

The GMS Group, LLC

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FORM ADV PART 2A BROCHURE

This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of The GMS Group, LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, contact us at 973-535-5000. 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 The GMS Group, LLC is available on the SEC's website at www.adviserinfo.sec.gov.

The GMS Group, LLC is a registered investment adviser. Registration with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or any state securities authority does not imply a certain level of skill or training.

Item 2 Summary of Material Changes

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

Since our last annual updating amendment, dated March 9, 2023 we have made no material changes to our Form ADV.

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Item 4 Advisory Business

Description of Firm

The GMS Group, LLC is a registered investment adviser primarily based in East Hanover, NJ. We are organized as a limited liability company ("LLC") under the laws of the State of Delaware. We have been providing investment advisory services since 2006. We are wholly owned by GMS Group Holdings Corp.

The following paragraphs describe our services and fees. Refer to the description of each investment advisory service listed below for information on how we tailor our advisory services to your individual needs. As used in this brochure, the words "we," "our," and "us" refer to The GMS Group, LLC and the words "you," "your," and "client" refer to you as either a client or prospective client of our firm.

Portfolio Management Services

We offer discretionary portfolio management services. Our investment advice is tailored to meet our clients' needs and investment objectives.

You may limit our discretionary authority (for example, limiting the types of securities that can be purchased or sold for your account) by providing our firm with your restrictions and guidelines in writing.

We may also offer non-discretionary portfolio management services. If you enter into non-discretionary arrangements with our firm, we must obtain your approval prior to executing any transactions on behalf of your account. You have an unrestricted right to decline to implement any advice provided by our firm on a non-discretionary basis.

As part of our portfolio management services, we may use one or more sub-advisers to manage a portion of your account on a discretionary basis. The sub-adviser(s) may use one or more of their model portfolios to manage your account. We will regularly monitor the performance of your accounts managed by sub-adviser(s) and may hire and fire any sub-adviser without your prior approval. We may pay a portion of our advisory fee to the sub-adviser(s) we use; however, you will not pay our firm a higher advisory fee as a result of any sub-advisory relationships.

Selection of Other Advisers

We may recommend that you use the services of a third-party money manager ("TPMM") to manage all, or a portion of, your investment portfolio. After gathering information about your financial situation and objectives, we may recommend that you engage a specific TPMM or investment program. Factors that we take into consideration when making our recommendation(s) include, but are not limited to, the following: the TPMM's performance, methods of analysis, fees, your financial needs, investment goals, risk tolerance, and investment objectives. We will monitor the TPMM(s)' performance to ensure its management and investment style remains aligned with your investment goals and objectives.

The TPMM(s) will actively manage your portfolio and will assume discretionary investment authority over your account. We will assume discretionary authority to hire and fire TPMM(s) and/or reallocate your assets to other TPMM(s) where we deem such action appropriate.

Types of Investments

We offer advice on equity securities, corporate debt securities (other than commercial paper), certificates of deposit, municipal securities, United States government securities, options contracts on securities, money market funds, shares of registered investment companies (both open and closed end), ETFs and leveraged ETFs.

Additionally, we may advise you on various types of investments based on your stated goals and objectives. We may also provide advice on any type of investment held in your portfolio at the inception of our advisory relationship.

Since our investment strategies and advice are based on each client's specific financial situation, the investment advice we provide to you may be different or conflicting with the advice we give to other clients regarding the same security or investment.

Assets Under Management

As of December 31, 2023, we provide continuous management services for \$177,300,399 in client assets. All assets are managed on a discretionary basis.

Item 5 Fees and Compensation

Portfolio Management Services

Our annual fee for portfolio management services is up to 2% of the market value of your assets under our management. Assets in each of your account(s) are included in the fee assessment unless specifically identified in writing for exclusion.

Our annual portfolio management fee is billed and payable, quarterly in advance, based on the balance at end of billing period.

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

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

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

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

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

Selection of Other Advisers

We do not charge you a separate fee for the selection of other advisers. We will share in the advisory fee you pay directly to the TPMM. The advisory fee you pay to the TPMM is established and payable in accordance with the brochure provided by each TPMM to whom you are referred. These fees may or may not be negotiable. Our compensation may differ depending upon the individual agreement we have with each TPMM. As such, a conflict of interest exists where our firm or persons associated with our firm has an incentive to recommend one TPMM over another TPMM with whom we have more favorable compensation arrangements or other advisory programs offered by TPMMs with whom we have less or no compensation arrangements.

Our recommendations to use third party money managers are included in our portfolio management fee. We do not charge you a separate fee for the selection of other advisers nor will we share in the advisory fee you pay directly to the TPMM. Advisory fees that you pay to the TPMM are established and payable in accordance with the Form ADV Part 2 or other equivalent disclosure document provided by each TPMM to whom you are referred. These fees may or may not be negotiable. You should review the recommended TPMM's brochure for information on its fees and services.

You may be required to sign an agreement directly with the recommended TPMM(s). You may terminate your advisory relationship with the TPMM according to the terms of your agreement with the TPMM. You should review each TPMM's brochure for specific information on how you may terminate your advisory relationship with the TPMM and how you may receive a refund, if applicable. You should contact the TPMM directly for questions regarding your advisory agreement with the TPMM.

