

# Argus Equity Partners, LLC

## Firm Brochure - Form ADV Part 2A

*This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Argus Equity Partners, LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at (716) 838-5504 or by email at: [Steve@AEP-RIA.com](mailto:Steve@AEP-RIA.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 Argus Equity Partners, LLC is also available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov). Argus Equity Partners, LLC's CRD number is: 306518.*

199 Burbank Dr  
Amherst, NY 14226  
(716) 838-5504  
[Steve@AEP-RIA.com](mailto:Steve@AEP-RIA.com)  
[AEP-RIA.com](http://AEP-RIA.com)

*Registration as an investment adviser does not imply a certain level of skill or training.*

Version Date: 03/07/2024

## Item 2: Material Changes

The material changes in this brochure from the last annual updating amendment of Argus Equity Partners, LLC on 03/14/2023 are described below. Material changes relate to Argus Equity Partners, LLC's policies, practices or conflicts of interests.

- Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services has acquired TD Ameritrade. Due to this acquisition clients have transitioned from TD Ameritrade to Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services. (Items 12 and 14)

## Item 3: Table of Contents

Item 1: Cover Page	
Item 2: Material Changes .....	ii
Item 3: Table of Contents .....	iii
Item 4: Advisory Business .....	2
Item 5: Fees and Compensation .....	3
Item 6: Performance-Based Fees and Side-By-Side Management .....	4
Item 7: Types of Clients .....	5
Item 8: Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies, & Risk of Loss .....	5
Item 9: Disciplinary Information .....	8
Item 10: Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations .....	9
Item 11: Code of Ethics, Participation or Interest in Client Transactions and Personal Trading .....	9
Item 12: Brokerage Practices .....	10
Item 13: Review of Accounts .....	12
Item 14: Client Referrals and Other Compensation .....	12
Item 15: Custody .....	13
Item 16: Investment Discretion .....	13
Item 17: Voting Client Securities (Proxy Voting) .....	14
Item 18: Financial Information .....	14

## **Item 4: Advisory Business**

### **A. Description of the Advisory Firm**

Argus Equity Partners, LLC (hereinafter "AEPL") is a Limited Liability Company organized in the State of New York. The firm was formed in July 2012, and the principal owner is Stephen F Tripodi.

### **B. Types of Advisory Services**

#### ***Portfolio Management Services***

AEPL offers ongoing portfolio management services based on the individual goals, objectives, time horizon, and risk tolerance of each client. AEPL creates an Investment Policy Statement for each client, which outlines the client's current situation (income, tax levels, and risk tolerance levels) and then constructs a plan to aid in the selection of a portfolio that matches each client's specific situation. Portfolio management services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Investment strategy
- Asset allocation
- Risk tolerance
- Personal investment policy
- Asset selection
- Regular portfolio monitoring

AEPL evaluates the current investments of each client with respect to their risk tolerance levels and time horizon. AEPL will request discretionary authority from clients in order to select securities and execute transactions without permission from the client prior to each transaction. Risk tolerance levels are documented in the Investment Policy Statement, which is given to each client.

AEPL seeks to provide that investment decisions are made in accordance with the fiduciary duties owed to its accounts and without consideration of AEPL's economic, investment or other financial interests. To meet its fiduciary obligations, AEPL attempts to avoid, among other things, investment or trading practices that systematically advantage or disadvantage certain client portfolios, and accordingly, AEPL's policy is to seek fair and equitable allocation of investment opportunities/transactions among its clients to avoid favoring one client over another over time. It is AEPL's policy to allocate investment opportunities and transactions it identifies as being appropriate and prudent, including initial public offerings ("IPOs") and other investment opportunities that might have a limited supply, among its clients on a fair and equitable basis over time.

#### ***Services Limited to Specific Types of Investments***

AEPL generally limits its investment advice to mutual funds, fixed income securities, real estate funds (including REITs), insurance products including annuities, equities, ETFs

(including ETFs in the gold and precious metal sectors), treasury inflation protected/inflation linked bonds and non-U.S. securities. AEPL may use other securities as well to help diversify a portfolio when applicable.

### ***Written Acknowledgement of Fiduciary Status***

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 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 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.

