

**Form ADV Part 2A – Firm Brochure  
Item 1: Cover Page  
September 2013**

**FINANCIAL ADVOCATES INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT LLC**  
doing business as

**PRIZM FINANCIAL**

**3281 E. GUASTI ROAD, SUITE 270  
ONTARIO, CA 91761**

**FIRM CONTACT: TIFFANY COTÉ, CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER**

**FIRM WEBSITE ADDRESS: [WWW.FINANCIALADVOCATES.COM](http://WWW.FINANCIALADVOCATES.COM)**

This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Prizm Financial (hereinafter referred to as the “Adviser”, “us”, “we”, or “our firm”). If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact Tiffany Côté by telephone at (360) 866-2345 or by email at [tcote@financialadvocates.com](mailto:tcote@financialadvocates.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 Prizm Financial also is available on the SEC’s website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov) by using CRD# 151298.

Please note that the use of the term “registered investment adviser” and description of Prizm Financial 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**

Prizm Financial 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.

Date of last annual amendment: September 30, 2013

At this time, we have the following changes to disclose:

- i. Christian D'Urso, Corey Castner and Charles Johnson joined Financial Advocates Investment Management, LLC as new Investment Adviser Representatives.
- ii. Financial Advocates Investment Management, LLC has incorporated the ability to provide 3(38) consulting services to pension plans.
- iii. We have increased the maximum fees for financial planning from \$20,000 to \$30,000.

### **Item 3: Table of Contents:**

<u>Section:</u>	<u>Page(s):</u>
Item 1. Cover Page.....	1
Item 2. Material Changes.....	2
Item 3. Table of Contents.....	3
Item 4. Advisory Business.....	4
Item 5. Fees and Compensation.....	11
Item 6. Performance-Based Fees and Side-By-Side Management.....	15
Item 7. Types of Clients and Account Requirements .....	15
Item 8. Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies and Risk of Loss .....	16
Item 9. Disciplinary Information.....	16
Item 10. Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations.....	17
Item 11. Code of Ethics, Participation or Interest in Client Transactions and Personal Trading...17	
Item 12. Brokerage Practices.....	19
Item 13. Review of Accounts or Financial Plans .....	24
Item 14. Client Referrals and Other Compensation.....	25
Item 15. Custody .....	30
Item 16. Investment Discretion .....	30
Item 17. Voting Client Securities .....	31
Item 18. Financial Information .....	31

#### **Item 4: Advisory Business**

We specialize in the following types of services: asset management, LPL Financial Corporation sponsored advisory programs, financial planning and consultations, and pension consulting services. Our assets under management are \$355,215,743 as of June 30, 2013.

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 Washington. Our firm has been in business as an investment adviser since 2010 and is owned as follows:

Financial Advocates Incorporated – 100% Owner

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

(i) Asset Management:

We emphasize continuous and regular account supervision. As part of our asset management service, we generally create a portfolio, consisting of individual stocks or bonds, exchange traded funds (“ETFs”), options, mutual funds and other public and private securities or investments. The client’s individual investment strategy is tailored to their specific needs and may include some or all of the previously mentioned securities. Each portfolio will be initially designed to meet a particular investment goal, which we determine to be suitable to the client’s circumstances. Once the appropriate portfolio has been determined, we review the portfolio at least quarterly and if necessary, rebalance the portfolio based upon the client’s individual needs, stated goals and objectives. Each client has the opportunity to place reasonable restrictions on the types of investments to be held in the portfolio.

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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.

We may utilize Independent Money Managers, where we design an investment portfolio on a fee-only basis for a percentage of assets in conjunction with another investment advisory firm. Before selecting other advisers, we make sure that the other advisers are properly licensed or registered.

(ii) LPL Financial Sponsored Advisory Programs:

We may provide advisory services through certain programs sponsored by LPL Financial Corporation ("LPL"), a registered investment adviser and broker-dealer. Below is a brief description of each LPL advisory program available to us. For more information regarding the LPL programs, including more information on the advisory services and fees that apply, the types of investments available in the programs and the potential conflicts of interest presented by the programs please see the LPL Financial Form ADV Part II or applicable client agreement. LPL's applicable paperwork and client agreement shall not become effective until acceptance by us as evidenced by the signature of an authorized representative.

Advisory Services:

**Optimum Market Portfolios Program (OMP)**

OMP offers clients the ability to participate in a professionally managed asset allocation program using Optimum Funds Class I shares. Under OMP, client will authorize LPL on a discretionary basis to purchase and sell Optimum Funds pursuant to investment objectives chosen by the client. We will assist the client in determining the suitability of OMP for the client and assist the client in setting an appropriate investment objective. We will have discretion to select a mutual fund asset allocation portfolio designed by LPL consistent with the client's investment objective. LPL will have discretion to purchase and sell Optimum Funds pursuant to the portfolio selected for the client. LPL will also have authority to rebalance the account.

A minimum account value of \$15,000 is required for OMP.

