

# Fortress Planning Group Firm Brochure

---

*This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Fortress Planning Group, LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at (262) 264-5838 or [scott@fortressplanninggroup.com](mailto:scott@fortressplanninggroup.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 Fortress Planning Group, LLC is also available on the SEC's website at:*

**[www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov)**

N27W23953 Paul Rd

Suite 103

Pewaukee, WI 53072

(262) 264-5838

[scott@fortressplanninggroup.com](mailto:scott@fortressplanninggroup.com)

[www.fortressplanninggroup.com](http://www.fortressplanninggroup.com)

March 13, 2024

## **Item 2: Material Changes**

This Firm Brochure is our disclosure document prepared according to regulatory requirements and rules. Consistent with the rules, we will ensure that you receive a summary of any material changes to this and subsequent Brochures within 120 days of the close of our business fiscal year. Furthermore, we will provide you with other interim disclosures about material changes as necessary. At this time, the material changes made since the last annual update of this brochure issued on February 8, 2023, are described below:

- Item 12: TD Ameritrade Inc. is no longer a custodian of Fortress Planning Group. TD Ameritrade Inc. was purchased by and merged with Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. Fortress Planning Group uses Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. as their sole custodian.
- Item 19: Requirements for State-Registered Advisers removed due to Fortress Planning Group no longer being registered as a State-Registered firm. Fortress Planning Group is now registered with the SEC.

## Item 3: Table of Contents

### Table of Contents

Item 2: Material Changes .....	2
Item 3: Table of Contents .....	3
Item 4: Advisory Business .....	4
Item 5: Fees and Compensation .....	6
Item 6: Performance-Based Fees and Side-By-Side Management .....	8
Item 7: Types of Clients .....	8
Item 8: Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies, and Risk of Loss .....	8
Item 9: Disciplinary Information .....	10
Item 10: Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations .....	10
Item 11: Code of Ethics, Participation or Interest in Client Transactions and Personal Trading .....	11
Item 12: Brokerage Practices .....	12
Item 13: Review of Accounts .....	14
Item 14: Client Referrals and Other Compensation .....	14
Item 15: Custody .....	15
Item 16: Investment Discretion .....	15
Item 17: Voting Client Securities (Proxy Voting) .....	16
Item 18: Financial Information .....	16

## Item 4: Advisory Business

### **Description of the Advisory Firm**

Fortress Planning Group, LLC (“Fortress Planning Group”) is a registered investment advisor based in Pewaukee, WI. We are organized as a limited liability company under the laws of the state of Wisconsin. We have been providing wealth management services since 2011. Scott Wellens, CFP® is the founding member and a partner. Kevin Sandieson and Brian Cayon CFA® CPA are also partners. For information purposes, a registered investment adviser does not imply a certain level of skill or training.

Our firm is an investment management firm. The firm's compensation is solely from asset under management fees paid directly by clients. The firm does not earn commissions from the sale of annuities, insurance, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, limited partnerships, or other commissioned products. No commissions in any form are accepted. No finder's fees are accepted.

When we provide investment advice to you regarding your retirement account or individual retirement account, we are fiduciaries within the meaning of Title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act and/or the Internal Revenue Code, as applicable, which are laws governing retirement accounts. The way we make money creates some conflicts with your interests, so we operate under a special rule that requires us to act in your best interest and not put our interests ahead of yours.

Under this special rule's provisions, we must:

- Meet a professional standard of care when making investment recommendations (give prudent advice)
- Never put our financial interests ahead of yours when making recommendations (give loyal advice)
- Avoid misleading statements about conflicts of interest, fees, and investments

- Follow policies and procedures designed to ensure that we give advice that is in your best interest
- Charge no more than is reasonable for our services
- Give you basic information about conflicts of interest

Fortress Planning Group focuses on a comprehensive consultative approach to wealth management. We believe that strong, trusting relationships with our clients will have a substantial positive impact in reaching their goals and dreams. To achieve this holistic approach, we use a four-step wealth management consulting process to begin the fostering of this relationship.

Step 1 - Discovery Meeting - We begin to develop a total client profile during this initial meeting. We learn about the client's values, interests, goals, assets, risk capacity, relationships, and dreams.

Step 2 - Planning Meeting - We present a detailed, actionable investment plan that will serve as a roadmap that maximizes the probability of achieving everything that is financially important to the client. Please refer to the "Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies and Risk of Loss" section (Item 8) of this brochure for additional information.

Step 3 - Commitment Meeting - We mutually agree that this plan is in the best interest of supporting client's goals and values. We use this time to assist the client in executing the documents necessary to implement the investment plan.