### **C. Client Tailored Services and Client Imposed Restrictions**

AEPL will tailor a program for each individual client. This will include an interview session to get to know the client's specific needs and requirements as well as a plan that will be executed by AEPL on behalf of the client. AEPL may use model allocations together with a specific set of recommendations for each client based on their personal restrictions, needs, and targets. Clients may impose restrictions in investing in certain securities or types of securities in accordance with their values or beliefs. However, if the restrictions prevent AEPL from properly servicing the client account, or if the restrictions would require AEPL to deviate from its standard suite of services, AEPL reserves the right to end the relationship.

### **D. Wrap Fee Programs**

A wrap fee program is an investment program where the investor pays one stated fee that includes management fees, transaction costs, and certain other administrative fees. AEPL does not participate in wrap fee programs.

## **E. Assets Under Management**

AEPL has the following assets under management:

Discretionary Amounts:	Non-discretionary Amounts:	Date Calculated:
\$ 29,425,502	\$ 17,040,021	December 2023

## **Item 5: Fees and Compensation**

### **A. Fee Schedule**

#### *Portfolio Management Fees*

Total Assets Under Management	Annual Fees
\$0 - \$250,000	1.50%
\$250,001 - \$1,000,000	1.00%
\$1,000,001 – And Up	0.50%

AEPL uses an average of the daily balance in the client's account throughout the billing period, after taking into account deposits and withdrawals, for purposes of determining the market value of the assets upon which the advisory fee is based.

These fees are generally negotiable and the final fee schedule will be memorialized in the client's advisory agreement. Clients may terminate the agreement without penalty for a full refund of AEPL's fees within five business days of signing the Investment Advisory Contract. Thereafter, clients may terminate the Investment Advisory Contract immediately upon written notice.

### **B. Payment of Fees**

#### *Payment of Portfolio Management Fees*

Asset-based portfolio management fees are withdrawn directly from the client's accounts with client's written authorization on a monthly basis. Fees are paid in arrears.

### **C. Client Responsibility For Third Party Fees**

Clients are responsible for the payment of all third party fees (i.e. custodian fees, brokerage fees, mutual fund fees, transaction fees, etc.). Those fees are separate and

distinct from the fees and expenses charged by AEPL. Please see Item 12 of this brochure regarding broker-dealer/custodian.

#### **D. Prepayment of Fees**

AEPL collects its fees in arrears. It does not collect fees in advance.

#### **E. Outside Compensation For the Sale of Securities to Clients**

Neither AEPL nor its supervised persons accept any compensation for the sale of investment products, including asset-based sales charges or service fees from the sale of mutual funds.

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

AEPL does not accept performance-based fees or other fees based on a share of capital gains on or capital appreciation of the assets of a client.

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

AEPL generally provides advisory services to the following types of clients:

- ❖ Individuals
- ❖ High-Net-Worth Individuals
- ❖ Corporations or Business Entities

There is no account minimum for any of AEPL's services.

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

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

##### ***Methods of Analysis***

AEPL's methods of analysis include Fundamental analysis.

**Fundamental analysis** involves the analysis of financial statements, the general financial health of companies, and/or the analysis of management or competitive advantages.

## *Investment Strategies*

AEPL uses long term trading, short sales, margin transactions and options trading (including covered options, uncovered options, or spreading strategies).

**Investing in securities involves a risk of loss that you, as a client, should be prepared to bear.**

## **B. Material Risks Involved**

### *Methods of Analysis*

**Fundamental analysis** concentrates on factors that determine a company's value and expected future earnings. This strategy would normally encourage equity purchases in stocks that are undervalued or priced below their perceived value. The risk assumed is that the market will fail to reach expectations of perceived value.

### *Investment Strategies*

AEPL's use of short sales, margin transactions and options trading generally holds greater risk, and clients should be aware that there is a material risk of loss using any of those strategies.

**Long term trading** is designed to capture market rates of both return and risk. Due to its nature, the long-term investment strategy can expose clients to various types of risk that will typically surface at various intervals during the time the client owns the investments. These risks include but are not limited to inflation (purchasing power) risk, interest rate risk, economic risk, market risk, and political/regulatory risk.

