

**Item 1 – Cover Page**

**Part 2A of Form ADV: *Firm Brochure***



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January 1, 2015

This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Francis Financial. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at (212) 374-9008 or [stacy@francisfinancial.com](mailto:stacy@francisfinancial.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 Francis Financial also is available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov). You can search this site by a unique identifying number, known as a CRD number. Our firm's CRD number is 128067.

## **Item 2 – Material Change**

The purpose of this page is to inform you of any material changes since the last annual update to this brochure. If you are receiving this brochure for the first time, this section may not be relevant to you.

Francis Financial, Inc. reviews and updates this brochure at least annually to assure it remains current. There have been no material changes since the last annual update to this brochure, dated January 1, 2014.

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## **Item 4 – Advisory Business**

Francis Financial, Inc. is an SEC-registered investment adviser with its principal place of business located in New York. Francis Financial, Inc. began conducting business in 2003. Registration with the SEC does not imply a certain level of skill or training.

Stacy A. Francis, President, is the firm's principal shareholders (i.e., those individuals and/or entities controlling 25% or more of this company).

Francis Financial offers the following advisory services to our clients:

### **INVESTMENT SUPERVISORY SERVICES ("ISS") INDIVIDUAL PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT**

Our firm provides continuous advice to a client regarding the investment of client funds based on the individual needs of the client. Through personal discussions in which goals and objectives based on a client's particular circumstances are established, we develop a client's personal investment policy statement and create and manage a portfolio based on that policy. During our data-gathering process, we determine the client's individual objectives, time horizons, risk tolerance, and liquidity needs. As appropriate, we also review and discuss a client's prior investment history, as well as family composition and background.

We manage these advisory accounts on a discretionary or non-discretionary basis. Account supervision is guided by the client's stated objectives (i.e., maximum capital appreciation, growth, income, or growth and income), as well as tax considerations.

Clients may impose reasonable restrictions on investing in certain securities, types of securities, or industry sectors.

Once the client's portfolio has been established, we review the portfolio quarterly, and if necessary, rebalance the portfolio based on the client's individual needs.

Our investment recommendations are not limited to any specific product or service offered by a broker-dealer or insurance company and will generally include advice regarding the following securities:

- Exchange-listed securities
- Securities traded over-the-counter
- Foreign issuers
- Corporate debt securities (other than commercial paper)

- Commercial paper
- Certificates of deposit
- Municipal securities
- Mutual fund shares
- United States governmental securities
- Options contracts on securities
- International debt securities

Because some types of investments involve certain additional degrees of risk, they will only be implemented/recommended when consistent with the client's stated investment objectives, tolerance for risk, liquidity and suitability.

## **FINANCIAL PLANNING & DIVORCE FINANCIAL PLANNING**

We provide financial planning services. Financial planning is a personalized evaluation of a client's current and future financial state by using currently known variables to predict future cash flows, asset values and withdrawal plans. Through the financial planning process, all questions, information and analysis are considered as they impact and are impacted by the entire financial and life situation of the client. Clients purchasing this service receive a written report which provides the client with a detailed financial plan designed to assist the client achieve his or her financial goals and objectives.

In general, the financial plan can address any or all of the following areas:

- **PERSONAL:** We review family records, budgeting, personal liability, estate information and financial goals.
- **TAX & CASH FLOW:** We analyze the client's income tax and spending and planning for past, current and future years; then illustrate the impact of various investments on the client's current income tax and future tax liability.
- **INVESTMENTS:** We analyze investment alternatives and their effect on the client's portfolio.
- **COLLEGE FUNDING:** We analyze the client's income and develop a strategy of saving and investing to plan for college expenses and loan repayments.
- **INSURANCE:** We review existing policies to ensure proper coverage for life, health, disability, long-term care, liability, home and automobile.
- **RETIREMENT:** We analyze current strategies and investment plans to help the

client achieve his or her retirement goals.

- DEATH & DISABILITY: We review the client's cash needs at death, income needs of surviving dependents, estate planning and disability income.
- ESTATE: We assist the client in assessing and developing long-term strategies, including as appropriate, living trusts, wills, review estate tax, powers of attorney, asset protection plans, nursing homes, Medicaid and elder law. We do not draft legal documents as we are not attorneys.

