

# **SFI Advisors, LLC**

79 Midland Ave.  
Montclair, NJ 07042

**Telephone: 973-744-1014**

**[www.sfiadvisors.com](http://www.sfiadvisors.com)**

March 16, 2024

## **FORM ADV PART 2A BROCHURE**

This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of SFI Advisors, LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, contact us at 973-744-1014. 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 SFI Advisors, LLC is available on the SEC's website at <https://adviserinfo.sec.gov/firm/summary/287929>

SFI Advisors, 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 filed on March 6, 2023, we have no material changes to report.

We benefit financially from the rollover of your assets from a retirement account to an account that we manage or provide investment advice, because the assets increase our assets under management and, in turn, our advisory fees. As a fiduciary, we only recommend a rollover when we believe it is in your best interest.

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## Item 4 Advisory Business

### Description of Firm

SFI Advisors, LLC is a registered investment adviser headquartered in Montclair, New Jersey. We are organized as a limited liability company ("LLC") under the laws of the State of New Jersey. SFI Advisors has been approved as a registered investment advisor since April 2017, while ownership and senior management have been in the securities industry and providing investment advisory services to clients for over thirty years.

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

### Investment Portfolio Management Services

We offer discretionary investment portfolio management services tailored to meet our clients' specific goals and investment objectives. Prior to making investment recommendations, we gather information about your financial situation and assist you in clarifying your investment goals, objectives, risk tolerance, and time horizon. With this framework we develop an investment portfolio designed to support your goals.

When you participate in our discretionary investment portfolio management services, we require you to grant our firm discretionary authority to manage your account. Discretionary authorization allows SFI Advisors to determine the specific securities, and the amount of securities, to be purchased or sold for your account without your approval prior to each transaction. Discretionary authority is typically granted by the investment advisory agreement you sign with our firm and the appropriate trading authorization forms.

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.

### Financial Planning Services

We offer financial planning services to clients regarding the management of their financial resources based upon an analysis of their individual circumstances. Services can range from broad-based strategic financial planning to tactical, single subject matter planning. The subjects we address may include, but are not limited to, financial organization, risk assessment, investment planning, retirement planning, education funding, and financial decision making. If you retain SFI Advisors for financial planning services, we will meet with you to gather information about your financial circumstances and objectives. We may use financial planning tools and software to illustrate your current financial position and to further define and quantify your long-term goals. Once we frame your long-term objectives (both financial and non-financial), we next develop targeted, shorter-term objectives. As we organize, review and analyze the information you provide, we will deliver a written plan to you, designed to help you achieve your stated financial goals and objectives.

Financial plans are tailored to your financial situation at the time we present the plan to you, and based on the financial information you provide to us. You must promptly notify SFI Advisors if your financial situation, goals, objectives, or needs change.

You are under no obligation to act on our financial planning recommendations. Should you choose to act on any of our recommendations, you are not obligated to implement the financial plan through any of our other investment advisory services. Moreover, you may act on our recommendations by placing securities transactions with any brokerage firm.

### **Corporate Retirement Plan services**

We offer 401k and Corporate Retirement Plan consulting services to employee benefit plans and their fiduciaries based upon the needs of the plan and the services requested by the plan sponsor or named fiduciary. In general, these services may include:

- Financial and Actuarial Analysis
- Plan Design Strategies and Analysis
- Fiduciary Consulting
- Plan Level Investment Advice
- Employee Education Services

In providing plan-level investment advice, we acknowledge that we are a "fiduciary" with respect to assets of the Plan as ERISA defines that term under Section 3(21)(A)(ii) to the extent it renders investment advice with respect to any moneys or property of such Plan, or has the authority or responsibility to render such investment advice. To the extent we are a fiduciary, we acknowledge that we are subject to and will at all times exercise the standard of fiduciary responsibility set forth in Title 1, Subtitle B, Part 4 of ERISA.

Our Corporate Retirement Plan consulting services will generally be non-discretionary and advisory in nature. The ultimate decision to act on behalf of the plan shall remain with the plan sponsor or other named fiduciary.