**Personal Wealth Portfolios Program (PWP)**

PWP offers clients an asset management account using asset allocation model portfolios designed by LPL. We will have discretion for selecting the asset allocation model portfolio based on client's investment objective. We will also have discretion for selecting third party money managers (PWP Advisors) or mutual funds within each asset class of the model portfolio. LPL will act as the overlay portfolio manager on all PWP accounts and will be authorized to purchase and sell on a discretionary basis mutual funds and equity and fixed income securities.

A minimum account value of \$250,000 is required for PWP.

## **Model Wealth Portfolios Program (MWP)**

MWP offers clients a professionally managed mutual fund asset allocation program. Adviser will obtain the necessary financial data from the client, assist the client in determining the suitability of the MWP program and assist the client in setting an appropriate investment objective.

We will initiate the steps necessary to open an MWP account and have discretion to select a model portfolio designed by LPL's Research Department consistent with the client's stated investment objective. LPL's Research Department is responsible for selecting the mutual funds within a model portfolio and for making changes to the mutual funds selected.

The client will authorize LPL to act on a discretionary basis to purchase and sell mutual funds (including in certain circumstances exchange traded funds) and to liquidate previously purchased securities. The client will also authorize LPL to effect rebalancing for MWP accounts. In the future, the MWP program may make available model portfolios designed by strategists other than LPL's Research Department. If such models are made available, Adviser will have discretion to choose among the available models designed by LPL and outside strategists.

A minimum account value of \$25,000 is required for MWP.

## **Manager Access Select Program**

Manager Access Select provides clients access to the investment advisory services of professional portfolio management firms for the individual management of client accounts. Adviser will assist client in identifying a third party portfolio manager (Portfolio Manager) from a list of Portfolio Managers made available by LPL. The Portfolio Manager manages client's assets on a discretionary basis. Adviser will provide initial and ongoing assistance regarding the Portfolio Manager selection process.

A minimum account value of \$100,000 is required for Manager Access Select, however, in certain instances, the minimum account size may be higher.

## **Manager Access Network**

Manager Access Network enables high-net-worth investors to access a variety of institutional portfolio managers at significantly lower account minimums. By using separate account managers, clients can enjoy a higher level of specialization and service through the ownership of individual securities. A broad range of portfolio managers and multiple investment styles are available, including equity, fixed income, balanced, international, ETF, REIT and socially responsible portfolios.

Advisors contract directly with clients to provide advisory services such as asset allocation, portfolio manager recommendations, account monitoring and can set the annual Advisor Fee for these services with each individual client who has a Manager Access Network account.

Clients contract directly with the portfolio managers for discretionary asset management services. LPL Financial provides brokerage, custodial and administrative services to clients.

A minimum account value of \$100,000 is required for Manager Access Network, however, in certain instances, the minimum account size may be higher

### **Fees for LPL Advisory Programs**

The account fee charged to the client for each LPL advisory program is negotiable, subject to the following maximum account fees:

Manager Access Select	3.0%
Manager Access Network	3.0%
OMP	2.5%
PWP	2.5%
MWP	2.5%

Account fees are payable quarterly in advance.

LPL serves as program sponsor, investment adviser and broker-dealer for the LPL advisory programs. Adviser and LPL may share in the account fee and other fees associated with program accounts. Our firm's associated persons may also be registered representatives of LPL.

### **Potential Conflicts of Interest**

Transactions in LPL advisory program accounts are generally effected through LPL as the executing broker-dealer.

We receive compensation as a result of a client's participation in an LPL program. Depending on, among other things, the size of the account, changes in its value over time, the ability to negotiate fees or commissions, and the number of transactions, the amount of this compensation may be more or less than what we would receive if the client participated in other programs, whether through LPL or another sponsor, or paid separately for investment advice, brokerage and other services.

#### **(iii) Pension Consulting:**

We offer consulting and advisory services for employer-sponsored retirement plans that are designed to assist plan sponsors of employee benefit plans ("Sponsor(s)). We may also assist Sponsors with enrollment and/or providing investment

education to plan participants and beneficiaries. We provide these retirement plan services ("Retirement Plan Services") through its independent contractor representatives ("IARs), and may charge a fee for the Retirement Plan Services, as described in this Form ADV Part II ("ADV") and the Retirement Plan Consulting Agreement ("Agreement").

Retirement Plan Services are either ERISA Fiduciary Services or ERISA Non-fiduciary Services. ERISA Non-fiduciary Services may be performed only so that they would not be considered fiduciary services under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended (ERISA). When delivering ERISA Fiduciary Services, we will perform those services to the plan as a fiduciary under ERISA Section 3(21)(A)(ii) and will act in good faith and with the degree of diligence, care and skill that a prudent person rendering similar services would exercise under similar circumstances. When providing any ERISA Fiduciary Services, we will solely be making recommendations to the Sponsor and the Sponsor retains full discretionary authority or control over assets of the plan.

