

# **Winans International**

**330 Ignacio Blvd, Suite 203  
Novato, CA 94949**

**Telephone: (415) 506-3070  
Facsimile: (415) 883-1646**

**[www.winansintl.com](http://www.winansintl.com)**

## **FORM ADV PART 2A DISCLOSURE BROCHURE**

**Date: June 18, 2015**

This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Winans International. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at (415) 506-3070 or [info@winansintl.com](mailto:info@winansintl.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 Winans International is also available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov). The searchable IARD/CRD number for Winans International is 107125.

Winans International is a Registered Investment Adviser. Registration with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or any state securities authority does not imply a certain level of skill or training.

## **Item 2 Summary of Material Changes**

Form ADV Part 2 requires registered investment advisers to amend their brochure when information becomes materially inaccurate. If there are any material changes to an adviser's disclosure brochure, the adviser is required to notify you and provide you with a description of the material changes.

Since the filing of our last annual updating amendment, dated February 11, 2014 we have no material changes to report.

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## Item 4 Advisory Business

Winans International is a registered investment adviser based in Novato, California. We are organized as a corporation under the laws of the State of California and we have been providing investment advisory services since 1992. Kenneth Grant Winans is our principal owner. Currently, we offer the following investment advisory services, which are personalized to each individual client:

- Portfolio Management Services
- Advisory Consulting and Research Services

### Portfolio Management Services

We offer discretionary and non-discretionary portfolio management services where our investment advice is tailored to meet our clients' needs and investment objectives. If you retain our firm for portfolio management services, we will meet with you to determine your investment objectives, risk tolerance, and other relevant information (the "suitability information") at the beginning of our advisory relationship. We will use the suitability information we gather to develop a strategy that enables our firm to give you continuous and focused investment advice and/or to make investments on your behalf. As part of our portfolio management services, we may customize an investment portfolio for you in accordance with your risk tolerance and investing objectives. We may also invest your assets using a predefined strategy, or we may invest your assets according to one or more model portfolios developed by our firm. Once we construct an investment portfolio for you, or select a model portfolio, we will monitor your portfolio's performance on an ongoing basis, and will rebalance the portfolio as required by changes in market conditions and in your financial circumstances.

If you participate in our discretionary portfolio management services, we require you to grant our firm discretionary authority to manage your account. Discretionary authorization will allow our firm to determine the specific securities, and the amount of securities, to be purchased or sold for your account without your approval prior to each transaction. Discretionary authority is typically granted by the investment advisory agreement you sign with our firm or a limited power of attorney. You may limit our discretionary authority (for example, limiting the types of securities that can be purchased for your account) by providing our firm with your restrictions and guidelines in writing. If you enter into non-discretionary arrangements with our firm, we must obtain your approval prior to executing any transactions on behalf of your account.

### Advisory Consulting and Research Services

We offer consulting services designed to provide experienced investors with information and guidance in managing their investments. We initially conduct a preliminary investment analysis of your existing portfolio plus an analysis of the tax implications or mutual fund expenses. We will then provide you with a written report and assist you in formulating an investment strategy. On a quarterly basis, we will provide you with a performance report which will contain a statistical and fundamental analysis of stock and bond ratings. We will also conduct a meeting or conference call to review the information provided and discuss possible changes to your portfolio.

We also provide research services to unaffiliated third party financial databases where we sell several proprietary market indices and indicators developed by our firm. The research may be available for purchase directly from the third party for a fee which are separate and apart from the advisory fees charged by our firm.

### Types of Investments

We primarily offer advice on stocks, bonds, real estate, mutual funds and derivatives.

You may request that we refrain from investing in particular securities or certain types of securities. You must provide these restrictions to our firm in writing.

### **Assets Under Management**

As of December 31, 2014, we provide continuous management services for \$168,387,560 in client assets on a discretionary basis, and \$0 in client assets on a non-discretionary basis.

## **Item 5 Fees and Compensation**

### **Portfolio Management Services**

Winans International charges a fee for portfolio management services based on a percentage of the assets under management. Fees are billed quarterly in advance based on the value of your account on the last day of the previous quarter based on the following fee schedule:.