**Margin transactions** use leverage that is borrowed from a brokerage firm as collateral. When losses occur, the value of the margin account may fall below the brokerage firm's threshold thereby triggering a margin call. This may force the account holder to either allocate more funds to the account or sell assets on a shorter time frame than desired.

**Options transactions** involve a contract to purchase a security at a given price, not necessarily at market value, depending on the market. This strategy includes the risk that an option may expire out of the money resulting in minimal or no value, as well as the possibility of leveraged loss of trading capital due to the leveraged nature of stock options.

**Short sales** entail the possibility of infinite loss. An increase in the applicable securities' prices will result in a loss and, over time, the market has historically trended upward.

**Investing in securities involves a risk of loss that you, as a client, should be prepared to bear.**

## C. Risks of Specific Securities Utilized

AEPL's use of short sales, margin transactions and options trading generally holds greater risk of capital loss. Clients should be aware that there is a material risk of loss using any investment strategy. The investment types listed below (leaving aside Treasury Inflation Protected/Inflation Linked Bonds) are not guaranteed or insured by the FDIC or any other government agency.

**Mutual Funds:** Investing in mutual funds carries the risk of capital loss and thus you may lose money investing in mutual funds. All mutual funds have costs that lower investment returns. The funds can be of bond "fixed income" nature (lower risk) or stock "equity" nature.

**Equity** investment generally refers to buying shares of stocks in return for receiving a future payment of dividends and/or capital gains if the value of the stock increases. The value of equity securities may fluctuate in response to specific situations for each company, industry conditions and the general economic environments.

**Fixed income** investments generally pay a return on a fixed schedule, though the amount of the payments can vary. This type of investment can include corporate and government debt securities, leveraged loans, high yield, and investment grade debt and structured products, such as mortgage and other asset-backed securities, although individual bonds may be the best known type of fixed income security. In general, the fixed income market is volatile and fixed income securities carry interest rate risk. (As interest rates rise, bond prices usually fall, and vice versa. This effect is usually more pronounced for longer-term securities.) Fixed income securities also carry inflation risk, liquidity risk, call risk, and credit and default risks for both issuers and counterparties. The risk of default on treasury inflation protected/inflation linked bonds is dependent upon the U.S. Treasury defaulting (extremely unlikely); however, they carry a potential risk of losing share price value, albeit rather minimal. Risks of investing in foreign fixed income securities also include the general risk of non-U.S. investing described below.

**Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs):** An ETF is an investment fund traded on stock exchanges, similar to stocks. Investing in ETFs carries the risk of capital loss (sometimes up to a 100% loss in the case of a stock holding bankruptcy). Areas of concern include the lack of transparency in products and increasing complexity, conflicts of interest and the possibility of inadequate regulatory compliance. Precious Metal ETFs (e.g., Gold, Silver, or Palladium Bullion backed "electronic shares" not physical metal) specifically may be negatively impacted by several unique factors, among them (1) large sales by the official sector which own a significant portion of aggregate world holdings in gold and other precious metals, (2) a significant increase in hedging activities by producers of gold or other precious metals, (3) a significant change in the attitude of speculators and investors.

**Real estate** funds (including REITs) face several kinds of risk that are inherent in the real estate sector, which historically has experienced significant fluctuations and cycles in performance. Revenues and cash flows may be adversely affected by: changes in local real



estate market conditions due to changes in national or local economic conditions or changes in local property market characteristics; competition from other properties offering the same or similar services; changes in interest rates and in the state of the debt and equity credit markets; the ongoing need for capital improvements; changes in real estate tax rates and other operating expenses; adverse changes in governmental rules and fiscal policies; adverse changes in zoning laws; the impact of present or future environmental legislation and compliance with environmental laws.

**Annuities** are a retirement product for those who may have the ability to pay a premium now and want to guarantee they receive certain monthly payments or a return on investment later in the future. Annuities are contracts issued by a life insurance company designed to meet requirement or other long-term goals. An annuity is not a life insurance policy. Variable annuities are designed to be long-term investments, to meet retirement and other long-range goals. Variable annuities are not suitable for meeting short-term goals because substantial taxes and insurance company charges may apply if you withdraw your money early. Variable annuities also involve investment risks, just as mutual funds do.