We offer investment management services for employer-sponsored retirement plans. These services are designed to allow the plan fiduciary to delegate responsibility for managing, acquiring and disposing of plan assets that meets the requirements of section 3(38). We will perform these investment management services through its independent contractor investment advisor representative and may charge a fee for the investment management services, as described in this Form ADV Part II ("ADV") and the Retirement Plan Investment Management Agreement ("Agreement"). We will perform these services to the plan as a fiduciary under ERISA Section 3(38) and will act with the degree of diligence, care and skill that a prudent person rendering similar services would exercise under similar circumstances. When providing investment management services, we exercise discretionary authority or control over assets of the plan.

We also offer retirement plan educational and ministerial services that are ERISA Non-fiduciary Services. ERISA Non-fiduciary Services may be performed only so that they would not be considered fiduciary services under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended (ERISA).

Sponsor may engage us to perform the ERISA 3(38) Investment Management Fiduciary Services and the ERISA Non-fiduciary Services (together, the "Retirement Plan Services") by completing Schedule B of the Retirement Plan Consulting Agreement.

Potential Additional Retirement Services Provided Outside of the Agreement:

In providing Retirement Plan Services, we may establish a client relationship with one or more plan participants or beneficiaries. Such client relationships develop in various ways, including, without limitation:



- 1) as a result of a decision by the participant or beneficiary to purchase services from **us** not involving the use of plan assets;
- 2) as part of an individual or family financial plan for which any specific recommendations concerning the allocation of assets or investment recommendations relate exclusively to assets held outside of the plan; or
- 3) through an Individual Retirement Account rollover (“IRA Rollover”).

If **we are** providing Retirement Plan Services to a plan, IARs may, when requested by a plan participant or beneficiary, arrange to provide services to that participant or beneficiary through a separate agreement that excludes any investment advice on plan assets (but may consider the participant’s or beneficiary’s interest in the plan in providing that service). If a plan participant or beneficiary desires to affect an IRA Rollover, IAR will obtain a written acknowledgement from the plan participant. Any decision to affect the rollover or about what to do with the rollover assets remain that of the participant or beneficiary alone.

(iv) Financial Planning and Consulting:

We provide a variety of financial planning and consulting services to individuals, families and other clients regarding the management of their financial resources based upon an analysis of the client’s current situation, goals, and objectives. Generally, such financial planning services will involve preparing a financial plan or rendering a financial consultation for clients based on the client’s financial goals and objectives. This planning or consulting may encompass one or more of the following areas: Investment Planning, Retirement Planning, Estate Planning, Charitable Planning, Education Planning, Corporate and Personal Tax Planning, Cost Segregation Study, Corporate Structure, Real Estate Analysis, Mortgage/Debt Analysis, Insurance Analysis, Lines of Credit Evaluation, Business and Personal Financial Planning.

Our written financial plans or financial consultations rendered to clients usually include general recommendations for a course of activity or specific actions to be taken by the clients. For example, recommendations may be made that the clients begin or revise investment programs, create or revise wills or trusts, obtain or revise insurance coverage, commence or alter retirement savings, or establish education or charitable giving programs. It should also be noted that we refer clients to an accountant, attorney or other specialist, as necessary for non-advisory related services. For written financial planning engagements, we provide our clients with a written summary of their financial situation, observations, and recommendations.

For financial consulting engagements, we usually do not provide our clients with a written summary of our observations and recommendations as the process is less formal than our planning service.

Plans or consultations are typically completed within six (6) months of the client signing a contract with us, assuming that all the information and documents we request from the client are provided to us promptly. Implementation of the recommendations will be at the discretion of the client.

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 individualized investment advice to clients utilizing our firm's Asset Management service. Additionally, we offer general investment advice to clients utilizing our firm's Financial Planning and Consulting, and Pension Consulting services.

(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. In the rare instance that we would allow restrictions, it would be limited to our firm's Asset Management service.

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> \$355,215,743 on a discretionary basis and \$0 on a non discretionary basis as of June 30, 2013.

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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.

## **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 are generally not negotiable.

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

**(i) Asset Management:**

**Strategic Wealth Management Non-Wrap Portfolios:**

<u>Assets under management</u>	<u>Annual Percentage of assets charge*:</u>
Less than \$500,000	up to 2.00%
\$500,000 to \$1,000,000	up to 1.75%
\$1,000,001 to \$3,000,000	up to 1.50%
\$3,000,001 to \$10,000,000	up to 1.00%
Over \$10,000,000	up to 0.50%

**Manager Access Network Non-Wrap Portfolios:**

<u>Assets under management</u>	<u>Annual Percentage of assets charge*:</u>
Less than \$500,000	up to 2.00%
\$500,000 to \$1,000,000	up to 1.75%
\$1,000,001 to \$3,000,000	up to 1.50%
\$3,000,001 to \$10,000,000	up to 1.00%
Over \$10,000,000	up to 0.50%

**Portfolio Management for Fidelity Accounts:**

<u>Assets under management</u>	<u>Annual Percentage of assets charge*:</u>
Less than \$500,000	up to 2.00%
\$500,000 to \$1,000,000	up to 1.75%
\$1,000,001 to \$3,000,000	up to 1.50%
\$3,000,001 to \$10,000,000	up to 1.00%
Over \$10,000,000	up to 0.50%

