

# **JPS Financial, LLC**

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

This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of JPS Financial, LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at 440-899-6350. 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 JPS Financial, LLC available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov).

JPS Financial, LLC is a registered investment adviser. Registration with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or any state securities authority does not imply a certain level of skill or training.

## Item 2 Material Changes

Form ADV Part 2 requires registered investment advisers to amend their brochure when information becomes materially inaccurate. If there are any material changes to an adviser's disclosure brochure, the adviser is required to notify you and provide you with a description of the material changes.

Generally, JPS Financial, LLC will notify clients of material changes on an annual basis. However, where we determine that an interim notification is either meaningful or required, we will notify our clients promptly. In either case, we will notify our clients in a separate document.

Since the filing of our last annual updating amendment, dated February 26, 2015 we have no material changes to report.

### Item 3 Table Of Contents

Item 1 Cover Page	Page 1
Item 2 Material Changes	Page 2
Item 3 Table Of Contents	Page 3
Item 4 Advisory Business	Page 4
Item 5 Fees and Compensation	Page 6
Item 6 Performance-Based Fees and Side-By-Side Management	Page 10
Item 7 Types of Clients	Page 10
Item 8 Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies and Risk of Loss	Page 10
Item 9 Disciplinary Information	Page 12
Item 10 Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations	Page 12
Item 11 Code of Ethics, Participation or Interest in Client Transactions and Personal Trading	Page 13
Item 12 Brokerage Practices	Page 13
Item 13 Review of Accounts	Page 16
Item 14 Client Referrals and Other Compensation	Page 16
Item 15 Custody	Page 16
Item 16 Investment Discretion	Page 17
Item 17 Voting Client Securities	Page 17
Item 18 Financial Information	Page 17
Item 19 Requirements for State-Registered Advisers	Page 17
Item 20 Additional Information	Page 17

## Item 4 Advisory Business

### Description of Services and Fees

JPS Financial, LLC is a registered investment adviser based in Westlake, Ohio. We are organized as a limited liability company under the laws of the State of Ohio. We have been providing investment advisory services since 2014. John Pinter is our principal owner. Currently, we offer the following investment advisory services, which are personalized to each individual client:

- Portfolio Management Services
- Portfolio Consulting Services
- Financial Planning Services
- Pension Consulting Services

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

### Portfolio Management Services

We offer discretionary and non-discretionary portfolio management services. Our investment advice is tailored to meet our clients' needs and investment objectives. If you retain our firm for portfolio management services, we will meet with you to determine your investment objectives, risk tolerance, and other relevant information at the beginning of our advisory relationship. We will use the information we gather to develop a strategy that enables our firm to give you continuous and focused investment advice and/or to make investments on your behalf. Once we construct an investment portfolio for you, or select a model portfolio, we will monitor your portfolio's performance on an ongoing basis, and will rebalance the portfolio as required by changes in market conditions and in your financial circumstances.

If you participate in our discretionary portfolio management services, we require you to grant our firm discretionary authority to manage your account. Discretionary authorization will allow us to determine the specific securities, and the amount of securities, to be purchased or sold for your account without your approval prior to each transaction. Discretionary authority is typically granted by the investment advisory agreement you sign with our firm and the appropriate trading authorization forms. In our sole discretion, we may allow you to limit our discretionary authority (for example, limiting the types of securities that can be purchased for your account) by providing our firm with your restrictions and guidelines in writing. If you enter into non-discretionary arrangements with our firm, we must obtain your approval prior to executing any transactions on behalf of your account.

As part of our portfolio management services, we offer certain advisory clients access to our Wealth Management Platform, a secure internet based web site designed to provide clients with investment and planning reports that are updated every business day. Additionally, the Wealth Management Platform includes access to an on-line vault where clients can store important documents and papers, including estate planning documents, tax returns, insurance contracts, deeds, etc. Generally, access to the Wealth Management Platform is available to clients with \$500,000 or more in assets under management, but we reserve the right to extend this service to any client account.