**Options** are contracts to purchase a security at a given price, risking that an option may expire out of the money resulting in minimal or no value. An uncovered option is a type of options contract that is not backed by an offsetting position that would help mitigate risk. The risk for a “naked” or uncovered put is not unlimited, whereas the potential loss for an uncovered call option is limitless. Spread option positions entail buying and selling multiple options on the same underlying security, but with different strike prices or expiration dates, which helps limit the risk of other option trading strategies. Option transactions also involve risks including but not limited to economic risk, market risk, sector risk, idiosyncratic risk, political/regulatory risk, inflation (purchasing power) risk and interest rate risk.

**Non-U.S.** securities present certain risks such as currency fluctuation, political and economic change, social unrest, changes in government regulation, differences in accounting and the lesser degree of accurate public information available.

**Past performance is not indicative of future results. Investing in securities involves a risk of loss that you, as a client, should be prepared to bear.**

## **Item 9: Disciplinary Information**

### **A. Criminal or Civil Actions**

There are no criminal or civil actions to report.

### **B. Administrative Proceedings**

There are no administrative proceedings to report.

### **C. Self-regulatory Organization (SRO) Proceedings**

Claimant Joseph A. Halizak alleged that Advest, Inc. and Steven Fiore Tripodi, seized and sold securities from his account to satisfy margin deficiencies in October 1987 and November 1987. Mr. Halizak asserted that these actions constituted breach of contract and violation of fiduciary obligations. Per Mr. Halizak's margin agreement, Respondent Advest, Inc. was not required to make any prior tender, demand or call of any kind before making a liquidation. The matter is no longer pending, as the claims of Mr. Halizak against Mr. Tripodi have been dismissed. Advest, Inc. was liable, and Mr. Halizak was awarded \$4,458.08.

In November 2012, a regulatory action was initiated Stephen Tripodi seeking a civil and administrative penalty/fine and suspension based on allegations that Mr. Tripodi shared commissions with a broker at another firm without prior approval. The matter is no longer pending, as it was resulted in an acceptance, waiver & consent in November 2012 wherein Mr. Tripodi was subsequently fined \$5,000 and suspended for 3 months.

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

### **A. Registration as a Broker/Dealer or Broker/Dealer Representative**

Neither AEPL nor its representatives are registered as, or have pending applications to become, a broker/dealer or a representative of a broker/dealer.

### **B. Registration as a Futures Commission Merchant, Commodity Pool Operator, or a Commodity Trading Advisor**

Neither AEPL nor its representatives are registered as or have pending applications to become either a Futures Commission Merchant, Commodity Pool Operator, or Commodity Trading Advisor or an associated person of the foregoing entities.

### **C. Registration Relationships Material to this Advisory Business and Possible Conflicts of Interests**

Neither AEPL nor its representatives have any material relationships to this advisory business that would present a possible conflict of interest.

#### **D. Selection of Other Advisers or Managers and How This Adviser is Compensated for Those Selections**

AEPL does not utilize nor select third-party investment advisers.

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

#### **A. Code of Ethics**

AEPL has a written Code of Ethics that covers the following areas: Prohibited Purchases and Sales, Insider Trading, Personal Securities Transactions, Exempted Transactions, Prohibited Activities, Conflicts of Interest, Gifts and Entertainment, Confidentiality, Service on a Board of Directors, Compliance Procedures, Compliance with Laws and Regulations, Procedures and Reporting, Certification of Compliance, Reporting Violations, Compliance Officer Duties, Training and Education, Recordkeeping, Annual Review, and Sanctions. AEPL's Code of Ethics is available free upon request to any client or prospective client.

#### **B. Recommendations Involving Material Financial Interests**

AEPL does not recommend that clients buy or sell any security in which a related person to AEPL or AEPL has a material financial interest.

#### **C. Investing Personal Money in the Same Securities as Clients**

From time to time, representatives of AEPL may buy or sell securities for themselves that they also recommend to clients. This may provide an opportunity for representatives of AEPL to buy or sell the same securities before or after recommending the same securities to clients resulting in representatives profiting off the recommendations they provide to clients. Such transactions may create a conflict of interest. AEPL will always document any transactions that could be construed as conflicts of interest and will never engage in trading that operates to the client's disadvantage when similar securities are being bought or sold.