**Portfolio Management for Schwab Accounts:**

<u>Assets under management</u>	<u>Annual Percentage of assets charge*:</u>
Less than \$500,000	up to 2.00%
\$500,000 to \$1,000,000	up to 1.75%
\$1,000,001 to \$3,000,000	up to 1.50%
\$3,000,001 to \$10,000,000	up to 1.00%
Over \$10,000,000	up to 0.50%

### **Portfolio Management for TD Ameritrade Accounts:**

<u>Assets under management</u>	<u>Annual Percentage of assets charge*:</u>
Less than \$500,000	up to 2.00%
\$500,000 to \$1,000,000	up to 1.75%
\$1,000,001 to \$3,000,000	up to 1.50%
\$3,000,001 to \$10,000,000	up to 1.00%
Over \$10,000,000	up to 0.50%

\* 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.

We may pay compensation to Independent Managers for services rendered to our clients and our firm. This compensation is typically equal to a percentage of the overall investment advisory fee charged by our firm or an agreed upon fixed fee. The advisory fee paid to Independent Managers shall be negotiable in certain circumstances, but shall never exceed the overall amount in our published fee statement. We usually pay twenty-five (25) to fifty-percent (50%) of the overall advisory fee to Independent Managers for their services.

#### **(ii) LPL Financial Sponsored Advisory Programs:**

See Item 4(B)(ii) above.

#### **(iii) Pension Consulting:**

Fees for the Retirement Plan Services ("Fees") are negotiable. A description of the different types of fees for retirement plan services appears in the fee schedule below.

Fee for Services - Asset based Fees on % of Plan assets  
Annual Flat Fee  
One Time Payment for Project Based Services  
First Year Transition Expense Fee

All fees paid to us for Retirement Plan Services are separate and distinct from the fees and expenses charged by mutual funds, variable annuities and exchange traded funds to their shareholders. These fees and expenses are described in each investment's prospectus. These fees will generally include a management fee, other expenses, and possible distribution fees. If the investment also imposes sales charges, a client may pay an initial or deferred sales charge. The Retirement Plan Services provided by us may, among other things, assist the client in determining which investments are most appropriate to each client's financial condition and objectives and to provide other administrative assistance as selected by the client. Accordingly, the client should review both the fees charged by the funds, the fund manager, the plan's other service providers and the fees charged by us to fully

understand the total amount of fees to be paid by the client and to evaluate the Retirement Plan Services being provided.

No increase in the Fees will be effective without prior written Notice. While not necessarily related to the Services, various vendors, product providers, distributors and others may provide non-monetary compensation by paying some expenses related to training and education, including travel expenses, and attaining professional designations. We might receive payments to subsidize its own training programs. Certain vendors may invite us to participate in conferences, on-line training or provide it publications that may further its IARs and employees' skills and knowledge. Some may occasionally provide us gifts, meals and entertainment of reasonable value consistent with industry rules and regulations.

(iv) Financial Planning and Consulting:

We charge on an hourly or flat fee basis for financial planning and consulting services. The total estimated fee, as well as the ultimate fee that we charge you, is based on the scope and complexity of our engagement with you. Our hourly fees range from \$50 to \$300. Flat fees generally range from \$500 to \$30,000.

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

(i) Asset Management:

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.\*\*

\* We do not offer direct billing as an option to our asset management clients.

\*\*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.

(ii) LPL Financial Sponsored Programs:

For more information regarding the LPL programs, including more information on the advisory services and fees that apply, the types of investments available in the programs and the potential conflicts of interest presented by the programs please see the LPL Financial Form ADV Part II or applicable client agreement.

(iii) Pension Consulting:

The fees described above in 5A(iii) may be paid by the Plan record keeper directly from Plan assets, accounts or investments. Alternatively, fees for retirement plan services may be billed to the plan sponsor

(iv) Financial Planning and Consulting:

We require a retainer of fifty-percent (50%) of the ultimate financial planning or consulting fee with the remainder of the fee directly billed to you and due to us within thirty (30) days of your financial plan being delivered or consultation rendered to you. In all cases, we will not require a retainer exceeding \$1,200 when services cannot be rendered within 6 (six) months.

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.

Non-Wrap fee clients will incur transaction charges for trades executed in their accounts. These transaction fees are separate from our fees and will be disclosed by the firm that the trades are executed through. Also, clients will pay the following separately incurred expenses, which we do not receive any part of: charges imposed directly by a mutual fund, index fund, or exchange traded fund which shall be disclosed in the fund's prospectus (i.e., fund management fees and other 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.

We sell securities for a commission. In order to sell securities for a commission, our supervised persons are registered representatives of LPL Financial Corporation, member FINRA/SIPC. 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**

We do not charge performance fees to our clients.

