

**Ironwood Investment Counsel, LLC**  
**SEC File Number: 801 – 60073**

Part 2A of Form ADV  
Brochure

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**This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Ironwood Investment Counsel, LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at (602) 493-4042 or [palston@ironwoodic.com](mailto:palston@ironwoodic.com). The information in this brochure has not been approved or verified by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or by any state securities authority.**

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

**References herein to Ironwood Investment Counsel, LLC as a “registered investment adviser” or any reference to being “registered” does not imply a certain level of skill or training.**

## **Item 2           Material Changes**

**There have been no material changes made Ironwood Investment Counsel, LLC's ("Registrant") Part 2A Brochure since its prior Annual Amendment filing on February 22, 2017. Registrant below has made disclosure additions and enhancements, including at Items 4, 5, and 7 regarding financial planning limitations, advisory fees, mutual funds, exchange traded funds, private investment funds, retirement rollovers, and cross transactions. Item 8 has been enhanced to include information on structured notes. Item 15 has been amended with respect to custody. ANY QUESTIONS: Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address any questions regarding this Part 2A, including the disclosure additions and enhancements below.**

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#### Item 4            Advisory Business

- A. The Registrant is a limited liability company formed on February 1, 2001 in the State of Arizona. The Registrant became registered as an Investment Adviser Firm in March 2001. The Registrant is owned by Paul W. Alston III, Jeffrey E. Shiffra, Bruce C. Williams and Matthew J. Carter. Paul W. Alston III and Jeffrey E. Shiffra are the Registrant's Managing Members.
- B. As discussed below, the Registrant offers to its clients (individuals, business entities, trusts, estates, charitable organizations, and pension and profit sharing plans, etc.) investment advisory services. The Registrant **does not** hold itself out as providing financial planning, estate planning, insurance planning and related consulting services.

#### INVESTMENT ADVISORY SERVICES

The client can determine to engage the Registrant to provide discretionary and/or non-discretionary investment advisory services on a *fee-only* basis. The Registrant's annual investment advisory fee is based upon a percentage (%) of the market value of the assets placed under the Registrant's management generally between negotiable and 1.00%.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

**Limitations of Financial Planning and Non-Investment Consulting/Implementation Services.** Although the Registrant does not hold itself out as providing financial planning services, to the extent requested by the client, the Registrant may provide limited consulting services regarding non-investment related matters, such as estate planning, tax planning, insurance, etc. Registrant will generally provide such consulting services inclusive of its advisory fee set forth at Item 5 below. **Please Note:** Registrant **does not** serve as an attorney, accountant or insurance agent, and no portion of our services should be construed as legal, accounting or insurance services. Accordingly, Registrant **does not** prepare estate planning documents or tax returns, nor does it sell insurance products. To the extent requested by a client, we may recommend the services of other professionals for certain non-investment implementation purposes (i.e. attorneys, accountants, insurance, etc.), including certain Registrant's representatives in their separate licenses capacities as attorneys-*see* disclosure at Item 10 below. The client is under no obligation to engage the services of any such recommended professional. The client retains absolute discretion over all such implementation decisions and is free to accept or reject any recommendation from Registrant and/or its representatives. **Please Also Note:** If the client engages any recommended unaffiliated professional, and a dispute arises thereafter relative to such engagement, the client agrees to seek recourse exclusively from and against the engaged professional.

**Independent Managers.** The Registrant may allocate (and/or recommend that the client allocate) a portion of a client's investment assets among unaffiliated independent investment managers in accordance with the client's designated investment objective(s). In such situations, the *Independent Manager[s]* shall have day-to-day responsibility for the active discretionary management of the allocated assets. The Registrant shall continue to render investment supervisory services to the client relative to the ongoing monitoring and review of account performance, asset allocation and client investment objectives. Factors which the Registrant shall consider in recommending *Independent Manager[s]* include the

client's designated investment objective(s), management style, performance, reputation, financial strength, reporting, pricing, and research. The fee charged by the *Independent Manager[s]* is in addition to the Registrant's advisory fee.

**Private Investment Funds.** The Registrant may provide investment advice regarding unaffiliated private investment funds. Registrant's role relative to the private investment funds shall be limited to its initial and ongoing due diligence and investment monitoring services. If a client determines to become a private fund investor, the amount of assets invested in the fund(s) shall be included as part of "assets under management" for purposes of Registrant calculating its investment advisory fee. Registrant's clients are under absolutely no obligation to consider or make an investment in a private investment fund(s).

