



## **FIRM BROCHURE (FORM ADV PART 2A)**

March 2017

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This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of The Mather Group, LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us by telephone at (630) 537-1078 or by email at [s.mather@themathergroup.com](mailto:s.mather@themathergroup.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 The Mather Group, LLC also is available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov)

Please note use of the term "registered investment adviser" and description of The Mather Group, LLC and/or our associates as "registered" does not imply a certain level of skill or training. You are encouraged to review this Brochure and Brochure Supplements for our firms' associates who advise you for more information on the qualifications of our firm and its employees.

## **Item 2: Material Changes to Our Part 2A of Form ADV: Firm Brochure**

Since the most recent annual update filed on March 28, 2016 there have been material amendments to this ADV Part 2A, Firm Brochure (“Brochure”). The Mather Group’s Chief Compliance Officer, Stewart Mather, CFP®, CIMA, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client has about any aspect of this Brochure.

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## Item 4: Advisory Business

We specialize in the following types of services: financial planning and portfolio management (Collectively “Financial Planning and Portfolio Management”), retirement plan consulting, and retirement plan asset management. Our assets under management are \$974,845,665 as of February 3, 2017.

A. Description of our advisory firm, including how long we have been in business and our principal owner(s).

We are dedicated to providing individuals and other types of clients with a wide array of investment advisory services. Our firm is a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) formed in the State of Delaware and is wholly owned by Mather Group Holdings, Inc.

B. Description of the types of advisory services we offer.

(i) Financial Planning and Portfolio Management:

As discussed below, The Mather Group offers to provide combined financial planning and investment management services on a fee-only, percentage of assets under management basis. The scope of financial planning services to be provided will depend upon the client’s individual circumstances and needs. Please see Fee Differentials below.

Our Financial Planning and Portfolio Management service encompasses asset management as well as providing financial planning/financial consulting to clients. It is designed to assist clients in meeting their financial goals through the use of financial investments. We conduct at least one, but sometimes more than one meeting (in person if possible, otherwise via telephone conference) with clients in order to understand their current financial situation, existing resources, financial goals, and tolerance for risk. Based on what we learn, we propose an investment approach to the client. We may propose an investment portfolio, consisting of exchange traded funds, individual stocks or bonds, or other securities. Upon the client’s agreement to the proposed investment plan, we work with the client to establish or transfer investment accounts so that we can manage the client’s portfolio. Once the relevant accounts are under our management, we review the model portfolios at least daily. We may periodically rebalance or adjust client accounts under our management. We may also provide tax preparation services as part of this engagement for no additional charge. If the client experiences any significant changes to his/her financial or personal circumstances, the client must notify us so that we can consider such information in managing the client’s investments.

(ii) Betterment Sub-Advisory Services

The Mather Group also provides sub-advisory services to clients referred to it by Betterment LLC (hereinafter referred to as “**Betterment**”), a registered investment adviser. The sub-advisory services shall be described as Comprehensive Financial Planning and shall meet the criteria of such as described above. The Mather Group provides Comprehensive Financial Planning services to such referred clients on the fee terms described in Item 5. The clients from Betterment will use MTG, LLC dba as Betterment Securities (hereinafter

referred to as “**Betterment Securities**”) as the custodian and Betterment will charge a portfolio management fee. All other fees and services from The Mather Group will remain intact.

(iii) Retirement Plan Consulting

We provide retirement plan consulting services to employer plan sponsors on an ongoing basis. Generally, such retirement plan consulting services consist of assisting employer plan sponsors in establishing, monitoring and reviewing their company's participant- directed retirement plan. As the needs of the plan sponsor dictate, areas of advising could include: investment options, plan structure and participant education.

All retirement plan consulting services shall be in compliance with the applicable state law(s) regulating retirement plan consulting services. This applies to client accounts that are retirement plan or other employee benefit plans (“Plan”) governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended (“ERISA”). If the client accounts are part of a Plan, and we accept appointments to provide our services to such accounts, we acknowledge that we are a fiduciary within the meaning of Section 3(21) of ERISA (but only with respect to the provision of services described in section 1 of the Retirement Plan Consulting Agreement).

In providing Services for retirement plan consulting, The Mather Group generally does not provide any services hereunder with respect to the following types of assets: employer securities, real estate (excluding real estate funds and publicly traded REITS), participant loans, non-publicly traded securities or assets; other illiquid investments, or brokerage window programs (collectively, “Excluded Assets”) Non-Excluded Assets are “Included Assets”.