Additional Fees and Expenses

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

We may trade client accounts on margin. Each client must sign a separate margin agreement before margin is extended to that client account. Fees for advice and execution on these securities are based on the total asset value of the account, which includes the value of the securities purchased on margin. While a negative amount may show on a client's statement for the margined security as the result of a lower net market value, the amount of the fee is based on the absolute market value. This creates a conflict of interest where we have an incentive to encourage the use of margin to create a higher market value and therefore receive a higher fee. The use of margin may also result in interest charges in addition to all other fees and expenses associated with the security involved.

Compensation for the Sale of Securities or Other Investment Products

Persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm are registered representatives with The GMS Group, LLC, a securities broker-dealer, and a member of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority and the Securities Investor Protection Corporation. In their capacity as registered representatives, these persons receive compensation in connection with the purchase and sale of securities or other investment products, including asset-based sales charges, service fees or 12b-1 fees, for the sale or holding, of mutual funds. Compensation earned by these persons in their

capacities as registered representatives is separate and in addition to our advisory fees. This practice presents a conflict of interest because persons providing investment advice to advisory clients on behalf of our firm who are registered representatives have an incentive to recommend investment products based on the compensation received rather than solely based on your needs. Persons providing investment advice to advisory clients on behalf of our firm can select or recommend, and in many instances will select or recommend, mutual fund investments in share classes that pay 12b-1 fees when clients are eligible to purchase share classes of the same funds that do not pay such fees and are less expensive. This presents a conflict of interest. You are under no obligation, contractually or otherwise, to purchase securities products through any person affiliated with our firm who receives compensation described above.

We have a fiduciary duty to act in our client's best interest including the duty to seek best execution. Therefore, our mutual fund selection and recommendation process takes into consideration several factors in order to meet this requirement. See the *Brokerage Practices* section for additional information on our mutual fund share class selection process.

Our firm receives 12b-1 fees in connection with mutual funds purchased or held for advisory client accounts. This compensation is separate and in addition to our advisory fees. This practice presents a conflict of interest because we have an incentive to recommend mutual funds for which we receive 12b-1 fees rather than solely based on your needs. We can select or recommend, and in many instances will select or recommend to our advisory clients, mutual fund investments in share classes that pay 12b-1 fees when clients are eligible to purchase share classes of the same funds that do not pay such fees and are less expensive. This presents a conflict of interest. You are under no obligation, contractually or otherwise, to purchase or hold securities products through our firm or any affiliate.

Persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm are licensed as independent insurance agents. These persons will earn commission-based compensation for selling insurance products, including insurance products they sell to you. Insurance commissions earned by these persons are separate and in addition to our advisory fees. This practice presents a conflict of interest because persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm who are insurance agents have an incentive to recommend insurance products to you for the purpose of generating commissions rather than solely based on your needs. You are under no obligation, contractually or otherwise, to purchase insurance products through any person affiliated with our firm.

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

We do not accept performance-based fees or participate in side-by-side management. Performance-based fees are fees that are based on a share of a capital gains or capital appreciation of a client's account. Side-by-side management refers to the practice of managing accounts that are charged performance-based fees while at the same time managing accounts that are not charged performance-based fees. Our fees are calculated as described in the *Fees and Compensation* section above and are not charged on the basis of a share of capital gains upon, or capital appreciation of, the funds in your advisory account.

Item 7 Types of Clients

We offer investment advisory services to institutional clients, which does not include retail clients (i.e., individuals).

In general, we do not require a minimum dollar amount to open and maintain an advisory account; however, we have the right to terminate your Account if it falls below a minimum size which, in our sole opinion, is too small to manage effectively.

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

Our Methods of Analysis and Investment Strategies

We use one or more of the following methods of analysis or investment strategies when providing investment advice to you:

Fundamental Analysis - involves analyzing individual companies and their industry groups, such as a company's financial statements, details regarding the company's product line, the experience and expertise of the company's management, and the outlook for the company and its industry. The resulting data is used to measure the true value of the company's stock compared to the current market value.

Risk: The risk of fundamental analysis is that information obtained may be incorrect and the analysis may not provide an accurate estimate of earnings, which may be the basis for a stock's value. If securities prices adjust rapidly to new information, utilizing fundamental analysis may not result in favorable performance.

Long-Term Purchases - securities purchased with the expectation that the value of those securities will grow over a relatively long period of time, generally greater than one year.

Risk: Using a long-term purchase strategy generally assumes the financial markets will go up in the long-term which may not be the case. There is also the risk that the segment of the market that you are invested in or perhaps just your particular investment will go down over time even if the overall financial markets advance. Purchasing investments long-term may create an opportunity cost - "locking-up" assets that may be better utilized in the short-term in other investments.

Short-Term Purchases - securities purchased with the expectation that they will be sold within a relatively short period of time, generally less than one year, to take advantage of the securities' short-term price fluctuations.

Risk: Using a short-term purchase strategy generally assumes that we can predict how financial markets will perform in the short-term which may be very difficult and will incur a disproportionately higher amount of transaction costs compared to long-term trading. There are many factors that can affect financial market performance in the short-term (such as short-term interest rate changes, cyclical earnings announcements, etc.) but may have a smaller impact over longer periods of times.