<b>Total Assets Under Management:</b>	<b>Growth Investments Annual Fee***:</b>	<b>Taxable Income Investments Annual Fee***:</b>
Under \$125,000	1.60000%	0.98000%
\$125,000 to \$250,000	1.48000%	0.97020%
\$250,001 to \$500,000	1.36900%	0.96050%
\$500,001 to \$1,000,000	1.23210%	0.91247%
\$1,000,001 to \$2,000,000	1.10889%	0.86685%
\$2,000,001 to \$3,000,000	1.02572%	0.82351%
\$3,000,001 to \$4,000,000	1.00008%	0.80292%
\$4,000,001 to \$5,000,000	0.98008%	0.78686%
\$5,000,001 to \$6,000,000	0.96538%	0.77506%
\$6,000,001 to \$7,000,000	0.95572%	0.76731%
\$7,000,001 to \$8,000,000	0.95094%	0.76347%
\$8,000,001 to \$9,000,000	0.94857%	0.76156%
Over \$9,000,000	Negotiable	

\*\*\* There are minimum processing fees of \$10 per account per quarter and \$500 per client per year.

If the portfolio management agreement is executed at any time other than the first day of a calendar quarter, our fees will apply on a pro rata basis, which means that the advisory fee is payable in proportion to the number of days in the quarter for which you are a client. Our advisory fee is negotiable, depending on individual client circumstances.

At our discretion, we may combine the account values of family members living in the same household to determine the applicable advisory fee. For example, we may combine account values for you and your minor children, joint accounts with your spouse, and other types of related accounts. Combining account values may increase the asset total, which may result in your paying a reduced advisory fee based on the available breakpoints in our fee schedule stated above.

We will send you an invoice for the payment of our advisory fee, or we will deduct our fee directly from your account through the qualified custodian holding your funds and securities. We will deduct our advisory fee only when you have given our firm written authorization permitting the fees to be paid directly from your account. Further, the qualified custodian will deliver an account statement to you at least quarterly. These account statements will show all disbursements from your account. You should review all statements for accuracy.

We encourage you to reconcile our invoices with the statement(s) you receive from the qualified custodian. If you find any inconsistent information between our invoice and the statement(s) you receive from the qualified custodian please call our main office number located on the cover page of this brochure.

You may terminate the portfolio management agreement upon 5 business days' written notice to our firm. You will incur a pro rata charge for services rendered prior to the termination of the portfolio management agreement, which means you will incur advisory fees only in proportion to the number of days in the quarter for which you are a client. If you have pre-paid advisory fees that we have not yet earned, you will receive a prorated refund of those fees.

### **Advisory Consulting and Research Services**

Our fee for advisory consulting services is \$250 per hour (billed in 15 minute increments) plus expenses (travel, lodging, copies, shipping and postage, etc.). Fees are paid on a quarterly basis. The client will receive an invoice showing the amount of the fee, the specific manner in which the fee was calculated, and any late fees imposed on the account.

Our fee for research services are negotiable will vary on a case by case basis and are negotiated with each client.

### **Additional Fees and Expenses**

As part of our investment advisory services, we may invest, or recommend that you invest in mutual funds and exchange traded funds. The fees that you pay to our firm for investment advisory services are separate and distinct from the fees and expenses charged by mutual funds or exchange traded funds (described in each fund's prospectus) to their shareholders. These fees will generally include a management fee and other fund expenses. You will also incur transaction charges and/or brokerage fees when purchasing or selling securities. These charges and fees are typically imposed by the broker-dealer or custodian through which your account transactions are executed. We do not share in any portion of the brokerage fees/transaction charges imposed by the broker-dealer or custodian. To fully understand the total cost you will incur, you should review all the fees charged by mutual funds, exchange traded funds, our firm, and others. For information on our brokerage practices, please refer to the *Brokerage Practices* section of this Brochure.

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

We do not accept performance-based fees or participate in side-by-side management. Side-by-side management refers to the practice of managing accounts that are charged performance-based fees while at the same time managing accounts that are not charged performance-based fees.

Performance-based fees are fees that are based on a share of capital gains or capital appreciation of a client's account. Our fees are calculated as described in the *Advisory Business* section above, and are not charged on the basis of a share of capital gains upon, or capital appreciation of, the funds in your advisory account.

## **Item 7 Types of Clients**

Winans International provides investment advice and management for individuals, trusts, investment companies and pension plans. We generally require that a portfolio contains a minimum of \$100,000 to open an account, but Winans International reserves the right to waive this minimum.

