

## Item 1: Cover Page

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

April 21, 2015

#### **Financial Solutions, LLC**

SEC File No. 801-79140

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This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Financial Solutions, LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at [tmcgrath@fsplanners.com](mailto:tmcgrath@fsplanners.com). The information in this brochure has not been approved or verified by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or any State securities authority. Registration with the SEC or any State regulatory authority does not imply a certain level of skill or expertise.

Additional information about Financial Solutions, LLC, is also available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov).

## **Item 2: Material Changes**

This Firm Brochure is our disclosure document prepared according to regulatory requirements and rules. Consistent with the rules, we will ensure that you receive a summary of any material changes to this and subsequent Brochures within 120 days of the close of our business' fiscal year. Furthermore, we will provide you with other interim disclosures about material changes as necessary.

Effective April 21, 2015, the firm's name was changed from JLTD Advisors, LLC, to Financial Solutions, LLC.

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## Item 4: Advisory Business

### A. Description of Your Advisory Firm

Financial Solutions, LLC ("Financial Solutions" and/or "the firm"), is an Illinois limited liability company principally owned by Tim McGrath and Horace Seely-Brown. Financial Solutions began operations in May 2010 and offers investment supervisory, asset management, and financial planning services.

### B. Description of Advisory Services Offered

Financial Solutions is an independent investment advisory and financial planning firm offering a variety of financial services to individuals and high-net-worth individuals, trusts, retirement plans, pension and profit sharing plans, charitable organizations, corporations, partnerships, and other legal entities. Advisory services may include financial planning, investment strategy, portfolio management, and selection of other advisers.

#### B.1. Portfolio Management Services

Financial Solutions provides discretionary and non-discretionary portfolio management services, where the investment advice provided is tailored to meet the needs and investment objectives of the client.

For its discretionary asset management services, Financial Solutions receives a limited power of attorney to effect securities transactions on behalf of its clients that include securities and strategies described in Item 8 of this Brochure. Financial Solutions will be granted discretion and authority to manage the account, subject to any written guidelines that the client may provide. Accordingly, Financial Solutions is 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. Financial Solutions may utilize, in its sole discretion, one or more sub-advisers, wherein the sub-adviser will have discretion to manage all or a portion of the client's account, which management may be based on one or more model portfolios developed by the sub-adviser. Financial Solutions will monitor the performance of any accounts managed by a sub-adviser on an ongoing basis and may hire and fire any sub-adviser without the consent of the client. Financial Solutions will pay a portion of its fee to any sub-adviser(s) utilized by the firm; however, clients do not pay a higher fee than the firm's normal fee as a result of any sub-advisory relationships. Once the portfolio is constructed, Financial Solutions provides ongoing supervision and rebalancing of the portfolio as changes in market conditions and client circumstances may require.

Where Financial Solutions enters into non-discretionary arrangements with clients, the firm will obtain client approval prior to the execution of transactions. Financial Solutions may offer asset allocation recommendations with respect to participants' retirement plan(s). In such cases, all advice will be rendered on a non-discretionary and periodic basis. The client is free at all times to accept or reject any investment recommendation from Financial Solutions, and the client is solely responsible for implementing any recommendations made by the firm.

Financial Solutions will remind clients of their obligation to inform the firm of any changes to their personal financial circumstances, investment objectives or risk tolerance, and modifications or restrictions that should be imposed on the management of the client's account. Financial Solutions will also contact clients at least annually to determine whether there have been any changes in a client's personal financial circumstances, investment objectives, and tolerance for risk.

## **B.2. Financial Planning Services**

Financial Solutions offers broad-based, modular, and consultative financial planning services on a stand-alone basis. Such advice will typically involve providing a variety of services, principally advisory in nature, to clients regarding the management of their financial resources based upon an analysis of their individual needs. A financial advisor of the firm will first conduct a complimentary initial consultation. After the initial consultation, if the client decides to engage Financial Solutions for financial planning services, a financial advisor will conduct a follow-up meeting, during which pertinent information about the client's financial circumstances and objectives is collected. Once such information has been reviewed and analyzed, a written financial plan designed to achieve the client's stated financial goals and objectives will be produced and presented to the client. The primary objective of this process is to allow Financial Solutions to assist the client in developing a strategy for the successful management of income, assets, and liabilities in meeting the client's financial goals and objectives.

Financial Solutions may also offer ongoing financial planning services whereby it generally establishes a regular planning cycle to work with the client in managing specific aspects of the overall financial plan. As part of such services, Financial Solutions may provide periodic reviews of financial plans, asset allocation recommendations, insurance needs and estate planning issues, and/or other issues as requested by the client. The engagement for ongoing financial planning service is renewable on an annual basis.

Financial plans are based on the client's financial situation at the time the plan is presented and on financial information provided by the client to the firm. Clients are advised that certain assumptions may be made with respect to interest and inflation rates as well as use of past trends and performance of the market and economy. Past performance is in no way an indication of future performance. Financial Solutions cannot offer any guarantees or promises that the client's financial goals and objectives will be met. As the client's financial situation, goals, objectives, or needs change, the client must notify the firm promptly.

Clients may act on Financial Solutions' recommendations by placing securities transactions with any brokerage firm the client chooses. The client is under no obligation to act on Financial Solutions' financial planning recommendations. Moreover, if the client elects to act on any of the recommendations, the client is under no obligation to implement the financial plan through Financial Solutions.

## **B.3. 401(k) Plan Services**

Employees in qualified retirement plans are protected by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), which requires employers, investment advisers, and plan

administrators to put employees' interests first when managing retirement savings plans. Public retirement systems are governed by similar state laws and often incorporate the protections of ERISA.

In order to demonstrate that a plan fiduciary has operated in a prudent manner, there are certain steps that the fiduciary must take. Financial Solutions is committed to helping fiduciaries understand their roles and to assist them in implementing a process that allows them to fulfill their duties and responsibilities.

Financial Solutions offers sponsors of employee benefit plans (defined contribution and defined benefit) qualified under the Internal Revenue Code ("IRC"), and other retirement plans not qualified under the IRC a range of discretionary and non-discretionary services.

Financial Solutions provides Retirement Plan Consulting Services for plan trustees, fiduciaries, and participants, which include the following:

- ***Assistance in Plan Design and Implementation.*** Financial Solutions, after significant research and discussion with the plan trustee(s), will assist the trustee(s) with a plan design that is consistent with the needs of the company and its employees. Plan design is an important first step in the process. Financial Solutions stays current with various types of plans and how they are utilized by competitors to ensure the company is offering a competitive plan that is cost-effective and which meets the needs of the company and its participants. Such services will usually involve:
  - Review of expected participation, deferral percentage, and asset allocation of enrollees versus similarly situated companies
  - Review of investment options in relation performance and risk
  - Review of total plan costs and how they compare against similarly situated companies
  - Review of compliance requirements and related costs
  - Participant education and communication needs
  - Recordkeeping and administration requirements
  - Review of technology platform
  - Recommendation
- ***Vendor Search, Selection, and Plan Implementation.*** Financial Solutions also assists its retirement plan clients in selecting trustees, custodians, third-party administrators, accountants, actuaries, and other service providers. This process involves:
  - Generating criteria to identify appropriate service providers
  - Developing requests for proposals
  - Objectively rating service providers
  - Detailing potential conflicts of interest
  - Evaluating highly rated service provider candidates
  - Presenting to management

Once a service provider is selected, Financial Solutions will assist a client in implementing the client's retirement plan program. In implementing the program, Financial Solutions will, among other things, review the plan design, develop performance standards, and review the service provider's contract.

- ***Investment Selection and Monitoring.*** The process of investment selection and monitoring involves the following:
  - Creating an investment policy statement
  - Performing fund searches to ensure access to institutional funds
  - Recommending lifestyle funds where appropriate
  - Monitoring the investment options against well-defined risk and return criteriaFinancial Solutions' investment professionals work in partnership with clients to create sound solutions to investment challenges, including:
  - Maximizing long-term return while not assuming unnecessary risk
  - Creating an optimal portfolio that includes a diverse array of investment options that span the risk/return spectrum
  - Keeping plan sponsors and participants current on mutual fund performance and the events that may affect performance
- ***Employee Education and Communications in Connection with Client Retirement Plan Programs.*** Financial Solutions will provide assistance with employee education and communications as follows:
  - Development and maintenance of investment policy statement
  - Formalization and maintenance of investment review guidelines
  - Investment and market research
  - Investment consulting
  - Service monitoring
  - Group enrollment meetings
  - Written materials
  - One-on-one allocation and fund selection meetings
  - Quarterly investment review and analysis

## **C. Client-Tailored Services and Client-Imposed Restrictions**

Clients' accounts will be managed on the basis of their financial situation and investment objectives, and in accordance with any reasonable restrictions they have imposed on the management of their accounts—for example, restricting the type or amount of security to be purchased in the portfolio.