**Please Note:** Private investment funds generally involve various risk factors, including, but not limited to, potential for complete loss of principal, liquidity constraints and lack of transparency, a complete discussion of which is set forth in each fund's offering documents, which will be provided to each client for review and consideration. Unlike liquid investments that a client may maintain, private investment funds do not provide daily liquidity or pricing. Each prospective client investor will be required to complete a Subscription Agreement, pursuant to which the client shall establish that he/she is qualified for investment in the fund, and acknowledges and accepts the various risk factors that are associated with such an investment.

**Please Also Note: Valuation.** In the event that Registrant references private investment funds owned by the client on any supplemental account reports prepared by Registrant, the value(s) for all private investment funds owned by the client shall reflect the most recent valuation provided by the fund sponsor. However, if subsequent to purchase, the fund has not provided an updated valuation, the valuation shall reflect the initial purchase price. If subsequent to purchase, the fund provides an updated valuation, then the statement will reflect that updated value. The updated value will continue to be reflected on the report until the fund provides a further updated value. **Please Also Note:** As result of the valuation process, if the valuation reflects initial purchase price or an updated value subsequent to purchase price, the current value(s) of an investor's fund holding could be significantly more or less than the value reflected on the report. The client's advisory fee shall be based upon the value reflected on the report.

**Please Note-Use of Mutual Funds/ETFs:** Most mutual funds and exchange-traded funds are available directly to the public. Thus, a prospective client can obtain many of the funds that maybe utilized by Registrant independent of engaging Registrant as an investment advisor. However, if a prospective client determines to do so, he/she will not receive Registrant's initial and ongoing investment advisory services. In addition to Registrant's investment management fee described above, transaction and/or custodial fees discussed below at Item 5, clients will also incur, relative to all mutual fund and exchange traded fund purchases, charges imposed at the fund level (e.g. management fees and other fund expenses). **Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above.**

**Please Note: Retirement Rollovers-Potential for Conflict of Interest:** A client or prospective client leaving an employer typically has four options regarding an existing retirement plan (and may engage in a combination of these options): (i) leave the money in the former employer's plan, if permitted, (ii) roll over the assets to the new employer's

plan, if one is available and rollovers are permitted, (iii) roll over to an Individual Retirement Account (“IRA”), or (iv) cash out the account value (which could, depending upon the client’s age, result in adverse tax consequences). If Registrant recommends that a client roll over their retirement plan assets into an account to be managed by Registrant, such a recommendation creates a conflict of interest if Registrant will earn new (or increase its current) compensation as a result of the rollover. When acting in such capacity, Registrant serves as a fiduciary under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) or the Internal Revenue Code, or both. **No client is under any obligation to roll over retirement plan assets to an account managed by Registrant. The Registrant’s Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the potential for conflict of interest presented by such rollover recommendation.**

**ERISA / IRC Fiduciary Acknowledgment.** If the client is: (i) a retirement plan (“Plan”) organized under ERISA; (ii) a participant or beneficiary of a Plan subject to Title I of ERISA or described in section 4975(e)(1)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code, with authority to direct the investment of assets in his or her Plan account or to take a distribution; (iii) the beneficial owner of an IRA acting on behalf of the IRA; or (iv) a Retail Fiduciary with respect to a plan subject to Title I of ERISA or described in section 4975(e)(1)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code, then the Registrant represents that it and its representatives are fiduciaries under ERISA or the Internal Revenue Code, or both, with respect to any investment advice provided by the Registrant or its representatives or with respect to any investment recommendations regarding an ERISA Plan or participant or beneficiary account.

**Schwab.** As discussed below at Item 12, when requested to recommend a broker-dealer/custodian for client accounts, Registrant generally recommends that Schwab serve as the broker-dealer/custodian for client investment management assets. Broker-dealers such as Schwab charge transaction fees for effecting securities transactions. In addition to Registrant’s investment advisory fee and transaction fees, clients will also incur, relative to all mutual fund and exchange traded fund purchases, charges imposed at the fund level (e.g. management fees and other fund expenses). The fees charged by Schwab, or any broker-dealer/custodian directed by the client, are in addition to Registrant’s advisory fee referenced in Item 5 below.

**Portfolio Activity.** Registrant has a fiduciary duty to provide services consistent with the client’s best interest. As part of its investment advisory services, Registrant will review client portfolios on an ongoing basis to determine if any changes are necessary based upon various factors, including, but not limited to, market conditions, investment performance, fund manager tenure, style drift, account additions/withdrawals, and/or a change in the client’s investment objective. Based upon these factors, there may be extended periods of time when Registrant determines that changes to a client’s portfolio are neither necessary nor prudent. Of course, as indicated below, there can be no assurance that investment decisions made by Registrant will be profitable or equal any specific performance level(s).

**Please Note: Investment Risk.** Different types of investments involve varying degrees of risk, and it should not be assumed that future performance of any specific investment or investment strategy (including the investments and/or investment strategies recommended or undertaken by Registrant) will be profitable or equal any specific performance level(s).

