

**Form CRS – Client Relationship Summary (ADV, Part 3)****February 26, 2024****Item 1. Introduction**

**Investment Consultants LLC (IC LLC)** [and its predecessor company, Investment Consultants, founded in 1992 as an Illinois General Partnership] is an SEC-Registered Investment Adviser. IC LLC is *not* a broker-dealer. As a general rule, brokerage and investment advisory services and fees differ and it is important for retail investors to understand the differences. Free and simple tools are available to research firms and financial professionals at [Investor.gov/CRS](https://www.investor.gov/crs), which also provides educational materials about broker-dealers, investment advisers, and investing.

**Item 2. Relationships and Services****What investment services and advice can you provide me?**

**Description of Services -- Investment Consultants LLC (IC LLC)** provides non-discretionary investment advisory services to retail investors (i.e., the retail investor client makes the ultimate decision regarding the purchase or sale of investments). IC LLC and its investment professional are investment advice fiduciaries under Title I of ERISA and the IRS, as applicable, when providing investment advice to retirement investors; and IC LLC is a 3(21) fiduciary, regarding client businesses' retirement plans. The following (#1 - #4) are included as part of the IC LLC services: (1) financial consulting, resulting in defining/recommending appropriate asset allocation targets; (2) recommending appropriate investment style categories (bond funds, U.S. and foreign stock funds, etc.); (3) recommending individual mutual funds best suited to each client's specific objectives; and (4) investment fund monitoring services (oftentimes meeting clients quarterly). Additionally, if agreed upon, IC LLC provides a written, personalized quarterly "Executive Summary Report", highlighting the client's investments' performances and mutual funds' peer groups' rankings for various time periods. As mentioned above, IC LLC's services are non-discretionary. Retail clients make the ultimate buy-sell decisions. When IC LLC makes a specific investment product recommendation, it will typically be a mutual fund, or a U.S. Treasury Bill. There are many other types of investments; but IC LLC does not assert to have deep expertise in them -- not to the same level as with mutual funds. IC LLC does *not* have any specific requirements for retail investors to open or maintain an account or to establish a relationship, such as a minimum account size or investment amount. In the majority of instances, Investment Consultants LLC has personal or professional relationships with potential retail investor clients, in advance of establishing an advisory relationship. This can be considered a guideline/requirement. **Additional Information:** An important priority of IC LLC's mission is "to assist in the investment goal attainment of individual investor-clients and other asset pool oversight committees (e.g., 401(k) & Profit-Sharing Plans and industry associations)." IC LLC consults with committees that have oversight of various asset pools (such as 401(k) plans) and with individuals and family trusts. IC LLC tailors its services to specific clients, who sometimes put restrictions on the types of securities in which they wish to invest. IC LLC does not participate in any wrap fee programs. **Conversation Starters:** The following questions (developed by the SEC, US Securities and Exchange Commission) were designed to assist retail investors to ask substantive and helpful questions of their current or potential future advisors. *"Given my financial situation, should I choose an investment advisory service? Why or why not?" & "How will you choose investments to recommend to me?" & "What is your relevant experience, including your licenses, education and other qualifications? What do these qualifications mean?"*

**Item 3. Fees, Costs, Conflicts, and Standard of Conduct****What fees will I pay?**

Investment Consultants LLC (IC LLC) typically structures the ongoing fees for the its advisory services as a percentage of the client's portfolio assets. The fees typically range between 0.40% and 0.80% (annualized), are on-going in term and they are negotiable based on the scope of services and portfolio asset size. Typically, IC LLC structures the asset-based fees on a sliding scale -- that is, as the assets increase to various levels, the incremental assets have a lower quarterly fee associated with them. There is no general fee schedule because of the personalized scope of individual clients' needs and associated IC LLC services that clients utilize. The on-going fees are invoiced and paid quarterly (near the beginning of the quarter for that quarter's services) and can be cancelled with a 90-day written notice. IC LLC invoices clients directly and does not deduct fees from clients' assets. The client agreement for services details the services to each client, and the quarterly fee calculation is detailed in the quarterly invoice. Often, there is an initial onboarding fee for new clients, typically in the \$5,000 - \$10,000 range, to account for the significant upfront work necessary to define recommendations for each client's initial, unique investment mix. The above describes all of the income/revenue sources IC LLC receives in regard to our relationship with you. Clients do not pay IC LLC for custodial fees, brokerage fees, or transaction costs. If a client invests

in mutual funds, the mutual fund companies deduct fees out of the funds (in the form of “expense ratios”, for all of their clients). IC LLC does *not* receive any part of these fees from the mutual fund companies. [Stated differently, IC LLC does *not* collect mutual funds' fees, nor does IC LLC receive compensation from mutual fund companies.] As noted earlier, IC LLC is *not* in any wrap fee programs, *nor* does IC LLC have any other direct fee arrangements.