We may also provide additional types of pension consulting services to plans on an individually negotiated basis. All services, whether discussed above or customized for the plan based upon requirements from the plan fiduciaries (which may include additional plan-level or participant-level services) shall be detailed in a written agreement and be consistent with the parameters set forth in the plan documents.

Either party to the pension consulting agreement may terminate the agreement upon written notice to the other party in accordance with the terms of the agreement for services. The pension consulting fees will be prorated for the quarter in which the termination notice is given and any unearned fees will be refunded to the client.

### **Family Office Services**

We offer Family Office Services to help our affluent client organize their financial resources, collaborate with their advisory team, identify what is most important, and plan for the successful transfer of wealth in a tax-advantaged manner. Such services generally include financial planning in the following areas:

- Family and Business Continuity
- Estate Planning and Trustee Oversight
- Integrated Tax and Financial Planning
- Risk Management
- Family Philanthropy

## **Wrap Fee Programs**

We are not a portfolio manager nor sponsor of any wrap fee program. We do offer the Envestnet Wrap Fee Program to certain clients when deemed appropriate. A wrap fee program is a type of investment program that provides clients with access to several money managers or mutual fund asset allocation models for a single fee that includes administrative fees, management fees, and commissions. If you participate in Envestnet's wrap fee program, you will pay Envestnet a single fee, which includes our money management fees, certain transaction costs, and custodial and administrative costs. We receive a portion of the wrap fee for our services. The overall cost you will incur if you participate in Envestnet's wrap fee program may be higher or lower than you might incur by separately purchasing the types of securities available in the program.

## **Types of Investments**

We offer advice on equity securities, corporate debt securities (other than commercial paper), municipal securities, variable life insurance, variable annuities, mutual fund shares, money market funds, REITs and 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.

In some circumstances, SFI Advisors may have limited trading authority to buy and sell securities for clients in retail brokerage accounts.

## **IRA Rollover Recommendations**

Effective December 20, 2021 (or such later date as the US Department of Labor ("DOL") Field Assistance Bulletin 2018-02 ceases to be in effect), for purposes of complying with the DOL's Prohibited Transaction Exemption 2020-02 ("PTE 2020-02") where applicable, we are providing the following acknowledgment to you.

When we provide investment advice to you regarding your retirement plan 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 are compensated 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 interest 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; and
- Give you basic information about conflicts of interest.

We benefit financially from the rollover of your assets from a retirement account to an account that we manage or provide investment advice, because the assets increase our assets under management and, in turn, our advisory fees. As a fiduciary, we only recommend a rollover when we believe it is in your best interest.

## **Assets Under Management**

As of February 27, 2024, we provide continuous management services for \$142,000,000 in client assets on a discretionary basis and \$97,000,000 in client assets on a non-discretionary basis.

## **Item 5 Fees and Compensation**

### **Investment Portfolio Management Services**

Our annual fee for discretionary investment management services starts at 1.25 % and can be discounted to .65% depending upon the market value of your assets under our management, the type and complexity of the asset management services provided, as well as the level of administration requested either directly or assumed by the client. Assets in each of your account(s) are included in the fee assessment unless specifically identified in writing for exclusion. Our advisory fee is negotiable, depending on individual client circumstances. On occasion, we may, in our sole discretion, agree to lower our fee beyond the minimum specified above if an account is not being actively managed.

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.

Our annual portfolio management fee is billed and payable, quarterly in arrears, based on the average daily balance. Typically the investment advisory fee is deducted directly from your account through the qualified custodian holding your funds and securities. 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.

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.

You may terminate the portfolio management agreement upon written notice. 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.

### **Financial Planning Services**

We charge a fixed fee for financial planning and consulting services, which generally ranges between \$500 and \$12,500. The fee is negotiable depending upon the complexity and scope of the plan, your financial situation, and your objectives. The first half of the estimated fee is due in advance of services rendered with the remaining balance payable upon completion of the contracted services or in the sixth month of the engagement. If you engage our firm for other services, such as portfolio management, we may offset or reduce the remainder of the financial planning fee. We do not require you to pay fees six or more months in advance. Should the engagement last longer than six months between acceptance of financial planning agreement and delivery of the financial plan, any prepaid unearned fees will be promptly returned to you less a pro rata charge for bona fide financial planning services rendered to date.