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

### **Our investment philosophy is deeply rooted to the following beliefs:**

- The current economic and investment environment resembles similar times in the past 100 years. The government will use nearly identical fiscal and monetary policies to deal with these conditions.
- Investment prices generally move in long trends and prices lead most economic and financial data. Technical indicators can be used to identify the direction of current investment trends, as well as changes in the trend's direction.
- Investors should carefully consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses.

### **Winans International primarily focuses on quantitative and technical analysis.**

Since the main objective in growth investing is the price appreciation of our investments, we focus on the long-term historical performance of a company's stock itself. We believe that stock price movement leads all other financial and economic information.

With access to data on 7,600 publicly traded companies, we screen for the elite group of stocks, or exchange traded funds (ETF), that have a history of outperforming the overall market in the following ways:

- The security's overall cumulative % return
- The stock's average annual % return
- The % of time the stock outperformed the market's average annual return
- The % of time the investment had negative years
- The % of time the stock had back-to-back negative years.

Our typical growth portfolio has a diversified mix (between 20 and 40 holdings) of U.S.-based companies from various industry groups that have a medium to large market capitalization. Exchange traded funds are typically used in smaller portfolios and for clients who prefer them as investments.

Our typical fixed-income portfolio has a mix of corporate bond and preferred stock holdings. The bonds have an average S&P rating between B and BBB+, a yield of 3% to 4% above 10-year US Treasury bonds, and maturities within 10 years. Preferred stocks have an average S&P rating between B+ and A, a dividend yield of 3% to 4% above 10-year US Treasury bonds, and are exchange listed with stable liquidity. Real estate investment trusts, exchange traded limited partnerships, common stocks, and real estate trust deeds are often used in these portfolios. We track investments through our proprietary monitoring system, which is based on numerous price statistics.

All investments involve different degrees of risk. You should be aware of your risk tolerance level and financial situations at all times. All investments are subject to market risk and may result in the entire loss to the client's investment.

Our strategies and investments may have unique and significant tax implications. However, unless we specifically agree otherwise, and in writing, tax efficiency is not our primary consideration in the management of your assets. Regardless of your account size or any other factors, we strongly recommend that you continuously consult with a tax professional prior to and throughout the investing of your assets.

Moreover, as a result of revised IRS regulations, custodians and broker-dealers will begin reporting the cost basis of equities acquired in client accounts on or after January 1, 2011. Your custodian will default to the FIFO (First-In First-Out) accounting method for calculating the cost basis of your

investments. You are responsible for contacting your tax advisor to determine if this accounting method is the right choice for you. If your tax advisor believes another accounting method is more advantageous, please provide written notice to our firm immediately and we will alert your account custodian of your individually selected accounting method. Please note that decisions about cost basis accounting methods will need to be made before trades settle, as the cost basis method cannot be changed after settlement.

### **Recommendation of Particular Types of Securities**

As disclosed under the *Advisory Business* section in this Brochure, we primarily recommend stocks, bonds, real estate, mutual funds, exchange traded funds, and derivatives.

There are numerous ways of measuring the risk of equity securities (also known simply as "equities" or "stock"). In very broad terms, the value of a stock depends on the financial health of the company issuing it. However, stock prices can be affected by many other factors including, but not limited to: the class of stock (for example, preferred or common); the health of the market sector of the issuing company; and, the overall health of the economy. In general, larger, more well established companies ("large cap") tend to be safer than smaller start-up companies ("small cap") but the mere size of an issuer is not, by itself, an indicator of the safety of the investment.

Corporate debt securities (or "bonds") are typically safer investments than equity securities, but their risk can also vary widely based on: the financial health of the issuer; the risk that the issuer might default; when the bond is set to mature; and, whether or not the bond can be "called" prior to maturity. When a bond is called, it may not be possible to replace it with a bond of equal character paying the same rate of return.

Municipal bonds, while generally thought of as safe, can have significant risks associated with them including, but not limited to: the credit worthiness of the governmental entity that issues the bond; the stability of the revenue stream that is used to pay the interest to the bondholders; when the bond is due to mature; and, whether or not the bond can be "called" prior to maturity. When a bond is called, it may not be possible to replace it with a bond of equal character paying the same amount of interest or yield to maturity.