#### **D. Wrap Fee Programs**

Financial Solutions does not participate in wrap fee programs. (Wrap fee programs offer services for one all-inclusive fee.)

#### **E. Client Assets Under Management**

As of December 31, 2014, Financial Solutions has \$71,805,484 of discretionary assets and \$62,628,527 of non-discretionary assets under management.

## Item 5: Fees and Compensation

### A. Methods of Compensation and Fee Schedule

#### A.1. Asset-Based Fee Schedule

Financial Solutions' fee for the services is an asset-based fee calculated as a percentage of the value of the managed assets according to the following fee schedule, which represents Financial Solutions' maximum fees for individual services. All fees are negotiable.

<u>Assets Under Management</u>	<u>Annualized Fee</u>
\$1–\$1,000,000	1.50%
\$1,000,001–\$3,000,000	1.25%
Over \$3,000,000	1.00%

Financial Solutions requires a minimum account fee of \$1,000 for accounts it manages on a discretionary basis. As a result, there is an implied minimum portfolio size of \$70,000 at the highest fee tier. For accounts with portfolio values less than \$70,000, clients may be able to receive comparable services at more favorable pricing elsewhere. Financial Solutions, in its sole discretion, may waive the required minimum. At its discretion, Financial Solutions may allow accounts of members of the same household to be aggregated for purposes of determining the advisory fee—for example, where the firm services accounts on behalf of minor children of current clients, individual and joint accounts for a spouse, and other types of related accounts. This consolidation practice is designed to allow clients the benefit of an increased asset total, which could potentially cause the accounts to be assessed a reduced advisory fee based on the breakpoints available in Financial Solutions' fee schedule as stated above.

Asset-based fees are always subject to the investment advisory agreement between the client and Financial Solutions. Such fees are paid quarterly in advance. The clients and the client's custodian or broker-dealer will be invoiced at the beginning of each calendar quarter, based upon the market value (market value plus any credit balance or minus any debit balance) of the client's account at the end of the previous quarter, as mutually agreed upon by the client and Financial Solutions. The fees will be prorated if the investment advisory relationship commences otherwise than at the beginning of a calendar quarter. Adjustments for significant contributions to and distributions from a client's portfolio are prorated for the quarter in which the change occurs.

The client authorizes the qualified custodian to automatically deduct the fee and all other charges payable hereunder from the assets in the account when due, with such payments to be reflected on the next account statement sent to the client. If insufficient cash is available to pay such fees, securities in an amount equal to the balance of unpaid fees will be liquidated to pay for the unpaid balance. Financial Solutions may modify the fee at any time upon 30 days' written notice to the client. In the event the client has an ERISA-governed plan, fee modifications must be approved in writing by the client.

A client investment advisory agreement may be canceled at any time by the client, or by Financial Solutions with 30 days' prior written notice to the client. Upon termination, any unearned, prepaid fees will be promptly refunded. The firm calculates unearned fees as those fees paid in advance multiplied by the number of days left in the calendar quarter. For example, if the client paid quarterly fees of \$1,000 in advance and terminates the relationship 45 days into the quarter, the refund will be calculated as follows:  $\$1,000 \times (90-45) = \$500$ .

The client has the right to terminate an agreement without penalty within five business days after entering into the agreement. If the disclosure brochure is not delivered to the client within 48 hours prior to the client entering into the investment advisory agreement, the client may terminate the agreement within five business days of the date of acceptance without penalty. If the client receives the disclosure documents 48 hours in advance or if the five-day grace period has expired, either party may terminate the agreement upon written notice to the other party.

## **A.2. Financial Planning Fee Schedule**

Financial Solutions charges an hourly fee of \$200 per hour for broad-based, modular, and consultative financial planning services, which is negotiable depending on the scope and complexity of the plan, the client's situation, and the client's objectives. An estimate of the total time/cost will be determined at the start of the advisory relationship. In limited circumstances, the cost/time could potentially exceed the initial estimate. In such cases, Financial Solutions will notify the client and may request that the client approve the additional fee. In any case, Financial Solutions requires a minimum fee of \$500, which is payable in advance. Fees are due upon completion of services rendered. Under no circumstances will Financial Solutions require prepayment of a fee more than six months in advance and in excess of \$500.

Financial Solutions, in its sole discretion, may waive the fee for general consulting or modular planning where such services are incidental to the firm's portfolio management services. However, services beyond the scope of portfolio management may be rendered for an additional fee based on the firm's hourly rate. For ongoing financial planning services, Financial Solutions charges either an hourly fee based on its hourly rate of \$200 per hour, or an annualized percentage of assets under management with the firm, which ranges from 1.00% to 1.50% of assets under management. Fees are payable quarterly in arrears as invoiced. In either case, Financial Solutions requires a minimum annual fee of \$500.

A financial planning agreement may be terminated by either party for any reason upon receipt of written notice. Upon termination, any earned, unpaid fees will be due and payable.

The client has the right to terminate an agreement without penalty within five business days after entering into the agreement. If the disclosure brochure is not delivered to the client within 48 hours prior to the client entering into the financial planning agreement, the client may terminate the agreement within five business days of the date of acceptance without penalty. If the client receives the disclosure documents 48 hours in advance or if the five-day grace period has expired, either party may terminate the agreement upon written notice to the other party. The client will incur a pro rata charge for bona fide financial planning and/or consulting services rendered prior to such termination.

### **A.3. 401(k) Plan Fee Schedule**

Financial Solutions' fee for the services is an asset-based fee calculated as a percentage of the value of the managed assets according to the following fee schedule, which represents the Financial Solutions' maximum fees for individual services. All fees are negotiable.

<u>Assets Under Management</u>	<u>Annualized Fee</u>
First \$1,000,000	1.00%
Next \$4,000,000	0.75%
Over \$5,000,000	0.60%

Financial Solutions requires a minimum fee of \$5,000 for retirement plans. As a result, there is an implied minimum plan size of \$500,000 at the highest fee tier. For plans with portfolio values less than \$500,000, the client may be able to receive comparable services at more favorable pricing elsewhere. Financial Solutions, in its sole discretion, may waive the required minimum.

Retirement planning fees are always subject to the investment advisory agreement between the client and Financial Solutions. Such fees are paid quarterly in arrears. The client will be invoiced at the beginning of each calendar quarter, based upon the market value of the retirement plan at the end of the previous quarter, as mutually agreed upon by the client and Financial Solutions.

A client investment advisory agreement may be canceled at any time by the client, or by Financial Solutions with 30 days' prior written notice to the client. Upon termination, any earned, unpaid fees will be promptly refunded. The firm calculates unearned fees as those fees paid in advance multiplied by the number of days left in the calendar quarter. For example, if the client paid quarterly fees of \$1,000 in advance and terminates the relationship 45 days into the quarter, the refund will be calculated as follows:  $\$1,000 \times (90-45) = \$500$ .

If the disclosure brochure is not delivered to the client within 48 hours prior to the client entering into the investment advisory agreement, the client may terminate the agreement within five business days of the date of acceptance without penalty. If the client receives the disclosure documents 48 hours in advance or if the five-day grace period has expired, either party may terminate the agreement upon written notice to the other party.

## **B. Client Payment of Fees**

### **B.1. Payment of Asset-Based Fees**

Financial Solutions requires clients to authorize the direct debit of fees from their accounts. Exceptions may be granted subject to the firm's consent for clients to be billed directly for our fees. For directly debited fees, the custodian's periodic statements will show each fee deduction from the account. Clients may withdraw this authorization for direct billing of these fees at any time by notifying us or their custodian in writing.

Financial Solutions will deduct advisory fees directly from the client's account provided that (i) the client provides written authorization to the qualified custodian, and (ii) the qualified

custodian sends the client a statement, at least quarterly, indicating all amounts disbursed from the account.

The client is responsible for verifying the accuracy of the fee calculation, as the client's custodian will not verify the calculation. In the event of termination, all unearned, prepaid fees will be promptly refunded to the client.

### **B.2. Payment of Financial Planning Fees**

In the event of financial planning fees, Financial Solutions will invoice the balance due from the client upon completion of the work, provided such balance exceeds the minimum advance payment of \$500. In the event of termination, all earned, unpaid fees will be promptly due and payable from the client.

### **B.3. Payment of Retirement Planning Fees**

In the event of retirement planning fees, Financial Solutions will invoice the client quarterly in arrears, based upon the current assets in the retirement plan subject to any applicable minimum fees as described item A.3. above. In the event of termination, all earned, unpaid fees will be promptly due from the client.

## **C. Additional Client Fees Charged**

The fees charged by Financial Solutions do not include fees charged by any exchange-traded fund, mutual fund, pooled investment vehicle, or any broker-dealer or custodian selected by the client. The management fees for pooled investment vehicles are disclosed in their confidential offering memoranda and applicable subscription documents or, in the case of an exchange-traded fund or mutual fund, in the respective fund's prospectus. Clients are advised to read these materials carefully before investing. If a mutual fund also imposes sales charges, the client may pay an initial or deferred sales charge as further described in the mutual fund's prospectus. A client using Financial Solutions may be precluded from using certain mutual funds or separate account managers because they may not be offered by the client's custodian. Please refer to the Brokerage Practices section (Item 12) for additional information regarding the firm's brokerage practices.