You may terminate the financial planning or consulting services agreement upon written notice to our firm. You will be responsible for a prorated fee based on services performed.

### **Corporate Retirement Plan Consulting Services**

Our advisory fees for these customized services will be negotiated with the plan sponsor or named fiduciary on a case-by-case basis.

Corporate Retirement Plan Pension consulting services agreements can be terminated upon written notice to SFI Advisors and is subject to the terms of the agreement. You will incur a pro rata charge for investment advisory services rendered prior to the termination of the 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.

### **Family Office Services**

Our fee for Family Office Services can be based on either a fixed fee or as a percentage of assets. The fee is negotiable depending upon the complexity and scope of the services requested.

You may terminate the family office services agreement upon written notice to SFI Advisors and is subject to the terms of the agreement. You will incur a pro rata charge for services rendered prior to the termination of the 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.

### **Additional Fees and Expenses**

As part of our investment advisory services to you, we may invest, or recommend that you invest, in individual equity, fixed income, exchange traded funds and mutual 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.

### **Compensation for the Sale of Securities or Other Investment Products**

Persons providing investment advice on behalf of SFI Advisors are registered representatives with Private Client Services, LLC, ("PCS") 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 will receive commission-based compensation in connection with the purchase and sale of securities, including 12b-1 fees for the sale of investment company products. 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 on behalf of our firm who are registered representatives have an incentive to effect securities transactions for the purpose of generating commissions rather than solely based on your needs. You are under no obligation, contractually or otherwise, to purchase securities products through any person affiliated with our firm.

We may recommend that you purchase variable annuities to be included in your investment portfolio(s). Persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm may earn commissions on the sale of the variable annuities in their capacity as registered representatives of PCS. If these persons earn commission on the sale of variable annuities recommended to you, we do not include the annuity accounts in the total value used for our advisory billing/fee computation. The value of the annuity sub accounts will only be added to the value of your total assets for billing purposes if we were not the broker of record on the sale of the annuity. Annuities will be purchased for your account only after you receive a prospectus disclosing the terms of the annuity. You are under no obligation, contractually or otherwise, to purchase variable annuities through any person affiliated with our firm.



Persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm are also licensed as independent insurance agents. These persons will earn commission-based compensation for providing insurance products, including insurance products they provide to you. Insurance commissions earned by these persons are separate and in addition to our investment 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 advice and services to individuals, corporations, and other business organizations, trusts, estates, and charitable organizations. We provide investment advice to Retirement Plan clients qualified under Sections 401(a), 401(k), 403(b) or 457(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and/or subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) or which are otherwise considered nonqualified.

In general, we require a \$25,000 minimum dollar amount to open and maintain an advisory account. We may also combine account values for you and your minor children, joint accounts with your spouse, and other types of related accounts to meet the stated minimum. 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

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

**Modern Portfolio Theory** - a theory of investment which attempts to maximize portfolio expected return for a given amount of portfolio risk, or equivalently minimize risk for a given level of expected return, by carefully diversifying the proportions of various assets.

Risk: Market risk is that part of a security's risk that is common to all securities of the same general class (stocks and bonds) and thus cannot be eliminated by diversification.

**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.

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.**

### **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. At your request, and when you authorize us to do so, we can speak to, and coordinate with, your tax professional.

Moreover, custodians and broker-dealers must report the cost basis of equities acquired in client accounts on or after January 1, 2011. 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.

- **Interest Rate Risk:** Fluctuations in interest rates may cause investment values to fluctuate. For example, market values of bonds typically decline when interest rates rise, because the rising rate makes the existing bond yields less attractive.
- **Market risk:** External factors independent of a security's particular underlying circumstances may impact its value. The value of a security, bond, or mutual fund may drop in reaction to tangible and intangible events and conditions, such as political or social event or an economic position.
- **Inflation Risk:** Inflation means a dollar today may buy more than a dollar next year. When inflation is present, your purchasing power typically decreases at the rate of inflation.
- **Currency Risk:** Overseas investments are subject to fluctuations in the value of the dollar against the currency of the investment's originating country. Also known as exchange rate risk, these risks may be present in international mutual funds for example.
- **Reinvestment Risk:** The risk that future proceeds from investments may be reinvested at a

potentially lower rate of return is reinvestment risk. This risk is primarily related to fixed income securities.