Margin Transactions - a securities transaction in which an investor borrows money to purchase a security, in which case the security serves as collateral on the loan.

Risk: If the value of the shares drops sufficiently, the investor will be required to either deposit more cash into the account or sell a portion of the stock in order to maintain the margin requirements of the account. This is known as a "margin call." An investor's overall risk includes the amount of money invested plus the amount that was loaned to them.

Option Writing - a securities transaction that involves selling an option. An option is a contract that gives the buyer the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell a particular security at a specified price on or before the expiration date of the option. When an investor sells a call option, he or she must deliver to the buyer a specified number of shares if the buyer exercises the option. When an investor sells a put option, he or she must pay the strike price per share if the buyer exercises the option, and will receive the specified number of shares. The option writer/seller receives a premium (the market price of the option at a particular time) in exchange for writing the option.

Risk: Options are complex investments and can be very risky, especially if the investor does not own the underlying stock. In certain situations, an investor's risk can be unlimited.

Trading - We may use frequent trading (in general, selling securities within 30 days of purchasing the same securities) as an investment strategy when managing your account(s). Frequent trading is not a fundamental part of our overall investment strategy, but we may use this strategy occasionally when we determine that it is suitable given your stated investment objectives and tolerance for risk. This may include buying and selling securities frequently in an effort to capture significant market gains and avoid significant losses.

Risk: When a frequent trading policy is in effect, there is a risk that investment performance within your account may be negatively affected, particularly through increased brokerage and other transactional costs and taxes.

Our investment strategies and advice may vary depending upon each client's specific financial situation. As such, we determine investments and allocations based upon your predefined objectives, risk tolerance, time horizon, financial information, liquidity needs and other various suitability factors. Your restrictions and guidelines may affect the composition of your portfolio. **It is important that you notify us immediately with respect to any material changes to your financial circumstances, including for example, a change in your current or expected income level, tax circumstances, or employment status.**

We will not perform quantitative or qualitative analysis of individual securities. Instead, we will advise you on how to allocate your assets among various classes of securities or third-party money managers. We primarily rely on investment model portfolios and strategies developed by the third-party money managers and their portfolio managers. We may replace/recommend replacing a third-party money manager if there is a significant deviation in characteristics or performance from the stated strategy and/or benchmark.

Cash Management

In managing the cash maintained in your account, we utilize the cash vehicle (money market) made available by the custodian. There may be other cash management options away from the custodian available to you with higher yields or safer underlying investments, which will be reviewed and utilized as appropriate.

Tax Considerations

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

Custodians and broker-dealers must report the cost basis of equities acquired in client accounts. Your custodian will default to the First-In First-Out ("FIFO") accounting method for calculating the cost basis of your investments. You are responsible for contacting your tax advisor to determine if this accounting

method is the right choice for you. If your tax advisor believes another accounting method is more advantageous, provide written notice to our firm immediately and we will alert your account custodian of your individually selected accounting method. Decisions about cost basis accounting methods will need to be made before trades settle, as the cost basis method cannot be changed after settlement.

Risk of Loss

Investing in securities involves risk of loss that you should be prepared to bear. We do not represent or guarantee that our services or methods of analysis can or will predict future results, successfully identify market tops or bottoms, or insulate clients from losses due to market corrections or declines. We cannot offer any guarantees or promises that your financial goals and objectives will be met. Past performance is in no way an indication of future performance.

Other Risk Considerations

When evaluating risk, financial loss may be viewed differently by each client and may depend on many different risks, each of which may affect the probability and magnitude of any potential losses. The following risks may not be all-inclusive but should be considered carefully by a prospective client before retaining our services.

Liquidity Risk: The risk of being unable to sell your investment at a fair price at a given time due to high volatility or lack of active liquid markets. You may receive a lower price, or it may not be possible to sell the investment at all.

Credit Risk: Credit risk typically applies to debt investments such as corporate, municipal, and sovereign fixed income or bonds. A bond issuing entity can experience a credit event that could impair or erase the value of an issuer's securities held by a client.

Inflation and Interest Rate Risk: Security prices and portfolio returns will likely vary in response to changes in inflation and interest rates. Inflation causes the value of future dollars to be worth less and may reduce the purchasing power of a client's future interest payments and principal. Inflation also generally leads to higher interest rates which may cause the value of many types of fixed income investments to decline.

Horizon and Longevity Risk: The risk that your investment horizon is shortened because of an unforeseen event, for example, the loss of your job. This may force you to sell investments that you were expecting to hold for the long term. If you must sell at a time that the markets are down, you may lose money. Longevity Risk is the risk of outliving your savings. This risk is particularly relevant for people who are retired, or are nearing retirement.

Recommendation of Particular Types of Securities

We recommend various types of securities and we do not primarily recommend one particular type of security over another since each client has different needs and different tolerance for risk. Each type of security has its own unique set of risks associated with it and it would not be possible to list here all of the specific risks of every type of investment. Even within the same type of investment, risks can vary widely. However, in very general terms, the higher the anticipated return of an investment, the higher the risk of loss associated with the investment. A description of the types of securities we may recommend to you and some of their inherent risks are provided below.