Other than for 401(k) plans, fees will be charged in advance; clients will be invoiced at the beginning of each calendar quarter based upon the market value (market value plus any credit balance or minus any debit balance) of the client's account at the end of the previous quarter.

Fees charged by mutual funds, exchange-traded funds, and privately pooled investment vehicles are separate and apart from the advisory fees charged by Financial Solutions. Similarly, the fees charged by Financial Solutions do not include any fees charged by a broker-dealer or custodian retained by a client to implement Financial Solutions' advice or to otherwise hold the client's portfolio securities.

## **D. Prepayment of Client Fees**

Other than for 401(k) plans and financial planning services, Financial Solutions requires the prepayment of its investment advisory fees. Financial Solutions' fees will either be paid directly by the client or disbursed to Financial Solutions by the qualified custodian of the client's investment accounts, subject to prior written consent of the client. The custodian will deliver directly to the client an account statement, at least quarterly, showing all investment and transaction activity for the period, including fee disbursements from the account.

A client investment advisory agreement may be canceled at any time by the client, or by Financial Solutions with 30 days' prior written notice to the client. A financial planning agreement may be terminated by either party for any reason upon receipt of written notice. Upon termination of any account any unearned, prepaid fees will be promptly refunded and any earned, unpaid fees will be due and payable. The firm calculates unearned fees as those fees paid in advance multiplied by the number of days left in the calendar quarter. For example, if the client paid quarterly fees of \$1,000 in advance and terminates the relationship 45 days into the quarter, the refund will be calculated as follows:  $\$1,000 \times (90 - 45) = \$500$ . The client has the right to terminate an agreement without penalty within five business days after entering into the agreement.

## **E. External Compensation for the Sale of Securities to Clients**

Financial Solutions' advisory professionals are compensated primarily through a salary and bonus structure. Financial Solutions' advisory professionals may be paid sales, service, or administrative fees for the sale of mutual funds or other investment products. Financial Solutions' advisory professionals may receive commission-based compensation for the sale of securities and insurance products. Please see Item 10.C. for detailed information and conflicts and interest.

## **Item 6: Performance-Based Fees and Side-by-Side Management**

Financial Solutions does not charge performance-based fees and therefore has no economic incentive to manage clients' portfolios in any way other than what is in their best interests.

## Item 7: Types of Clients

Financial Solutions offers its investment services to various types of clients, including individuals and high-net-worth individuals, trusts, retirement plans, pension and profit sharing plans, charitable organizations, corporations, partnerships, and other legal entities. Although Financial Solutions provides investment services to the various types of clients mentioned, the services are conditioned upon meeting certain minimum criteria established by the firm for each of the investment programs it offers.

Financial Solutions requires a minimum account fee of \$1,000 for accounts it manages on a discretionary basis. As a result, there is an implied minimum portfolio size of \$70,000 at the highest fee tier. For accounts with portfolio values less than \$70,000, clients may be able to receive comparable services at more favorable pricing elsewhere. Financial Solutions, in its sole discretion, may waive the required minimum. At its discretion, Financial Solutions may allow accounts of members of the same household to be aggregated for purposes of determining the advisory fee—for example, where the firm services accounts on behalf of minor children of current clients, individual and joint accounts for a spouse, and other types of related accounts. This consolidation practice is designed to allow clients the benefit of an increased asset total, which could potentially cause the accounts to be assessed a reduced advisory fee based on the breakpoints available in the firm's fee schedule as stated above.

Financial Solutions requires a minimum fee of \$5,000 for retirement plans. As a result, there is an implied minimum plan size of \$500,000 at the highest fee tier. For plans with portfolio values less than \$500,000, the client may be able to receive comparable services at more favorable pricing elsewhere. Financial Solutions, in its sole discretion, may waive the required minimum.

For financial planning services, Financial Solutions requires a minimum fee of \$500 payable in advance.



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

### **A. Methods of Analysis and Investment Strategies**

Financial Solutions uses a variety of sources of data to conduct its economic, investment and market analysis, such as financial newspapers and magazines, economic and market research materials prepared by others, conference calls hosted by mutual funds, corporate rating services, annual reports, prospectuses, and company press releases. It is important to keep in mind that there is no specific approach to investing that guarantees success or positive returns; investing in securities involves risk of loss that clients should be prepared to bear.

Financial Solutions and its investment adviser representatives are responsible for identifying and implementing the methods of analysis used in formulating investment recommendations to clients. The methods of analysis may include quantitative methods for optimizing client portfolios, computer-based risk/return analysis, technical analysis, and statistical and/or computer models utilizing long-term economic criteria.

- Optimization involves the use of mathematical algorithms to determine the appropriate mix of assets given the firm's current capital market rate assessment and a particular client's risk tolerance.
- Quantitative methods include analysis of historical data such as price and volume statistics, performance data, standard deviation and related risk metrics, how the security performs relative to the overall stock market, earnings data, price to earnings ratios, and related data.
- Technical analysis involves charting price and volume data as reported by the exchange where the security is traded to look for price trends.
- Computer models may be used to attempt the future value of a security based on assumptions of various data categories such as earnings, cash flow, profit margins, sales, and a variety of other company specific metrics.

In addition, Financial Solutions reviews research material prepared by others, as well as corporate filings, corporate rating services, and a variety of financial publications. Financial Solutions may employ outside vendors or utilize third-party software to assist in formulating investment recommendations to clients.

#### **A.1. Mutual Funds, Exchange-Traded Funds, Independent Investment Managers and Pooled Investment Vehicles, Individual Equity and Fixed Income Securities**

Financial Solutions may recommend (i) separate account managers to manage client assets; (ii) no-load and load-waived mutual funds and individual securities (including fixed income instruments); and (iii) pooled investment vehicles. Such management styles may include, among others, large-cap, mid-cap, and small-cap value, growth, and core; international and emerging markets; and alternative investments. Financial Solutions may also assist the client in selecting one or more appropriate manager(s) for all or a portion of the client's portfolio. Such managers typically manage assets for clients who commit to the manager a minimum amount of assets

established by that manager—a factor that Financial Solutions will take into account when recommending managers to clients.

A description of the criteria to be used in formulating an investment recommendation for mutual funds, exchange-traded funds, individual securities (including fixed income securities), managers, and pooled investment vehicles is set forth below.

Financial Solutions has formed relationships with third-party vendors that

- provide a technological platform for separate account management
- prepare performance reports
- perform due diligence monitoring of mutual funds, managers, and pooled investment vehicles
- perform billing and certain other administrative tasks

Financial Solutions may utilize additional independent third parties to assist in recommending and monitoring individual securities, mutual funds, managers, and pooled investment vehicles to clients as appropriate under the circumstances.

Financial Solutions reviews certain quantitative and qualitative criteria related to mutual funds and managers and to formulate investment recommendations to its clients. Quantitative criteria may include:

- the performance history of a mutual fund or manager evaluated against that of its peers and other benchmarks
- an analysis of risk-adjusted returns
- an analysis of the manager's contribution to the investment return (e.g., manager's alpha), standard deviation of returns over specific time periods, sector and style analysis
- the fund, sub-advisor or manager's fee structure
- the relevant portfolio manager's tenure

Qualitative criteria used in recommending mutual funds or managers include the investment objectives and/or management style and philosophy of a mutual fund or manager, a mutual fund or manager's consistency of investment style, and employee turnover and efficiency and capacity. Financial Solutions will discuss relevant quantitative and qualitative factors pertaining to its recommendations with clients prior to their determination to retain a mutual fund or manager.

Quantitative and qualitative criteria related to mutual funds and managers are reviewed by Financial Solutions on a quarterly basis or such other interval as mutually agreed upon by the client and the firm. In addition, mutual funds or managers are reviewed to determine the extent to which their investments reflect efforts to time the market, or evidence style drift such that their portfolios no longer accurately reflect the particular asset category attributed to the mutual fund or manager by Financial Solutions (both of which are negative factors in implementing an asset allocation structure). Based on its review, Financial Solutions will make recommendations to clients regarding the retention or discharge of a mutual fund or manager.

Financial Solutions may negotiate reduced account minimum balances and reduced fees with managers under various circumstances (for example, for clients with minimum level of assets committed to the manager for specific periods of time, etc.). There can be no assurance that clients will receive any reduced account minimum balances or fees, or that all clients, even if apparently similarly situated, will receive any reduced account minimum balances or fees available to some other clients. Also, account minimum balances and fees may significantly differ between clients. Each client's individual needs and circumstances will determine portfolio weighting, which can have an impact on fees given the mutual funds or managers utilized. Financial Solutions will endeavor to obtain equal treatment for its clients with mutual funds or managers, but cannot assure equal treatment.