- **Business Risk:** Risk associated with a particular industry or a specific company may impact the value of investments.
- **Liquidity Risk:** Liquidity means the ability to readily convert an investment into cash. Assets with many purchasers are generally more liquid. For example, Treasury Bills are highly liquid, while real estate properties are less so.
- **Financial Risk:** A company with excessive borrowing or that takes significant business risks to generate profit is typically at a greater risk of financial difficulty or failure.

### **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.

**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.

**Variable Annuities:** A variable annuity is a form of insurance where the seller or issuer (typically an insurance company) makes a series of future payments to a buyer (annuitant) in exchange for the immediate payment of a lump sum (single-payment annuity) or a series of regular payments (regular-payment annuity). The payment stream from the issuer to the annuitant has an unknown duration based principally upon the date of death of the annuitant. At this point, the contract will terminate and the remainder of the funds accumulated forfeited unless there are other annuitants or beneficiaries in the contract. Annuities can be purchased to provide an income during retirement. Unlike fixed annuities that make payments in fixed amounts or in amounts that increase by a fixed percentage, variable annuities, pay amounts that vary according to the performance of a specified set of investments, typically bond and equity mutual funds. Many variable annuities typically impose asset-based sales charges or surrender charges for withdrawals within a specified period. Variable annuities may impose a variety of fees and expenses, in addition to sales and surrender charges, such as mortality and expense risk charges; administrative fees; underlying fund expenses; and charges for special features, all of which can reduce the return. Earnings in a variable annuity do not provide all the tax advantages of 401(k)s and other before-tax retirement plans. Once the investor starts withdrawing money from their variable annuity, earnings are taxed at the ordinary income rate, rather than at the lower capital gains rates applied to other non-tax-deferred vehicles which are held for more than one year. Proceeds of most variable annuities do not receive a "step-up" in cost basis when the owner dies like stocks, bonds and mutual funds do. Some variable annuities offer "bonus credits." These are usually not free. In order to fund them, insurance companies typically impose mortality and expense charges and surrender charge periods. In an exchange of an existing annuity for a new annuity (so-called 1035

exchanges), the new variable annuity may have a lower contract value and a smaller death benefit; may impose new surrender charges or increase the period of time for which the surrender charge applies; may have higher annual fees; and provide another commission for the broker.

**Real Estate Investment Trust:** A real estate investment trust ("REIT") is a corporate entity which invests in real estate and/or engages in real estate financing. A REIT reduces or eliminates corporate income taxes. REITs can be publicly or privately held. Public REITs may be listed on public stock exchanges. REITs are required to declare 90% of their taxable income as dividends, but they actually pay dividends out of funds from operations, so cash flow has to be strong or the REIT must either dip into reserves, borrow to pay dividends, or distribute them in stock (which causes dilution). After 2012, the IRS stopped permitting stock dividends. Most REITs must refinance or erase large balloon debts periodically. The credit markets are no longer frozen, but banks are demanding, and getting, harsher terms to re-extend REIT debt. Some REITs may be forced to make secondary stock offerings to repay debt, which will lead to additional dilution of the stockholders. Fluctuations in the real estate market can affect the REIT's value and dividends.

## 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. We do not have any required disclosures under this item.

## Item 10 Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations

### Registrations with Broker-Dealer

Persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm are registered representatives with PCS, 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.

### Arrangements with Affiliated Entities

We are affiliated with SFI Insurance Services, Inc. SFI Insurance Services, Inc. is owned by SFI Advisors, LLC. 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. This affiliated firm is otherwise regulated by the professional organizations to which it belongs and must comply with the rules of those organizations. These rules may prohibit paying or receiving referral fees to or from investment advisers that are not members of the same organization.

Referral arrangements with an affiliated entity present a conflict of interest for us because we may have a direct or indirect financial incentive to recommend an affiliated firm's services. While we believe that compensation charged by an affiliated firm is competitive, such compensation may be higher than fees charged by other firms providing the same or similar services. You are under no obligation to use the services of any firm we recommend, whether affiliated or otherwise, and may obtain comparable services and/or lower fees through other firms.