### Portfolio Consulting Services

We provide Portfolio Consulting services where the investment advice provided is custom tailored to meet your needs and investment objectives. Such services may include a risk tolerance assessment, asset allocation recommendations, and/or monitoring your account. We may assist you in identifying categories of mutual funds, individual equities, and other investments that are suitable based on your

investment profile. We will not cause any transactions in conjunction with the advice and/or recommendations given. You will be responsible for implementing our investment recommendations. If we have access to your account statements, we will monitor your account on a periodic basis to ensure the account remains aligned with your stated financial objectives. You are free at all times to accept or reject any of our investment recommendations.

### **Financial Planning Services**

We offer financial planning services which typically involve providing a variety of advisory services to clients regarding the management of their financial resources based upon an analysis of their individual needs. These services can range from broad, comprehensive, financial planning to consultative or single subject planning. If you retain our firm for financial planning services, we will meet with you to gather information about your financial circumstances and objectives. Once we review and analyze the information you provide to our firm, we may deliver a written plan to you, designed to help you achieve your stated financial goals and objectives.

Financial plans are based on your financial situation at the time we present the plan to you, and on the financial information you provide to us. You must promptly notify our firm if your financial situation, goals, objectives, or needs change. You are under no obligation to act on our financial planning recommendations. Should you choose to act on any of our recommendations, you are not obligated to implement the financial plan through any of our other investment advisory services. Moreover, you may act on our recommendations by placing securities transactions with any brokerage firm.

### **Pension Consulting Services**

We offer pension consulting services to employee benefit plans and their fiduciaries based upon the needs of the plan and the services requested by the plan sponsor or named fiduciary. In general, these services may include an existing plan review and analysis, plan-level advice regarding fund selection and investment options, education services to plan participants, investment performance monitoring, and/or ongoing consulting. The ultimate decision to act on behalf of the plan shall remain with the plan sponsor or other named fiduciary.

We may assist with participant enrollment meetings and provide investment-related educational seminars to plan participants on such topics as: Diversification; Asset allocation; Risk tolerance; and Time horizon. Our educational seminars may include other investment-related topics specific to the particular plan. We may also provide additional types of pension consulting services to plans on an individually negotiated basis. All services, whether discussed above or customized for the plan based upon requirements from the plan fiduciaries (which may include additional plan-level or participant-level services) shall be detailed in a written agreement and be consistent with the parameters set forth in the plan documents.

### **Types of Investments**

We primarily offer advice on mutual funds and equity securities. However, we may advise you on any type of investment that we deem appropriate based on your stated goals and objectives. We may also provide advice on any type of investment held in your portfolio at the inception of our advisory relationship. You may request that we refrain from investing in particular securities or certain types of securities. You must provide these restrictions to our firm in writing.

### **Assets Under Management**

As of February 1, 2016, we provide continuous management services for \$120,696,352 in client assets on a discretionary basis, and \$9,758,423 in client assets on a non-discretionary basis. We also provide investment advice to approximately \$11,550,000 in plan assets.

## Item 5 Fees and Compensation

### Portfolio Management Services

Our fee for portfolio management service is based on a percentage of your assets under management and is set forth in the following *blended* fee schedule:

Assets Under Management	Annual Fee
Up to \$250,000	1.25%
\$250,001 - \$500,000	1.00%
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	0.90%
\$1,000,001 - \$3,000,000	0.85%
\$3,000,001 - \$6,000,000	0.75%
Over \$6,000,000	0.65%

Our annual portfolio management fee is billed and payable quarterly in advance based on the value of your account on the last day of the previous quarter. If the portfolio management agreement is executed at any time other than the first day of a calendar quarter, our fees will apply on a pro rata basis, which means that the advisory fee is payable in proportion to the number of days in the quarter for which you are a client. You may make additions to your account and/or withdrawals from your account at any time. If assets are deposited into or withdrawn from an account after the inception of a quarter, we will adjust the fee based on the number of days remaining in the quarter. Since we bill your account quarterly in advance, any adjustments to your account will be reflected in the next quarter's billing statement. We design portfolios as long-term investments and asset withdrawals may impair the achievement of your investment objectives. Our advisory fee is negotiable, depending on individual client circumstances.