Real estate is increasingly being used as part of a long-term core strategy due to increased market efficiency and increasing concerns about the future long-term variability of stock and bond returns. In fact, real estate is known for its ability to serve as a portfolio diversifier and inflation hedge. However, the asset class still bears a considerable amount of market risk. Real estate has shown itself to be very cyclical, somewhat mirroring the ups and downs of the overall economy. In addition to employment and demographic changes, real estate is also influenced by changes in interest rates and the credit markets, which affect the demand and supply of capital and thus real estate values. Along with changes in market fundamentals, investors wishing to add real estate as part of their core investment portfolios need to look for property concentrations by area or by property type. Because property returns are directly affected by local market basics, real estate portfolios that are too heavily concentrated in one area or property type can lose their risk mitigation attributes and bear additional risk by being too influenced by local or sector market changes.

Mutual funds and exchange traded funds are professionally managed collective investment systems that pool money from many investors and invest in stocks, bonds, short-term money market instruments, other mutual funds, other securities or any combination thereof. The fund will have a manager that trades the fund's investments in accordance with the fund's investment objective. While mutual funds and ETFs generally provide diversification, risks can be significantly increased if the fund is concentrated in a particular sector of the market, primarily invests in small cap or speculative companies, uses leverage (i.e., borrows money) to a significant degree, or concentrates in a particular



type of security (i.e., equities) rather than balancing the fund with different types of securities. Exchange traded funds differ from mutual funds since they can be bought and sold throughout the day like stock and their price can fluctuate throughout the day. The returns on mutual funds and ETFs can be reduced by the costs to manage the funds. Also, while some mutual funds are "no load" and charge no fee to buy into, or sell out of, the fund, other types of mutual funds do charge such fees which can also reduce returns. During time of extreme market volatility ETF pricing may lag vs. the actual underlying asset values. This lag usually resolves itself in a short period of time (usually less than one day) however there is no guarantee this relationship will always occur.

Derivatives are types of investments where the investor does not own the underlying asset, but he makes a bet on the direction of the price movement of the underlying asset via an agreement with another party. There are many different types of derivative instruments, including options, swaps, futures and forward contracts. Derivatives have numerous uses as well as various risks associated with them, but are generally considered an alternative way to participate in the market. Investors typically use derivatives for three reasons: to hedge a position, to increase leverage or to speculate on an asset's movement. The key to making a sound investment is to fully understand the risks associated with the derivative, including, but not limited to: counterparty, underlying asset, price and expiration risks. The use of a derivative only makes sense if the investor is fully aware of the risks and understands the impact of the investment within a portfolio strategy. Due to the variety of available derivatives and the range of potential risks, a detailed explanation of derivatives is beyond the scope of this disclosure.

## **Item 9 Disciplinary Information**

Neither our firm nor any of our management persons have any reportable disciplinary information that is material to your evaluation of our firm or the integrity of our management.

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

We have not provided information on other financial industry activities and affiliations because we do not have any relationship or arrangement that is material to our advisory business or to our clients with any of the types of entities listed below.

1. broker-dealer, municipal securities dealer, or government securities dealer or broker.
2. investment company or other pooled investment vehicle (including a mutual fund, closed-end investment company, unit investment trust, private investment company or "hedge fund," and offshore fund).
3. other investment adviser or financial planner.
4. futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator, or commodity trading advisor.
5. banking or thrift institution.
6. accountant or accounting firm.
7. lawyer or law firm.
8. insurance company or agency.
9. pension consultant.
10. real estate broker or dealer.
11. sponsor or syndicator of limited partnerships.

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

It is the policy of Winans International to maintain the highest standards of professional competency, integrity, and judgment and we have adopted a Code of Ethics to formalize the principals practiced by Winans International and its associated persons. The ethical standards are intended to reflect standards expected of Winans International and our associated persons in the performance of our fiduciary obligations to our clients and serve as a guide for professional responsibility and a benchmark of ethical judgment. A copy of the company's code of ethics will be provided to any client or prospective client upon request. Because the Firm engages in an investment advisory business and manages more than one account, there may be conflicts of interest over the amount of time devoted to managing any one account and the allocation of investment opportunities among all accounts managed by us.