Step 4 - Review Meetings - We review client progress towards goals and values, assess risk tolerance with regards to any change in age and circumstance, and solution solve new goals. We also use these meetings to build a comprehensive wealth plan that includes wealth enhancement, wealth transfer, wealth protection and charitable giving.

### **Types of Investments**

We primarily recommend mutual funds and exchange traded funds; however, we may also offer advice on equity securities, Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITS),

corporate debt securities, municipal debt securities, mutual funds, exchange traded funds, variable annuities, variable life insurance, and U.S. Government securities. We may also provide advice on any type of investment held in your portfolio at the inception of our advisory relationship.

Clients may also impose restrictions on investing in certain securities or types of securities in accordance with their values or beliefs. However, if the restrictions prevent us from properly servicing the client accounts, or if the restrictions would require us to deviate from its standard suite of services, we reserve the right to end the relationship.

Fortress Planning Group does not participate in wrap fee programs.

As of March 13, 2024, Fortress Planning Group managed approximately \$226,305,572 of discretionary assets and \$0 of non-discretionary assets.

**Item 5: Fees and Compensation**

**Investment Supervisory Services Fees**

Our fee for investment advisory services is an asset-based fee calculated as a percentage of the value of the managed assets according to the following fee schedule:

Total Assets Under Management	Annual Fee
First \$1,000,000	0.95%
Next \$1,000,000	0.75%
Next \$5,000,000	0.50%
Next \$10,000,000 (+)	0.25%

Our annual investment advisory fees are billed quarterly and payable three months in advance. The fee is based upon the value of the assets held in the account on the last trading day of the month immediately prior to the three-

month period. You will not be billed until you have signed our client agreement and completed the account opening/transfer process. Our advisory fee is negotiable. We will deduct our fee directly from your account through the qualified custodian holding your funds and securities. The qualified custodian will deliver an account statement to you at least quarterly showing all disbursements from your account. We will send an itemized fee invoice to you via our client portal at the same time that the fee is deducted from your account. Please compare the invoice to your account statement for accuracy and contact us if there are any questions.

Refunds are given on a prorated basis, based on the number of days remaining in the three-month billing cycle at the point of written termination. Clients may terminate their contracts without penalty, for full refund, within 5 business days of signing the advisory contract.

### **Additional Fees and Expenses**

In some cases, as outlined in our investment management agreement, an annual maintenance fee of \$75 may be charged in addition to the quarterly fee.

The fees that you pay to us for investment advisory services are separate and distinct from the fees and expenses charged by mutual funds to their shareholders. These fees are described in each fund's prospectus. You will incur transaction and/or brokerage fees when we purchase or sell mutual funds/exchange traded funds or other securities in your account. You may also pay other custodial fees. Please see your custodian account agreement for details. We do not share in any fees charged by the broker-dealer or custodian. Please refer to the "Brokerage Practices" section (Item 12) of this brochure for additional information.

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

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

Performance based fees are fees that are based on a share of capital appreciation of the client's account.

## **Item 7: Types of Clients**

Fortress Planning Group provides holistic financial planning and investments management to individuals and high net-worth individuals.

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

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

Fortress Planning Group does not participate in market timing. We view market timing activities as speculation, rather than investing. We believe that utilizing these strategies make it near impossible to capture market returns over the long run. Instead, we utilize broadly diversified mutual funds and exchange traded funds over multiple asset classes to capture global market returns given the clients risk exposure. These asset classes include US large and small blend and value, international large and small blend and value, and emerging markets. We rely on Nobel Prize winning strategies, empirical studies, and data sets ranging over an 80-year period. We also recommend real estate investment trusts (REITS), equity securities and short-term fixed income to further diversify the



client's portfolio. Many academics have earned Nobel Prizes for their research and explanation of how stock markets work. We use the findings of the following individuals to help shape the construction of our client portfolios.

**Paul A. Samuelson (Nobel Laureate) - Markets Behave Randomly**  
**William F. Sharpe (Nobel Laureate) - Capital Asset Pricing Model**  
**Harry Markowitz (Nobel Laureate) - Efficient Diversification**  
**Eugene F. Fama (Nobel Laureate) - Market Efficiency**  
**Kenneth R. French (Dartmouth University) - Risk Factors**

We apply the tenants of Modern Portfolio Theory, which in part, states that risk must be considered as well as return. We understand and utilize efficient diversification which means that we will search for the highest expected return for any level of portfolio risk. We also use the findings of Eugene F. Fama and Kenneth R. French who together identified three risk factors associated with stock market returns which are market, size, value and profitability. We apply these findings and tilt our clients' portfolios towards value and small cap mutual funds and exchange traded funds. However, we consider each client's investment objectives, financial situation, constraints and risk tolerance in building a portfolio and can adjust accordingly.