**Please Note: Liquidity Constraints.** Registrant utilizes mutual funds and/or exchange traded funds that provide for limited liquidity, generally on a quarterly basis. Thus, if we determined that the fund was no longer performing or if you ever determined to transfer your account, the Fund could not be sold or transferred immediately. Rather, sale or transfer would need to await the quarterly permitted sale date. Moreover, the eventual net asset value for the Fund could be substantially different (positive or negative) than the Fund value on the date that the sale was requested. There can be no assurance that any such strategy will prove profitable or successful. In light of these enhanced risks/rewards, a client may direct Registrant, in writing, not to employ any or all such strategies for the client's account.

**Use of Model/research provider:** The Firm manages individual equity portfolios in conjunction with the model research and/or sub-advisory services provided by Clarkston Capital, an unaffiliated SEC registered investment adviser.

**Client Obligations.** In performing its services, Registrant shall not be required to verify any information received from the client or from the client's other professionals, and is expressly authorized to rely thereon. Moreover, each client is advised that it remains their responsibility to promptly notify the Registrant if there is ever any change in their financial situation or investment objectives for the purpose of reviewing, evaluating or revising Registrant's previous recommendations and/or services.

**Cross Transactions.** In limited circumstances, Registrant may engage in a cross-transaction pursuant to which Registrant may effect transactions between two of its managed client accounts (i.e., arranging for the clients' securities trades by "crossing" these trades when Registrant believes that such transactions are beneficial to its clients). For all such transactions, neither Registrant nor any affiliate will be acting as a broker, and will not receive any commission or transaction-based compensation. The client may revoke CP's cross-transaction authority at any time upon written notice to Registrant. **Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above.**

**Disclosure Statement.** A copy of the Registrant's written Brochure as set forth on Part 2A of Form ADV shall be provided to each client prior to, or contemporaneously with, the execution of the *Investment Advisory Agreement*.

- C. The Registrant shall provide investment advisory services specific to the needs of each client. Prior to providing investment advisory services, an investment adviser representative will ascertain each client's investment objective(s). Thereafter, the Registrant shall allocate and/or recommend that the client allocate investment assets consistent with the designated investment objective(s). The client may, at anytime, impose reasonable restrictions, in writing, on the Registrant's services.
- D. The Registrant does not participate in a wrap fee program.
- E. As of December 31, 2017, the Registrant had \$ 1,099,348,105 in assets under management on a discretionary basis.

## Item 5 Fees and Compensation

A.

### INVESTMENT ADVISORY SERVICES

If a client determines to engage the Registrant to provide discretionary investment advisory services on a *fee-only* basis, the Registrant's annual investment advisory fee shall be based upon a percentage (%) of the market value and type of assets placed under the Registrant's management (between negotiable and 1.00%) as follows:

<u>Market Value of Portfolio</u>	<u>% of Assets</u>
Initial \$1 million	1.00%
Next \$4 million	0.75%
Over \$5 million	0.50%

- Certain clients that engaged the Registrant's services prior to July 1, 2005 continue be grandfathered under a previous schedule.

#### **Fee Dispersion**

The Registrant's investment advisory fee is negotiable at Registrant's discretion, depending upon objective and subjective factors including but not limited to: the amount of assets to be managed; portfolio composition; the scope and complexity of the engagement; the anticipated number of meetings and servicing needs; related accounts; future earning capacity; anticipated future additional assets; the professional(s) rendering the service(s); prior relationships with the Registrant and/or its representatives, and negotiations with the client. Certain legacy clients may have accepted different pre-existing service offerings from Registrant and may therefore receive services under different fee schedules than as set forth above. As a result of these factors, similarly situated clients could pay different fees, the services to be provided by the Registrant to any particular client could be available from other advisers at lower fees, and certain clients may have fees different than those specifically set forth above. **The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above fee determination.**

- B. Clients may elect to have the Registrant's advisory fees deducted from their custodial account. Both Registrant's *Investment Advisory Agreement* and the custodial/ clearing agreement may authorize the custodian to debit the account for the amount of the Registrant's investment advisory fee and to directly remit that management fee to the Registrant in compliance with regulatory procedures. In the limited event that the Registrant bills the client directly, payment is due upon receipt of the Registrant's invoice. The Registrant shall deduct fees and/or bill clients quarterly in arrears, based upon the market value of the assets on the last business day of the previous quarter.
- C. As discussed below, unless the client directs otherwise or an individual client's circumstances require, the Registrant shall generally recommend that Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. ("Schwab"), TD Ameritrade ("Ameritrade") and/or Fidelity Investments ("Fidelity") serve as the broker-dealer/custodian for client investment management assets. Broker-dealers such as Schwab, Ameritrade and Fidelity charge brokerage commissions and/or transaction fees for effecting certain securities transactions (i.e. transaction fees are charged for certain no-load mutual funds,

commissions are charged for individual equity and fixed income securities transactions). In addition to Registrant's investment management fee, brokerage commissions and/or transaction fees, clients will also incur, relative to all mutual fund and exchange traded fund purchases, charges imposed at the fund level (e.g. management fees and other fund expenses).