**Item 7: Types of Clients and Account Requirements**

We have the following types of clients:

- Individuals and High Net Worth Individuals;
- Trusts, Estates or Charitable Organizations;
- Pension and Profit Sharing Plans;
- Corporations, limited liability companies and/or other business types.
- Retirement Plan Services are available to clients that are sponsors or other fiduciaries to Plans, including 401(k), 457(b), 403(b) and 401(a) plans. Plans include participant directed defined contribution plans and defined benefit plans. Plans may or may not be subject to ERISA.

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

- We do not require a minimum account balance for asset management services.
- LPL sponsored programs require a minimum account balance. Please see Item 4B(ii).

- We generally charge a minimum fee of \$50 for written financial plans.
- We do not require a minimum asset amount for retirement plan consulting services.

### **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:

- Fundamental;
- Technical;
- Cyclical;
- Quantitative;
- Qualitative.

Investment Strategies we use:

- Long term purchases (securities held at least a year);
- Short term purchases (securities sold within a year).

**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.

B. Our practices regarding cash balances in client accounts, including whether we invest cash balances for temporary purposes and, if so, how.

We generally invest client's cash balances in money market funds, FDIC Insured Certificates of Deposit, high-grade commercial paper and/or government backed debt instruments. Ultimately, we try to achieve the highest return on our client's cash balances through relatively low-risk conservative investments. In most cases, at least a partial cash balance will be maintained in a money market account so that our firm may debit advisory fees for our services related to asset management service.

### **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.

We have determined that our firm and management have nothing to disclose under the aforementioned standard.



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

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:

Our firm's management persons are registered representatives of LPL Financial Corporation, member FINRA/SIPC. Management persons may offer securities and receive normal and customary commissions as a result of securities transactions. This presents a conflict of interest to the extent that the management persons recommend that a client invest in a security which results in a commission being paid to him/her.

Our firm's management persons are also licensed insurance agents through various insurance companies. In such capacity, they may offer insurance products and receive normal and customary commissions as a result of such a purchase. This presents a conflict of interest to the extent that they recommend the purchase of an insurance product which results in a commission being paid to them as insurance agents. They spend approximately 10% of their time on these activities.

### **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>3</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.

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<sup>3</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.

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 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 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.

See Item 11A of this Brochure. Related persons of our firm may buy or sell securities and other investments that are also recommended to clients. In order to minimize this conflict of interest, our related persons will place client interests ahead of their own interests and adhere to our firm's Code of Ethics, a copy of which is available upon request.

- C. 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.

See Item 11A of this brochure. Related persons of our firm may buy or sell securities for themselves at or about the same time they buy or sell the same securities for client accounts. In order to minimize this conflict of interest, our related persons will place client interests ahead of their own interests and adhere to our firm's Code of Ethics, a copy of which is available upon request. Further, our related persons will refrain from buying or selling the same securities within 48 hours of buying or selling for our clients. If related persons' accounts are included in a block trade, our related persons will always trade personal accounts last.

## **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).

1. Research and Other Soft Dollar Benefits. If we receive non soft-dollar 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 LPL Financial Corporation ("LPL Financial") and Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC ("Fidelity"), which provides our firm with Fidelity's "platform" services. Under the arrangement with LPL Financial and Fidelity's platform services we receive services which 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.

Our firm also participates in the Schwab Institutional division of Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. ("Schwab"). Schwab offers to independent investment Advisers services which include custody of securities, trade execution, clearance and settlement of transactions. We receive some benefits from Schwab through our participation in the program. (Please see the disclosure under Item 14 of this Brochure.)

Our firm participates in the TD Ameritrade Institutional program. TD Ameritrade Institutional is a division of TD Ameritrade, Inc. ("TD Ameritrade") member FINRA/SIPC/NFA. TD Ameritrade is an independent [and unaffiliated] SEC-registered broker-dealer. TD Ameritrade offers to independent investment Advisers services which include custody of securities, trade execution, clearance and settlement of transactions. We receive some benefits from TD Ameritrade through our participation in the program. (Please see the disclosure under Item 14 of this Brochure.)

- 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, LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade also make 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 LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade directly from independent research companies, as selected by our firm (within specific parameters).

Research products and services provided by LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade 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 LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade 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 LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade's services. Our firm examined this potential conflict of interest when we chose to enter into the relationship with LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade 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.

LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade charge 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). LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade enable us to obtain many no-load mutual funds without transaction charges and other no-load funds at nominal transaction charges. LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade's commission rates are generally discounted from customary retail commission rates. However, the commission and transaction fees charged by LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade 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 LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade 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.

We do not receive any soft-dollar benefits.

- e. Description of the types of products and services our firm or any of our related persons acquired with client brokerage commissions (or markups or markdowns) within our last fiscal year.

We are required to specifically describe to our clients the types of products or services that we are acquiring and to permit them to evaluate possible conflicts of interest. Our description must be more detailed for products or services that do not qualify for the safe harbor in Section 28(e) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, such as those services that do not aid in investment decision-making or trade execution. Merely disclosing that we obtain various research reports and products is not specific enough.