At our discretion, we may combine the account values of family members living in the same household to determine the applicable advisory fee. For example, we may combine account values for you and your minor children, joint accounts with your spouse, and other types of related accounts. Combining account values may increase the asset total, which may result in your paying a reduced advisory fee based on the available breakpoints in our fee schedule stated above.

Generally, we will deduct our fee directly from your account through the qualified custodian holding your funds and securities. We will deduct our advisory fee only when you have given our firm written authorization permitting the fees to be paid directly from your account. Further, the qualified custodian will deliver an account statement to you at least quarterly. These account statements will show all disbursements from your account. You should review all statements for accuracy. In limited circumstances and in our sole discretion, we may agree to invoice for the payment of our advisory fee.

You may terminate the portfolio management agreement upon 30-days' written notice to our firm. You will incur a pro rata charge for services rendered prior to the termination of the portfolio management agreement, which means you will incur advisory fees only in proportion to the number of days in the quarter for which you are a client. If you have pre-paid advisory fees that we have not yet earned, you will receive a prorated refund of those fees.

We encourage you to review the statement(s) you receive from the qualified custodian. If you find any inconsistent information with the statement(s) you receive from the qualified custodian, please call our main office number located on the cover page of this brochure.

### **Portfolio Consulting Services**

Our annualized fee for Portfolio Consulting services is 1.00% of your portfolio assets. Our fee for this service is billed quarterly in advance. Our fees will be assessed pro rata in the event that the advisory agreement is executed at any time other than the first day of a billing period. In certain circumstances, you may only require advice on a single aspect of the management of your financial resources. In this case, we offer a general consulting service that addresses only those specific areas of your interest or concern. For consulting services, our fees will be based on our negotiable hourly rate of \$250, which will be due and payable as invoiced. Our fee is negotiable depending on individual client circumstances. In all cases, applicable fees, fee payment arrangements, and the terms of the engagement will be clearly set forth in the advisory agreement executed between our firm and you prior to services being rendered.

You may terminate the Portfolio Consulting Agreement upon 30-days' written notice to our firm. You will incur a pro rata charge for services rendered prior to termination, which means you will incur advisory fees only in proportion to the number of days in the quarter for which you are a client. If you have pre-paid advisory fees that we have not yet earned, you will receive a prorated refund of those fees. The advisory fees will be pro-rated for the quarter in which the cancellation notice was given, and any pre-paid unearned fees will be refunded to you.

### **Financial Planning Services**

We offer financial planning services on either an hourly basis or fixed fee basis. Our hourly fee is \$250 and our fixed fees range from \$1,500 to \$5,000. Generally, our hourly fee is billed for general consulting services and our fixed fees are billed for broad based or project-based financial planning. In limited circumstances, we may negotiate a fee above our maximum \$5,000 fixed fee where the client requires planning services beyond the scope of our general financial planning services.

Our financial planning fees - both hourly and fixed fees - are negotiable depending upon the complexity and scope of the plan, your financial situation, and your objectives. Our hourly fees are generally due upon completion of services rendered. For our fixed fees, however, we require that you pay 50% of the fee in advance with the remaining portion due upon completion of services rendered. In our sole discretion, we may negotiate other fee paying arrangements. All important terms will be evidenced in the agreement that you sign with our firm.

We also offer annual, ongoing financial planning services for a fixed fee ranging from \$1,500 to \$5,000, which is billed quarterly in advance. Our ongoing financial planning services may include, but not limited to: ongoing consulting regarding your financial plan; quarterly and/or annual reviews; and updates to your financial plan. In the event you submit written notice to our firm terminating our ongoing financial planning services, we will issue a refund of any advanced payment based on the number of days within the quarter for which you were a client.

Clients for whom we have previously provided Financial Planning Services, and who currently have a minimum of \$500,000 in assets under management, will receive regular reviews of their financial plan at no additional charge. At our sole discretion, we may waive this \$500,000 assets under management requirement.

We do not require advance payments in excess of \$1,200 for services not performed within six months from the date of engagement. Should the engagement last longer than six months between acceptance of the financial planning agreement and delivery of the financial plan and/or negotiated services, any prepaid unearned fees will be promptly returned to you less a pro rata charge for bona fide financial planning services rendered to date.