It is our policy to attempt to resolve all such conflicts in a manner that is generally fair to all of our clients. We may give advice and take action with respect to any of our clients that may differ from advice given the timing or nature of action taken with respect to any particular client so long as it is our policy, to the extent practicable, to allocate investment opportunities over a period of time on a fair and equitable basis relative to other clients. During market hours, trades are placed in the order that is fair and equitable to all clients. Generally, the decision to purchase or sell a particular security is usually done for all accounts. The orders are simultaneously placed in all accounts. In certain circumstances, orders will be aggregated and shares will be distributed at the average price of execution.

Generally speaking, there are no conflicts regarding securities held in individual client accounts and the Fund. The investment profiles for client accounts and the Fund are distinctly different. The timing of investment decisions for individual clients and the Fund are usually made at separate times and for uncorrelated reasons.

Because Winans International and its associates have a fiduciary relationship to clients, there is an affirmative duty not to overreach or disadvantage any client or otherwise take unfair advantage of his/her trust.

With respect to personal securities transactions, our firm or persons associated with our firm may buy or sell securities for you at the same time we or persons associated with our firm buy or sell such securities for our own account. A conflict of interest exists in such cases because we have the ability to trade ahead of you and potentially receive more favorable prices than you will receive. To mitigate this conflict of interest, it is our policy that neither our Associated Persons nor we shall have priority over your account in the purchase or sale of securities.

The trading records required under the Code of Ethics are intended as a means of bringing inappropriate trading practices to light. For this reason, our Chief Compliance Officer will monitor personal securities transactions as described in the Code of Ethics to ensure that such persons are fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities to our clients.

## Item 12 Brokerage Practices

### The Custodians and Brokers We Use

We do not maintain custody of your assets that we manage. Your assets must be maintained in an account at a "qualified custodian," generally a broker/dealer or bank. We may recommend that our clients use Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. (Schwab), a registered broker-dealer, member FINRA/SIPC, or TD Ameritrade Inc., member FINRA/SIPC/NFA ("TD Ameritrade"), as the qualified custodian. We are independently owned and operated and are not affiliated with either TD Ameritrade or Schwab.

Whichever custodian you decide to use will hold your assets in a brokerage account and buy and sell securities when instructed. While we recommend these custodians as broker/dealers, you will decide whether to use them and will open your account with either one by entering into an account agreement directly with them. We do not open the account for you, although we may assist you in doing so.

We participate in the institutional advisor program (the "Program") offered by TD Ameritrade Institutional. TD Ameritrade Institutional is a division of TD Ameritrade Inc. TD Ameritrade offers to independent investment advisors 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.

There is no direct link between our participation in the program and the investment advice we give to our Clients, although we receive economic benefits through our 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 related persons. Some of the products and services made available by TD Ameritrade through the program may benefit us but may not benefit our 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 our business enterprise. The benefits received by us or our personnel through participation in the program do not depend on the amount of brokerage transactions directed to TD Ameritrade. As part of our fiduciary duties to clients, we endeavor at all times to put the interests of our clients first. Clients should be aware, however, that the receipt of economic benefits by us or our related persons in and of itself creates a potential conflict of interest and may indirectly influence the our choice of TD Ameritrade for custody and brokerage services. (Please see the disclosure under Item 14 below for more information.)

Each client is responsible for selecting the brokerage firm to be used for his/her account. Although we will consult with a client regarding the selection of a brokerage firm and assist with any negotiations with that firm if the client so requests, the client is responsible for negotiating the terms and conditions (including, but not limited to, commission rates) relating to all services to be provided by such brokers and for ensuring that the client is satisfied with such terms and conditions.

Because clients select their own brokers and negotiate their own commission rates, a client may pay commission rates different from those paid by other clients. We have no responsibility for obtaining for clients the best prices or any particular commission rates as low as it might obtain if we had discretion to select broker-dealers other than those chosen by the client, and may not obtain the best execution of each transaction. We do not review the commissions charged by a client's brokerage firm on a trade-by-trade basis, but we may periodically review the commission rates being charged to clients.

Transactions for each client 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 multiple orders for shares of the same securities purchased for advisory accounts we manage (this practice is commonly referred to as "block trading"). We will then distribute a portion of the shares to participating accounts in a fair and equitable manner. The distribution of the shares purchased is typically proportionate to the size of the account, but it is not based on account performance or the amount or structure of management fees. Subject to our discretion regarding factual and market conditions, when we combine orders, each participating account pays an average price per share for all transactions and pays a proportionate share of all transaction costs on any given day. Accounts owned by our firm or persons associated with our firm may participate in block trading with your accounts; however, they will not be given preferential treatment.