(iii) Retirement Plan Asset Management

We provide retirement plan asset management services on an ongoing basis. Generally, such asset management services consist of selecting, monitoring, removing, and/or replacing the investment options under the Plan, consistent with the objectives, written guidelines and/or investment objectives set forth in the written investment policy statement (“IPS”) accepted and adopted by the client. As the needs of the plan sponsor dictate, areas of management could include: plan investment options, asset allocation, plan structure, and participant education.

We emphasize continuous and regular account supervision. Once the appropriate plan investments have been determined, we review the plan investments at least annually and if necessary, replace investments based upon the plan sponsor’s objectives, written guidelines and/or investment objectives.

All retirement plan asset management services shall be in compliance with the applicable state law(s) regulating retirement plan consulting services. This applies to client accounts that are retirement plan or other employee benefit plans (“Plan”) governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended (“ERISA”). If the client accounts are part of the Plan, and we accept appointments to provide our services to such accounts, we acknowledge that we are a fiduciary within the meaning of section 3(38) of

ERISA (but only with respect to the provision of services described in section 1 of the Retirement Plan Consulting Agreement).

C. Explanation of whether (and, if so, how) we tailor our advisory services to the individual needs of clients, whether clients may impose restrictions on investing in certain securities or types of securities.

(i) Individual Tailoring of Advice to Clients:

We offer individualized investment advice to clients utilizing the following services offered by our firm: financial planning and portfolio management, retirement plan consulting, retirement plan asset management.

(ii) Ability of Clients to Impose Restrictions on Investing in Certain Securities or Types of Securities:

We usually do not allow clients to impose restrictions on investing in certain securities or types of securities due to the level of difficulty this would entail in managing their account. In the rare instance that we would allow restrictions, it would be limited to the following services: financial planning and portfolio management, retirement plan consulting, retirement plan asset management.

D. Participation in wrap fee programs.

We do not offer wrap fee programs.

E. Disclosure of the amount of client assets we manage on a discretionary basis and the amount of client assets we manage on a non-discretionary basis.

We manage \$692,997,783 on a discretionary basis and \$281,847,882 on a non-discretionary basis as of February 3, 2017.

F. Miscellaneous

(i) Financial Planning:

While The Mather Group may provide tax preparation services, The Mather Group does not serve as an accountant, attorney, or insurance agent, and no portion of The Mather Group's services should be construed as same. To the extent requested by a client, we may recommend the services of other professionals for certain non-investment implementation purposes (i.e. accountants, attorneys, insurance agents, etc.) A client is under absolutely no obligation to accept any such recommendation.

(ii) Please Note: Fee Differentials:

As discussed below, The Mather Group shall price its services based upon various objective and subjective factors. As a result, our clients could pay diverse fees based upon the market value of their assets, the complexity of the engagement, and the level and scope of the overall financial planning and/or consulting services to be rendered. The services to be provided by The Mather Group to any particular client could be available from other advisers at lower fees. All clients and prospective clients should be guided accordingly. If

you have any questions, The Mather Group's Chief Compliance Officer, Stewart Mather, CFP®, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above fee determination.

(iii) Please Note: **RETIREMENT ROLLOVERS-No Obligation/Conflict of Interest:**

A client leaving an employer typically has four options (and may engage in a combination of these options): i) leave the money in his former employer's plan, if permitted, ii) roll over the assets to his new employer's plan, if one is available and rollovers are permitted, iii) rollover to an IRA, or iv) cash out the account value (which could, depending upon the client's age, result in adverse tax consequences). We may recommend an investor roll over plan assets to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) managed by us. As a result, The Mather Group and its representatives may earn an asset-based fee. In contrast, a recommendation that a client or prospective client leave his or her plan assets with his or her old employer or roll the assets to a plan sponsored by a new employer will generally result in no compensation to The Mather Group (unless you engage us to monitor and/or manage the account while maintained at your employer). We have an economic incentive to encourage an investor to roll plan assets into an IRA that we will manage **or** to engage The Mather Group to monitor and/or manage the account while maintained at your employer. There are various factors that we may consider before recommending a rollover, including but not limited to: i) the investment options available in the plan versus the investment options available in an IRA, ii) fees and expenses in the plan versus the fees and expenses in an IRA, iii) the services and responsiveness of the plan's investment professionals versus The Mather Group's, iv) protection of assets from creditors and legal judgments, v) required minimum distributions and age considerations, and vi) employer stock tax consequences, if any. No client is under any obligation to rollover plan assets to an IRA managed by us or to engage us to monitor and/or manage the account while maintained at your employer. The Mather Group's Chief Compliance Officer, Stewart Mather, CFP®, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above and the corresponding conflict of interest presented by such engagement.