We gather required information through in-depth personal interviews. Information gathered includes the client's current financial status, tax status, future goals, returns objectives and attitudes towards risk. We carefully review documents supplied by the client, including a questionnaire completed by the client, and prepare a written report. Should the client choose to implement the recommendations contained in the plan, we suggest the client work closely with his/her attorney, accountant, insurance agent, and/or stockbroker. Implementation of financial plan recommendations is entirely at the client's discretion.

We also provide general non-securities advice on topics that may include tax and budgetary planning, estate planning and business planning.

Typically the financial plan is presented to the client within six months of the contract date, provided that all information needed to prepare the financial plan has been promptly provided.

Financial Planning recommendations are not limited to any specific product or service offered by a broker-dealer or insurance company. All recommendations are of a generic nature but customized to each client situation.

Stacy Francis is also a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst (CDFA). The role of a CDFA includes knowledge of tax law, asset distribution, and short- and long-term financial planning to achieve an equitable settlement. Francis Financial helps clients determine the short term and long term financial impact of any proposed divorce settlement. We will also provide valuable information on financial issues that are related to the divorce, such as tax consequences, dividing pension plans, continued health care coverage, stock option elections.

## **PUBLICATION OF PERIODICALS**

We publish a monthly newsletter providing general information on various financial topics including, but not limited to, estate and retirement planning, and market trends. No specific investment recommendations are provided in this newsletter and the

information provided does not purport to meet the objectives or needs of any individual. This newsletter is distributed free of charge to our advisory clients, potential clients and other trusted colleagues.

### **AMOUNT OF MANAGED ASSETS**

As of December 31, 2014 we were actively managing \$110,878,645 of clients' assets on a discretionary basis plus \$18,999,385 of clients' assets on a non-discretionary basis. The total assets under management is \$129,878,030.

### **Item 5 – Fees and Compensation**

#### **INVESTMENT SUPERVISORY SERVICES INDIVIDUAL PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT FEES**

The annualized fee for Investment Supervisory Services will be charged as a percentage of assets under management, according to the below schedule.

- 1.50% on the market value of account up to \$1,000,000; plus
- 1.25% on the market value of account above \$1,000,000 up to \$2,000,000; plus
- 1.00% on the market value of account above \$2,000,000 up to \$5,000,000; plus
- 0.90% on the market value of account above \$5,000,000

Fees are calculated on a next plus basis. For example, a Client with \$3,000,000 under management would pay 1.50% on the first \$1,000,000, 1.25% on the next \$1,000,000 and 1.00% on the next \$1,000,000.

Our fees are billed quarterly, in advance, at the beginning of each calendar quarter based upon the value (market value or fair market value in the absence of market value), of the client's account at the end of the previous quarter. Fees will be directly debited from the account in accordance with the client authorization in the Client Services Agreement.

A minimum of \$1,000,000 of assets under management is required for this service. This account size may be negotiable under certain circumstances. Francis Financial may group certain related client accounts for the purposes of achieving the minimum account size and determining the annualized fee.

***Limited Negotiability of Advisory Fees:*** Although Francis Financial has established the aforementioned fee schedule, we retain the discretion to negotiate alternative fees on a client-by-client basis. Client facts, circumstances and needs will be considered in

determining the fee schedule. These include the complexity of the client, assets to be placed under management, anticipated future additional assets; related accounts; portfolio style, account composition, reports, among other factors. The specific annual fee schedule will be identified in the contract between the adviser and each client.

We may group certain related client accounts for the purposes of achieving the minimum account size requirements and determining the annualized fee.

Discounts, not generally available to our advisory clients, may be offered to family members and friends of associated persons of our firm.

### **FINANCIAL PLANNING & DIVORCE FINANCIAL PLANNING FEES**

Our minimum fee for financial planning is \$7,500 for one-time financial planning and \$5,000 for investment management clients. The fee is due at the final plan presentation.

Our minimum fee for divorce financial planning is \$3,500, which is due at the initial conference and will be credited to the client's account.