### **Item 13 Review of Accounts**

All client accounts are reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Client accounts may be reviewed on a less than quarterly basis if there is a change (such as asset allocation) in the account.

Clients are given written reports on a quarterly basis.

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

As disclosed under Item 12. above, we participate in TD Ameritrade's institutional customer program and we may recommend TD Ameritrade to Clients for custody and brokerage services. We may receive client referrals from TD Ameritrade through our participation in TD Ameritrade AdvisorDirect. In addition to meeting the minimum eligibility criteria for participation in AdvisorDirect, we may have been selected to participate in AdvisorDirect based on the amount and profitability to TD Ameritrade of the assets in, and trades placed for, client accounts maintained with TD Ameritrade. TD Ameritrade is a discount broker-dealer independent of and unaffiliated with us and there is no employee or agency relationship between us. TD Ameritrade has established AdvisorDirect as a means of referring its brokerage customers and other investors seeking fee-based personal investment management services or financial planning services to independent investment advisors. TD Ameritrade does not supervise us and has no responsibility for our management of client portfolios or our other advice or services. We pay TD Ameritrade an on-going fee for each successful client referral. This fee is usually a percentage (not to exceed 25%) of the advisory fee that the client pays to us ("Solicitation Fee"). We will also pay TD Ameritrade the Solicitation Fee on any advisory fees received by us from any of a referred client's family members, including a spouse, child or any other immediate family member who resides with the referred client and hired us on the recommendation of such referred client. We will not charge clients referred through AdvisorDirect any fees or costs higher than our standard fee schedule offered to our clients or otherwise pass Solicitation Fees paid to TD Ameritrade to our clients. For information regarding additional or other fees paid directly or indirectly to TD Ameritrade, please refer to the TD Ameritrade AdvisorDirect Disclosure and Acknowledgment Form.

Our participation in AdvisorDirect raises potential conflicts of interest. TD Ameritrade will most likely refer clients through AdvisorDirect to investment advisors that encourage their clients to custody their assets at TD Ameritrade and whose client accounts are profitable to TD Ameritrade. Consequently, in order to obtain client referrals from TD Ameritrade, we may have an incentive to recommend to clients that the assets under management by us be held in custody with TD Ameritrade and to place transactions for client accounts with TD Ameritrade. In addition, we have agreed not to solicit clients referred to us through AdvisorDirect to transfer their accounts from TD Ameritrade or to establish brokerage or custody accounts at other custodians, except when our fiduciary duties require doing so. Our participation in AdvisorDirect does not diminish our duty to seek best execution of trades for client accounts.

We may directly compensate other non-employee (outside) consultants, individuals, and/or entities (Solicitors) for client referrals. In order to receive a cash referral fee from our firm, Solicitors must comply with the requirements of the jurisdictions in which they operate. If you were referred to our firm by a Solicitor, you should have received a copy of this brochure along with the Solicitor's disclosure statement at the time of the referral. If you become a client, the Solicitor that referred you to our firm will receive either a percentage of the advisory fee you pay our firm for as long as you are a client with our firm, or until such time as our agreement with the Solicitor expires or a one-time, flat referral fee upon your signing an advisory agreement with our firm. You will not pay additional fees because of this referral arrangement. Referral fees paid to a Solicitor are contingent upon your entering into an advisory agreement with our firm. Therefore, a Solicitor has a financial incentive to recommend our firm to you for advisory services. This creates a conflict of interest; however, you are not obligated to retain our firm for advisory services. Comparable services and/or lower fees may be available through other firms.

Solicitors that refer business to more than one investment adviser may have a financial incentive to recommend advisers with more favorable compensation arrangements. We request that our Solicitors disclose to you whether multiple referral relationships exist and that comparable services may be available from other advisers for lower fees and/or where the Solicitor's compensation is less favorable.

We have entered into contractual arrangements with employees of our firm, under which the individuals receive compensation from our firm for the establishment of new client relationships. Employees who refer clients to our firm must comply with the requirements of the jurisdictions where they operate. The compensation is a percentage of the advisory fee you pay our firm for as long as you are a client with our firm, or until such time as our agreement with the Solicitor expires. You will not be charged additional fees based on this compensation arrangement. Incentive based compensation is contingent upon you entering into an advisory agreement with our firm. Therefore, the individual has a financial incentive to recommend our firm to you for advisory services. This creates a conflict of interest; however, you are not obligated to retain our firm for advisory services. Comparable services and/or lower fees may be available through other firms.