(iv) **Client Obligations:**

In performing its services, The Mather Group shall not be required to verify any information received from the client or from the client's other professionals, and is expressly authorized to rely thereon. Moreover, each client is advised that it remains his/her/its responsibility to promptly notify us if there is ever any change in his/her/its financial situation or investment objectives for the purpose of reviewing/evaluating/revising our previous recommendations and/or services.

(v) **Please Note: Investment Risk**

Different types of investments involve varying degrees of risk, and it should not be assumed that future performance of any specific investment or investment strategy (including the investments and/or investment strategies recommended or undertaken by The Mather Group) will be profitable or equal any specific performance level(s). Additionally, investments that are not guaranteed are subject to other risks such as: Purchasing Power Risk, Reinvestment Rate Risk, Interest Rate Risk, Market Risk Exchange Rate Risk, Business Risk and Liquidity Risk. Those risks are better defined below:

**Market Risk:** The price of a security, bond, ETF or mutual fund may drop in reaction to tangible and intangible events and conditions. This type of risk is caused by external factors independent of a security's particular underlying circumstances.

**Interest Rate Risk:** Fluctuations in interest rates may cause investment prices to fluctuate.

**Purchasing Power Risk:** When any type of inflation is present, a dollar today will not buy as much as a dollar next year, because purchasing power is eroding at the rate of inflation.

**Exchange Rate Risk:** Overseas investments are subject to fluctuations in the value of the dollar against the currency of the investment's originating country.

**Reinvestment Rate Risk:** This is the risk that future proceeds from investments – primarily fixed income securities – may have to be reinvested at a potentially lower rate of return (i.e. interest rate).

**Business Risk:** These risks are associated with a particular industry or a particular company within an industry.

**Liquidity Risk:** Liquidity is the ability to readily convert an investment into cash. Generally, assets are more liquid if many traders are interested in a standardized product.

(vi) eMoney:

The Mather Group may provide its clients with access to an online platform hosted by "eMoney Advisor" ("eMoney"). The eMoney platform allows a client to view his/her/its complete asset allocation, including those assets that The Mather Group does not manage (the "Excluded Assets"). The Mather Group does not provide investment management, monitoring, or implementation services for the Excluded Assets. **Therefore, The Mather Group shall not be responsible for the investment performance of the Excluded Assets. Rather, the client and/or his/her/its advisor(s) that maintain management authority for the Excluded Assets, and not The Mather Group, shall be exclusively responsible for such investment performance.** The eMoney platform also provides access to other types of information, including financial planning concepts, which should not, in any manner whatsoever, be construed as services, advice, or recommendations provided by The Mather Group. The client may engage The Mather Group to manage some or all of the Excluded Assets pursuant to the terms and conditions of a Comprehensive Portfolio Management Agreement between The Mather Group and the client.

## Item 5: Fees & Compensation

We are required to describe our brokerage, custody, fees and fund expenses so you will know how much you are charged and by whom for our advisory services provided to you. Our fees are generally not negotiable.

A. Description of how we are compensated for our advisory services provided to you.

(i) Financial Planning and Portfolio Management:

For our Financial Planning and Portfolio Management clients, the annual fee for any asset under management will range from 0.08% to 2.00% per the fee schedule set forth in the



Comprehensive Portfolio Management Agreement between the firm and the client. Our firm's fees are billed on a pro-rata annualized basis quarterly in advance based on the value of your account on the last day of the previous quarter. For the first invoice, clients will be pro-rated for the remaining days of the quarter and billed in advanced. **Please Note: Fee Differentials.** As discussed above, The Mather Group shall price its services based upon various objective and subjective factors. As a result, our clients could pay diverse fees based upon the market value of their assets, the complexity of the engagement, and the level and scope of the overall financial planning and/or consulting services to be rendered. The services to be provided by The Mather Group to any particular client could be available from other advisers at lower fees. All clients and prospective clients should be guided accordingly. The Mather Group's Chief Compliance Officer, Stewart Mather, CFP®, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above fee determination.

For our Financial Planning clients introduced through Betterment, the annual fee will range from .10% to .70% of assets under management on the Betterment Securities platform per the fee schedule set forth in the Comprehensive Financial Planning Agreement between the firm and the client. This fee is separate and distinct from any fees that Betterment is applying to client account(s) for its services. Betterment's separate agreements with clients provide authority for Betterment to directly debit The Mather Group's fees from the clients' accounts. Betterment shall collect the fees on a quarterly basis for the prior quarter or on a monthly basis for the prior month upon notification to client and The Mather Group.