All clients will be billed accordingly based on the total number of hours worked on their behalf. Our hourly rates are:

Consultation and Analysis – President & CEO	\$ 350/ hour
Consultation and Analysis – Director	\$ 275/ hour
Consultation and Analysis – Analyst	\$ 175/ hour
Administrative Tasks	\$ 40/ hour
Court Time and Court Preparation	\$ 375/hour

**\*Our firm requires a minimum of 10 billable hours for all engagements.**

However, advance payment will never exceed \$1,200 for work that will not be completed within six months. Typically, the financial plan is presented to clients within 90 days of signing the agreement for services.

***Limited Negotiability of Advisory Fees:*** Although Francis Financial has established the aforementioned fee schedule, we retain the discretion to negotiate alternative fees on a client-by-client basis. Client facts, circumstances and needs will be considered in determining the fee schedule. These include the complexity of the client, assets to be placed under management, anticipated future additional assets; related accounts; portfolio style, account composition, reports, among other factors. The specific annual fee schedule will be identified in the contract between the adviser and each client.



## PUBLICATION OF PERIODICALS OR NEWSLETTERS

Our newsletter is distributed free of charge to advisory clients, potential clients and other trusted colleagues.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

***Termination of the Advisory Relationship:*** An advisory client will have a period of five (5) business days from the date of signing the investment advisory agreement to unconditionally rescind the agreement and receive a full refund of all fees. Thereafter, a client agreement may be canceled at any time, by either party, for any reason upon receipt of written notice. As disclosed above, certain fees are paid in advance of services provided. Upon termination of any account, any prepaid, unearned fees will be promptly refunded. In calculating a client's reimbursement of fees, we will pro rate the reimbursement according to the number of days remaining in the billing period.

***Mutual Fund Fees:*** All fees paid to Francis Financial for investment advisory services are separate and distinct from the fees and expenses charged by mutual funds and/or ETFs to their shareholders. These fees and expenses are described in each fund's prospectus. These fees will generally include a management fee, other fund expenses, and a possible distribution fee. A client could invest in a mutual fund directly, without our services. In that case, the client would not receive the services provided by our firm which are designed, among other things, to assist the client in determining which mutual fund or funds are most appropriate to each client's financial condition and objectives. Accordingly, the client should review both the fees charged by the funds and our fees to fully understand the total amount of fees to be paid by the client and to thereby evaluate the advisory services being provided. Francis Financial endeavors to minimize the number of mutual fund fees to the greatest extent possible.

***Additional Fees and Expenses:*** In addition to our advisory fees, clients are also responsible for the fees and expenses charged by custodians and imposed by broker-dealers, including, but not limited to, any transaction charges imposed by a broker-dealer with which an independent investment manager effects transactions for the client's account(s). Please refer to the "Brokerage Practices" section (Item 12) of this Form ADV for additional information. Francis Financial endeavors to minimize these fees to the greatest extent possible.

***Grandfathering of Minimum Account Requirements:*** Pre-existing advisory clients are subject to Francis Financial's minimum account requirements and advisory fees in effect at the time the client entered into the advisory relationship. Therefore, our firm's minimum account requirements will differ among clients.

***ERISA Accounts:*** Francis Financial is deemed to be a fiduciary to advisory clients that are employee benefit plans or individual retirement accounts (IRAs) pursuant to the Employee Retirement Income and Securities Act (“ERISA”), and regulations under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (the “Code”), respectively. As such, our firm is subject to specific duties and obligations under ERISA and the Internal Revenue Code that include among other things, restrictions concerning certain forms of compensation. To avoid engaging in prohibited transactions, Francis Financial may only charge fees for investment advice about products for which our firm and/or our related persons do not receive any commissions or 12b-1 fees.

***Advisory Fees in General:*** Clients should note that similar advisory services may (or may not) be available from other registered (or unregistered) investment advisers for similar or lower fees.

***Limited Prepayment of Fees:*** Under no circumstances do we require or solicit payment of fees in excess of \$1,200 more than six months in advance of services rendered.

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

Francis Financial does not charge performance-based fees.