You may terminate the financial planning agreement by providing written notice to our firm. You will incur a pro rata charge for services rendered prior to the termination of the agreement. If you have pre-paid advisory fees that we have not yet earned, you will receive a prorated refund of those fees.

### **Pension Consulting Services**

Our advisory fee for pension consulting services is based on a percentage of the plan assets, which may range up to an annual fee of 1% of plan assets. This fee may be negotiated with the plan sponsor or named fiduciary on a case-by-case basis. Our fee is billed quarterly in arrears based on the value of plan assets on the last day of the quarter.

Either party to the pension consulting agreement may terminate the agreement upon 30-days' written notice to the other party. The pension consulting fees will be prorated for the quarter in which the termination notice is given and any unearned fees will be refunded to the client.

### **General - Advisory Services to Retirement Plans and Plan Participants**

As disclosed above, we offer various levels of advisory and consulting services to employee benefit plans ("Plan") and to the participants of such plans ("Participants"). Pursuant to adopted regulations of the U.S. Department of Labor, we are required to provide the Plan's responsible plan fiduciary (the person who has the authority to engage us as an investment adviser to the Plan) with a description of the services we provide to the Plan, the compensation we receive for providing those services, and our status (which is described below).

The services we provide to your Plan and the compensation that we receive for such services are described above, and in the service agreement that you sign with our firm. We do not reasonably expect to receive any other compensation, direct or indirect, for the services we provide to the Plan or Participants unless we are retained under a separate engagement. If we receive any other compensation for such services, we will (i) offset the compensation against our stated fees, and (ii) we will promptly disclose the amount of such compensation, the services rendered for such compensation and the payer of such compensation to you.

In providing services to the Plan and Participants, our status is that of an investment adviser registered under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, and we are not subject to any disqualifications under Section 411 of ERISA. To the extent we perform fiduciary services, we are acting as a fiduciary of the Plan as defined in Section 3(21) under ERISA.

### **IRA Rollover Considerations**

As part of our investment advisory services to you, we may recommend that you withdraw the assets from your employer's retirement plan and roll the assets over to an individual retirement account ("IRA") that we will manage on your behalf. If you elect to roll the assets to an IRA that is subject to our management, we will charge you an asset based fee as set forth in the agreement you executed with our firm. This practice presents a conflict of interest because persons providing investment advice on our behalf may have an incentive to recommend a rollover to you for the purpose of generating fee based compensation; however, it is our firm's strict policy to act in our client's best interest. You are under no obligation, contractually or otherwise, to complete the rollover. Moreover, if you do complete the rollover, you are under no obligation to have the assets in an IRA managed by our firm.

Many employers permit former employees to keep their retirement assets in their company plan. Also, current employees can sometimes move assets out of their company plan before they retire or change jobs. In determining whether to complete the rollover to an IRA, and to the extent the following options are available, you should consider the costs and benefits of:

An employee will typically have four options:



1. Leaving the funds in your employer's (former employer's) plan.
2. Moving the funds to a new employer's retirement plan.
3. Cashing out and taking a taxable distribution from the plan.
4. Rolling the funds into an IRA rollover account.

Each of these options has advantages and disadvantages and before making a change we encourage you to speak with your CPA and/or tax attorney.

If you are considering rolling over your retirement funds to an IRA for us to manage here are a few points to consider before you do so:

1. Determine whether the investment options in your employer's retirement plan address your needs or whether you might want to consider other types of investments.
  - a. Employer retirement plans generally have a more limited investment menu than IRAs.
2. Your current plan may have lower fees than our fees.
  - a. If you are interested in investing only in mutual funds, you should understand the cost structure of the share classes available in your employer's retirement plan and how the costs of those share classes compare with those available in an IRA. b. You should understand the various products and services you might take advantage of at an IRA provider and the potential costs of those products and services.
3. Our strategy may have higher risk than the option(s) provided to you in your plan.
4. Your current plan may also offer financial advice.
5. If you keep your assets titled in a 401k or retirement account, you could potentially delay your required minimum distribution beyond age 70.5. Your 401k may offer more liability protection than a rollover IRA; each state may vary.
6. Generally, federal law protects assets in qualified plans from creditors. Since 2005, IRA assets have been generally protected from creditors in bankruptcies. However, there can be some exceptions to the general rules so you should consult with an attorney if you are concerned about protecting your retirement plan assets from creditors.
7. You may be able to take out a loan on your 401k, but not from an IRA.
8. IRA assets can be accessed any time; however, distributions are subject to ordinary income tax and may also be subject to a 10% early distribution penalty for withdrawals taken before age 59 1/2 unless they qualify for an exception.
9. If you own company stock in your plan, you may be able to liquidate those shares at a lower capital gains tax rate.
10. Your plan may allow you to hire us as the manager and keep the assets titled in the plan name.