## Item 15 Custody

As paying agent for our firm, your independent custodian will directly debit your account(s) for the payment of our advisory fees. This ability to deduct our advisory fees from your accounts causes our firm to exercise limited custody over your funds or securities. We do not have physical custody of any of your funds and/or securities. Your funds and securities will be held with a bank, broker-dealer, or other independent, qualified custodian. You will receive account statements from the independent, qualified custodian(s) holding your funds and securities at least quarterly. The account statements from your custodian(s) will indicate the amount of our advisory fees deducted from your account(s) each billing period. You should carefully review account statements for accuracy. We will also provide statements to you reflecting the amount of advisory fee deducted from your account.

You should compare our statements with the statements from your account custodian(s) to reconcile the information reflected on each statement. If you have a question regarding your account statement, or if you did not receive a statement from your custodian, please contact us directly at the telephone number on the cover page of this brochure.

## Item 16 Investment Discretion

You may grant our firm discretion over the selection and amount of securities to be purchased or sold for your account(s) without obtaining your consent or approval prior to each transaction. You may specify investment objectives, guidelines, and/or impose certain conditions or investment parameters for your account(s). For example, you may specify that the investment in any particular stock or industry should not exceed specified percentages of the value of the portfolio and/or restrictions or prohibitions of transactions in the securities of a specific industry or security. Please refer to the *Advisory Business* section in this brochure for more information on our discretionary management services.

If you enter into non-discretionary arrangements with our firm, we will obtain your approval prior to the execution of any transactions for your account(s). You have an unrestricted right to decline to implement any advice provided by our firm on a non-discretionary basis.

## Item 17 Voting Client Securities

In the event clients authorize us to vote proxies on their behalf, we will determine how to vote proxies based on our reasonable judgment of the vote most likely to produce favorable financial results for you. Proxy votes generally will be cast in favor of proposals that maintain or strengthen the shared interests of shareholders and management, increase shareholder value, maintain or increase shareholder influence over the issuer's board of directors and management, and maintain or increase the rights of shareholders. Generally, proxy votes will be cast against proposals having the opposite effect. However, we will consider both sides of each proxy issue.

Except in the case of a conflict of interest as described below, we do not accept direction from you on voting a particular proxy.

Conflicts of interest between you and our firm, or a principal of our firm, regarding certain proxy issues could arise. If we determine that a material conflict of interest exists, we will take the necessary steps to resolve the conflict before voting the proxies. For example, we may disclose the existence and nature of the conflict to you, and seek direction from you as to how to vote on a particular issue; we may abstain from voting, particularly if there are conflicting interests for you (for example, where your



account(s) hold different securities in a competitive merger situation); or, we will take other necessary steps designed to ensure that a decision to vote is in your best interest and was not the product of the conflict.

We keep certain records required by applicable law in connection with our proxy voting activities. You may obtain information on how we voted proxies and/or obtain a full copy of our proxy voting policies and procedures by making a written or oral request to our firm.

If you do not authorize us to vote proxies on your behalf, you are responsible for exercising your right to vote as a shareholder. In such cases, you will receive proxy materials directly from the account custodian. However, in the event we were to receive any written or electronic proxy materials, we would forward them directly to you by mail, unless you have authorized our firm to contact you by electronic mail, in which case, we would forward any electronic solicitation to vote proxies.

### **Class Action Lawsuits**

We do not determine if securities held by you are the subject of a class action lawsuit or whether you are eligible to participate in class action settlements or litigation nor do we initiate or participate in litigation to recover damages on your behalf for injuries as a result of actions, misconduct, or negligence by issuers of securities held by you.

## **Item 18 Financial Information**

Our firm does not have any financial conditions or impairments that would prevent us from meeting our contractual commitments to you. We do not take physical custody of client funds or securities, or serve as trustee or signatory for client accounts, and, we do not require the prepayment of more than \$1200 in fees six or more months in advance. Therefore, we are not required to include a financial statement with this brochure.

## **Item 19 Requirements for State Registered Investment Advisers**

We are a federally registered investment adviser; therefore, we are not required to respond to this item.