**Tradeaway/Prime Broker Fees.** Relative to its discretionary investment management services, when beneficial to the client, individual equity and/or fixed income transactions may be effected through broker-dealers other than the account custodian, in which event, the client generally will incur both the fee (commission, mark-up/mark-down) charged by the executing broker-dealer and a separate "tradeaway" and/or prime broker fee charged by the account custodian (*Schwab, Ameritrade or Fidelity*).

- D. Registrant's annual investment advisory fee shall be prorated and paid quarterly, in arrears, based upon the market value of the assets on the last business day of the previous quarter. The Registrant, in its sole discretion, may charge a lesser investment management fee based upon certain criteria (i.e., anticipated future earning capacity, anticipated future additional assets, dollar amount of assets to be managed, related accounts, account composition, negotiations with client, etc.).

The *Investment Advisory Agreement* between the Registrant and the client will continue in effect until terminated by either party by written notice in accordance with the terms of the *Investment Advisory Agreement*. Upon termination, the Registrant's investment management fee shall be prorated through the date of termination, and any balance due shall be calculated as of the effective date of termination, and, at the discretion of the Registrant, either debited directly from the custodial account or billed directly to the client.

- E. Neither the Registrant, nor its representatives accept compensation from the sale of securities or other investment products.

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

Neither the Registrant nor any supervised person of the Registrant accepts performance-based fees.

## **Item 7            Types of Clients**

The Registrant's clients shall generally include individuals, business entities, trusts, estates, charitable organizations, pensions, and profit sharing plans. The Registrant, in its sole discretion, may charge a lesser investment management fee based upon certain criteria (i.e., anticipated future earning capacity, anticipated future additional assets, dollar amount of assets to be managed, related accounts, account composition, negotiations with client, etc.).

**Please Note:** As result of the above, similarly situated clients could pay different fees. In addition, similar advisory services may be available from other investment advisers for similar or lower fees. **ANY QUESTIONS:** Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding advisory fees.



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

- A. The Registrant shall utilize the following methods of security analysis:
- Fundamental - (analysis performed on historical and present data, with the goal of making financial forecasts)

The Registrant shall utilize the following investment strategies when implementing investment advice given to clients:

- Long Term Purchases (securities held at least a year)
- Short Term Purchases (securities sold within a year)
- Trading (securities sold within thirty (30) days)
- Options (contract for the purchase or sale of a security at a predetermined price during a specific period of time)

**Please Note: Investment Risk.** Different types of investments involve varying degrees of risk, and it should not be assumed that future performance of any specific investment or investment strategy (including the investments and/or investment strategies recommended or undertaken by the Registrant) will be profitable or equal any specific performance level(s).

- B. The Registrant's methods of analysis and investment strategies do not present any significant or unusual risks.

However, every method of analysis has its own inherent risks. To perform an accurate market analysis the Registrant must have access to current/new market information. The Registrant has no control over the dissemination rate of market information; therefore, unbeknownst to the Registrant, certain analyses may be compiled with outdated market information, severely limiting the value of the Registrant's analysis. Furthermore, an accurate market analysis can only produce a forecast of the direction of market values. There can be no assurances that a forecasted change in market value will materialize into actionable and/or profitable investment opportunities.

The Registrant's primary investment strategies - Long Term Purchases, Short Term Purchases, and Trading - are fundamental investment strategies. However, every investment strategy has its own inherent risks and limitations. For example, longer term investment strategies require a longer investment time period to allow for the strategy to potentially develop. Shorter term investment strategies require a shorter investment time period to potentially develop but, as a result of more frequent trading, may incur higher transactional costs when compared to a longer term investment strategy. Trading, an investment strategy that requires the purchase and sale of securities within a thirty (30) day investment time period, involves a very short investment time period but will incur higher transaction costs when compared to a short term investment strategy and substantially higher transaction costs than a longer term investment strategy.

In addition to the fundamental investment strategies discussed above, the Registrant may also implement and/or recommend the use of options transactions. With the use of this strategy comes a high level of inherent risk.