It is important that you understand the differences between these types of accounts and to decide whether a rollover is best for you. Prior to proceeding, if you have questions contact your investment adviser representative, or call our main number as listed on the cover page of this brochure.

### **Additional Fees and Expenses**

As part of our investment advisory services to you, we may invest, or recommend that you invest, in mutual funds and exchange traded funds. The fees that you pay to our firm for investment advisory services are separate and distinct from the fees and expenses charged by mutual funds or exchange traded funds (described in each fund's prospectus) to their shareholders. These fees will generally include a management fee and other fund expenses. You will also incur transaction charges and/or brokerage fees when purchasing or selling securities. These charges and fees are typically imposed by the broker-dealer or custodian through whom your account transactions are executed. We do not share in any portion of the brokerage fees/transaction charges imposed by the broker-dealer or custodian. To fully understand the total cost you will incur, you should review all the fees charged by mutual funds, exchange traded funds, our firm, and others. For information on our brokerage practices, please refer to the *Brokerage Practices* section of this brochure.

### **Compensation for the Sale of Other Financial Products**

Persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm may be licensed as independent insurance agents. These persons may earn commission-based compensation for selling insurance products, including insurance products they sell to you. Insurance commissions earned by these persons are separate and in addition to our advisory fees. This practice presents a conflict of interest because persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm who are insurance agents may have an incentive to recommend insurance products to you for the purpose of generating commissions. You are under no obligation, contractually or otherwise, to purchase insurance products through any person affiliated with our firm.

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

We do not accept performance-based fees or participate in side-by-side management. Performance-based fees are fees that are based on a share of capital gains or capital appreciation of a client's account. Side-by-side management refers to the practice of managing accounts that are charged performance-based fees while at the same time managing accounts that are not charged performance-based fees. Our fees are calculated as described in the *Advisory Business* section above, and are not charged on the basis of a share of capital gains upon, or capital appreciation of, the funds in your advisory account.

## **Item 7 Types of Clients**

We offer investment advisory services to pension and profit sharing plans, individuals, and high net worth individuals, including business owners, professionals, corporate executives, beneficiaries, and retirees.

In general, we require a minimum of \$250,000 to open and maintain an advisory account. At our discretion, we may waive this minimum account size. For example, we may waive the minimum if you appear to have significant potential for increasing your assets under our management. We may also combine account values for you and your minor children, joint accounts with your spouse, and other types of related accounts to meet the stated minimum.

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

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

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

**Fundamental Analysis** - involves analyzing individual companies and their industry groups, such as a company's financial statements, details regarding the company's product line, the experience and expertise of the company's management, and the outlook for the company and its industry. The resulting data is used to measure the true value of the company's stock compared to the current market value.

**Risk:** The risk of fundamental analysis is that information obtained may be incorrect and the analysis may not provide an accurate estimate of earnings, which may be the basis for a stock's value. If securities prices adjust rapidly to new information, utilizing fundamental analysis may not result in favorable performance.

**Long-Term Purchases** - securities purchased with the expectation that the value of those securities will grow over a relatively long period of time, generally greater than one year.

**Risk:** Using a long-term purchase strategy generally assumes the financial markets will go up in the long-term which may not be the case. There is also the risk that the segment of the market that you are invested in or perhaps just your particular investment will go down over time even if the overall financial markets advance. Purchasing investments long-term may create an opportunity cost - "locking-up" assets that may be better utilized in the short-term in other investments.