## **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, non-public 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.

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

Neither our firm nor any persons associated with our firm has any material financial interest in client transactions beyond the provision of investment advisory services as disclosed in 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.

## **Item 12 Brokerage Practices**

We recommend the brokerage and custodial services of various broker-dealers ("Custodians"). In all cases, the recommended Custodian is a securities broker-dealer and a member of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority and the Securities Investor Protection Corporation. We believe that the recommended Custodian provides quality execution services for you 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 the Custodian, including the value of the Custodian's reputation, execution capabilities, commission rates, and responsiveness to our clients and our firm. In recognition of the value of the services the Custodian provides, 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 direct client securities transactions to obtain research benefits or other benefits, otherwise known as "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 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 PCS are typically required to recommend PCS to you for brokerage services. These individuals are subject to applicable rules that restrict them from conducting securities transactions away from PCS unless PCS provides the representative with written authorization to do so. Therefore, these individuals are generally limited to conducting securities transactions through PCS. It may be the case that PCS charges higher transactions costs and/or custodial fees than another broker charges for the same types of services. If transactions are executed through PCS, these individuals (in their separate capacities as registered representatives of PCS) may earn commission-based compensation as result of placing the recommended securities transactions through PCS. 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 PCS, 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.

### **Block Trades**

Transactions for each client generally will be effected independently, unless we decide to purchase or sell the same securities for several clients at approximately the same time. We may, but are not obligated to, combine multiple orders for shares of the same securities purchased for advisory accounts we manage (this practice is commonly referred to as "block 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 block trading with your accounts; however, they will not be given preferential treatment.

We combine multiple orders for shares of the same securities purchased for discretionary accounts; however, we do not combine orders 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**

SFI Advisors Investment Management will monitor your accounts on an ongoing basis and will conduct account reviews at least quarterly, 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.

The individuals conducting reviews may vary from time to time, as personnel join or leave our firm.

We will provide you with additional or regular written reports in conjunction with account reviews. Reports we provide to you will contain relevant account and/or market-related information such as an inventory of account holdings and account performance, etc. You will receive trade confirmations and monthly or quarterly statements from your account custodian.

SFI Advisors Financial Planning team will review financial plans as needed, depending on the arrangements made with you at the inception of your advisory relationship to ensure that the advice provided is consistent with your investment needs and objectives. Generally, we will contact you periodically to determine whether any updates may be needed based on changes in your circumstances. Changed circumstances may include, but are not limited to marriage, divorce, birth, death, inheritance, lawsuit, retirement, job loss and/or disability, among others. We recommend meeting with you at least annually to review and update your plan if needed. Additional reviews will be conducted upon your request. Such reviews and updates may be subject to our then current hourly rate. Written updates to the financial plan will be provided in conjunction with the review. If you implement financial planning advice, you will receive trade confirmations and monthly or quarterly statements from relevant custodians.

## **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 PCS, 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.

Also, we have entered into contractual arrangements with employees of our firm, under which the individual receives compensation from our firm for the establishment of new client relationships. Employees who refer clients to our firm must comply with the requirements of the jurisdictions where they operate. The compensation consists of a one-time, flat referral fee upon your signing an advisory agreement with our firm. You will not be charged additional fees based on this compensation arrangement. Incentive based compensation is contingent upon you entering into an advisory agreement with our firm. Therefore, the individual has a financial incentive to recommend our firm to you for advisory services. This creates a conflict of interest; however, you are not obligated to retain our firm for advisory services. Comparable services and/or lower fees may be available through other firms.

## **Item 15 Custody**

As paying agent for our firm, 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.

### **Trustee Services**

Persons associated with our firm may serve as trustees to certain accounts for which we also provide investment advisory services. In all cases, the persons associated with our firm have been appointed trustee as a result of a family or personal relationship with the trust grantor and/or beneficiary and not as a result of employment with our firm. Therefore, we are not deemed to have custody over the advisory accounts for which persons associated with our firm serve as trustee.