The use of options transactions as an investment strategy involves a high level of inherent risk. Option transactions establish a contract between two parties concerning the buying

or selling of an asset at a predetermined price during a specific period of time. During the term of the option contract, the buyer of the option gains the right to demand fulfillment by the seller. Fulfillment may take the form of either selling or purchasing a security depending upon the nature of the option contract. Generally, the purchase or the recommendation to purchase an option contract by the Registrant shall be with the intent of offsetting/"hedging" a potential market risk in a client's portfolio. **Please Note:** Although the intent of the options-related transactions that may be implemented by the Registrant is to hedge against principal risk, certain of the options-related strategies (i.e. straddles, short positions, etc), may, in and of themselves, produce principal volatility and/or risk. Thus, a client must be willing to accept these enhanced volatility and principal risks associated with such strategies. In light of these enhanced risks, client may direct the Registrant, in writing, not to employ any or all such strategies for his/her/their/its accounts.

**Structured Notes.** The Registrant may purchase structured notes for client accounts. A structured note is a financial instrument that combines two elements, a debt security and exposure to an underlying asset or assets. It is essentially a note, carrying counter party risk of the issuer. However, the return on the note is linked to the return of an underlying asset or assets (such as the S&P 500 Index or commodities). It is this latter feature that makes structured products unique, as the payout can be used to provide some degree of principal protection, leveraged returns (but usually with some cap on the maximum return), and be tailored to a specific market or economic view. In addition, investors may receive long-term capital gains tax treatment if certain underlying conditions are met and the note is held for more than one year. Finally, structured notes may also have liquidity constraints, such that the sale thereof before maturity may be limited. In the event that a client has any questions regarding the purchase of structured notes for their account, the Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address them.

- C. Currently, the Registrant recommends that clients primarily allocate investment management assets among various individual equity and/or fixed income securities, and/or mutual funds, on a discretionary basis, in accordance with the investment objective(s) of the client. In addition, the Registrant may also engage independent investment advisers to actively manage a portion of client assets and/or engage independent sub-advisers to assist the Registrant with its investment management process.

## **Item 9           Disciplinary Information**

The Registrant has not been the subject of any disciplinary actions.

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

- A. Neither the Registrant, nor its representatives, are registered or have an application pending to register, as a broker-dealer or a registered representative of a broker-dealer.
- B. Neither the Registrant, nor its representatives, are registered or have an application pending to register, as a futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator, a commodity trading advisor, or a representative of the foregoing.
- C. The Registrant does not have any relationship or arrangement that is material to its advisory business or to its clients with any related person.

- D. The Registrant does not recommend or select other investment advisors for its clients.

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

- A. The Registrant maintains an investment policy relative to personal securities transactions. This investment policy is part of Registrant's overall Code of Ethics, which serves to establish a standard of business conduct for all of Registrant's Representatives that is based upon fundamental principles of openness, integrity, honesty and trust, a copy of which is available upon request.

In accordance with Section 204A of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, the Registrant also maintains and enforces written policies reasonably designed to prevent the misuse of material non-public information by the Registrant or any person associated with the Registrant.

- B. Neither the Registrant nor any related person of Registrant recommends, buys, or sells for client accounts, securities in which the Registrant or any related person of Registrant has a material financial interest.
- C. The Registrant and/or representatives of the Registrant *may* buy or sell securities that are also recommended to clients. This practice may create a situation where the Registrant and/or representatives of the Registrant are in a position to materially benefit from the sale or purchase of those securities. Therefore, this situation creates a conflict of interest. Practices such as "scalping" (i.e., a practice whereby the owner of shares of a security recommends that security for investment and then immediately sells it at a profit upon the rise in the market price which follows the recommendation) could take place if the Registrant did not have adequate policies in place to detect such activities. In addition, this requirement can help detect insider trading, "front-running" (i.e., personal trades executed prior to those of the Registrant's clients) and other potentially abusive practices.

The Registrant has a personal securities transaction policy in place to monitor the personal securities transactions and securities holdings of each of the Registrant's "Access Persons". The Registrant's securities transaction policy requires that Access Person of the Registrant must provide the Chief Compliance Officer or his/her designee with a written report of the their current securities holdings within ten (10) days after becoming an Access Person. Additionally, each Access Person must provide the Chief Compliance Officer or his/her designee with a written report of the Access Person's current securities holdings at least once each twelve (12) month period thereafter on a date the Registrant selects; provided, however that at any time that the Registrant has only one Access Person, he or she shall not be required to submit any securities report described above.

- D. The Registrant and/or representatives of the Registrant *may* buy or sell securities, at or around the same time as those securities are recommended to clients. This practice creates a situation where the Registrant and/or representatives of the Registrant are in a position to materially benefit from the sale or purchase of those securities. Therefore, this situation creates a conflict of interest. As indicated above in Item 11.C, the Registrant has a personal securities transaction policy in place to monitor the personal securities transaction and securities holdings of each of Registrant's Access Persons.