Money Market Funds: A money market fund is technically a security. The fund managers attempt to keep the share price constant at \$1/share. However, there is no guarantee that the share price will stay at \$1/share. If the share price goes down, you can lose some or all of your principal. The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") notes that "While investor losses in money market funds have been rare, they are possible." In return for this risk, you should earn a greater return on

your cash than you would expect from a Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation ("FDIC") insured savings account (money market funds are not FDIC insured). Next, money market fund rates are variable. In other words, you do not know how much you will earn on your investment next month. The rate could go up or go down. If it goes up, that may result in a positive outcome. However, if it goes down and you earn less than you expected to earn, you may end up needing more cash. A final risk you are taking with money market funds has to do with inflation. Because money market funds are considered to be safer than other investments like stocks, long-term average returns on money market funds tends to be less than long term average returns on riskier investments. Over long periods of time, inflation can eat away at your returns.

Certificates of Deposit: Certificates of deposit ("CD") are generally a safe type of investment since they are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Company ("FDIC") up to a certain amount. However, because the returns are generally low, there is risk that inflation outpaces the return of the CD. Certain CDs are traded in the marketplace and not purchased directly from a banking institution. In addition to trading risk, when CDs are purchased at a premium, the premium is not covered by the FDIC.

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

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

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

Mutual Funds and Exchange Traded Funds: Mutual funds and exchange traded funds ("ETF") are professionally managed collective investment systems that pool money from many investors and invest in stocks, bonds, short-term money market instruments, other mutual funds, other securities, or any combination thereof. The fund will have a manager that trades the fund's investments in accordance with the fund's investment objective. While mutual funds and ETFs generally provide diversification, risks can be significantly increased if the fund is concentrated in a particular sector of the market, primarily invests in small cap or speculative companies, uses leverage (i.e., borrows money) to a significant degree, or concentrates in a particular type of security (i.e., equities) rather than balancing the fund with different types of securities. ETFs differ from mutual funds since they can be bought and sold throughout the day like stock and their price can fluctuate throughout the day. The returns on mutual funds and ETFs can be reduced by the costs to manage the funds. Also, while some mutual funds are "no load" and charge no fee to buy into, or sell out of, the fund, other types of mutual funds do charge such fees which can also reduce returns. Mutual funds can also be "closed end" or "open

end". So-called "open end" mutual funds continue to allow in new investors indefinitely whereas "closed end" funds have a fixed number of shares to sell which can limit their availability to new investors.

ETFs may have tracking error risks. For example, the ETF investment adviser may not be able to cause the ETF's performance to match that of its Underlying Index or other benchmark, which may negatively affect the ETF's performance. In addition, for leveraged and inverse ETFs that seek to track the performance of their Underlying Indices or benchmarks on a daily basis, mathematical compounding may prevent the ETF from correlating with performance of its benchmark. In addition, an ETF may not have investment exposure to all of the securities included in its Underlying Index, or its weighting of investment exposure to such securities may vary from that of the Underlying Index. Some ETFs may invest in securities or financial instruments that are not included in the Underlying Index, but which are expected to yield similar performance.

Leveraged Exchange Traded Funds: Leveraged Exchange Traded Funds ("Leveraged ETFs" or "L-ETF") seeks investment results for a single day only, not for longer periods. A "single day" is measured from the time the L-ETF calculates its net asset value ("NAV") to the time of the L-ETF's next NAV calculation. The return of the L-ETF for periods longer than a single day will be the result of each day's returns compounded over the period, which will very likely differ from multiplying the return by the stated leverage for that period. For periods longer than a single day, the L-ETF will lose money when the level of the Index is flat, and it is possible that the L-ETF will lose money even if the level of the Index rises. Longer holding periods, higher index volatility and greater leverage both exacerbate the impact of compounding on an investor's returns. During periods of higher Index volatility, the volatility of the Index may affect the L-ETF's return as much as or more than the return of the Index. Leveraged ETFs are different from most exchange-traded funds in that they seek leveraged returns relative to the applicable index and only on a daily basis. The L-ETF also is riskier than similarly benchmarked exchange-traded funds that do not use leverage. Accordingly, the L-ETF may not be suitable for all investors and should be used only by knowledgeable investors who understand the potential consequences of seeking daily leveraged investment results.

Leveraged ETF Leveraged Risk: The L-ETF obtains investment exposure in excess of its assets in seeking to achieve its investment objective — a form of leverage — and will lose more money in market environments adverse to its daily objective than a similar fund that does not employ such leverage. The use of such leverage could result in the total loss of an investor's investment. For example: a 2X fund will have a multiplier of two times (2x) the Index. A single day movement in the Index approaching 50% at any point in the day could result in the total loss of a shareholder's investment if that movement is contrary to the investment objective of the L-ETF, even if the Index subsequently moves in an opposite direction, eliminating all or a portion of the earlier movement. This would be the case with any such single day movements in the Index, even if the Index maintains a level greater than zero at all times.

Leveraged ETF Compounding Risk: Compounding affects all investments but has a more significant impact on a leveraged fund. Particularly during periods of higher Index volatility, compounding will cause results for periods longer than a single day to vary from the stated multiplier of the return of the Index. This effect becomes more pronounced as volatility increases.