#### **D. Trading Securities At/Around the Same Time as Clients' Securities**

From time to time, representatives of AEPL may buy or sell securities for themselves at or around the same time as clients. This may provide an opportunity for representatives of AEPL to buy or sell securities before or after recommending securities to clients resulting in representatives profiting off the recommendations they provide to clients. Such

transactions may create a conflict of interest; however, AEPL will never engage in trading that operates to the client's disadvantage if representatives of AEPL buy or sell securities at or around the same time as clients.

## **Item 12: Brokerage Practices**

### **A. Factors Used to Select Custodians and/or Broker/Dealers**

Custodians/broker-dealers will be recommended based on AEPL's duty to seek "best execution," which is the obligation to seek execution of securities transactions for a client on the most favorable terms for the client under the circumstances. Clients will not necessarily pay the lowest commission or commission equivalent, and AEPL may also consider the market expertise and research access provided by the broker-dealer/custodian, including but not limited to access to written research, oral communication with analysts, admittance to research conferences and other resources provided by the brokers that may aid in AEPL's research efforts. AEPL will never charge a premium or commission on transactions, beyond the actual cost imposed by the broker-dealer/custodian.

AEPL recommends Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services and American Funds Distributors, Inc.

#### ***1. Research and Other Soft-Dollar Benefits***

While AEPL has no formal soft dollars program in which soft dollars are used to pay for third party services, AEPL may receive research, products, or other services from custodians and broker-dealers in connection with client securities transactions ("soft dollar benefits"). AEPL may enter into soft-dollar arrangements consistent with (and not outside of) the safe harbor contained in Section 28(e) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. There can be no assurance that any particular client will benefit from soft dollar research, whether or not the client's transactions paid for it, and AEPL does not seek to allocate benefits to client accounts proportionate to any soft dollar credits generated by the accounts. AEPL benefits by not having to produce or pay for the research, products or services, and AEPL will have an incentive to recommend a broker-dealer based on receiving research or services. Clients should be aware that AEPL's acceptance of soft dollar benefits may result in higher commissions charged to the client.

#### ***2. Brokerage for Client Referrals***

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

### ***3. Clients Directing Which Broker/Dealer/Custodian to Use***

AEPL may permit clients to direct it to execute transactions through a specified broker-dealer. If a client directs brokerage, then the client will be required to acknowledge in writing that the client's direction with respect to the use of brokers supersedes any authority granted to AEPL to select brokers; this direction may result in higher commissions, which may result in a disparity between free and directed accounts; the client may be unable to participate in block trades (unless AEPL is able to engage in "step outs"); and trades for the client and other directed accounts may be executed after trades for free accounts, which may result in less favorable prices, particularly for illiquid securities or during volatile market conditions. Not all investment advisers allow their clients to direct brokerage.

#### **B. Aggregating (Block) Trading for Multiple Client Accounts**

If AEPL buys or sells the same securities on behalf of more than one client, then it may (but would be under no obligation to) aggregate or bunch such securities in a single transaction for multiple clients in order to seek more favorable prices, lower brokerage commissions, or more efficient execution. In such case, AEPL would place an aggregate order with the broker on behalf of all such clients in order to ensure fairness for all clients; provided, however, that trades would be reviewed periodically to ensure that accounts are not systematically disadvantaged by this policy. AEPL would determine the appropriate number of shares and select the appropriate brokers consistent with its duty to seek best execution, except for those accounts with specific brokerage direction (if any).

## **Item 13: Review of Accounts**

#### **A. Frequency and Nature of Periodic Reviews and Who Makes Those Reviews**

All client accounts for AEPL's advisory services provided on an ongoing basis are reviewed at least Monthly by Stephen F Tripodi, owner, with regard to clients' respective investment policies and risk tolerance levels. All accounts at AEPL are assigned to this reviewer.

#### **B. Factors That Will Trigger a Non-Periodic Review of Client Accounts**

Reviews may be triggered by material market, economic or political events, or by changes in client's financial situations (such as retirement, termination of employment, physical move, or inheritance).