In addition to the benefits described in Item 12A1 of this Brochure, LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade also make available to our firm other products and services that benefit us, but may not benefit our clients' accounts. These benefits may include national, regional or investment adviser specific educational events organized and/or sponsored by LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade. Other potential benefits may include occasional business entertainment of personnel of our firm by LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade personnel, including meals, invitations to sporting events, including golf tournaments, and other forms of entertainment, some of which may accompany educational opportunities.

Some of these products and services assist our firm in managing and administering clients' accounts. These include software and other technology (and related technological training) that provide access to client account data (such as trade confirmations and account statements), facilitate trade execution (and allocation of aggregated trade orders for multiple client accounts), provide research, pricing information and other market data, facilitate payment of our fees from clients' accounts, and assist with back-office training and support functions, recordkeeping and client reporting. Many of these services generally may be used to service all or some substantial number of our accounts, including accounts not maintained at LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade. LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade also makes available to our firm other services intended to help our firm manage and further develop our business enterprise. These services may include professional compliance, legal and business consulting, publications and conferences on practice management, information technology, business succession, regulatory compliance, employee benefits providers, human capital consultants, insurance, and marketing. In addition, LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade may make available, arrange and/or pay vendors for these types of services rendered to our firm by independent third parties. LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade may discount or waive fees it would otherwise charge for some of these services or pay all or a part of the fees of a third-party providing these services to our firm. While, as a fiduciary, our firm endeavors to act in our clients' best interests, Adviser's recommendation/requirement that clients maintain their assets in accounts at LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade may be based in part on the benefit to our firm of the availability of some of the foregoing products and services and other arrangements and not solely on the nature, cost, or quality of custody and brokerage services provided by LPL Financial, Fidelity, Schwab, and TD Ameritrade, which may create a potential conflict of interest. As a result of receiving such non soft dollar products and services for no cost, we may have an incentive to continue to place client trades through broker-dealers that offer the aforementioned services and products. This interest conflicts with the clients' interest of obtaining the lowest commission rate available. Therefore, we must determine in good faith, based on the best execution policy stated above that such commissions are reasonable in relation to the value of the services provided by such executing broker-dealers.

- f. Explanation of the procedures we used during our last fiscal year to direct client transactions to a particular broker-dealer in return for soft dollar benefits we received.

We do not have any soft dollar relationships.

2. Brokerage for Client Referrals. If we use client brokerage to compensate or otherwise reward brokers for client referrals, we must disclose this practice, the conflicts of interest it creates, and any procedures we used to direct client brokerage to referring brokers during the last fiscal year (i.e., the system of controls used by us when allocating brokerage).

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.

Neither we nor any of our firm's related person have 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.

#### **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.

We do not allow client-directed brokerage.

- 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 affected only when we believe that to do so will be in the best interest of the effected 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.

We review accounts on at least a quarterly basis for our clients subscribing to our firm's Asset Management service. 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. Ms. Tiffany Coté, Chief Compliance Officer, or a delegate will conduct reviews of all client accounts.

Pension consulting clients will be contacted at least once a year to review our Retirement Plan Services. It is important that you discuss any changes in the Plan's demographic information, investment goals, and objectives with your IAR. Plans may receive written reports directly from their IAR based upon the services being provided, including any reports evaluating the performance of Plan investment manager(s) or investments.

Financial planning clients do not receive reviews of their written plans unless they take action to schedule a financial consultation with us. We do not provide ongoing services to financial planning clients, but are willing to 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 firm's Asset Management 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.

As also mentioned in Item 13A of this Brochure, financial planning clients do not receive written or verbal updated reports regarding their financial plans unless they separately contract with us for a post-financial plan meeting or update to their initial written financial plan.

<b><u>Item 14: Client Referrals and Other Compensation</u></b>
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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.

**LPL:**

**Investment or Brokerage Discretion**

We provide discretionary portfolio management services where the investment advice provided is custom tailored to meet the needs and investment objectives of each client. Accordingly, we are authorized to perform various functions, at the client's expense, without further approval from the client. Such functions include the determination of securities to be purchased/sold and the amount of securities to be purchased/sold. We do not have discretionary authority over the broker or dealer to be used.

**Suggestion of Brokers to Clients**

We shall recommend LPL Financial. LPL is the broker-dealer and investment adviser with which our representatives are also associated. As a result of the individual association of our representatives with LPL, we are generally required to utilize the brokerage/custodial services of LPL for investment advisory accounts. Our general policies relative to the execution of client securities brokerage transactions are as follows:

### **Execution of Brokerage Transactions (when applicable)**

If requested, we will arrange for the execution of securities brokerage transactions for the account through broker-dealers that we reasonably believe will provide "best execution". In seeking "best execution", the determinative factor is not the lowest possible commission cost, but whether the transaction represents the best qualitative execution. We also take into consideration the full range of a broker-dealer's services including execution capability, commission rates, and responsiveness. Although we will seek competitive commission rates, it may not necessarily obtain the lowest possible commission rates for account transactions.