Leveraged ETF Use of Derivatives: The L-ETF obtains investment exposure through derivatives. Investing in derivatives may be considered aggressive and may expose the L-ETF to greater risks than investing directly in the reference asset(s) underlying those derivatives. These risks include counterparty risk, liquidity risk and increased correlation risk (each as discussed below). When the L-ETF uses derivatives, there may be imperfect correlation between the value of the reference asset(s) and the derivative, which may prevent the L-ETF from achieving its investment objective.

Because derivatives often require only a limited initial investment, the use of derivatives also may expose the L-ETF to losses in excess of those amounts initially invested. The L-ETF may use a combination of swaps on the Index and swaps on an ETF that is designed to track the performance of the Index. The performance of an ETF may not track the performance of the Index due to embedded costs and other factors. Thus, to the extent the L-ETF invests in swaps that use an ETF as the reference asset, the L-ETF may be subject to greater correlation risk and may not achieve as high a degree of correlation with the Index as it would if the L-ETF only used swaps on the Index. Moreover, with respect to the use of swap agreements, if the Index has a dramatic intraday move that causes a material decline in the L-ETF's net assets, the terms of a swap agreement between the L-ETF and its counterparty may permit the counterparty to immediately close out the transaction with the L-ETF. In that event, the L-ETF may be unable to enter into another swap agreement or invest in other derivatives to achieve the desired exposure consistent with the L-ETF's investment objective. This, in turn, may prevent the L-ETF from achieving its investment objective, even if the Index reverses all or a portion of its intraday move by the end of the day. Any costs associated with using derivatives will also have the effect of lowering the L-ETF's return.

Options Contracts: Options are complex securities that involve risks and are not suitable for everyone. Option trading can be speculative in nature and carry substantial risk of loss. It is generally recommended that you only invest in options with risk capital. An option is a contract that gives the buyer the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell an underlying asset at a specific price on or before a certain date (the "expiration date"). The two types of options are calls and puts:

A call gives the holder the right to buy an asset at a certain price within a specific period of time. Calls are similar to having a long position on a stock. Buyers of calls hope that the stock will increase substantially before the option expires.

A put gives the holder the right to sell an asset at a certain price within a specific period of time. Puts are very similar to having a short position on a stock. Buyers of puts hope that the price of the stock will fall before the option expires.

Selling options is more complicated and can be even riskier.

The option trading risks pertaining to options buyers are:

- Risk of losing your entire investment in a relatively short period of time.
- The risk of losing your entire investment increases if, as expiration nears, the stock is below the strike price of the call (for a call option) or if the stock is higher than the strike price of the put (for a put option).
- European style options which do not have secondary markets on which to sell the options prior to expiration can only realize its value upon expiration.
- Specific exercise provisions of a specific option contract may create risks.
- Regulatory agencies may impose exercise restrictions, which stops you from realizing value.

The option trading risks pertaining to options sellers are:

- Options sold may be exercised at any time before expiration.
- Covered Call traders forgo the right to profit when the underlying stock rises above the strike price of the call options sold and continues to risk a loss due to a decline in the underlying stock.
- Writers of Naked Calls risk unlimited losses if the underlying stock rises.
- Writers of Naked Puts risk substantial losses if the underlying stock drops.

- Writers of naked positions run margin risks if the position goes into significant losses. Such risks may include liquidation by the broker.
- Writers of call options could lose more money than a short seller of that stock could on the same rise on that underlying stock. This is an example of how the leverage in options can work against the option trader.
- Writers of Naked Calls are obligated to deliver shares of the underlying stock if those call options are exercised.
- Call options can be exercised outside of market hours such that effective remedy actions cannot be performed by the writer of those options.
- Writers of stock options are obligated under the options that they sold even if a trading market is not available or that they are unable to perform a closing transaction.
- The value of the underlying stock may surge or decline unexpectedly, leading to automatic exercises.

Other option trading risks are:

- The complexity of some option strategies is a significant risk on its own.
- Option trading exchanges or markets and option contracts themselves are open to changes at all times.
- Options markets have the right to halt the trading of any options, thus preventing investors from realizing value.
- Risk of erroneous reporting of exercise value.
- If an options brokerage firm goes insolvent, investors trading through that firm may be affected.
- Internationally traded options have special risks due to timing across borders.

Risks that are not specific to options trading include market risk, sector risk and individual stock risk. Option trading risks are closely related to stock risks, as stock options are a derivative of stocks.

Item 9 Disciplinary Information

We are required to disclose the facts of any legal or disciplinary events that are material to a client's evaluation of our advisory business or the integrity of our management. Our firm or a management person has been involved in the event(s) described below.