## Item 12 Brokerage Practices

- A. In the event that the client requests that the Registrant recommend a broker-dealer/custodian for execution and/or custodial services (exclusive of those clients that may direct the Registrant to use a specific broker-dealer/custodian), Registrant generally recommends that investment management accounts be maintained at *Schwab*, *Ameritrade* and/or *Fidelity*. Prior to engaging Registrant to provide investment management services, the client will be required to enter into a formal *Investment Advisory Agreement* with Registrant setting forth the terms and conditions under which Registrant shall manage the client's assets, and a separate custodial/clearing agreement with each designated broker-dealer/custodian.

Factors that the Registrant considers in recommending *Schwab*, *Ameritrade* and/or *Fidelity* (or any other broker-dealer/custodian to clients) include historical relationship with the Registrant, financial strength, reputation, execution capabilities, pricing, research, and service. Although the commissions and/or transaction fees paid by Registrant's clients shall comply with the Registrant's duty to obtain best execution, a client may pay a commission that is higher than another qualified broker-dealer might charge to effect the same transaction where the Registrant determines, in good faith, that the commission/transaction fee is reasonable. In seeking best execution, the determinative factor is not the lowest possible cost, but whether the transaction represents the best qualitative execution, taking into consideration the full range of a broker-dealer services, including the value of research provided, execution capability, commission rates, and responsiveness. Accordingly, although Registrant will seek competitive rates, it may not necessarily obtain the lowest possible commission rates for client account transactions. The brokerage commissions or transaction fees charged by the designated broker-dealer/custodian are exclusive of, and in addition to, Registrant's investment management fee. The Registrant's best execution responsibility is qualified if securities that it purchases for client accounts are mutual funds that trade at net asset value as determined at the daily market close.

### 1. Schwab Referrals

Registrant receives client referrals from *Schwab* through Registrant's participation in Schwab Advisor Network™ ("the Service"), designed to help investors find an independent investment advisor. *Schwab* is a broker-dealer independent of and unaffiliated with Registrant. *Schwab* does not supervise Registrant and has no responsibility for Registrant's management of clients' portfolios or Registrant's other advice or services. Registrant pays *Schwab* fees to receive client referrals through the Service. Registrant's participation in the Service may raise conflicts of interest described below.

Registrant pays *Schwab* a Participation Fee on all referred clients' accounts that are maintained in custody at *Schwab* and a Non-Schwab Custody Fee on all accounts that are maintained at, or transferred to, another custodian. The Participation Fee paid by Registrant is a percentage of the fees owed by the client to Registrant or a percentage of the value of the assets in the client's account, subject to a minimum Participation Fee. Registrant pays *Schwab* the Participation Fee for so long as the referred client's account remains in custody at *Schwab*. The Participation Fee is billed to Registrant quarterly and may be increased, decreased or waived by *Schwab* from time to time. The Participation Fee is paid by Registrant and not by the client. Registrant has agreed not to charge clients referred through the Service fees or costs greater than the fees or costs Registrant charges clients with similar portfolios (pursuant to Registrant's

standard fee schedule as in effect from time to time) who were not referred through the Service.

Registrant generally pays *Schwab* a Non-Schwab Custody Fee if custody of a referred client's account is not maintained by, or assets in the account are transferred from *Schwab*, unless the client was solely responsible for the decision not to maintain custody at *Schwab*. The Non-Schwab Custody Fee is a one-time payment equal to a percentage of the assets placed in custody other than at *Schwab*. The Non-Schwab Custody Fee is higher than the Participation Fees Registrant generally would pay in a single year. Thus, Registrant will have an incentive to recommend that client accounts be held in custody at *Schwab*.

The Participation and Non-Schwab Custody Fees will be based on assets in accounts of Registrant's clients who were referred by *Schwab* and those referred clients' family members living in the same household. Thus, Registrant will have incentives to encourage household members of clients referred through the Service to maintain custody of their accounts and execute transactions at *Schwab* and to instruct *Schwab* to debit Registrant's fees directly from the accounts.

For accounts of Registrant's clients maintained in custody at *Schwab*, *Schwab* will not charge the client separately for custody but will receive compensation from Registrant's clients in the form of commissions or other transaction-related compensation on securities trades executed through *Schwab*. *Schwab* also will receive a fee (generally lower than the applicable commission on trades it executes) for clearance and settlement of trades to be executed through *Schwab* rather than another broker-dealer. Registrant nevertheless acknowledges its duty to seek best execution of trades for client accounts. Trades for client accounts held in custody at *Schwab* may be executed through a different broker-dealer than trades for Registrant's other clients. Thus, trades for accounts custodied at *Schwab* may be executed at different times and different prices than trades for other accounts that are executed at other broker-dealers.