Over-the-Counter (OTC) securities transactions for our clients are generally effected based on two (2) separate broker-dealers: (1) a "dealer" or "principal" acting as market-maker; and (2) the executing broker-dealer that acts in an agency capacity for the client's account. Dealers executing principal transactions typically include a mark-up/down, which is included in the offer or bid price of the securities purchased or sold. In addition to the dealer mark-up/down, the client may also incur the transaction fee imposed by the executing broker-dealer. We do not receive any portion of the dealer mark-up/down or the executing broker-dealer transaction fee.

Transactions for each client account generally will be effected independently, unless we decide to purchase or sell the same securities for several clients at approximately the same time. We may, but are not obligated to, combine or "batch" such orders to obtain "best execution", to negotiate more favorable commission rates, to allocate fairly among the clients' differences in prices and commissions or other transaction costs that might have been obtained had such orders been placed independently. Under this procedure, transactions will be averaged as to price and will be allocated among our clients in proportion to the purchase and sale orders placed for each client account on any given day. To the extent that we determine to aggregate client orders for the purchase or sale of securities, including securities in which our principals) and/or associated persons) may invest, we shall generally do so in accordance with the parameters set forth in SEC No-Action Letter, *SMC Capital, Inc.* We shall not receive any additional compensation or remuneration as a result of the aggregation.

When referring clients to dealers, we will only refer clients to dealers registered in states where the clients reside.

### **Additional Compensation**

We *may* receive from LPL or a mutual fund company, without cost and/or at a discount support services and/or products, to assist us to better monitor and service client accounts maintained at such institutions. Included within the support services we may receive investment-related research, pricing information and market data, software and other technology that provide access to client account data, compliance and/or practice management-related publications, discounted or gratis consulting services, discounted and/or gratis attendance at conferences, meetings, and other educational

and/or social events, marketing support, computer hardware and/or software and/or other products used by us to assist us in our investment advisory business operations.

Our clients do not pay more for investment transactions effected and/or assets maintained at LPL as result of this arrangement. There is no commitment made by us to LPL or any other institution as a result of the above arrangement.

**Fidelity:**

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

**Schwab:**

Our firm may recommend that clients establish brokerage accounts with Schwab Institutional division of Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. ("Schwab"), registered broker-dealers, Members SIPC, to maintain custody of Clients' assets and to effect trades for their accounts. Our firm is independently owned and operated and not affiliated with Schwab. Our firm may also recommend that Clients establish accounts with firms other than Schwab.

Our firm places trades for its Clients' accounts subject to its duty to seek best execution and its other fiduciary duties. Our firm may use broker-dealers other than Schwab to execute trades for client accounts maintained at Schwab, but this practice may result in additional costs to clients so that we are more likely to place trades through Schwab rather than other broker-dealers. Schwab's execution quality may be different than other broker-dealers.

For our client accounts maintained in its custody, Schwab generally does not charge separately for custody services but is compensated by account holders through commissions or other transaction-related or asset-based fees for securities trades that are executed through Schwab or that settle into Schwab accounts.

Some of the products, services and other benefits provided by Schwab benefit us and may not benefit our firm's client accounts. Our recommendation/requirement that a client place assets in Schwab's custody may be based in part on benefits Schwab provides to us, and not solely on the nature, cost or quality of custody and execution services provided by Schwab.

Schwab also makes available to our firm other products and services that benefit us but may not benefit clients' accounts. These benefits may include national, regional or specific to our firm, educational events organized and/or sponsored by Schwab Institutional. Other potential benefits may include occasional business entertainment of personnel of our firm by Schwab Institutional personnel, including meals, invitations to sporting events, including golf tournaments, and other forms of entertainment, some of which may accompany educational opportunities. Other of these products and

services assist us in managing and administering clients' accounts. These include software and other technology (and related technological training) that provide access to client account data (such as trade confirmations and account statements), facilitate trade execution (and allocation of aggregated trade orders for multiple client accounts), provide research, pricing information and other market data, facilitate payment of our fees from its clients' accounts, and assist with back-office training and support functions, recordkeeping and client reporting. Many of these services generally may be used to service all or some substantial number of our firm's accounts, including accounts not maintained at Schwab Institutional. Schwab Institutional also makes available to us other services intended to help our firm manage and further develop its business enterprise. These services may include professional compliance, legal and business consulting, publications and conferences on practice management, information technology, business succession, regulatory compliance, employee benefits providers, human capital consultants, and insurance and marketing. In addition, Schwab may make available, arrange and/or pay vendors for these types of services rendered to our firm by independent third parties. Schwab Institutional may discount or waive fees it would otherwise charge for some of these services or pay all or a part of the fees of a third-party providing these services to us. While, as a fiduciary, Our firm endeavors to act in its clients' best interests, our recommendation/requirement that clients maintain their assets in accounts at Schwab may be based in part on the benefit to our firm of the availability of some of the foregoing products and services and other arrangements and not solely on the nature, cost or quality of custody and brokerage services provided by Schwab, which may create a potential conflict of interest.