- In December of 2016, FINRA brought action against the broker-dealer relating to municipal bonds. Without admitting or denying the findings, the firm consented to sanctions and to the entry of findings that it recommended and sold municipal bonds to retail customers in amounts below the minimum denomination. The findings state that on three occasions, the firm failed to disclose to customers that their purchase was in an amount below the minimum denomination. The findings also stated that the firm recommended and sold four bonds in transactions to customers who were not qualified institutional buyers ("QIBs"), even though the official statements for these bonds states that they were eligible for sale only to QIBs. The findings also included that the firm's written supervisory procedures ("WSPs") prohibited the sale of bonds below the minimum denomination and restricted the sale of bonds with a QIB restriction to eligible purchasers. The firm was found not to have adequate systems or controls in place to monitor and prohibit sales below minimum denominations or to ineligible purchasers. The firm was censured and fined \$45,000. Fines were paid in full January 10, 2017.
- In February of 2021, FINRA brought action against the broker-dealer relating to municipal bonds. Without admitting or denying the findings, the firm consented to the sanctions and to the entry of findings that is charged unfair and unreasonable mark-ups and mark-downs in transactions involving below investment grade municipal securities. The findings stated that in

some instances, the mark-ups charged by the firm resulted from the use of an average cost methodology ("ACM") to calculate the mark-ups instead of calculating the mark-ups based on the firm's contemporaneous cost. In those instances where the firm used an ACM the firm calculated mark-ups based upon the average price paid by the firm to acquire the same bonds in similar inter-dealer transactions instead of the firm's contemporaneous cost. In the remaining transactions, the firm charged mark-ups and mark-downs without reasonably considering the prevailing market price of the bonds based upon the firm's contemporaneous cost or proceeds. The findings also stated that the firm failed to establish and maintain a supervisory system, including WSPs, reasonably designed to achieve compliance with its municipal securities fair pricing obligations. The firm's supervisory system was not reasonably designed to determine when an ACM was used or how firm supervisors should determine the prevailing market price for bonds under such circumstances. In addition, the firms WSPs did not provide reasonable guidance as to how the firm's supervisors should assess whether a mark-up or mark-down that met the firm's internal guidelines was fair and reasonable, including whether the mark-up was based upon the prevailing market price of the subject bonds. The firm was censured and fined \$90,000 and was ordered to pay \$42,226.06, plus interest, in restitution to customers and to further revise its WSPs.

- Associated Person Carmine Claudio Capone (CRD# 1124455):
 - In June of 2009, a client complained that the Account Executive failed to reconfigure her portfolio to be consistent with her investment objectives and risk tolerance. The client alleged that all trades undertaken were unauthorized. Settlement amount \$675,000. He was named as supervisor.
 - In October of 2015, Capone entered into an Acceptance, Waiver and Consent with FINRA whereby, without admitting or denying the findings, Capone consented to the sanctions and to the entry of findings that his member firm, acting through him, failed to adequately supervise the sales practices of a registered representative who recommended and engaged in unsuitable trading in nontraditional exchange traded funds in four customer accounts, and exercised discretion without having obtained prior written authorization in fourteen customer accounts. Capone was suspended by FINRA in all capacities for 30 business days and fined \$10,000.
 - In November of 2015, a client alleged negligent supervision during the period of October 2011 through October 2015. Settlement amount \$350,000.
 - In August of 2018, a client alleged that misrepresentation, breach of fiduciary duty, unsuitable recommendations, and negligence from inception of accounts. Settlement amount \$850,000. Capone was named as supervisor.
- Associated Person Melvin Feldman (CRD# 205924)
 - In May of 2004, the National Association of Securities Dealers ("NASD" now known as FINRA) censured and fined the broker-dealer \$10,000 for violation of NASD membership and registration rule 1031(A) and NASD Conduct Rules 2110 and 3010B.
- Associated Person Paul Robert Konsig (CRD # 500443)
 - In June of 1984, the state of Tennessee reported that he was an officer at a firm that was suspended as a broker-dealer in the state of Tennessee years earlier. He neglected to report this on his U4 and was suspended by the state.
 - On September of 1984, Konsig, while employed by another registered broker/dealer, was the subject of an Order of the SEC. and without admitting or denying the allegations, consented to the Findings and Imposition of a suspension from association with any broker, dealer or municipal securities dealer for a period of 30 days. The findings related to aiding and abetting violations of MSRB Rule G-30 (for adjusted trading in municipal securities) and Section 17(a) of the Exchange Act of 1934 and

S.E.C. Rule 17a-3 (failure to maintain accurate books and records).

- In December of 2007, FINRA brought action against the broker-dealer relating to municipal bonds. The firm purchased/sold municipal securities for its own account from/to a total of four customers at an aggregate price that was not fair or reasonable. Without admitting or denying the findings, the firm consented to a censure and fine of \$10,000 and was also required to pay \$2,336.87, plus interest, in restitution to a total of four public customers.
- In December of 2008, FINRA brought action against the broker-dealer for alleged violations of NASD marketplace rules 6230(A) and (C)(8) and conduct Rule 2110 in that the firm failed to report to TRACE 264 of its transactions that were in TRACE eligible securities within 15 minutes of execution and failed to report the time of execution for each such transaction. This represented 17% of all transactions the firm was required to report to TRACE during the period reviewed (7/1/08-9/30/08). Without admitting or denying findings, the firm consented to the sanctions and was fined \$5,000.
- In May of 2011, FINRA brought charged against the broker-dealer. At various times during the period of May 8, 2008 through May 24, 2008 the firm failed to deliver official statements by settlement date to certain customers who had purchased new issue municipal securities during the primary offering disclosure period in accordance with MSRB Rule G-17 and G-32. The firm's WSPs and internal compliance review procedures were deficient with respect to delivery of official statements to customers for new issue municipal securities as required by MSRV G-27 and G-32. Without admitting or denying the findings, the firm was censured and fined \$50,000.