***FEE SCHEDULE: Comprehensive Financial Planning***

<b><u>Account Asset Value</u></b>	<b><u>Annualized Fee*</u></b>
First \$1,000,000	0.70%
Next \$1,000,000	0.65%
Next \$1,000,000	0.55%
Next \$1,000,000	0.45%
Next \$1,000,000	0.35%
Next \$5,000,000	0.25%
Balance Over \$10,000,000	0.10%

(ii) Retirement Plan Consulting

The total estimated fee, as well as the ultimate fee that we charge you, is based on the scope and complexity of our engagement with you. Our maximum annualized fee for this service is 0.30% of the assets under management. Our firms' fees are billed on a pro-rata annualized basis quarterly in arrears based on the value of your account on the last day of the previous quarter. We may also charge on a fixed fee basis, in which case, our fees will range from \$10,000 to \$200,000.

The fees listed are the maximum fees charged for services. Each client's fees are determined on a case by case basis. Average client fees are typically lower than the maximum fee quoted above. The fee-paying arrangements for pension consulting service will be determined on a case-by- case basis and will be detailed in the signed Retirement Plan Consulting Agreement. The client will be invoiced directly for the fees.

(iii) Retirement Plan Asset Management

The total estimated fee, as well as the ultimate fee that we charge you, is based on the scope and complexity of our engagement with you. Our maximum annualized fee for this service is 0.30% of the assets under management. The fees charged for retirement plan asset management services under 3(38) take into account the fees listed as part of our Retirement Plan Consulting service and additional fees in exchange for other services that may be provided. We may also charge on a fixed fee basis, in which case, our fees will range from \$10,000 to \$200,000.

The fees listed are the maximum fees charged for services. Each client's fees are determined on a case by case basis. Average client fees are typically lower than the maximum fee quoted above. The fee-paying arrangements for retirement plan asset management services will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will be detailed in the signed Retirement Plan Consulting Agreement. The client will be invoiced directly for the fees.

B. Description of whether we deduct fees from clients' assets or bill clients for fees incurred.

(i) Financial Planning and Portfolio Management:

Fees will generally be automatically deducted from your managed account. As part of this process, you understand and acknowledge the following:

- a) Your independent custodian sends statements at least quarterly to you showing all disbursements for your account, including the amount of the advisory fees paid to us;
- b) You provide authorization permitting us to be directly paid by these terms.

C. Description of any other types of fees or expenses clients may pay in connection with our advisory services, such as custodian fees or mutual fund expenses.

For our Financial Planning and Portfolio Management accounts, clients will incur transaction charges for trades executed in their accounts. These transaction fees are separate from our fees and will be disclosed by the firm that the trades are executed through. Also, clients will pay the following separately incurred expenses, which we do not receive any part of charges imposed directly by a mutual fund, index fund, or exchange traded fund which shall be disclosed in the fund's prospectus (i.e., fund management fees and other fund expenses).

For our Financial Planning clients introduced through Betterment, trading costs are included in the Betterment annual portfolio management fee. Please refer to Betterment for a full description of its fees.

D. Client's advisory fees

For our Financial Planning and Portfolio Management clients, we charge our advisory fees quarterly in advance. In the event that you wish to terminate our services, we will refund the unearned portion of our advisory fee to you. You should contact us and let us know that you wish to terminate our services. Upon confirmation of termination, we will proceed to close out your account and process a pro-rata refund of unearned advisory fees.

For our Financial Planning clients introduced through Betterment, Betterment shall collect the fees on a quarterly basis for the prior quarter or on a monthly basis for the prior month upon notification to client and The Mather Group. In the event that you wish to terminate our sub-advisory services, we shall immediately notify Betterment. At that point, Betterment will revoke The Mather Group's access to such client's account and shall no longer be entitled to fees. The Mather Group cannot close an account on behalf of a client.

E. Commissionable securities sales.

We do not sell securities for a commission. In order to sell securities for a commission, we would need to have our associated persons registered with a broker-dealer. We have chosen not to do so.

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

We do not charge performance fees to our clients.

## Item 7: Types OF Clients & Account Requirements

We have the following types of clients:

- Individuals;
- Trusts, Estates or Charitable Organizations;
- Pension, Profit Sharing Plans, Defined Contribution, Defined Benefit and Non-Qualified Deferred Compensation Plans;
- Corporations, limited liability companies and/or other business types;

Our requirements for opening and maintaining accounts or otherwise engaging us:

- We require a minimum account balance of \$1,000,000 for our Financial Planning and Portfolio Management service. Generally, this minimum account balance requirement is negotiable and would be required throughout the course of the client's relationship with our firm.
- The Mather Group, in its sole discretion, may waive its aggregate account minimum based upon certain criteria (i.e. anticipated future earning capacity, anticipated future additional assets, dollar amount of assets to be managed, related accounts, account composition, negotiations with client, etc.).
- Furthermore, The Mather Group, in its sole discretion, may waive its aggregate account minimum when engaging in sub-advisory services with Betterment.