Based on all our academic research, we believe that Dimensional Fund Advisors stands out as the mutual fund company that best utilizes the traits described above, therefore, this is the company our firm primarily uses to construct our portfolios. We also use other leading mutual fund/exchange traded fund companies.

Clients should be aware that, although Fortress Planning Group receives no compensation from mutual fund companies, these companies may also offer educational events, research or occasional business entertainment of Fortress Planning Group personnel. These benefits create a conflict of interest and may directly or indirectly influence Fortress Planning Groups investment recommendations.

### **Risk of Investment Loss**

Investing in securities involves a risk of loss that you, as a client, should be prepared to bear. Material risks associated with our strategy includes systematic risk. Systematic risk is also known as market risk and relates to factors that affect the overall economy or securities markets. Systematic risk affects all companies, regardless of the company's financial condition, management, or capital structure, and, depending on the investment, can involve international as well as domestic factors. Nonsystematic risk, in contrast to systematic risk, affects a much smaller number of companies or investments and is associated with investing in a particular product, company, or industry sector. Investing in broadly diversified portfolios works to minimize nonsystematic risk. Although broadly diversified portfolio strategies seek to limit nonsystematic risk, it does still occur.

#### **Item 9: Disciplinary Information**

Like other registered investment advisors, Fortress Planning Group is required to disclose all material facts regarding any legal or disciplinary events that would materially impact a client's evaluation of our firm. No events have occurred at Fortress Planning Group that is applicable to this item.

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

Neither Fortress Planning Group, nor its representatives are registered as a broker/dealer or as a representative of a broker dealer. Neither Fortress Planning Group nor its representatives are registered as a futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator, a commodity trading advisor, or an associated person of the foregoing entities.

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

### **Code of Ethics**

Our firm has adopted a Code of Ethics that sets forth high ethical standards of business conduct that we require of our employees, including compliance with applicable federal securities laws. We owe a duty of loyalty, fairness, and good faith towards our clients. We are Fiduciaries and have a legal obligation to put clients' interests ahead of our own. The Fortress Planning Group written Code of Ethics covers the following areas: Compliance Procedures, Compliance with Laws and Regulations, Prohibited Purchases and Sales, Insider Trading, Prohibited Activities, Conflicts of Interest, Political and Charitable Contributions, Gifts and Entertainment, Service on Board of Directors, Confidentiality, Personal Securities Reporting and Monitoring, Certification of Compliance, Reporting Violations and Whistleblower Provisions, Compliance Officer Duties, Training and Education, Recordkeeping, Annual Review, and Sanctions. Clients or prospective clients will be provided a copy of our Code of Ethics upon request.

### **Participation or Interest in Client Transactions**

Neither Fortress Planning Group nor any related person has any material financial interests in the securities recommended to clients.

### **Personal Trading**

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. To eliminate this potential conflict of interest, it is our policy that neither our associated persons nor we shall have priority over your account in the purchase or sale of securities.

## Item 12: Brokerage Practices

The custodian used by Fortress Planning Group is Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. We believe that commissions charged by this custodian are among the lowest available in the industry. We also consider the quality of the brokerage services provided, the firm's reputations, execution capabilities, commission rates, and responsiveness to our clients and our firm. We will never charge a premium or commission on transactions, beyond the actual costs imposed by the Custodian.

### **Research and Other Soft Dollar Benefits**

Clients should be aware that there is no direct link between Schwab and Fortress Planning Group in connection with the advice Fortress Planning Group gives to clients. Schwab offers services to independently registered investment advisers which include custody of securities, trade execution, and clearance and settlement of transactions. Fortress Planning Group receives economic benefits through the relationship it has with these custodians that are not typically available to retail investors. These benefits may include the following products and services, provided to Fortress Planning Group without cost or at a discount: duplicate client statements and confirmations, research related products and tools, consulting services, access to a trading desk serving IARs, access to block trading (which provides the ability to aggregate securities transactions for execution and then allocate the appropriate shares directly to or from client accounts), the ability to have advisory fees deducted directly from client accounts, access to an electronic communications network for client order entry and account information, access to mutual funds with no transaction fees, and discounts or no fees on compliance, marketing, research, technology, and practice management products and services provided by third-party vendors. These custodians may also pay for business consulting, professional services, and research received by Fortress Planning Group affiliated persons and may also pay or reimburse expenses (travel, lodging, meals, and entertainment expenses) for Fortress Planning Group personnel to attend conferences or meetings relating to their service platforms or to their advisor custody and brokerage services.

generally. Some of these products and services made available by the custodians, may benefit Fortress Planning Group, but may not benefit its clients. Such other services made available by the custodians are intended to help Fortress Planning Group manage and further develop its business enterprise, and such services may or may not depend on the amount of brokerage transactions directed to them. The benefits received by Fortress Planning Group or its personnel through participation in the custodians' programs do not depend on the amount of brokerage transactions directed to the custodian.