The GMS Group, LLC maintains the ability to function without restriction. The details on the above matters related to 's disciplinary history can be found on the IAPD. The IAPD link is www.adviserinfo.sec.gov.

Item 10 Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations

Registration as Broker-Dealer

Our firm is also registered as a broker-dealer and is a member of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority and the Securities Investor Protection Corporation.

Registrations with Broker-Dealer

Persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm are registered representatives with The GMS Group, LLC a securities broker-dealer, and a member of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority and the Securities Investor Protection Corporation. See the *Fees and Compensation* section in this brochure for more information on the compensation received by registered representatives who are affiliated with our firm.

Licensed Insurance Agency

Our firm is also licensed as an insurance agency. Therefore, persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm may be licensed as insurance agents. These persons will earn commission-based compensation for selling insurance products, including insurance products they sell to you. Insurance commissions earned by these persons are separate from our advisory fees. See the *Fees and Compensation* section in this brochure for more information on the compensation received by insurance agents who are affiliated with our firm.

Registered Municipal Advisor

Our firm is also a registered municipal advisor.

Recommendation of Other Advisers

We may recommend that you use a third party money manager ("TPMM") based on your needs and suitability. We will receive compensation from the TPMM for recommending that you use their services. These compensation arrangements present a conflict of interest because we have a financial incentive to recommend the services of the third party adviser. You are not obligated, contractually or otherwise, to use the services of any TPMM we recommend. We do not have any other business relationships with the recommended TPMM(s). Refer to the *Advisory Business* section above for additional disclosures on this topic.

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

Description of Our Code of Ethics

We strive to comply with applicable laws and regulations governing our practices. Therefore, our Code of Ethics includes guidelines for professional standards of conduct for persons associated with our firm. Our goal is to protect your interests at all times and to demonstrate our commitment to our fiduciary duties of honesty, good faith, and fair dealing with you. All persons associated with our firm are expected to adhere strictly to these guidelines. Persons associated with our firm are also required to report any violations of our Code of Ethics. Additionally, we maintain and enforce written policies reasonably designed to prevent the misuse or dissemination of material, nonpublic information about you or your account holdings by persons associated with our firm.

Clients or prospective clients may obtain a copy of our Code of Ethics by contacting us at the telephone number on the cover page of this brochure.

Personal Trading Practices

Our firm or persons associated with our firm may buy or sell the same securities that we recommend to you or securities in which you are already invested. A conflict of interest exists in such cases because we have the ability to trade ahead of you and potentially receive more favorable prices than you will receive. To mitigate this conflict of interest, it is our policy that neither our firm nor persons associated with our firm shall have priority over your account in the purchase or sale of securities.

Aggregated Trading

Our firm or persons associated with our firm may buy or sell securities for you at the same time we or persons associated with our firm buy or sell such securities for our own account. We may also combine our orders to purchase securities with your orders to purchase securities ("aggregated trading"). Refer to the *Brokerage Practices* section in this brochure for information on our aggregated trading practices.

A conflict of interest exists in such cases because we have the ability to trade ahead of you and potentially receive more favorable prices than you will receive. To eliminate this conflict of interest, it is our policy that neither our firm nor persons associated with our firm shall have priority over your account in the purchase or sale of securities.

Item 12 Brokerage Practices

We maintain relationships with several broker-dealers. While you are free to choose any broker-dealer or other service provider as your custodian, we recommend that you establish an account with a brokerage firm with which we have an existing relationship. Such relationships may include benefits provided to our firm, including but not limited to market information and administrative services that help our firm manage your account(s). We believe that the recommended broker-dealers provide

quality execution services for our clients at competitive prices. Price is not the sole factor we consider in evaluating best execution. We also consider the quality of the brokerage services provided by recommended broker-dealers, including the value of the firm's reputation, execution capabilities, commission rates, and responsiveness to our clients and our firm. In recognition of the value of the services recommended broker-dealers provide, you may pay higher commissions and/or trading costs than those that may be available elsewhere.

Research and Other Soft Dollar Benefits

We do not have any soft dollar arrangements.

Economic Benefits

As a registered investment adviser, we have access to the institutional platform of your account custodian. As such, we will also have access to research products and services from your account custodian and/or other brokerage firm. These products are in addition to any benefits or research we pay for with soft dollars, and may include financial publications, information about particular companies and industries, research software, and other products or services that provide lawful and appropriate assistance to our firm in the performance of our investment decision-making responsibilities. Such research products and services are provided to all investment advisers that utilize the institutional services platforms of these firms and are not considered to be paid for with soft dollars. However, you should be aware that the commissions charged by a particular broker for a particular transaction or set of transactions may be greater than the amounts another broker who did not provide research services or products might charge.

Brokerage for Client Referrals

We do not receive client referrals from broker-dealers in exchange for cash or other compensation, such as brokerage services or research.