## **Item 7 – Types of Clients**

Francis Financial provides advisory services to the following types of clients:

- Individuals (other than high net worth individuals)
- High net worth individuals

As previously disclosed in Item 5, our firm has established certain initial minimum account requirements, based on the nature of the service(s) being provided. For a more detailed understanding of those requirements, please review the disclosures provided in each applicable service.

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

### **METHODS OF ANALYSIS**

We use the following methods of analysis in formulating our investment advice and/or managing client assets:

***Asset Allocation.*** We attempt to identify an appropriate ratio of equities, fixed income, and cash or cash equivalents suitable to the client's investment goals and risk tolerance. We create an asset allocation strategy to define the client's time horizon, benchmarks to be measured against and a rebalancing policy. Our asset allocation decisions assume a minimum three-year timeframe to establish that underlying investment fundamentals, rather than short-term market sentiment, will drive returns. We continually test the overall portfolio risk over one year. Occasionally this forces changes in portfolio allocations based on a long-term decision horizon.

A risk of asset allocation is that the client may not participate in sharp increases in a particular security, industry or market sector. Another risk is that the ratio of equities, fixed income, and cash or cash equivalents will change over time due to stock and market movements and, if not corrected, will no longer be appropriate for the client's goals.

***Mutual Fund and/or ETF Analysis.*** We look at the experience and track record of the manager of the mutual fund or ETF in an attempt to determine if that manager has demonstrated an ability to invest over a period of time and in different economic conditions. We also look at the underlying assets in a mutual fund or ETF in an attempt to determine if there is significant overlap in the underlying investments held in another fund(s) in the client's portfolio. We also monitor the funds or ETFs in an attempt to determine if they are continuing to follow their stated investment strategy.

A risk of mutual fund and/or ETF analysis is that, as in all securities investments, past performance does not guarantee future results. A manager who has been successful may not be able to replicate that success in the future. In addition, as we do not control the underlying investments in a fund or ETF, managers of different funds held by the client may purchase the same security, increasing the risk to the client if that security were to fall in value. There is also a risk that a manager may deviate from the stated investment mandate or strategy of the fund or ETF, which could make the holding(s) less suitable for the client's portfolio.

***Risks for all forms of analysis.*** Our securities analysis methods rely on the assumption that the companies whose securities we purchase and sell, the rating agencies that

review these securities, and other publicly-available sources of information about these securities, are providing accurate and unbiased data. While we are alert to indications that data may be incorrect, there is always a risk that our analysis may be compromised by inaccurate or misleading information. Clients should understand that investing in any securities, including mutual funds, involves a risk of loss of both income and principal that clients should be prepared to bear.

## INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

We use the following strategies in managing client accounts, provided that such strategies are appropriate to the needs of the client and consistent with the client's investment objectives, risk tolerance, and time horizons, among other considerations:

***Long-term purchases.*** We purchase securities with the idea of holding them in the client's account for a year or longer. Typically we employ this strategy when:

- we believe the securities to be currently undervalued, and/or
- we want exposure to a particular asset class over time, regardless of the current projection for this class.

A risk in a long-term purchase strategy is that by holding the security for this length of time, we may not take advantage of short-term gains that could be profitable to a client. Moreover, if our predictions are incorrect, a security may decline sharply in value before we make the decision to sell.

***Short-term purchases.*** When utilizing this strategy, we purchase securities with the idea of selling them within a relatively short time (typically a year or less). We do this in an attempt to take advantage of conditions that we believe will soon result in a price swing in the securities we purchase.

A short-term purchase strategy poses risks should the anticipated price swing not materialize; we are then left with the option of having a long-term investment in a security that was designed to be a short-term purchase, or potentially taking a loss.

In addition, this strategy involves more frequent trading than does a longer-term strategy, and will result in increased brokerage and other transaction-related costs, as well as less favorable tax treatment of short-term capital gains.

***Risk of Loss.*** Securities investments are not guaranteed and you may lose money on your investments. We ask that you work with us to help us understand your tolerance for risk.

## **Item 9 – Disciplinary Information**

We are required to disclose any legal or disciplinary events that are material to a client's or prospective client's evaluation of our advisory business or the integrity of our management.

Our firm and our management personnel have no reportable disciplinary events to disclose.