Clients should be aware that the receipt of economic benefits by Fortress Planning Group or its related persons described above, in and of itself, creates an incentive and conflict of interest and may directly or indirectly influence Fortress Planning Group's recommendation of Schwab for custody and brokerage services.

### **Brokerage for Client Referrals**

Fortress Planning Group receives no referrals from a broker-dealer or third party in exchange for using that broker-dealer or third party.

### **Directed Brokerage**

Fortress Planning Group will not allow clients to direct us to use a specific broker-dealer to execute transactions.

### **Block Trades**

Block trades will be placed only when we have determined that the block trade is in the best interest of each client participating in the order, is consistent with our duty to obtain best execution and is consistent with the terms of the investment management agreement of each participating client. The price of the securities purchased or sold in a block trade will be at the average price for all transactions of the participating client in the block trade for that security with transaction costs applied to each participating client account individually.

### Item 13: Reviews of Accounts

Review of accounts is done at least quarterly by your Investment Advisor at Fortress Planning Group, to determine if the current investment holdings of the account are consistent with the client's investment objectives. Additional reviews may take place based on the various circumstances. Examples of such circumstances may be a change in contributions or withdrawals, or changes in your risk/return objectives or your risk capacity. Each client will receive a written quarterly statement reflecting portfolio value, portfolio holdings and rate of return. We will also send quarterly itemized fee invoices. Clients should compare their invoices to the account statements for accuracy. You will also receive trade confirmations, monthly or quarterly statements, and year-end tax statements from your account custodian, Charles Schwab & Co., Inc.

### Item 14: Client Referrals and Other Compensation

It is our policy **not** to engage solicitors or to pay related or non-related persons for referring potential clients to our firm. Furthermore, it is our policy **not** to accept or allow our related persons to accept any form of compensation, including cash, sales awards or other prizes, from a non-client in conjunction with the advisory services we provide to our clients.

Fortress Planning Group does have a relationship with Ramsey Solutions (“RS”) whereby RS provides online advertising services in exchange for a flat monthly marketing fee. The services include advertising space on RS’s web based SmartVestor™ lists assigned to particular geographic markets, use of the SmartVestor™ marks in advertising, and provision of other marketing materials. Potential clients using the SmartVestor™ site may select and choose to contact the advisory representative for services; potential clients are not referred to Fortress Planning Group.

### **Item 15: Custody**

Fortress Planning Group does not take possession of client money or securities, although we do have authority to deduct advisory fees from client accounts which causes our firm to exercise limited custody over your funds. Your funds will be held at Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. You will receive account statements from Schwab at least quarterly. The account statements from your custodian will indicate the amount of our advisory fees deducted from your account each billing period. You should carefully review account statements for accuracy. If you have a question regarding your account statement or if you did not receive a statement from your custodian, please contact Fortress Planning Group directly. Fortress Planning Group will also send quarterly itemized fee invoices. Clients should compare their invoices to the account statements for accuracy.

### **Item 16: Investment Discretion**

Fortress Planning Group will direct, in their sole discretion, without consulting the client and without the client's prior approval, the investment and reinvestment of any or all assets held in the client's account in securities, cash or cash equivalents. The client's financial circumstances, investment objectives and special instructions or limitation that the client imposes will be communicated to us upon initiation of the relationship.

Before we can buy or sell securities on your behalf, you must first sign our discretionary client agreement. This will allow us to place trades in your account without contacting you prior to each trade to obtain your permission. This investment discretion will let us determine the security to buy or sell and/or determine the amount of the security to buy or sell. You may limit this authority

by giving us written instructions. You may also change/amend such limitations by once again providing us with written instruction.

### **Item 17: Voting Client Securities (Proxy Voting)**

We do not vote individual company proxies on your behalf. If you own shares of common stock or mutual funds, you are responsible for exercising your right to vote as a shareholder. You should receive proxy material directly from the issuer of security or the custodian.

### **Item 18: Financial Information**

As an advisory firm that maintains discretionary authority for client accounts, we are also required to disclose any financial condition that is reasonably likely to impair our ability to meet our contractual commitments to clients. We have no additional financial circumstances to report.

We do not require nor solicit prepayment of more than \$500 in fees per client, six months or more in advance and therefore do not need to include a balance sheet with this brochure.

We have not been the subject of a bankruptcy petition at any time, including the past 10 years.