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

### A. Description of the methods of analysis and investment strategies we use in formulating investment advice or managing assets.

#### Methods of Analysis:

- Charting;
- Fundamental;
- Technical;
- Cyclical.

#### Investment Strategies we use:

- Long term purchases (securities held at least a year);
- Short term purchases (securities sold within a year);
- Trading (securities sold within 30 days);
- Short sales;
- Margin transactions;
- Option writing, including covered options, uncovered options or spreading strategies.

#### **Please note:**

Investing in securities involves risk of loss that clients should be prepared to bear. While the stock market may increase and your account(s) could enjoy a gain, it is also possible that the stock market may decrease and your account(s) could suffer a loss. It is important that you

understand the risks associated with investing in the stock market, are appropriately diversified in your investments, and ask us any questions you may have.

- B. Our practices regarding cash balances in client accounts, including whether we invest cash balances for temporary purposes and, if so, how.

We generally invest client's cash balances in money market funds, FDIC Insured Certificates of Deposit, high-grade commercial paper and/or government backed debt instruments. Ultimately, we try to achieve the highest return on our client's cash balances through relatively low-risk conservative investments.

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

There are no 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.

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

The Mather Group provides sub-advisory services to clients referred to it by Betterment, a registered investment advisor, as described in Item 4.

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

- A. Brief description of our Code of Ethics adopted pursuant to SEC rule 204A-1 and offer to provide a copy of our Code of Ethics to any client or prospective client upon request.

We recognize that the personal investment transactions of members and employees of our firm demand the application of a high Code of Ethics and require that all such transactions be carried out in a way that does not endanger the interest of any client. At the same time, we believe that if investment goals are similar for clients and for members and employees of our firm, it is logical and even desirable that there be common ownership of some securities.

Therefore, in order to prevent conflicts of interest, we have in place a set of procedures (including a pre-clearing procedure) with respect to transactions effected by our members, officers and employees for their personal accounts. In order to monitor compliance with our personal trading policy, we have a quarterly securities transaction reporting system for all of our associates.

Furthermore, our firm has established a Code of Ethics which applies to all of our associated persons. An investment adviser is considered a fiduciary. As a fiduciary, it is an investment adviser's responsibility to provide fair and full disclosure of all material facts and to act solely in the best interest of each of our clients at all times. We have a fiduciary duty to all clients. Our fiduciary duty is considered the core underlying principle for our Code of Ethics which also

includes Insider Trading and Personal Securities Transactions Policies and Procedures. We require all of our supervised persons to conduct business with the highest level of ethical standards and to comply with all federal and state securities laws at all times. Upon employment or affiliation and at least annually thereafter, all supervised persons will sign an acknowledgement that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with our Code of Ethics. Our firm and supervised persons must conduct business in an honest, ethical, and fair manner and avoid all circumstances that might negatively affect or appear to affect our duty of complete loyalty to all clients. This disclosure is provided to give all clients a summary of our Code of Ethics. However, if a client or a potential client wishes to review our Code of Ethics in its entirety, a copy will be provided promptly upon request.

- B. If our firm or a related person invests in the same securities (or related securities, e.g., warrants, options or futures) that our firm or a related person recommends to clients, we are required to describe our practice and discuss the conflicts of interest this presents and generally how we address the conflicts that arise in connection with personal trading.

See Item 11A of this Brochure. Related persons of our firm may buy or sell securities and other investments that are also recommended to clients. In order to minimize this conflict of interest, our related persons will place client interests ahead of their own interests and adhere to our firm's Code of Ethics, a copy of which is available upon request.

- C. If our firm or a related person recommends securities to clients, or buys or sells securities for client accounts, at or about the same time that you or a related person buys or sells the same securities for our firm's (or the related person's own) account, we are required to describe our practice and discuss the conflicts of interest it presents. We are also required to describe generally how we address conflicts that arise.

See Item 11A of this brochure. Related persons of our firm may buy or sell securities for themselves at or about the same time they buy or sell the same securities for client accounts. In order to minimize this conflict of interest, our related persons will place client interests ahead of their own interests and adhere to our firm's Code of Ethics, a copy of which is available upon request. If related persons' accounts are included in a block trade, our related persons will always trade personal accounts last.

## Item 12: Brokerage Practices

- A. Description of the factors that we consider in selecting or recommending broker-dealers for client transactions and determining the reasonableness of their compensation (e.g., commissions).
1. Research and Other Soft Dollar Benefits. If we receive research or other products or services other than execution from a broker-dealer or a third party in connection with client securities transactions ("soft dollar benefits"), we are required to disclose our practices and discuss the conflicts of interest they create. Please note that we must disclose all soft dollar benefits we receive, including, in the case of research, both proprietary research (created or developed by the broker-dealer) and research created or developed by a third party.