But for soft dollar arrangements, we would have to obtain the aforementioned services and products for cash. As a result of receiving such products and services for no cost, we may have an incentive to continue to place Client trades through broker-dealers that offer soft dollar arrangements. This interest conflicts with the Clients' interest of obtaining the lowest commission rate available. Therefore, our firm must determine in good faith, based on the "best execution" policy stated above that such commissions are reasonable in relation to the value of the services provided by such executing broker-dealers.

From time-to-time our firm may make an error in submitting a trade order on a client's behalf. When this occurs, we may place a correcting trade with the broker-dealer which has custody of the client's account. If an investment gain results from the correcting trade, the gain will remain in the client's account unless the same error involved other client account(s) that should have received the gain, it is not permissible for the client to retain the gain, or our firm confers with the client and the client decides to forego the gain (e.g., due to tax reasons). If the gain does not remain in the client's account and Schwab is the custodian, Schwab will donate the amount of any gain \$100 and over to charity. If a loss occurs greater than \$100, we will pay for the loss. Schwab will maintain the loss or gain (if such gain is not retained in the client's account) if it is under \$100 to minimize and offset its administrative time and expense. Generally, if related trade errors result in both gains and losses in the client's account, they may be netted.

### **TD Ameritrade:**

As disclosed above, we participate in TD Ameritrade's institutional customer program and we may recommend TD Ameritrade to Clients for custody and brokerage services. There is no direct link between our participation in the program and the investment advice it gives to its Clients, although we receive economic benefits through its participation in the program that are typically not available to TD Ameritrade retail investors. These benefits include the following products and services (provided without cost or at a discount): receipt of duplicate Client statements and confirmations; research related products and tools; consulting services; access to a trading desk serving our participants; access to block trading (which provides the ability to aggregate securities transactions for execution and then allocate the appropriate shares to Client accounts); the ability to have advisory fees deducted directly from Client accounts; access to an electronic communications network for Client order entry and account information; access to mutual funds with no transaction fees and to certain institutional money managers; and discounts on compliance, marketing, research, technology, and practice management products or services provided to us by third party vendors. TD Ameritrade may also have paid for business consulting and professional services received by our firm's related persons. Some of the products and services made available by TD Ameritrade through the program may benefit us but may not benefit its Client accounts. These products or services may assist us in managing and administering Client accounts, including accounts not maintained at TD Ameritrade. Other services made available by TD Ameritrade are intended to help us manage and further develop its business enterprise. The benefits received by us or our firm's personnel through participation in the program do not depend on the amount of brokerage transactions directed to TD Ameritrade.

As part of its fiduciary duties to clients, the firm endeavors at all times to put the interests of its clients first. Clients should be aware, however, that the receipt of economic benefits by us or our firm's related persons in and of itself creates a potential conflict of interest and may indirectly influence our choice of TD Ameritrade for custody and brokerage services.

- 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 may 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. Such referral fee represents a share of our investment advisory fee charged to our clients. This arrangement will not result in higher costs to you. In this regard, we maintain *Solicitors Agreements* in compliance with Rule 206 (4)-3 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 and applicable state and federal laws. All clients referred by Solicitors to our firm will be given full written disclosure describing the terms and fee arrangements between our firm and Solicitor(s).

In cases where state law requires licensure of solicitors, we ensure that no solicitation fees are paid unless the solicitor is registered as an investment adviser representative of our firm. If we are paying solicitation fees to another registered investment adviser, the licensure of individuals is the other firm's responsibility.

#### **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) does 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.

We will not serve as a custodian for Plan assets in connection with the Retirement Plan Services. The Sponsor is responsible for selecting the custodian for Plan assets. The Adviser and the Investment Adviser Representative may be listed as the contact for the Plan account held at an investment sponsor or custodian. The Sponsor for the Plan will complete account paperwork with the outside custodian that will provide the name and address of the custodian. The custodian for Plan assets is responsible for providing the Plan with periodic confirmations and statements. We recommend that Sponsors review the statements and reports received directly from the custodian or investment sponsor.

#### **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:

Our clients need to sign a discretionary investment advisory agreement with our firm for the management of their account. This type of agreement only applies to our Asset Management service. This Agreement shall not become effective until acceptance by us as evidenced by the signature of an authorized representative.

When providing any ERISA 3(38) Investment Management Fiduciary Services, we exercise discretionary authority or control over assets of the Plan. We will perform these services to the plan as a fiduciary under ERISA Section 3(38) and will act with the degree of diligence, care and skill that a prudent person rendering similar services would exercise under similar circumstances. This discretionary authority is specifically granted us by the Plan Sponsor, as specified in the Agreement.

#### **Item 17: Voting Client Securities**

If we 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, 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**

We are not required to provide financial information in this Brochure because:

- We do not require the prepayment of more than \$500 OR \$1,200 in fees and six or more months in advance.
- We do not take custody of client funds or securities.
- We do not have a financial condition or commitment that impairs our ability to meet contractual and fiduciary obligations to clients.
- We have never been the subject of a bankruptcy proceeding.