Directed Brokerage

Persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm who are registered representatives of The GMS Group, LLC will recommend The GMS Group, LLC to you for brokerage services. These individuals are subject to applicable rules that restrict them from conducting securities transactions away from The GMS Group, LLC unless The GMS Group, LLC provides the representative with written authorization to do so. Therefore, these individuals are generally limited to conducting securities transactions through The GMS Group, LLC. It may be the case that The GMS Group, LLC charges higher transactions costs and/or custodial fees than another broker charges for the same types of services. If transactions are executed through The GMS Group, LLC, these individuals (in their separate capacities as registered representatives of The GMS Group, LLC) may earn commission-based compensation as result of placing the recommended securities transactions through The GMS Group, LLC. This practice presents a conflict of interest because these registered representatives have an incentive to effect securities transactions for the purpose of generating commissions rather than solely based on your needs. You may utilize the broker-dealer of your choice and have no obligation to purchase or sell securities through such broker as we recommend. However, if you do not use The GMS Group, LLC, we may not be able to accept your account. See the *Fees and Compensation* section in this brochure for more information on the compensation received by registered representatives who are affiliated with our firm.

Aggregated Trades

As appropriate, we combine multiple orders for shares of the same securities purchased for discretionary advisory accounts we manage (this practice is commonly referred to as "aggregated trading"). We will then distribute a portion of the shares to participating accounts in a fair and equitable manner. Generally, participating accounts will pay a fixed transaction cost regardless of the number of shares transacted. In certain cases, each participating account pays an average price

per share for all transactions and pays a proportionate share of all transaction costs on any given day. In the event an order is only partially filled, the shares will be allocated to participating accounts in a fair and equitable manner, typically in proportion to the size of each client's order. Accounts owned by our firm or persons associated with our firm may participate in aggregated trading with your accounts; however, they will not be given preferential treatment.

We do not aggregate trades for non-discretionary accounts. Accordingly, non-discretionary accounts may pay different costs than discretionary accounts pay. If you enter into non-discretionary arrangements with our firm, we may not be able to buy and sell the same quantities of securities for you and you may pay higher commissions, fees, and/or transaction costs than clients who enter into discretionary arrangements with our firm.

Item 13 Review of Accounts

The GMS Group, LLC will monitor your accounts on an ongoing basis and will conduct account reviews at least monthly, to ensure the advisory services provided to you are consistent with your investment needs and objectives. Additional reviews may be conducted based on various circumstances, including, but not limited to:

- contributions and withdrawals;
- year-end tax planning;
- market moving events;
- security specific events; and/or
- changes in your risk/return objectives.

We will not provide you with regular written reports. You will receive trade confirmations and monthly or quarterly statements from your account custodian(s).

Item 14 Client Referrals and Other Compensation

As disclosed under the *Fees and Compensation* section in this brochure, persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm are licensed insurance agents, and are registered representatives with The GMS Group, LLC, a securities broker-dealer, and a member of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority and the Securities Investor Protection Corporation. For information on the conflicts of interest this presents, and how we address these conflicts, refer to the *Fees and Compensation* section.

Other Compensation

We receive compensation from ValueWorks LLC for referring clients to them. This arrangement will not cause you to pay more in advisory fees than you would otherwise pay had there been no solicitor's compensation. All referral fees paid to our firm represent a portion of the fees actually charged to you by ValueWorks LLC for investment advisory services. There is no differential between the amount or level of investment advisory fees that ValueWorks LLC will charge for managing the client account(s) in excess of that which they would customarily charge for managing any other new client's account with similar assets and which was not referred to ValueWorks LLC by our firm.

Item 15 Custody

Your independent custodian will directly debit your account(s) for the payment of our advisory fees. This ability to deduct our advisory fees from your accounts causes our firm to exercise limited custody over your funds or securities. We do not have physical custody of any of your funds and/or securities. Your funds and securities will be held with a bank, broker-dealer, or other qualified custodian. You will

receive account statements from the qualified custodian(s) holding your funds and securities at least quarterly. The account statements from your custodian(s) will indicate the amount of our advisory fees deducted from your account(s) each billing period. You should carefully review account statements for accuracy.

We will also provide statements to you reflecting the amount of the advisory fee deducted from your account. You should compare our statements with the statements from your account custodian(s) to reconcile the information reflected on each statement. If you have a question regarding your account statement, or if you did not receive a statement from your custodian, contact us immediately at the telephone number on the cover page of this brochure.

Item 16 Investment Discretion

Before we can buy or sell securities on your behalf, you must first sign our discretionary management agreement and the appropriate trading authorization forms.

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

Item 17 Voting Client Securities

We will not vote proxies on behalf of your advisory accounts. At your request, we may offer you advice regarding corporate actions and the exercise of your proxy voting rights. If you own shares of applicable securities, you are responsible for exercising your right to vote as a shareholder.

In most cases, you will receive proxy materials directly from the account custodian. However, in the event we were to receive any written or electronic proxy materials, we would forward them directly to you by mail, unless you have authorized our firm to contact you by electronic mail, in which case, we would forward any electronic solicitations to vote proxies.

Item 18 Financial Information

Our firm does not have any financial condition or impairment that would prevent us from meeting our contractual commitments to you. We do not take physical custody of client funds or securities, or serve as trustee or signatory for client accounts, and we do not require the prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees six or more months in advance. Therefore, we are not required to include a financial statement with this brochure.

We have not filed a bankruptcy petition at any time in the past ten years.