## **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.

You may grant our firm discretion over the selection and amount of securities to be purchased or sold for your account(s) without obtaining your consent or approval prior to each transaction. You may specify investment objectives, guidelines, and/or impose certain conditions or investment parameters for your account(s). For example, you may specify that the investment in any particular stock or industry should not exceed specified percentages of the value of the portfolio and/or restrictions or prohibitions of transactions in the securities of a specific industry or security. Refer to the *Advisory Business* section in this brochure for more information on our discretionary management services.

## **Item 17 Voting Client Securities**

SFI Advisors has the authority to vote proxies in respect of securities in client accounts ("Client Securities") over which the Company has voting discretion. In such cases, the Company will cast proxy votes in a manner that is consistent with the best interests of the Company's clients. These policies and procedures are designed to deal with the complexities which may arise in cases where the Company's interests conflict or appear to conflict with the interests of its clients and to communicate to clients the methods and rationale whereby the Company exercises proxy authority. This document is available to any client upon request. SFI Advisors will also make available the record of the Company's votes promptly upon request.

Unless contractually obligated to vote in a certain manner, the Company will reach its voting decisions independently, after appropriate investigation. It does not generally intend to delegate its decision making or to rely on the recommendations of any third party, although it may take such recommendations into consideration. Where the Company deviates from the guidelines listed below, or depends upon a third party to make the decision, the reasons shall be documented. SFI Advisors may consult with such other experts, such as CPA's, investment bankers, attorneys, etc., as it regards necessary to help it reach informed decisions.

The CCO is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy.

SFI Advisors generally will monitor proposed corporate actions and proxy issues regarding Client Securities, and may take any of the following actions based on the best interests of our clients: (i) determine how to vote the proxies, (ii) abstain, or (iii) follow the recommendations of an independent proxy voting service in voting the proxies.

In general, the Company will determine how to vote proxies based on our reasonable judgment of the vote most likely to produce favorable financial results for our clients. Proxy votes generally will be cast in favor of proposals that maintain or strengthen the shared interests of shareholders and management, increase shareholder value, maintain or increase shareholder influence over the issuer's board of directors and management and maintain or increase the rights of shareholders. Proxy votes generally will be cast against proposals having the opposite effect. However, the Company will consider both sides of each proxy issue.

### **Non-Voting of Proxies**

SFI Advisors will generally not vote proxies in the following situations:

- Proxies are received for equity securities where, at the time of receipt, the Company's position, across all clients that it advises, is less than, or equal to, 1% of the total outstanding voting equity (an "immaterial position").
- Proxies are received for equity securities where, at the time of receipt, the Company's clients no longer hold that position.

### **Management Proposals**

Absent good reason to the contrary, the Company will generally give substantial weight to management recommendations regarding voting. This is based on the view that management is usually in the best position to know which corporate actions are in the best interests of common shareholders as a whole.

SFI Advisors will generally vote for routine matters proposed by issuer management, such as setting a time or place for an annual meeting, changing the name or fiscal year of the company, or voting for directors in favor of the management proposed slate. Other routine matters in which the Company will generally vote along with company management include: appointment of auditors, fees paid to board members, and change in the board structure. As long as the proposal does not: i) measurably change the structure, management, control or operations of the company; ii) measurably change the terms of, or fees or expenses associated with, an investment in the company; and the proposal is consistent with customary industry standards and practices, as well as the laws of the state of incorporation applicable to the company, the Company will generally vote along with management.

### **Non-Routine Matters**

Non-routine matters include such things as:

- Amendments to management incentive plans
- The authorization of additional common or preferred stock
- Initiation or termination of barriers to takeover or acquisition
- Mergers or acquisitions
- Changes in the state of incorporation
- Corporate reorganizations
- Term limits for board members
- "Contested" director slates

In non-routine matters, the Company will attempt to be generally familiar with the questions at issue. Non-routine matters will be voted on a case-by-case basis, given the complexity of many of these issues.

## **Processing Proxy Votes**

The CCO will be responsible for determining whether each proxy is for a "routine" matter, as described above, and whether the Policy and Procedures set forth herein actually address the specific issue. For proxies that are not clearly "routine", the Company, in conjunction with the CCO, will determine how to vote each such proxy by applying these policies and procedures. Upon making a decision, the proxy will be executed and returned for submission to the company. SFI Advisors' proxy voting record will be updated at the time the proxy is submitted.