Our firm has a non-soft dollar arrangement with Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC (“Fidelity”) which provides our firm with Fidelity’s “platform” services. The platform services include, among others, brokerage, custodial, administrative support, record keeping and related services that are intended to support our firm in conducting business and in serving the best interests of our clients but that may benefit our firm.

For our Financial Planning clients introduced through Betterment, please refer to Section D of this section for a full explanation of Brokerage Practices that apply to those relationships.

- a. Explanation of when we use client brokerage commissions (or markups or markdowns) to obtain research or other products or services, and how we receive a benefit because our firm does not have to produce or pay for the research, products or services.

As part of the arrangement described in Item 12A1, Fidelity also makes certain research and brokerage services available at no additional cost to our firm. These services include certain research and brokerage services, including research services obtained by Fidelity directly from independent research companies, as selected by our firm (within specific parameters). Research products and services provided by Fidelity to our firm may include research reports on recommendations or other information about, particular companies or industries; economic surveys, data and analyses; financial publications; portfolio evaluation services; financial database software and services; computerized news and pricing services; quotation equipment for use in running software used in investment decision-making; and other products or services that provide lawful and appropriate assistance by Fidelity to our firm in the performance of our investment decision-making responsibilities. The aforementioned research and brokerage services are used by our firm to manage accounts for which we have investment discretion. In addition, we may also receive from Fidelity without cost (and/or at a discount) compliance and/or practice management-related publications, discounted or gratis consulting services, discounted and/or gratis attendance at conferences, meetings, and other educational and/or social events, marketing support, computer hardware and/or software and/or other products used by Mather in furtherance of its investment advisory business operations. Without this arrangement, our firm might be compelled to purchase the same or similar services at our own expense.

- b. Incentive to select or recommend a broker-dealer based on our interest in receiving the research or other products or services, rather than on our clients’ interest in receiving best execution.

As a result of receiving the services discussed in 12A(1)a of this Firm Brochure for no additional cost, we may have an incentive to continue to use or expand the use of Fidelity’s services. Our firm examined this potential conflict of interest when we chose to enter into the relationship with Fidelity and we have determined that the relationship is in the best interest of our firm’s clients and satisfies our client obligations, including our duty to seek best execution.

Fidelity charges brokerage commissions and transaction fees for effecting certain securities transactions (i.e., transaction fees are charged for certain no-load mutual funds, commissions are charged for individual equity and debt securities transactions). Fidelity enables us to obtain many no-load mutual funds without transaction charges and other no-load funds at nominal transaction charges. Fidelity’s commission rates are generally discounted from customary retail commission rates. However, the

commission and transaction fees charged by Fidelity may be higher or lower than those charged by other custodians and broker-dealers.

- c. Causing clients to pay commissions (or markups or markdowns) higher than those charged by other broker-dealers in return for soft dollar benefits (known as paying-up).

Our clients may pay a commission to Fidelity that is higher than another qualified broker dealer might charge to affect the same transaction where we determine in good faith that the commission is reasonable in relation to the value of the brokerage and research services received. In seeking best execution, the determinative factor is not the lowest possible cost, but whether the transaction represents the best qualitative execution, taking into consideration the full range of a broker-dealers' services, including the value of research provided, execution capability, commission rates, and responsiveness. Accordingly, although we will seek competitive rates, to the benefit or all clients, we may not necessarily obtain the lowest possible commission rates for specific client account transactions.

- d. Disclosure of whether we use soft dollar benefits to service all of our clients' accounts or only those that paid for the benefits, as well as whether we seek to allocate soft dollar benefits to client accounts proportionately to the soft dollar credits the accounts generate.

Although the investment research products and services that may be obtained by our firm will generally be used to service all of our clients, a brokerage commission paid by a specific client may be used to pay for research that is not used in managing that specific client's account.

- e. Description of the types of products and services our firm or any of our related persons acquired with client brokerage commissions (or markups or markdowns) within our last fiscal year.

We have nothing to disclose in this regards.

- f. Explanation of the procedures we used during our last fiscal year to direct client transactions to a particular broker-dealer in return for soft dollar benefits we received.

We have nothing to disclose in this regards.

- 2) Brokerage for Client Referrals. If we consider, in selecting or recommending broker-dealers, whether our firm or a related person receives client referrals from a broker-dealer or third party, we are required to disclose this practice and discuss the conflicts of interest it create.

Our firm does not receive brokerage for client referrals.

- 3) Directed Brokerage.