**The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above arrangement and any corresponding conflict of interest presented by such arrangement.**

#### Research and Additional Benefits

Although not a material consideration when determining whether to recommend that a client utilize the services of a particular broker-dealer/custodian, Registrant may receive from *Schwab*, *Ameritrade* and/or *Fidelity* (or another broker-dealer/custodian) without cost (and/or at a discount) support services and/or products, certain of which assist the Registrant to better monitor and service client accounts maintained at such institutions. Included within the support services that may be obtained by the Registrant may be investment-related research, pricing information and market data, software and other technology that provide access to client account data, compliance and/or practice management-related publications, discounted or gratis consulting services, discounted and/or gratis attendance at conferences, meetings, and other educational and/or social events, marketing support, computer hardware and/or software and/or other products used by Registrant in furtherance of its investment advisory business operations.

As indicated above, certain of the support services and/or products that *may* be received may assist the Registrant in managing and administering client accounts. Others do not directly provide such assistance, but rather assist the Registrant to manage and further develop its business enterprise.

Registrant's clients do not pay more for investment transactions effected and/or assets maintained at *Schwab, Ameritrade* and/or *Fidelity* as a result of this arrangement. There is no corresponding commitment made by the Registrant to *Schwab, Ameritrade* and/or *Fidelity* or other any entity to invest any specific amount or percentage of client assets in any specific mutual funds, securities or other investment products as a result of the above arrangement.

**The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above arrangement and any corresponding perceived conflict of interest presented by such arrangement.**

2. The Registrant may receive client referrals from *Schwab* through its participation in the Schwab Advisor Network™.

**The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above arrangement and any corresponding conflict of interest presented by such arrangement.**

3. **Directed Brokerage.** Registrant recommends that its clients utilize the brokerage and custodial services provided by Schwab. Registrant generally does not accept directed brokerage arrangements (when a client requires that account transactions be effected through a specific broker-dealer). In such client directed arrangements, the client will negotiate terms and arrangements for their account with that broker-dealer, and Registrant will not seek better execution services or prices from other broker-dealers or be able to "batch" the client's transactions for execution through other broker-dealers with orders for other accounts managed by Registrant. As a result, a client may pay higher commissions or other transaction costs or greater spreads, or receive less favorable net prices, on transactions for the account than would otherwise be the case. **Please Note:** In the event that the client directs Registrant to effect securities transactions for the client's accounts through a specific broker-dealer, the client correspondingly acknowledges that such direction may cause the accounts to incur higher commissions or transaction costs than the accounts would otherwise incur had the client determined to effect account transactions through alternative clearing arrangements that may be available through Registrant. Higher transaction costs adversely impact account performance. **Please Also Note:** Transactions for directed accounts will generally be executed following the execution of portfolio transactions for non-directed accounts.

**The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above arrangement.**

**Order Aggregation.** Transactions for each client account generally will be effected independently, unless Registrant decides to purchase or sell the same securities for several clients at approximately the same time. Registrant may (but is not obligated to)

combine or “bunch” such orders to obtain best execution, to negotiate more favorable commission rates or to allocate equitably among Registrant’s clients differences in prices and commissions or other transaction costs that might have been obtained had such orders been placed independently. Under this procedure, transactions will be averaged as to price and will be allocated among clients in proportion to the purchase and sale orders placed for each client account on any given day. Registrant shall not receive any additional compensation or remuneration as a result of such aggregation.

#### B. Item 13 Review of Accounts

1. For those clients to whom Registrant provides investment supervisory services, account reviews are conducted on an ongoing basis by the Registrant's Principals and/or representatives. All investment supervisory clients are advised that it remains their responsibility to advise the Registrant of any changes in their investment objectives and/or financial situation. All clients (in person or via telephone) are encouraged to review financial planning issues, investment objectives and account performance with the Registrant on an annual basis, as applicable.
2. The Registrant may conduct account reviews on an other than periodic basis upon the occurrence of a triggering event, such as a change in client investment objectives and/or financial situation, market corrections and client request.
3. Clients are provided with transaction confirmation notices and regular summary account statements directly from the broker-dealer/custodian and/or program sponsor for the client accounts. Those clients to whom Registrant provides investment supervisory services shall also receive a quarterly report from the Registrant summarizing account activity and performance.

### Item 14 Client Referrals and Other Compensation

- A. As referenced in Item 12.A.1 above, the Registrant can receive an economic benefit from *Schwab, Ameritrade* and/or *Fidelity*. The Registrant, without cost (and/or at a discount), may receive support services and/or products from *Schwab, Ameritrade* and/or *Fidelity*.