Financial Solutions will regularly review the activities of mutual funds and managers selected by the client. Clients that engage managers or invest in mutual funds should first review and understand the disclosure documents of those managers or mutual funds, which contain information relevant to such retention or investment, including information on the methodology used to analyze securities, investment strategies, fees, and conflicts of interest. Similarly, clients qualified to invest in pooled investment vehicles should review the private placement memoranda or other disclosure materials relating to such vehicles before making a decision to invest.

### **A.2. Investment Methodology – 401(k) Plans**

Financial Solutions will generally recommend lifestyle funds. The lifestyle fund enables plan participants to choose the appropriate model portfolio that fits with their tolerance for risk. Lifestyle funds use the client's age as a barometer for the composition of the underlying fund portfolio assets. For example, someone in their 70's will have a lifestyle fund that is composed of securities that are heavily weighted in high-quality fixed income; younger participants will likely have a lifestyle fund whose portfolio is more weighted in equities.

### **A.3. Material Risks of Investment Instruments**

Financial Solutions typically invests in equity securities, corporate debt instruments, municipal fixed income instruments, government securities including asset-backed securities, and options on securities as detailed below:

- Equity securities
- Warrants and rights
- Mutual fund securities
- Exchange-traded funds
- Corporate debt securities, commercial paper, and certificates of deposit
- Municipal securities
- U.S. government securities
- Private placements
- Option contracts on securities
- Pooled investment vehicles

- Structured products
- Government and agency mortgage-backed securities
- Corporate debt obligations
- Mortgage-backed securities
- Collateralized obligations

#### **A.3.a. Equity Securities**

Investing in individual companies involves inherent risk. The major risks relate to the company's capitalization, quality of the company's management, quality and cost of the company's services, the company's ability to manage costs, efficiencies in the manufacturing or service delivery process, management of litigation risk, and the company's ability to create shareholder value (i.e., increase the value of the company's stock price). Foreign securities, in addition to the general risks of equity securities, have geopolitical risk, financial transparency risk, currency risk, regulatory risk and liquidity risk.

#### **A.3.b. Warrants and Rights**

Warrants are securities, typically issued with preferred stock or bonds, that give the holder the right to purchase a given number of shares of common stock at a specified price and time. The price of the warrant usually represents a premium over the applicable market value of the common stock at the time of the warrant's issuance. Warrants have no voting rights with respect to the common stock, receive no dividends and have no rights with respect to the assets of the issuer.

Investments in warrants and rights involve certain risks, including the possible lack of a liquid market for the resale of the warrants and rights, potential price fluctuations due to adverse market conditions or other factors, and failure of the price of the common stock to rise. If the warrant is not exercised within the specified time period, it becomes worthless.

#### **A.3.c. Mutual Fund Securities**

Investing in mutual funds carries inherent risk. The major risks of investing in a mutual fund include the quality and experience of the portfolio management team and its ability to create fund value by investing in securities that have positive growth, the amount of individual company diversification, the type and amount of industry diversification, and the type and amount of sector diversification within specific industries. In addition, mutual funds tend to be tax inefficient and therefore investors may pay capital gains taxes on fund investments while not having yet sold the fund.

#### **A.3.d. Exchange-Traded Funds ("ETFs")**

ETFs are investment companies whose shares are bought and sold on a securities exchange. An ETF holds a portfolio of securities designed to track a particular market segment or index. Some examples of ETFs are SPDRs<sup>®</sup>, streetTRACKS<sup>®</sup>, DIAMONDS<sup>SM</sup>, NASDAQ 100 Index Tracking Stock<sup>SM</sup> ("QQQs<sup>SM</sup>"), iShares<sup>®</sup> and VIPERS<sup>®</sup>. The funds could purchase an ETF to gain exposure to a portion of the U.S. or foreign market. The funds, as a shareholder of another

investment company, will bear their pro rata portion of the other investment company's advisory fee and other expenses, in addition to their own expenses.

Investing in ETFs involves risk. Specifically, ETFs, depending on the underlying portfolio and its size, can have wide price (bid and ask) spreads, thus diluting or negating any upward price movement of the ETF or enhancing any downward price movement. Also, ETFs require more frequent portfolio reporting by regulators and are thereby more susceptible to actions by hedge funds that could have a negative impact on the price of the ETF. Certain ETFs may employ leverage, which creates additional volatility and price risk depending on the amount of leverage utilized, the collateral and the liquidity of the supporting collateral.

Further, the use of leverage (i.e., employ the use of margin) generally results in additional interest costs to the ETF. Certain ETFs are highly leveraged and therefore have additional volatility and liquidity risk. Volatility and liquidity can severely and negatively impact the price of the ETF's underlying portfolio securities, thereby causing significant price fluctuations of the ETF.

#### **A.3.e. Corporate Debt, Commercial Paper, and Certificates of Deposit**

Fixed income securities carry additional risks than those of equity securities described above. These risks include the company's ability to retire its debt at maturity, the current interest rate environment, the coupon interest rate promised to bondholders, legal constraints, jurisdictional risk (U.S. or foreign) and currency risk. If bonds have maturities of ten years or greater, they will likely have greater price swings when interest rates move up or down. The shorter the maturity the less volatile the price swings. Foreign bonds also have liquidity and currency risk.

Commercial paper and certificates of deposit are generally considered safe instruments, although they are subject to the level of general interest rates, the credit quality of the issuing bank and the length of maturity. With respect to certificates of deposit, depending on the length of maturity there can be prepayment penalties if the client needs to convert the certificate of deposit to cash prior to maturity.

#### **A.3.f. Municipal Securities**

Municipal securities carry additional risks than those of corporate and bank-sponsored debt securities described above. These risks include the municipality's ability to raise additional tax revenue or other revenue (in the event the bonds are revenue bonds) to pay interest on its debt and to retire its debt at maturity. Municipal bonds are generally tax free at the federal level, but may be taxable in individual states other than the state in which both the investor and municipal issuer is domiciled.

#### **A.3.g. U.S. Government Securities**

U.S. government securities include securities issued by the U.S. Treasury and by U.S. government agencies and instrumentalities. U.S. government securities may be supported by the full faith and credit of the United States.

#### **A.3.h. Private Placements**

Private placements carry significant risk in that companies using the private placement market conduct securities offerings that are exempt from registration under the federal securities laws, which means that investors do not have access to public information and such investors are not provided with the same amount of information that they would receive if the securities offering was a public offering. Moreover, many companies using private placements do so to raise equity capital in the start-up phase of their business, or require additional capital to complete another phase in their growth objective. In addition, the securities issued in connection with private placements are restricted securities, which means that they are not traded on a secondary market, such as a stock exchange, and they are thus illiquid and cannot be readily converted to cash.

#### **A.3.i. Options on Securities**

A call option is a contract under which the purchaser of the call option, in return for a premium paid, has the right to buy the security (or index) underlying the option at a specified price at any time during the term of the option. The writer of the call option, who receives the premium, has the obligation upon exercise of the option to deliver the underlying security against payment of the exercise price. A put option gives its purchaser, in return for a premium, the right to sell the underlying security at a specified price during the term of the option. The writer of the put, who receives the premium, has the obligation to buy, upon exercise of the option, the underlying security (or a cash amount equal to the value of the index) at the exercise price. The amount of a premium received or paid for an option is based upon certain factors, including the market price of the underlying security, the relationship of the exercise price to the market price, the historical price volatility of the underlying security, the option period and interest rates.

#### **A.3.j. Pooled Investment Vehicles**

A pooled investment vehicle, such as a commodity pool or investment company, is generally offered only to investors who meet specified suitability, net worth and annual income criteria. Pooled investment vehicles sell securities through private placements and thus are illiquid and subject to a variety of risks that are disclosed in each pooled investment vehicle's confidential private placement memorandum or disclosure document. Investors should read these documents carefully and consult with their professional advisors prior to committing investment dollars. Because many of the securities involved in pooled investment vehicles do not have transparent trading markets from which accurate and current pricing information can be derived, or in the case of private equity investments where portfolio security companies are privately held with no publicly traded market, Financial Solutions will be unable to monitor or verify the accuracy of such performance information.

#### **A.3.k. Structured Products**

Structured products are designed to facilitate highly customized risk-return objectives. While structured products come in many different forms, they typically consist of a debt security that is structured to make interest and principal payments based upon various assets, rates or

formulas. Many structured products include an embedded derivative component. Structured products may be structured in the form of a security, in which case these products may receive benefits provided under federal securities law, or they may be cast as derivatives, in which case they are offered in the over-the-counter market and are subject to no regulation.

Investment in structured products includes significant risks, including valuation, liquidity, price, credit and market risks. One common risk associated with structured products is a relative lack of liquidity due to the highly customized nature of the investment. Moreover, the full extent of returns from the complex performance features is often not realized until maturity. As such, structured products tend to be more of a buy-and-hold investment decision rather than a means of getting in and out of a position with speed and efficiency.