Any investment adviser that charges an asset-based fee (such as IC LLC does), the more assets there are in a client's advisory account, the more a client will pay in fees. Therefore, the adviser has an incentive to grow the assets, and the adviser *could* encourage the client-investor to increase the assets in his or her account – a conflict of interest. To avoid this potential conflict of interest (for IC LLC's clients), it is each client's decision to increase or decrease assets held in his or her account. Investment Consultants LLC (IC LLC) is *not* aware of any other conflicts of interest regarding our fee structure.

*Other fees and costs that retail investors may incur:*

The fees described above are all of the fees that IC LLC collects related to our investment advisory services. Many retail investors also pay custodial fees (and transaction fees) directly to custody organizations (such as Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. [Schwab] that custodies the assets of many of Investment Consultants LLC's clients). IC LLC's clients independently and directly contract with a custodian for these services (e.g., custody services from Charles Schwab). IC LLC does *not* require a client to use a specific custodian. Also as mentioned above – “If a client invests in mutual funds, the mutual fund companies deduct fees out of the funds (in the form of “expense ratios”, for all of their clients). IC LLC does *not* receive any part of these fees from the mutual fund companies.”

**Note** – You will pay fees and costs whether you make or lose money from your investments. Fees and costs will reduce any amount of money you make on your investments over time. Please make sure you understand what fees and costs you are paying.

**Conversation Starter:** “Help me understand how these fees and costs might affect my investments. If I give you \$10,000 to invest, how much will go to fees and costs, and how much will be invested for me?”

### **What are your legal obligations to me when acting as my investment adviser? How else does your firm make money and what conflicts of interest do you have?**

“*When we act as your investment adviser*, we have to act in your best interest and not put our interest ahead of yours. At the same time, the way we make money creates some conflicts with your interests. You should understand and ask us about these conflicts because they can affect the investment advice that we provide you. Here are some examples to help you understand what this means.” IC LLC's only “investment advisory” conflict of interest of which I am aware, was stated above – “... the adviser has an incentive to grow the assets, and the adviser *could* encourage the client-investor to increase the assets in his or her account...” Note that, it is totally the client's (your) decision to increase or decrease assets held in his/her account. An example of a general conflict of interest that affects retail investors is an adviser that uses performance-based fees as its fee structure – i.e., the firm's clients' fees increase as a percentage of investment profits. This could incent the adviser to aggressively take chances in an effort to make larger fees, regardless of the best interests of the clients. Investment Consultants LLC does *not* use a performance-based fees structure. **Conversation Starter:** “How might your conflicts of interest affect me, and how will you address them?”

### **How do your financial professionals make money?**

Bill Gela, Managing Director, is the owner and the only employee-adviser. His compensation is based solely on the profitability of Investment Consultants LLC.

## **Item 4. Disciplinary History**

### **Do you or your financial professionals have legal or disciplinary history?**

No.

Please visit [Investor.gov/CRS](https://www.investor.gov/crs), for a free and simple search tool to research Investment Consultants LLC and its financial professional, Bill Gela (William D. Gela).

**Conversation Starter:** “As a financial professional, do you have any disciplinary history? For what type of conduct?”

## **Item 5. Additional Information**

You can find additional information about Investment Consultants LLC's advisory services and/or request a copy of this relationship summary by calling Bill Gela at 847-492-9559, or by writing him at: Investment Consultants LLC; 2515 Lawndale Ave.; Evanston, IL 60201.

**Conversation Starter:** “Who is my primary contact person? Is he or she a representative of an investment adviser or a broker-dealer? Who can I talk to if I have concerns about how this person is treating me?”