Registrant’s clients do not pay more for investment transactions effected and/or assets maintained at *Schwab, Ameritrade* and/or *Fidelity* as a result of this arrangement. There is no corresponding commitment made by the Registrant to *Schwab, Ameritrade* and/or *Fidelity* or any other entity to invest any specific amount or percentage of client assets in any specific mutual funds, securities or other investment products as a result of the above arrangement.

**The Registrant’s Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above arrangement and the corresponding conflict of interest presented by such arrangements.**

- B. If a client is introduced to the Registrant by either an unaffiliated or an affiliated solicitor, Registrant may pay that solicitor a referral fee in accordance with the requirements of Rule

206(4)-3 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, and any corresponding state securities law requirements. Any such referral fee shall be paid solely from the Registrant's investment management fee, and shall not result in any additional charge to the client. If the client is introduced to the Registrant by an unaffiliated solicitor, the solicitor, at the time of the solicitation, shall disclose the nature of their solicitor relationship, and shall provide each prospective client with a copy of the Registrant's written Brochure with a copy of the written disclosure statement from the solicitor to the client disclosing the terms of the solicitation arrangement between the Registrant and the solicitor, including the compensation to be received by the solicitor from the Registrant.

## **Item 15      Custody**

The Registrant shall have the ability to have its advisory fee for each client debited by the custodian on a quarterly basis. Clients are provided with transaction confirmation notices and regular summary account statements directly from the broker-dealer/custodian and/or program sponsor for the client accounts. Those clients to whom Registrant provides investment supervisory services shall also receive a quarterly report from the Registrant summarizing account activity and performance.

**Please Note:** To the extent that the Registrant provides clients with periodic account statements or reports, the client is urged to compare any statement or report provided by the Registrant with the account statements received from the account custodian. **Please Also Note:** The account custodian does not verify the accuracy of the Registrant's advisory fee calculation.

**Please Also Note: Custody Situations:** The Registrant engages in other practices and/or services on behalf of its clients that require disclosure at ADV Part 1, Item 9, but which practices and/or services **are not** subject to an annual surprise CPA examination in accordance with the guidance provided in the SEC's February 21, 2017 Investment Adviser Association No-Action Letter.

**The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding custody-related issues.**

## **Item 16      Investment Discretion**

The client can determine to engage the Registrant to provide investment advisory services on a discretionary basis. Prior to the Registrant assuming discretionary authority over a client's account, client shall be required to execute *Investment Advisory Agreement*, naming the Registrant as client's attorney and agent in fact, granting the Registrant full authority to buy, sell, or otherwise effect investment transactions involving the assets in the client's name found in the discretionary account.

Clients who engage the Registrant on a discretionary basis may, at any time, impose restrictions, in writing, on the Registrant's discretionary authority. (i.e., limit the types/amounts of particular securities purchased for their account, exclude the ability to purchase securities with an inverse relationship to the market, limit or proscribe the Registrant's use of margin, etc).



## **Item 17          Voting Client Securities**

Unless the client directs otherwise in writing, the Registrant is responsible for voting client proxies (However, the client shall maintain exclusive responsibility for all legal proceedings or other type events pertaining to the account assets, including, but not limited to, class action lawsuits.). The Registrant shall vote proxies in accordance with its Proxy Voting Policy, a copy of which is available upon request. The Registrant shall monitor corporate actions of individual issuers and investment companies consistent with the Registrant's fiduciary duty to vote proxies in the best interests of its clients. Although the factors which Registrant will consider when determining how it will vote differ on a case by case basis, they may, but are not limited to, include the following: a review of recommendations from issuer management, shareholder proposals, cost effects of such proposals, effect on employees and executive and director compensation. With respect to individual issuers, the Registrant may be solicited to vote on matters including corporate governance, adoption or amendments to compensation plans (including stock options), and matters involving social issues and corporate responsibility. With respect to investment companies (i.e., mutual funds), the Registrant may be solicited to vote on matters including the approval of advisory contracts, distribution plans, and mergers. The Registrant shall maintain records pertaining to proxy voting as required pursuant to Rule 204-2 (c)(2) under the Advisers Act. Copies of Rules 206(4)-6 and 204-2(c)(2) are available upon written request. In addition, information pertaining to how the Registrant voted on any specific proxy issue is also available upon written request. Requests should be made by contacting the Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston.

## **Item 18          Financial Information**

- A. The Registrant does not solicit fees of more than \$1,200, per client, six months or more in advance.
- B. The Registrant is unaware of any financial condition that is reasonably likely to impair its ability to meet its contractual commitments relating to its discretionary authority over certain client accounts.
- C. The Registrant has not been the subject of a bankruptcy petition.

**ANY QUESTIONS: The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Paul Alston, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above disclosures and arrangements.**