Another risk with structured products is the credit quality of the issuer. Although the cash flows are derived from other sources, the products themselves are legally considered to be the issuing financial institution's liabilities. The vast majority of structured products are from high-investment-grade issuers only. Also, there is a lack of pricing transparency. There is no uniform standard for pricing, making it harder to compare the net-of-pricing attractiveness of alternative structured product offerings than it is, for instance, to compare the net expense ratios of different mutual funds or commissions among broker-dealers.

#### **A.3.I. Government and Agency Mortgage-Backed Securities**

The principal issuers or guarantors of mortgage-backed securities are the Government National Mortgage Association ("GNMA"), Fannie Mae ("FNMA") and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation ("FHLMC"). GNMA, a wholly owned U.S. government corporation within the Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD"), creates pass-through securities from pools of government-guaranteed (Farmers' Home Administration, Federal Housing Authority or Veterans Administration) mortgages. The principal and interest on GNMA pass-through securities are backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government.

FNMA, which is a U.S. government-sponsored corporation owned entirely by private stockholders that is subject to regulation by the secretary of HUD, and FHLMC, a corporate instrumentality of the U.S. government, issue pass-through securities from pools of conventional and federally insured and/or guaranteed residential mortgages. FNMA guarantees full and timely payment of all interest and principal, and FHLMC guarantees timely payment of interest and ultimate collection of principal of its pass-through securities. Mortgage-backed securities from FNMA and FHLMC are *not* backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government.

#### **A.3.m. Corporate Debt Obligations**

Corporate debt obligations include corporate bonds, debentures, notes, commercial paper and other similar corporate debt instruments. Companies use these instruments to borrow money from investors. The issuer pays the investor a fixed or variable rate of interest and must repay the amount borrowed at maturity. Commercial paper (short-term unsecured promissory notes) is issued by companies to finance their current obligations and normally has a maturity of less than nine months. Financial Solutions may also invest in corporate debt securities



registered and sold in the United States by foreign issuers (Yankee bonds) and those sold outside the U.S. by foreign or U.S. issuers (Eurobonds).

#### **A.3.n. Mortgage-Backed Securities**

Mortgage-backed securities represent interests in a pool of mortgage loans originated by lenders such as commercial banks, savings associations, and mortgage bankers and brokers. Mortgage-backed securities may be issued by governmental or government-related entities, or by non-governmental entities such as special-purpose trusts created by commercial lenders.

Pools of mortgages consist of whole mortgage loans or participations in mortgage loans. The majority of these loans are made to purchasers of between one and four family homes. The terms and characteristics of the mortgage instruments are generally uniform within a pool but may vary among pools. For example, in addition to fixed-rate, fixed-term mortgages, Financial Solutions may purchase pools of adjustable-rate mortgages, growing equity mortgages, graduated payment mortgages and other types. Mortgage poolers apply qualification standards to lending institutions, which originate mortgages for the pools as well as credit standards and underwriting criteria for individual mortgages included in the pools. In addition, many mortgages included in pools are insured through private mortgage insurance companies.

Mortgage-backed securities differ from other forms of fixed income securities, which normally provide for periodic payment of interest in fixed amounts, with principal payments at maturity or on specified call dates. Most mortgage-backed securities, however, are pass-through securities, which means that investors receive payments consisting of a pro rata share of both principal and interest (less servicing and other fees), as well as unscheduled prepayments as loans in the underlying mortgage pool are paid off by the borrowers. Additional prepayments to holders of these securities are caused by prepayments resulting from the sale or foreclosure of the underlying property or refinancing of the underlying loans. As prepayment rates of individual pools of mortgage loans vary widely, it is not possible to accurately predict the average life of a particular mortgage-backed security. Although mortgage-backed securities are issued with stated maturities of up to 40 years, unscheduled or early payments of principal and interest on the mortgages may shorten considerably the securities' effective maturities.

#### **A.3.o. Collateralized Obligations**

Collateralized mortgage obligations ("CMOs") are collateralized by mortgage-backed securities issued by GNMA, FHLMC or FNMA ("mortgage assets"). CMOs are multiple-class debt obligations. Payments of principal and interest on the mortgage assets are passed through to the holders of the CMOs as they are received, although certain classes (often referred to as "tranches") of CMOs have priority over other classes with respect to the receipt of mortgage prepayments. Each tranche is issued at a specific or floating coupon rate and has a stated maturity or final distribution date. Interest is paid or accrues in all tranches on a monthly, quarterly or semi-annual basis. Payments of principal and interest on mortgage assets are commonly applied to the tranches in the order of their respective maturities or final



distribution dates, so that generally no payment of principal will be made on any tranche until all other tranches with earlier stated maturity or distribution dates have been paid in full.

Collateralized debt obligations ("CDOs") include collateralized bond obligations ("CBOs"), collateralized loan obligations ("CLOs") and other similarly structured securities. CBOs and CLOs are types of asset-backed securities. A CBO is a trust that is backed by a diversified pool of high-risk, below-investment-grade fixed income securities. A CLO is a trust typically collateralized by a pool of loans, which may include, among others, domestic and foreign senior secured loans, senior unsecured loans and subordinate corporate loans, including loans that may be rated below investment grade or equivalent unrated loans.

## **B. Investment Strategy and Method of Analysis Material Risks**

### **B.1. Margin Leverage**

Although Financial Solutions, as a general business practice, does not utilize leverage, there may be instances in which exchange-traded funds, other separate account managers and, in very limited circumstances, Financial Solutions will utilize leverage. In this regard please review the following:

The use of leverage enhances the overall risk of investment gain and loss to the client's investment portfolio. For example, investors are able to control \$2 of a security for \$1. So if the price of a security rises by \$1, the investor earns a 100% return on their investment. Conversely, if the security declines by \$.50, then the investor loses 50% of their investment. The use of leverage entails borrowing, which results in additional interest costs to the investor.

Broker-dealers that carry customer accounts have a minimum equity requirement when clients utilize leverage. The minimum equity requirement is stated as a percentage of the value of the underlying collateral security with an absolute minimum dollar requirement. For example, if the price of a security declines in value to the point where the excess equity used to satisfy the minimum requirement dissipates, the broker-dealer will require the client to deposit additional collateral to the account in the form of cash or marketable securities. A deposit of securities to the account will require a larger deposit, as the security being deposited is included in the computation of the minimum equity requirement. In addition, when leverage is utilized and the client needs to satisfy a margin deposit or withdraw cash, the client must sell a disproportionate amount of collateral securities to release enough cash to satisfy the withdrawal amount based upon similar reasoning as cited above.

Regulations concerning the use of leverage are established by the Federal Reserve Board and vary if the client's account is held at a broker-dealer versus a bank custodian. Broker-dealers and bank custodians may apply more stringent rules as they deem necessary.

### **B.2. Short-Term Trading**

Although Financial Solutions, as a general business practice, does not utilize short-term trading, there may be instances in which short-term trading may be necessary or an appropriate strategy. In this regard, please read the following:

There is an inherent risk for clients who trade frequently in that high-frequency trading creates substantial transaction costs that in the aggregate could negatively impact account performance.

### **B.3. Option Strategies**

Various option strategies give the holder the right to acquire or sell underlying securities at the contract strike price up until expiration of the option. Each contract is worth 100 shares of the underlying security. Options entail greater risk but allow an investor to have market exposure to a particular security or group of securities without the capital commitment required to purchase the underlying security or groups of securities. In addition, options allow investors to hedge security positions held in the portfolio. For detailed information on the use of options and option strategies, please contact the Options Clearing Corporation for the current Options Risk Disclosure Statement.

Financial Solutions as part of its investment strategy may employ the following option strategies:

- Covered call writing
- Long call options purchases
- Long put options purchases
- Option spreading
- Short call option strategy
- Short put option strategy
- Equity collars
- Long straddles

#### **B.3.a. Covered Call Writing**

Covered call writing is the sale of in-, at-, or out-of-the money call option against a long security position held in the client portfolio. This type of transaction is used to generate income. It also serves to create downside protection in the event the security position declines in value. Income is received from the proceeds of the option sale. Such income may be reduced to the extent it is necessary to buy back the option position prior to its expiration. This strategy may involve a degree of trading velocity, transaction costs and significant losses if the underlying security has volatile price movement. Covered call strategies are generally suited for companies with little price volatility.

#### **B.3.b. Long Call Option Purchases**

Long call option purchases allow the option holder to be exposed to the general market characteristics of a security without the outlay of capital necessary to own the security. Options are wasting assets and expire (usually within nine months of issuance), and as a result can expose the investor to significant loss.

### **B.3.c. Long Put Option Purchases**

Long put option purchases allow the option holder to sell or “put” the underlying security at the contract strike price at a future date. If the price of the underlying security declines in value, the value of the long put option increases. In this way long puts are often used to hedge a long stock position. Options are wasting assets and expire (usually within nine months of issuance), and as a result can expose the investor to significant loss.

