described above. Among the factors which may trigger an off-cycle review are major market or economic events, the client's life events, requests by the client, etc.

- C. Description of the content and indication of the frequency of written or verbal regular reports we provide to clients regarding their accounts.

We do not provide written reports to clients, unless asked to do so. Verbal reports to clients take place on at least an annual basis when we meet with clients who subscribe to our Referrals to Third Party Money Managers service.

As mentioned in Item 13A of this Brochure, pension clients do not receive written or verbal updated reports regarding their pension plans unless they choose to contract with us for ongoing Pension Consulting services.

#### **Item 14. Client Referrals and Other Compensation**

- A. If someone who is not a client provides an economic benefit to our firm for providing investment advice or other advisory services to our clients, we must generally describe the arrangement. For purposes of this Item, economic benefits include any sales awards or other prizes.

Except for the arrangements outlined in Item 12 of this brochure, we have no additional arrangements to disclose.

- B. If our firm or a related person directly or indirectly compensates any person who is not our employee for client referrals, we are required to describe the arrangement and the compensation.

We do not pay referral fees (non-commission based) to independent solicitors (non-registered representatives) for the referral of their clients to our firm in accordance with Rule 206 (4)-3 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940.

#### **Item 15. Custody**

- A. If we have custody of client funds or securities and a qualified custodian as defined in SEC rule 206(4)-2 or similar state rules (for example, a broker-dealer or bank) and do not send account statements with respect to those funds or securities directly to our clients, we must disclose that we have custody and explain the risks that you will face because of this.

All of our clients receive at least quarterly account statements directly from their custodians. Upon opening an account with a qualified custodian on a client's behalf, we promptly notify the client in writing of the qualified custodian's contact information. If we decide to also send account statements to clients, such notice and account statements include a legend that recommends that the client compare the account statements received from the qualified custodian with those received from our firm.

- B. If we have custody of client funds or securities and a qualified custodian sends quarterly, or more frequent, account statements directly to our clients, we are required to explain that you will receive account statements from the broker-dealer, bank, or other qualified custodian and that you should carefully review those statements.

We encourage our clients to raise any questions with us about the custody, safety or security of their assets. The custodians we do business with will send you independent account statements listing your account balance(s), transaction history and any fee debits or other fees taken out of your account.

### **Item 16. Investment Discretion**

If we accept discretionary authority to manage securities accounts on behalf of clients, we are required to disclose this fact and describe any limitations our clients may place on our authority. The following procedures are followed before we assume this authority:

We accept discretionary authority over client accounts. Our clients need to sign a discretionary investment advisory agreement with our firm for the management of their account.

### **Item 17. Voting Client Securities**

- A. If we have, or will accept, proxy authority to vote client securities, we must briefly describe our voting policies and procedures, including those adopted pursuant to SEC Rule 206(4)-6.

We do not and will not accept the proxy authority to vote client securities. Clients will receive proxies or other solicitations directly from their custodian or a transfer agent. In the event that proxies are sent to our firm, we will forward them on to you and ask the party who sent them to mail them directly to you in the future. Clients may call, write or email us to discuss questions they may have about particular proxy votes or other solicitations.

However, third party money managers selected or recommended by our firm may vote proxies for clients. Therefore, except in the event a third party money manager votes proxies, clients maintain exclusive responsibility for: (1) directing the manner in which proxies solicited by issuers of securities beneficially owned by the client shall be voted, and (2) making all elections relative to any mergers, acquisitions, tender offers, bankruptcy proceedings or other type events pertaining to the client's investment assets. Therefore (except for proxies that may be voted by a third party money manager), our firm and/or you shall instruct your qualified custodian to forward to you copies of all proxies and shareholder communications relating to your investment assets.

### **Item 18. Financial Information**

- A. If we require or solicit prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance, we must include a balance sheet for our most recent fiscal year.

We do not require nor do we solicit prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance. Therefore we have not included a balance sheet for our most recent fiscal year.

- B. If we are an SEC-registered adviser and have discretionary authority or custody of client funds or securities, or we require or solicit prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance, we must disclose any financial condition that is reasonably likely to impair our ability to meet contractual commitments to clients.

Not applicable.

- C. If we have been the subject of a bankruptcy petition at any time during the past ten years, we must disclose this fact, the date the petition was first brought, and the current status.

Not applicable.