### **C. Content and Frequency of Regular Reports Provided to Clients**

Each client of AEPL's advisory services provided on an ongoing basis will receive a quarterly report detailing the client's account, including assets held, asset value, and calculation of fees. This written report will come from the custodian.

## **Item 14: Client Referrals and Other Compensation**

### **A. Economic Benefits Provided by Third Parties for Advice Rendered to Clients (Includes Sales Awards or Other Prizes)**

Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services provides AEPL with access to Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services' institutional trading and custody services, which are typically not available to Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services retail investors. These services generally are available to independent investment advisers on an unsolicited basis, at no charge to them so long as a total of at least \$10 million of the adviser's clients' assets are maintained in accounts at Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services. Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services includes brokerage services that are related to the execution of securities transactions, custody, research, including that in the form of advice, analyses and reports, and access to mutual funds and other investments that are otherwise generally available only to institutional investors or would require a significantly higher minimum initial investment. For AEPL client accounts maintained in its custody, Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services generally does not charge separately for custody services but is compensated by account holders through commissions or other transaction-related or asset-based fees for securities trades that are executed through Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services or that settle into Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services accounts.

Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services also makes available to AEPL other products and services that benefit AEPL but may not benefit its clients' accounts. These benefits may include national, regional or AEPL specific educational events organized and/or sponsored by Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services. Other potential benefits may include occasional business entertainment of personnel of AEPL by Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services personnel, including meals, invitations to sporting events, including golf tournaments, and other forms of entertainment, some of which may accompany educational opportunities. Other of these products and services assist AEPL in managing and administering clients' accounts. These include software and other technology (and related technological training) that provide access to client account data (such as trade confirmations and account statements), facilitate trade execution (and allocation of aggregated trade orders for multiple client accounts, if applicable), provide research, pricing information and other market data, facilitate payment of AEPL's fees from its clients' accounts (if applicable), and assist with back-office training and support functions, recordkeeping and client reporting. Many of these services generally may be used to service all or some substantial number of AEPL's accounts. Charles Schwab & Co.,

Inc. Advisor Services also makes available to AEPL other services intended to help AEPL manage and further develop its business enterprise. These services may include professional compliance, legal and business consulting, publications and conferences on practice management, information technology, business succession, regulatory compliance, employee benefits providers, and human capital consultants, insurance and marketing. In addition, Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services may make available, arrange and/or pay vendors for these types of services rendered to AEPL by independent third parties. Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services may discount or waive fees it would otherwise charge for some of these services or pay all or a part of the fees of a third-party providing these services to AEPL. AEPL is independently owned and operated and not affiliated with Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Advisor Services.

#### **B. Compensation to Non - Advisory Personnel for Client Referrals**

AEPL does not directly or indirectly compensate any person who is not advisory personnel for client referrals.

### **Item 15: Custody**

When advisory fees are deducted directly from client accounts at client's custodian, AEPL will be deemed to have limited custody of client's assets and must have written authorization from the client to do so. Clients will receive all account statements and billing invoices that are required in each jurisdiction, and they should carefully review those statements for accuracy.

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

AEPL provides discretionary and non-discretionary investment advisory services to clients. The advisory contract established with each client sets forth the discretionary authority for trading. Where investment discretion has been granted, AEPL generally manages the client's account and makes investment decisions without consultation with the client as to when the securities are to be bought or sold for the account, the total amount of the securities to be bought/sold, what securities to buy or sell, or the price per share. In some instances, AEPL's discretionary authority in making these determinations may be limited by conditions imposed by a client (in investment guidelines or objectives, or client instructions otherwise provided to AEPL).

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

AEPL will not ask for, nor accept voting authority for client securities. Clients will receive proxies directly from the issuer of the security or the custodian. Clients should direct all proxy questions to the issuer of the security.



## **Item 18: Financial Information**

### **A. Balance Sheet**

AEPL neither requires nor solicits prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance, and therefore is not required to include a balance sheet with this brochure.

### **B. Financial Conditions Reasonably Likely to Impair Ability to Meet Contractual Commitments to Clients**

Neither AEPL nor its management has any financial condition that is likely to reasonably impair AEPL's ability to meet contractual commitments to clients.

### **C. Bankruptcy Petitions in Previous Ten Years**

AEPL has not been the subject of a bankruptcy petition in the last ten years.