### **B.3.d. Option Spreading**

Option spreading usually involves the purchase of a call option and the sale of a call option at a higher contract strike price, both having the same expiration month. The purpose of this type of transaction is to allow the holder to be exposed to the general market characteristics of a security without the outlay of capital to own the security, and to offset the cost by selling the call option with a higher contract strike price. In this type of transaction, the spread holder “locks in” a maximum profit, defined as the difference in contract prices reduced by the net cost of implementing the spread. There are many variations of option spreading strategies; clients may contact the Options Clearing Corporation for a current Options Risk Disclosure Statement that discusses each of these strategies.

### **B.3.e. Short Call Option Strategy**

Short call option strategy is highly speculative and has theoretical potential for unlimited loss. The seller (writer) of the call option receives proceeds (premium) from the sale of the option. The expectation is that the value of the underlying security will remain below the contract strike price and the option will expire worthless, allowing the option writer to keep the entire amount of the sale proceeds (premium). Should the value of the underlying security increase above the contract strike price, then the option writer can either purchase the call option at a loss, or through a process of exercise and assignment be forced to sell the stock at the contract strike price. If this happens, the option writer will have to go in the open market and buy an equivalent amount of stock to cover the sale at prices that can be materially higher than the amount received from the sale.

### **B.3.f. Short Put Option Strategy**

Short put option strategy is highly speculative and has theoretical potential for significant loss. The seller (writer) of the put option receives proceeds (premium) from the sale of the option. The expectation is that the value of the underlying security will remain above the contract strike price and the option will expire worthless, allowing the option writer to keep the entire amount of the sale proceeds (premium). Should the value of the underlying security decrease below the contract strike price, the option writer can either purchase the put option at a loss, or through a process of exercise and assignment be forced to buy the stock at the contract strike price. If this happens, the option writer will be purchasing the underlying security at a price potentially well above its then-current market value, exposing the investor to potential loss.

### **B.3.g. Equity Collar**

A collar combines both a cap and a floor. A cap gives the purchaser of the cap the right (for a premium payment), but not the obligation, to receive the difference in the cost on some amount when a specified index rises above the specified “cap rate.” A floor is the opposite of a cap—it gives the purchaser of the floor the right (for a premium payment), but not the obligation, to receive the difference in interest payable on an amount when a specified index falls below the specified “floor rate.” A collar involving stock is called an “equity collar.” In a collar transaction, the buyer of the collar purchases a cap while selling a floor indexed to the same rate or asset. A zero-cost collar results when the premium earned by selling a floor exactly offsets the cap premium.

### **B.3.h. Long Straddle**

A long straddle is the purchase of a long call and a long put with the same underlying security, expiration date and strike price. This is a speculative trade that may be profitable when volatility is high and will result in a loss when prices of the underlying security are relatively stable.

## **C. Concentration Risks**

There is an inherent risk for clients whose investment portfolios lack diversification—that is, they have their investment portfolios heavily weighted in one security, one industry or industry sector, one geographic location, one investment manager, one type of investment instrument (equities versus fixed income). Clients who have diversified portfolios, as a general rule, incur less volatility and therefore less fluctuation in portfolio value than those who have concentrated holdings. Concentrated holdings may offer the potential for higher gain, but also offer the potential for significant loss.

## **Item 9: Disciplinary Information**

### **A. Criminal or Civil Actions**

Financial Solutions has nothing to disclose for this item.

### **B. Administrative Enforcement Proceedings**

Financial Solutions has nothing to disclose for this item.

### **C. Self-Regulatory Organization Enforcement Proceedings**

Financial Solutions has nothing to disclose for this item.

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

### **A. Broker-Dealer or Representative Registration**

Members and registered advisory personnel of Financial Solutions are registered representatives of Royal Alliance Associates, Inc. ("Royal Alliance"). Royal Alliance is a diversified financial services company registered with FINRA as a broker-dealer engaged in the offer and sale of securities products. Financial Solutions professionals licensed with Royal Alliance as registered representatives spend less than 25% of their time engaged in commission product sales through Royal Alliance.

As a result of Financial Solutions members and registered professionals' affiliation with Royal Alliance, such professionals, in their capacity as registered representatives of Royal Alliance, are subject to the general oversight of Royal Alliance and the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority Inc. ("FINRA"). As such, clients of Financial Solutions should understand that their personal and account information is available to FINRA and Royal Alliance for the fulfillment of their regulatory oversight obligations and duties.

Further, a potential conflict of interest may be deemed to exist as a result of Financial Solutions personnel being licensed with Royal Alliance; in that regard please note the following:

- The recommendation of securities transactions for commission creates a conflict of interest in that Financial Solutions is economically incented to effect securities transactions for clients;
- The client is under no obligation to act upon Financial Solutions' recommendation; and
- If the client elects to act on any of the recommendations, the client is under no obligation to effect the transaction through Royal Alliance.

Please note that the registration of Financial Solutions personnel with Royal Alliance is to facilitate the sale of securities products. All Financial Solutions managed portfolios are established at Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC. Please see Item 12 of this Brochure for additional details regarding Financial Solutions' relationship with Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC.

### **B. Futures or Commodity Registration**

Neither Financial Solutions nor its affiliates are registered as a commodity firm, futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator, or commodity trading adviser and do not have an application to register pending.

## **C. Material Relationships Maintained by this Advisory Business and Conflicts of Interest**

### **C.1. Financial Solutions Group, LLC / Financial Solutions, LLC of Wisconsin**

Financial Solutions Group, LLC, an entity solely owned by Timothy McGrath, owns a 50% interest in Financial Solutions, LLC, a Wisconsin state-registered investment adviser. Jeffrey Stuckert owns a 50% interest directly in Financial Solutions, LLC of Wisconsin.

Timothy McGrath owns a 60% interest in Financial Solutions of Illinois and the remaining 40% interest is owned by Horace Seely-Brown. As such, Financial Solutions Group, LLC, Financial Solutions, LLC of Wisconsin and Financial Solutions of Illinois are affiliate entities. Both advisory firms will continue to be separately registered and operated. Depending on the needs of the client, either Financial Solutions, LLC of Wisconsin or Financial Solutions of Illinois may recommend the other adviser for such services. This creates a potential conflict of interest in that the recommendation of the other firm may be viewed as being in the best interests of Financial Solutions, LLC of Wisconsin or Financial Solutions of Illinois as opposed to the best interest of its clients.

### **C.2. Royal Alliance Associates, Inc.**

Certain representatives of Financial Solutions are associated with Royal Alliance Associates, Inc. ("Royal Alliance") as Registered Representatives. Royal Alliance a diversified financial services company registered with FINRA as a broker-dealer engaged in the offer and sale of securities products.

Royal Alliance is financing the acquisition of Financial Solutions by Financial Solutions Group, LLC. As a result, there is a potential conflict of interest in that there is an economic incentive for Financial Solutions to recommend Royal Alliance to open and maintain advisory accounts and effect advisory clients' securities transactions. In addition, there may be an incentive to recommend products or services offered through Royal Alliance that yield higher asset-based fee or commission income. Although Financial Solutions strives to put its clients' interests first, the recommendation of Royal Alliance may be viewed as being in the best interests of Financial Solutions as opposed to the best interest of its clients.

### **C.3. JCW Tax & Accounting, LLC**

Financial Solutions may recommend the provision of tax preparation services for individuals through JCW Tax & Accounting, which is not affiliated with Financial Solutions.

### **C.4. MJA, Inc.**

Certain managers, members, and registered employees of Financial Solutions are licensed insurance agents. With respect to the provision of financial planning services, Financial Solutions professionals refer health insurance prospects to Liberty Insurance and Creative Insurance, for which they may receive a portion of the health insurance commission paid to MJA, Inc., an affiliate of Financial Solutions.

Clients are advised that there is a potential conflict of interest in that there is an economic incentive to recommend the purchase of insurance products offered through Liberty Insurance and Creative Insurance and other insurance carriers and receive a commission for doing so. The client may utilize any carrier of their choice and is under no obligation to purchase insurance products through MJA or any other carrier recommended by Financial Solutions. Clients are also advised that Financial Solutions strives to put its clients' interests first and foremost.

#### **D. Recommendation or Selection of Other Investment Advisors and Conflicts of Interest**

Financial Solutions may refer clients to certain investment management firms in return for an ongoing portion of the advisory fee received by such investment manager. See Item 14 for additional disclosure.



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

### **A. Code of Ethics Description**

In accordance with the Advisers Act, Financial Solutions has adopted policies and procedures designed to detect and prevent insider trading. In addition, Financial Solutions has adopted a Code of Ethics (the "Code"). Among other things, the Code includes written procedures governing the conduct of the firm's advisory and access persons. The Code also imposes certain reporting obligations on persons subject to the Code. The Code and applicable securities transactions are monitored by the Chief Compliance Officer of the firm. Financial Solutions will send clients a copy of its Code of Ethics upon written request.