An independent proxy voting advisory and research firm may be appointed as a "Proxy Service" for voting the Company's proxies after approval by the CCO.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Conflicts of interest between the Company or a principal of the Company and the Company's clients in respect of a proxy issue conceivably may arise, for example, from personal or professional relationships with a company or with the directors, candidates for director, or senior executives of a company that is the issuer of Client Securities.

Potential conflicts of interest between the Company and its clients may arise when the Company's relationships with an issuer or with a related third party actually conflict, or appear to conflict, with the best interests of the Company's clients.

If the issue is specifically addressed in these policies and procedures, the Company will vote in accordance with these policies. In a situation where the issue is not specifically addressed in these Policies and Procedures and an apparent or actual conflict exists, the Company shall either: i) delegate the voting decision to an independent third party; ii) inform clients of the conflict of interest and obtain advance consent of a majority of such clients for a particular voting decision; or iii) obtain approval of a voting decision from the Company's CCO, who will be responsible for documenting the rationale for the decision made and voted.

In all such cases, the Company will make disclosures to clients of all material conflicts and will keep documentation supporting its voting decisions.

If the CCO determines that a material conflict of interest exists, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. SFI Advisors may disclose the existence and nature of the conflict to the client(s) owning the securities, and seek directions on how to vote the proxies;
2. SFI Advisors may abstain from voting, particularly if there are conflicting client interests (for example, where client accounts hold different Client Securities in a competitive merger situation); or
3. SFI Advisors may follow the recommendations of an independent proxy voting service in voting the 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.

## **Item 19 Requirements for State-Registered Advisers**

We are a federally registered investment adviser; therefore, we are not required to respond to this item.

## **Item 20 Additional Information**

### **Your Privacy**

We view protecting your private information as a top priority. Pursuant to applicable privacy requirements, we have instituted policies and procedures to ensure that we keep your personal information private and secure.

We do not disclose any non-public personal information about you to any non-affiliated third parties, except as permitted by law. In the course of servicing your account, we may share some information with our service providers, such as transfer agents, custodians, broker-dealers, accountants, consultants, and attorneys.

We restrict internal access to non-public personal information about you to employees, who need that information in order to provide products or services to you. We maintain physical and procedural safeguards that comply with regulatory standards to guard your non-public personal information and to ensure our integrity and confidentiality. We will not sell information about you or your accounts to anyone. We do not share your information unless it is required to process a transaction, at your request, or required by law.

You will receive a copy of our privacy notice prior to or at the time you sign an advisory agreement with our firm. Thereafter, we will deliver a copy of the current privacy policy notice to you on an annual basis. Contact our main office at the telephone number on the cover page of this brochure if you have any questions regarding this policy.

If you decide to close your account(s) we will adhere to our privacy policies, which may be amended from time to time.

If we make any substantive changes in our privacy policy that would further permit or require disclosures of your private information, we will provide written notice to you. Where the change is based on permitted disclosures, you will be given an opportunity to direct us as to whether such disclosure is acceptable. Where the change is based on required disclosures, you will only receive written notice of the change. You may not opt out of the required disclosures.

If you have questions about our privacy policies contact our main office at the telephone number on the cover page of this brochure and ask to speak to the Chief Compliance Officer.

### **Trade Errors**

In the event a trading error occurs in your account, our policy is to restore your account to the position it should have been in had the trading error not occurred. Depending on the circumstances, corrective actions may include canceling the trade, adjusting an allocation, and/or reimbursing the account.

### **Class Action Lawsuits**

We do not determine if securities held by you are the subject of a class action lawsuit or whether you are eligible to participate in class action settlements or litigation nor do we initiate or participate in litigation to recover damages on your behalf for injuries as a result of actions, misconduct, or negligence by issuers of securities held by you.

**Business Continuity Plan**

We maintain a business continuity plan designed to minimize the impact of disasters, emergencies and other unforeseen circumstances on our services and communications. A description of our business continuity plan is available by contacting SFI Advisors.