- a. If we routinely recommend, request or require that a client directs us to execute transactions through a specified broker-dealer, we are required to describe our practice or policy. Further, we must explain that not all advisers require their clients to direct brokerage. If our firm and the broker-dealer are affiliates or have another economic relationship that creates a material conflict of interest, we are further required to



describe the relationship and discuss the conflicts of interest it presents by explaining that through the direction of brokerage we may be unable to achieve best execution of client transactions, and that this practice may cost our clients more money.

We or any of our firm's related person do not have discretionary authority in making the determination of the brokers with whom orders for the purchase or sale of securities are placed for execution, and the commission rates at which such securities transactions are effected.

- b. If we permit a client to direct brokerage, we are required to describe our practice. If applicable, we must also explain that we may be unable to achieve best execution of your transactions. Directed brokerage may cost clients more money. For example, in a directed brokerage account, you may pay higher brokerage commissions because we may not be able to aggregate orders to reduce transaction costs, or you may receive less favorable prices on transactions.

We do not allow client-directed brokerage.

- B. Discussion of whether, and under what conditions, we aggregate the purchase or sale of securities for various client accounts in quantities sufficient to obtain reduced transaction costs (known as bunching). If we do not bunch orders when we have the opportunity to do so, we are required to explain our practice and describe the costs to clients of not bunching.

We perform investment management services for various clients. There are occasions on which portfolio transactions may be executed as part of concurrent authorizations to purchase or sell the same security for numerous accounts served by our firm, which involve accounts with similar investment objectives. Although such concurrent authorizations potentially could be either advantageous or disadvantageous to any one or more particular accounts, they are effected only when we believe that to do so will be in the best interest of the affected accounts. When such concurrent authorizations occur, the objective is to allocate the executions in a manner which is deemed equitable to the accounts involved. In any given situation, we attempt to allocate trade executions in the most equitable manner possible, taking into consideration client objectives, current asset allocation and availability of funds using price averaging, proration and consistently non-arbitrary methods of allocation.

- C. Special Considerations for ERISA Clients

A retirement or ERISA plan client may direct all or part of portfolio transactions for its account through a specific broker or dealer in order to obtain goods or services on behalf of the plan. Such direction is permitted provided that the goods and services provided are reasonable expenses of the plan incurred in the ordinary course of its business for which it otherwise would be obligated and empowered to pay. ERISA prohibits directed brokerage arrangements when the goods or services purchased are not for the exclusive benefit of the plan. Consequently, we will request that plan sponsors who direct plan brokerage provide us with a letter documenting that this arrangement will be for the exclusive benefit of the plan.

- D. Betterment Sub-Advisory Services Custodian and Brokers

The Mather Group also provides sub-advisory services to clients referred to it by Betterment, a registered investment adviser. Per the terms of the Betterment Advisor Network Agreement, The Mather Group does not maintain custody of your assets, although we may be deemed to have

custody of your assets if you give us authority to withdraw advisory fees from your account. For this referral arrangement, your assets must be held at Betterment Securities, a registered broker-dealer and member of the SIPC. The Mather Group is independently owned and operated and is not affiliated with Betterment Securities. Betterment Securities will hold your assets in a brokerage account and buy and sell securities when we and/or you instruct them to.

- a. When using the Betterment Securities platform, The Mather Group and you are subject to the trading policies and procedures established by Betterment. These policies and procedures limit our ability to control, among other things, the timing of the execution of certain trades (including in response to withdrawals, deposits, or asset allocation changes) within your account. You should not expect that trading on Betterment is instant, and, accordingly, you should be aware that Betterment does not permit you or us to control the specific time during a day that securities are bought or sold in your account (i.e., to “time the market”). Betterment describes its trading policies in Betterment Form ADV Part 2A.
- b. The Mather Group and Betterment acknowledge that the Client’s self-directed appointment of Betterment Securities for brokerage services may not result in the lowest commissions and/or custody fees.

### Item 13: Review of Accounts or Financial Plans

- A. Review of client accounts or financial plans, along with a description of the frequency and nature of our review, and the titles of our employees who conduct the review.

We review accounts on at least a quarterly basis for our clients subscribing to our firm’s Financial Planning and Portfolio Management service or Comprehensive Financial Planning service. The nature of these reviews is to learn whether clients’ accounts are in line with their investment objectives, appropriately positioned based on market conditions, and investment policies, if applicable. The reviews also enable us to monitor the client’s financial plan and its progress towards stated financial goals. Only our Wealth Advisors will conduct reviews.

- B. Review of client accounts on other than a periodic basis, along with a description of the factors that trigger a review.