Financial Solutions has policies and procedures in place to ensure that the interests of its clients are given preference over those of the firm, its affiliates, and its employees. For example, there are policies in place to prevent the misappropriation of material nonpublic information, and such other policies and procedures reasonably designed to comply with federal and state securities laws.

### **B. Investment Recommendations Involving a Material Financial Interest and Conflicts of Interest**

Financial Solutions does not engage in principal trading (i.e., the practice of selling stock to advisory clients from a firm's inventory or buying stocks from advisory clients into a firm's inventory). In addition, Financial Solutions does not recommend any securities to advisory clients in which it has some proprietary or ownership interest.

### **C. Advisory Firm Purchase of Same Securities Recommended to Clients and Conflicts of Interest**

Financial Solutions, its affiliates, employees and their families, trusts, estates, charitable organizations, and retirement plans established by it may purchase the same securities as are purchased for clients in accordance with its Code of Ethics policies and procedures. The personal securities transactions by advisory representatives and employees may raise potential conflicts of interest when they trade in a security that is:

- owned by the client, or
- considered for purchase or sale for the client.

Such conflict generally refers to the practice of front-running (trading ahead of the client), which Financial Solutions specifically prohibits. Financial Solutions has adopted policies and procedures that are intended to address these conflicts of interest. These policies and procedures:

- require our advisory representatives and employees to act in the client's best interest,
- prohibit front-running, and

- provide for the review of transactions to discover and correct any trades that result in an advisory representative or employee benefitting at the expense of a client.

Advisory representatives and employees must follow Financial Solutions' procedures when purchasing or selling the same securities purchased or sold for the client.

#### **D. Client Securities Recommendations or Trades and Concurrent Advisory Firm Securities Transactions and Conflicts of Interest**

Financial Solutions, its affiliates, employees and their families, trusts, estates, charitable organizations, and retirement plans established by it may effect securities transactions for their own accounts that differ from those recommended or effected for other of the firm's clients. Financial Solutions will make a reasonable attempt to trade securities in client accounts at or prior to trading the securities in its affiliate, corporate, employee or employee-related accounts. Trades executed the same day will likely be subject to an average pricing calculation. It is the policy of Financial Solutions to place the client's interests above those of the firm and its employees.

## Item 12: Brokerage Practices

### A. Factors Used to Select Broker-Dealers for Client Transactions

#### A.1. Custodian Recommendations

Financial Solutions may recommend that clients establish brokerage accounts with Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC, a FINRA-registered broker-dealer, member SIPC, to maintain custody of clients' assets and to effect trades for their accounts. Although Financial Solutions may recommend that clients establish brokerage accounts with Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC, Financial Solutions is independently owned and operated and not affiliated with Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC. Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC does not charge separately for custody services, but is compensated by account holders through commissions and other transaction-related or asset-based fees for securities trades that are executed through or that settle into Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC accounts.

Financial Solutions considers the financial strength, reputation, operational efficiency, cost, execution capability, level of customer service, and related factors in recommending broker-dealers or custodians to advisory clients.

In certain instances and subject to approval by the firm, Financial Solutions will recommend to clients certain broker-dealers and/or custodians based on the needs of the individual client, taking into consideration the nature of the services required, the experience of the broker-dealer or custodian, the cost and quality of the services, and the reputation of the broker-dealer or custodian. The final determination to engage a broker-dealer or custodian recommended by Financial Solutions will be made by and in the sole discretion of the client. The client recognizes that broker-dealers and/or custodians have different cost and fee structures and trade execution capabilities. As a result, there may be disparities with respect to the cost of services and/or the transaction prices for securities transactions executed on behalf of the client. Clients are responsible for assessing the commissions and other costs charged by broker-dealers and/or custodians.

##### A.1.a. Soft Dollar Arrangements

Financial Solutions does not utilize soft dollar arrangements. Financial Solutions does not direct brokerage transactions to executing brokers for research and brokerage services.

##### A.1.b. Institutional Trading and Custody Services

Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC provides Financial Solutions with access to its institutional trading and custody services, which are typically not available to Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC's retail investors. These services are generally available to independent investment advisers on an unsolicited basis, at no charge to them so long as a minimum dollar commitment of the advisor's clients' assets are maintained in accounts at Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC. These services are not contingent upon Financial Solutions committing to Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC any specific amount of business (assets in custody or trading commissions). Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC's brokerage services include the execution of

securities transactions, custody, research, and access to mutual funds and other investments that are otherwise generally available only to institutional investors or that would require a significantly higher minimum initial investment.

#### **A.1.c. Other Products and Services**

Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC also makes available to Financial Solutions other products and services that benefit Financial Solutions but may not directly benefit its clients' accounts. Many of these products and services may be used to service all or some substantial number of Financial Solutions' accounts, including accounts not maintained at Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC. Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC also makes available to Financial Solutions its managing and administering software and other technology that

- provide access to client account data (such as trade confirmations and account statements)
- facilitate trade execution and allocate aggregated trade orders for multiple client accounts
- provide research, pricing, and other market data
- facilitate payment of Financial Solutions' fees from its clients' accounts
- assist with back-office functions, recordkeeping, and client reporting

Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC also offers other services intended to help Financial Solutions manage and further develop its business enterprise. These services may include

- compliance, legal, and business consulting
- publications and conferences on practice management and business succession
- access to employee benefits providers, human capital consultants, and insurance providers

Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC may also provide other benefits such as educational events or occasional business entertainment of Financial Solutions personnel. In evaluating whether to recommend that clients custody their assets at Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC, Financial Solutions may take into account the availability of some of the foregoing products and services and other arrangements as part of the total mix of factors it considers, and not solely the nature, cost, or quality of custody and brokerage services provided by Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC, which may create a potential conflict of interest.

#### **A.1.d. Independent Third Parties**

Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC may make available, arrange, and/or pay third-party vendors for the types of services rendered to Financial Solutions. Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC may discount or waive fees it would otherwise charge for some of these services or all or a part of the fees of a third party providing these services to Financial Solutions.

#### **A.1.e. Additional Compensation Received from Custodians**

Financial Solutions may participate in institutional customer programs sponsored by broker-dealers or custodians. Financial Solutions may recommend these broker-dealers or custodians

to clients for custody and brokerage services. There is no direct link between Financial Solutions' participation in such programs and the investment advice it gives to its clients, although Financial Solutions receives economic benefits through its participation in the programs that are typically not available to retail investors. These benefits may 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 Financial Solutions 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
- Discounts on compliance, marketing, research, technology, and practice management products or services provided to Financial Solutions by third-party vendors

The custodian may also pay for business consulting and professional services received by Financial Solutions' related persons, and may pay or reimburse expenses (including travel, lodging, meals and entertainment expenses for Financial Solutions' personnel to attend conferences). Some of the products and services made available by such custodian through its institutional customer programs may benefit Financial Solutions but may not benefit its client accounts. These products or services may assist Financial Solutions in managing and administering client accounts, including accounts not maintained at the custodian as applicable. Other services made available through the programs are intended to help Financial Solutions manage and further develop its business enterprise. The benefits received by Financial Solutions or its personnel through participation in these programs do not depend on the amount of brokerage transactions directed to the broker-dealer.

Financial Solutions also participates in similar institutional advisor programs offered by other independent broker-dealers or trust companies, and its continued participation may require Financial Solutions to maintain a predetermined level of assets at such firms. In connection with its participation in such programs, Financial Solutions will typically receive benefits similar to those listed above, including research, payments for business consulting and professional services received by Financial Solutions' related persons, and reimbursement of expenses (including travel, lodging, meals and entertainment expenses for Financial Solutions' personnel to attend conferences sponsored by the broker-dealer or trust company).

As part of its fiduciary duties to clients, Financial Solutions endeavors at all times to put the interests of its clients first. Clients should be aware, however, that the receipt of economic benefits by Financial Solutions or its related persons in and of itself creates a potential conflict

of interest and may indirectly influence Financial Solutions' recommendation of broker-dealers such as Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC for custody and brokerage services.

## **A.2. Brokerage for Client Referrals**

Financial Solutions does not engage in the practice of directing brokerage commissions in exchange for the referral of advisory clients.

## **A.3. Directed Brokerage**

### **A.3.a. Financial Solutions Recommendations**

Financial Solutions typically recommends Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC as custodian for clients' funds and securities and to execute securities transactions on its clients' behalf.

### **A.3.b Client-Directed Brokerage**

Occasionally, clients may direct Financial Solutions to use a particular broker-dealer to execute portfolio transactions for their accounts or request that certain types of securities not be purchased for their accounts. Clients who designate the use of a particular broker-dealer should be aware that they will lose any possible advantage Financial Solutions derives from aggregating transactions. Such client trades are typically effected after the trades of clients who have not directed the use of a particular broker-dealer. Financial Solutions loses the ability to aggregate trades with other Financial Solutions advisory clients, potentially subjecting the client to inferior trade execution prices as well as higher commissions.