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

Our firm and our related persons are not engaged in other financial industry activities and have no other industry affiliations.

Neither Francis Financial nor its management persons are registered, or have an application pending to register, as a futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator, a commodity trading advisor, or an associated person of the foregoing entities.

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

Our firm has adopted a Code of Ethics which sets forth high ethical standards of business conduct that we require of our employees, including compliance with applicable federal securities laws.

Francis Financial and our personnel owe a duty of loyalty, fairness and good faith towards our clients, and have an obligation to adhere not only to the specific provisions of the Code of Ethics but to the general principles that guide the Code.

Our Code of Ethics includes policies and procedures for the review of quarterly securities transactions reports as well as initial and annual securities holdings reports that must be submitted by the firm's access persons. Among other things, our Code of Ethics also requires the prior approval of any acquisition of securities in a limited offering (e.g., private placement) or an initial public offering. Our code also provides for oversight, enforcement and recordkeeping provisions.

Francis Financial's Code of Ethics further includes the firm's policy prohibiting the use of material non-public information. While we do not believe that we have any particular access to non-public information, all employees are reminded that such information may not be used in a personal or professional capacity.

A copy of our Code of Ethics is available to our advisory clients and prospective clients. You may request a copy by email sent to [stacy@francisfinancial.com](mailto:stacy@francisfinancial.com), or by calling us at (212) 374-9008.

Francis Financial and individuals associated with our firm are prohibited from engaging in principal transactions.

Francis Financial and individuals associated with our firm are prohibited from engaging in agency cross transactions.

Our Code of Ethics is designed to assure that the personal securities transactions, activities and interests of our employees will not interfere with (i) making decisions in the best interest of advisory clients and (ii) implementing such decisions while, at the same time, allowing employees to invest for their own accounts.

Our firm and/or individuals associated with our firm may buy or sell for their personal accounts securities identical to or different from those recommended to our clients. In addition, any related person(s) may have an interest or position in a certain security(ies) which may also be recommended to a client.

## **Item 12 – Brokerage Practices**

Francis Financial does not have any soft-dollar arrangements and does not receive any soft-dollar benefits.

As our firm does not have the discretionary authority to determine the broker-dealer to be used or the commission rates to be paid, clients must direct Francis Financial as to the broker-dealer to be used.

For clients in need of brokerage or custodial services, and depending on client circumstances and needs, we may recommend the use of Shareholders Service Group or Charles Schwab and Co., Inc., provided that such recommendation is consistent with our firm's fiduciary duty to the client. Our clients must evaluate this broker before opening an account. The factors considered by Francis Financial when making this recommendation is the broker's ability to provide professional services, our experience with the broker, the broker's reputation, the broker's quality of execution services and costs of such services, among other factors. Clients are not under any obligation to effect trades through Shareholders Service Group or Charles Schwab and Co., Inc.

To the extent that Francis Financial provides investment management services to its clients, the transactions for each client account generally will be effected independently, unless Francis Financial decides to purchase or sell the same securities for several clients at approximately the same time. Francis Financial may (but is not obligated to) combine or “bunch” such orders to obtain best execution, to negotiate more favorable commission rates or to allocate equitably among Francis Financial’s clients differences in prices and commissions or other transaction costs that might have been obtained had such orders been placed independently. Under this procedure, transactions will be averaged as to price and will be allocated among clients in proportion to the purchase and sale orders placed for each client account on any given day. Francis Financial shall not receive any additional compensation or remuneration as a result of such aggregation.

Some clients may instruct Francis Financial to use one or more particular brokers for the transactions in their accounts. Clients who may want to direct Francis Financial to use a particular broker should understand that this may prevent Francis Financial from effectively negotiating brokerage compensation on their behalf. This arrangement may also prevent Francis Financial from obtaining the most favorable net price and execution. Thus, when directing brokerage business, clients should consider whether the commission expenses and execution, clearance and settlement capabilities that they will obtain through their broker are adequately favorable in comparison to those that Francis Financial would otherwise obtain for its clients. Clients are encouraged to discuss available alternatives with their advisory representative.