We may review client accounts or financial plans more frequently than described above. Among the factors which may trigger an off-cycle review are major market or economic events, the client’s life events, requests by the client, etc.

- C. Description of the content and indication of the frequency of written or verbal regular reports we provide to clients regarding their accounts.

Written reports take place quarterly with performance reports and a market commentary letter. Verbal reports to clients take place on at least an annual basis when we meet with clients who subscribe to the Financial Planning and Portfolio Management service.

### Item 14: Client Referrals & Other Compensation

- A. If someone who is not a client provides an economic benefit to our firm for providing investment advice or other advisory services to our clients, we must generally describe the arrangement. For purposes of this Item, economic benefits include any sales awards or other prizes.

Except for the arrangements outlined in Item 12 of this brochure, we have no additional arrangements to disclose.

- B. If our firm or a related person directly or indirectly compensates any person who is not our employee for client referrals, we are required to describe the arrangement and the compensation.

We do not maintain any solicitor arrangements (i.e. does not compensate any individual or entity for client introduction).

## Item 15: Custody

- A. If we have custody of client funds or securities and a qualified custodian as defined in SEC rule 206(4)-2 or similar state rules (for example, a broker-dealer or bank) does not send account statements with respect to those funds or securities directly to our clients, we must disclose that we have custody and explain the risks that you will face because of this.

All of our clients receive at least quarterly account statements directly from their custodians. Upon opening an account with a qualified custodian on a client's behalf, we promptly notify the client in writing of the qualified custodian's contact information. If we decide to also send account statements to clients, such notice and account statements include a legend that recommends that the client compare the account statements received from the qualified custodian with those received from our firm.

- B. If we have custody of client funds or securities and a qualified custodian sends quarterly, or more frequent, account statements directly to our clients, we are required to explain that you will receive account statements from the broker-dealer, bank, or other qualified custodian and that you should carefully review those statements.
- C. For our Financial Planning clients introduced through the Betterment, Betterment Securities maintains actual custody of your assets. Your statements will be available for you to review on the activity section of your Betterment for Advisors account portal. You will also receive account statements directly from Betterment Securities at least quarterly at [www.bettermentsecurities.com](http://www.bettermentsecurities.com). You should carefully review those statements promptly.

We encourage our clients to raise any questions with us about the custody, safety or security of their assets. The custodians we do business with will send you independent account statements listing your account balance(s), transaction history and any fee debits or other fees taken out of your account.

## Item 16: Investment Discretion

If we accept discretionary authority to manage securities accounts on behalf of clients, we are required to disclose this fact and describe any limitations our clients may place on our authority. The following procedures are followed before we assume this authority:

Our clients are required to sign a discretionary investment advisory agreement with our firm for the management of their account. This type of agreement only applies to our Financial Planning and Portfolio Management clients. We do not take or exercise discretion with respect to our other clients.

For our Financial Planning clients introduced through Betterment, Betterment and The Mather Group agree that only Betterment will exercise “investment discretion” with respect to Accounts within the meaning of Section 13(f) of the Securities Act of 1934, as amended (the “Exchange Act”) and that Betterment shall be responsible for filing any required reports pursuant to Section 13(f) and the rules thereunder.

## Item 17: Voting Client Securities

If we have, or will accept, proxy authority to vote client securities, we must briefly describe our voting policies and procedures, including those adopted pursuant to SEC Rule 206(4)-6.

We do not and will not accept the proxy authority to vote client securities. Clients will receive proxies or other solicitations directly from their custodian or a transfer agent. In the event that proxies are sent to our firm, we will forward them on to you and ask the party who sent them to mail them directly to you in the future. Clients may call, write or email us to discuss questions they may have about particular proxy vote or other solicitation.

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. Therefore (except for proxies that may be voted by a third-party money manager), our firm and/or you shall instruct your qualified custodian to forward to you copies of all proxies and shareholder communications relating to your investment assets.

## Item 18: Financial Information

- A. If we require or solicit prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance, we must include a balance sheet for our most recent fiscal year.

We do not require nor do we solicit prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance. Therefore, we have not included a balance sheet for our most recent fiscal year.

- B. If we are an SEC-registered adviser and have discretionary authority or custody of client funds or securities, or we require or solicit prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance, we must disclose any financial condition that is reasonably likely to impair our ability to meet contractual commitments to clients.

We have nothing to disclose in this regard.

- C. If we have been the subject of a bankruptcy petition at any time during the past ten years, we must disclose this fact, the date the petition was first brought, and the current status.

We have nothing to disclose in this regard.

**Any questions regarding this Brochure – Part 2A, please contact The Mather Group’s Chief Compliance Officer, Stewart M. Mather, CFP®, CIMA at (630) 537-1080.**