## **B. Aggregating Securities Transactions for Client Accounts**

### **B.1. Best Execution**

Financial Solutions, pursuant to the terms of its investment advisory agreement with clients, may have discretionary authority to determine which securities are to be bought and sold, and the price of such securities. Financial Solutions effects securities transactions directly with the clients' custodian unless as otherwise directed by the client. Financial Solutions recognizes that the analysis of execution quality involves a number of factors, both qualitative and quantitative. Financial Solutions will follow a process in an attempt to ensure that it is seeking to obtain the most favorable execution under the prevailing circumstances when placing client orders. These factors include but are not limited to the following:

- The financial strength, reputation and stability of the broker
- The efficiency with which the transaction is effected
- The ability to effect prompt and reliable executions at favorable prices (including the applicable dealer spread or commission, if any)
- The availability of the broker to stand ready to effect transactions of varying degrees of difficulty in the future
- The efficiency of error resolution, clearance and settlement
- Block trading and positioning capabilities

- Performance measurement
- Online access to computerized data regarding customer accounts
- Availability, comprehensiveness, and frequency of brokerage and research services
- Commission rates
- The economic benefit to the client
- Related matters involved in the receipt of brokerage services

Consistent with its fiduciary responsibilities, Financial Solutions seeks to ensure that clients receive best execution with respect to clients' transactions by blocking client trades to reduce commissions and transaction costs. To the best of Financial Solutions' knowledge, these custodians provide high-quality execution, and Financial Solutions' clients do not pay higher transaction costs in return for such execution.

Commission rates and securities transaction fees charged to effect such transactions are established by the client's independent custodian and/or broker-dealer. Based upon its own knowledge of the securities industry, Financial Solutions believes that such commission rates are competitive within the securities industry. Lower commissions or better execution may be able to be achieved elsewhere.

## **B.2. Security Allocation**

Since Financial Solutions may be managing accounts with similar investment objectives, Financial Solutions may aggregate orders for securities for such accounts. In such event, allocation of the securities so purchased or sold, as well as expenses incurred in the transaction, is made by Financial Solutions in the manner it considers to be the most equitable and consistent with its fiduciary obligations to such accounts.

Financial Solutions' allocation procedures seek to allocate investment opportunities among clients in the fairest possible way, taking into account the clients' best interests. Financial Solutions will follow procedures to ensure that allocations do not involve a practice of favoring or discriminating against any client or group of clients. Account performance is never a factor in trade allocations.

Financial Solutions' advice to certain clients and entities and the action of Financial Solutions for those and other clients are frequently premised not only on the merits of a particular investment, but also on the suitability of that investment for the particular client in light of his or her applicable investment objective, guidelines and circumstances. Thus, any action of Financial Solutions with respect to a particular investment may, for a particular client, differ, or be opposed to the recommendation, advice, or actions of Financial Solutions to or on behalf of other clients.

## **B.3. Order Aggregation**

Orders for the same security entered on behalf of more than one client will generally be aggregated (i.e., blocked or bunched) subject to the aggregation being in the best interests of all participating clients. Subsequent orders for the same security entered during the same trading day may be aggregated with any previously unfilled orders. Subsequent orders may also

be aggregated with filled orders if the market price for the security has not materially changed and the aggregation does not cause any unintended duration exposure. All clients participating in each aggregated order will receive the average price and, subject to minimum ticket charges and possible step outs, pay a pro rata portion of commissions.

To minimize performance dispersion, "strategy" trades should be aggregated and average priced. However, when a trade is to be executed for an individual account and the trade is not in the best interests of other accounts, then the trade will only be performed for that account. This is true even if Financial Solutions believes that a larger size block trade would lead to best overall price for the security being transacted.

#### **B.4. Allocation of Trades**

All allocations will be made prior to the close of business on the trade date. In the event an order is "partially filled," the allocation will be made in the best interests of all the clients in the order, taking into account all relevant factors including, but not limited to, the size of each client's allocation, clients' liquidity needs, and previous allocations. In most cases, accounts will get a pro forma allocation based on the initial allocation. This policy also applies if an order is "over-filled."

Financial Solutions acts in accordance with its duty to seek best price and execution and will not continue any arrangements if it determines that such arrangements are no longer in the best interest of its clients.



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

### **A. Schedule for Periodic Review of Client Accounts or Financial Plans and Advisory Persons Involved**

Financial Solutions, at its discretion, may prepare a customized written investment policy statement ("IPS") for a client. Each client account is reviewed periodically by the managing member or his designee as specified in the client's IPS. Reviews include an inspection of portfolio holdings, change in account values, and actual allocation of the account as compared to the recommended allocation. Reviews may be conducted by any of Financial Solutions' financial advisors.

### **B. Review of Client Accounts on Non-Periodic Basis**

Financial Solutions may perform ad hoc reviews on an as-needed basis if there have been material changes in the client's investment objectives or risk tolerance, or a material change in how Financial Solutions formulates investment advice.

### **C. Content of Client-Provided Reports and Frequency**

Financial Solutions typically provides written reports to non-ERISA clients on at least an annual basis. These reports include

- changes in market values
- current and historical time-weighted performance statistics
- comparison to an appropriate benchmark index

Financial Solutions will provide reports showing the investment performance of a client's account and a comparison of such account performance against relevant benchmarks. The client's independent custodian also provides regular account statements directly to the client. The custodian's statement is the official record of the client's securities account and supersedes any statements or reports created on behalf of the client by Financial Solutions.

For ERISA clients, Financial Solutions will not provide performance reports.

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

### **A. Economic Benefits Provided to the Advisory Firm from External Sources and Conflicts of Interest**

In addition to the information described in Items 10 and 12 of this Brochure, Financial Solutions receives economic benefits from external sources. Financial Solutions refers clients to certain investment management firms in return for an ongoing portion of the advisory fee received by such investment manager. All such arrangements are in compliance with Investment Advisers Act rule 206(4)-3. Generally, these requirements require the solicitor, Financial Solutions, to have a written agreement with the investment management firm. Financial Solutions must provide the client with a disclosure document describing the fees it receives from the investment management firm, whether those fees represent an increase in fees that the investment management firm would otherwise charge the client, and whether an affiliation exists between Financial Solutions and the investment management firm.

### **B. Advisory Firm Payments for Client Referrals**

Financial Solutions does not make payment for client referrals.

## Item 15: Custody

Clients will receive at least quarterly account statements directly from their custodian containing a description of all activity, cash balances, and portfolio holdings in their accounts. Clients are urged to compare billing statements provided by Financial Solutions to the custodian statement for accuracy. Any discrepancies should be brought to the firm's attention. The custodian's statement is the official record of the account.

## **Item 16: Investment Discretion**

Clients may grant a limited power of attorney to Financial Solutions with respect to trading activity in their accounts by signing the appropriate custodian limited power of attorney form. In those cases, Financial Solutions will exercise full discretion as to the nature and type of securities to be purchased and sold, and the amount of securities for such transactions. Investment limitations may be designated by the client as outlined in the investment advisory agreement.

## Item 17: Voting Client Securities

Financial Solutions does not take discretion with respect to voting proxies on behalf of its clients. Financial Solutions will endeavor to make recommendations to clients on voting proxies regarding shareholder vote, consent, election or similar actions solicited by, or with respect to, issuers of securities beneficially held as part of Financial Solutions supervised and/or managed assets. In no event will Financial Solutions take discretion with respect to voting proxies on behalf of its clients.

Except as required by applicable law, Financial Solutions will not be obligated to render advice or take any action on behalf of clients with respect to assets presently or formerly held in their accounts that become the subject of any legal proceedings, including bankruptcies.

From time to time, securities held in the accounts of clients will be the subject of class action lawsuits. Financial Solutions has no obligation to determine if securities held by the client are subject to a pending or resolved class action lawsuit. Financial Solutions also has no duty to evaluate a client's eligibility or to submit a claim to participate in the proceeds of a securities class action settlement or verdict. Furthermore, Financial Solutions has no obligation or responsibility to initiate litigation to recover damages on behalf of clients who may have been injured as a result of actions, misconduct, or negligence by corporate management of issuers whose securities are held by clients.

Where Financial Solutions receives written or electronic notice of a class action lawsuit, settlement, or verdict affecting securities owned by a client, it will forward all notices, proof of claim forms, and other materials to the client. Electronic mail is acceptable where appropriate and where the client has authorized contact in this manner.

## **Item 18: Financial Information**

### **A. Balance Sheet**

Financial Solutions does not require the prepayment of fees of \$1200 or more, six months or more in advance, and as such is not required to file a balance sheet.

### **B. Financial Conditions Reasonably Likely to Impair Advisory Firm's Ability to Meet Commitments to Clients**

Financial Solutions does not have any financial issues that would impair its ability to provide services to clients.

### **C. Bankruptcy Petitions During the Past Ten Years**

There are no bankruptcy petitions to report.