### **Item 13 – Review of Accounts**

#### **INVESTMENT SUPERVISORY SERVICES INDIVIDUAL PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT**

*REVIEWS:* While the underlying securities within Individual Portfolio Management Services accounts are continually monitored, these accounts are reviewed at least quarterly. Accounts are reviewed in the context of each client’s stated investment objectives and guidelines. More frequent reviews may be triggered by material changes in variables such as the client’s individual circumstances, or the market, political or economic environment.

These accounts are reviewed by Stacy Francis, President and Avani Ramnani, Director of Investment Management and Financial Planning.

*REPORTS:* In addition to the monthly statements and confirmations of transactions that

clients receive from their broker-dealer, we provide quarterly reports summarizing account performance, balances and holdings.

## **FINANCIAL PLANNING & DIVORCE FINANCIAL PLANNING SERVICES**

**REVIEWS:** While reviews may occur at different stages depending on the nature and terms of the specific engagement, typically no formal reviews will be conducted for Financial Planning clients unless otherwise contracted for.

**REPORTS:** Financial Planning clients will receive a completed financial plan. Additional reports will not typically be provided unless otherwise contracted for. Investment Management clients typically receive performance reports quarterly and account statements directly from the custodian monthly.

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

It is Francis Financial's policy not to engage solicitors or to pay related or non-related persons for referring potential clients to our firm.

It is Francis Financial's policy not to accept or allow our related persons to accept any form of compensation, including cash, sales awards or other prizes, from a non-client in conjunction with the advisory services we provide to our clients.

### **Item 15 – Custody**

We previously disclosed in the "Fees and Compensation" section (Item 5) of this Brochure that our firm directly debits advisory fees from client accounts.

As part of this billing process, the client's custodian is advised of the amount of the fee to be deducted from that client's account. On at least a quarterly basis, the custodian is required to send to the client a statement showing all transactions within the account during the reporting period.

Because the custodian does not calculate the amount of the fee to be deducted, it is important for clients to carefully review their custodial statements to verify the accuracy of the calculation, among other things. Clients should contact us directly if they believe that there may be an error in their statement.

In addition to the periodic statements that clients receive directly from their custodians, we also send account statements directly to our clients on a quarterly basis. We urge our clients to carefully compare the information provided on these statements to ensure that



all account transactions, holdings and values are correct and current.

Our firm does not have actual or constructive custody of client accounts.

### **Item 16 – Investment Discretion**

Clients may hire us to provide discretionary asset management services, in which case we place trades in a client's account without contacting the client prior to each trade to obtain the client's permission.

Our discretionary authority includes the ability to do the following without contacting the client:

- Determine the security to buy or sell; and/or
- Determine the amount of the security to buy or sell

Clients give us discretionary authority when they sign a discretionary agreement with our firm, and may limit this authority by giving us written instructions. Clients may also change/amend such limitations by once again providing us with written instructions.

Some clients may choose to engage us to manage securities on a non-discretionary basis. If we receive non-discretionary authority from the client, we will select the identity and amount of securities to be bought or sold, but must receive approval from the client prior to placing any trades in the client's account. Please be advised that as a result, until we reach the client, no transactions will be placed in any client accounts.

### **Item 17 – Voting Client Securities**

#### **VOTING CLIENT SECURITIES**

As a matter of firm policy, we do not vote proxies on behalf of clients. Therefore, although our firm may provide investment advisory services relative to client investment assets, clients maintain exclusive responsibility for: (1) directing the manner in which proxies solicited by issuers of securities beneficially owned by the client shall be voted, and (2) making all elections relative to any mergers, acquisitions, tender offers, bankruptcy proceedings or other type events pertaining to the client's investment assets. Clients are responsible for instructing each custodian of the assets, to forward to the client copies of all proxies and shareholder communications relating to the client's investment assets.

We may provide clients with consulting assistance regarding proxy issues if they

contact us with questions at our principal place of business.

### **Item 18 – Financial Information**

Francis Financial has no additional financial circumstances to report.

Under no circumstances do we require or solicit payment of fees in excess of \$1,200 per client more than six months in advance of services rendered. Therefore, we are not required to include a financial statement.

Francis Financial has not been the subject of a bankruptcy petition at any time during the past ten years.