**Short-Term Purchases** - securities purchased with the expectation that they will be sold within a relatively short period of time, generally less than one year, to take advantage of the securities' short-term price fluctuations.

**Risk:** Using a short-term purchase strategy generally assumes that we can predict how financial markets will perform in the short-term which may be very difficult and will incur a disproportionately higher amount of transaction costs compared to long-term trading. There are many factors that can affect financial market performance in the short-term (such as short-term interest rate changes, cyclical earnings announcements, etc.) but may have a smaller impact over longer periods of times.

### **Tax Considerations**

Our strategies and investments may have unique and significant tax implications. However, unless we specifically agree otherwise, and in writing, tax efficiency may not be our primary consideration in the management of your assets. Regardless of your account size or any other factors, we strongly recommend that you consult with a tax professional prior to and throughout the investing of your assets.

Moreover, as a result of revised IRS regulations, custodians and broker-dealers will begin reporting the cost basis of equities acquired in client accounts on or after January 1, 2011. Your custodian will default to the FIFO (First-In First-Out) accounting method for calculating the cost basis of your investments. You are responsible for contacting your tax advisor to determine if this accounting method is the right choice for you. If your tax advisor believes another accounting method is more advantageous, please provide written notice to our firm immediately and we will alert your account custodian of your individually selected accounting method. Please note that decisions about cost basis accounting methods will need to be made before trades settle, as the cost basis method cannot be changed after settlement.

### **Risk of Loss**

Investing in securities involves risk of loss that you should be prepared to bear. We do not represent or guarantee that our services or methods of analysis can or will predict future results, successfully identify market tops or bottoms, or insulate clients from losses due to market corrections or declines. We cannot offer any guarantees or promises that your financial goals and objectives will be met. Past performance is in no way an indication of future performance.

### **Recommendation of Particular Types of Securities**

As disclosed under the *Advisory Business* section in this brochure, we primarily recommend mutual funds and equity securities. However, we may advise you on any type of investment since each client has different needs and different tolerance for risk. Each type of security has its own unique set of risks associated with it and it would not be possible to list here all of the specific risks of every type of investment. Even within the same type of investment, risks can vary widely. However, in very general terms, the higher the anticipated return of an investment, the higher the risk of loss associated with it.

**Mutual Funds:** Mutual funds are professionally managed collective investment systems that pool money from many investors and invest in stocks, bonds, short-term money market instruments, other mutual funds, other securities or any combination thereof. The fund will have a manager that trades the fund's investments in accordance with the fund's investment objective. While mutual funds generally provide diversification, risks can be significantly increased if the fund is concentrated in a particular sector of the market, primarily invests in small cap or speculative companies, uses leverage (i.e., borrows money) to a significant degree, or concentrates in a particular type of security (i.e., equities) rather than balancing the fund with different types of securities. The returns on mutual funds can be reduced by the costs to manage the funds. Also, while some mutual funds are "no load" and charge no fee to buy into, or sell out of, the fund, other types of mutual funds do charge such fees which can also reduce returns. Mutual funds can also be "closed end" or "open end". So-called "open end" mutual funds continue to allow in new investors indefinitely whereas "closed end" funds have a fixed number of shares to sell which can limit their availability to new investors.

**Stocks:** There are numerous ways of measuring the risk of equity securities (also known simply as "equities" or "stock"). In very broad terms, the value of a stock depends on the financial health of the company issuing it. However, stock prices can be affected by many other factors including, but not limited to: the class of stock (for example, preferred or common); the health of the market sector of the issuing company; and, the overall health of the economy. In general, larger, more well established companies ("large cap") tend to be safer than smaller start-up companies ("small cap") but the mere size of an issuer is not, by itself, an indicator of the safety of the investment.

### **Item 9 Disciplinary Information**

JPS Financial, LLC has been registered and providing investment advisory services since 2014. Neither our firm nor any of our management persons has any reportable disciplinary information.

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

In addition to being registered as an investment adviser, our firm is also licensed as a corporate insurance agent. Moreover, persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm may be licensed as insurance agents. These persons may earn commission-based compensation for selling insurance products, including insurance products they sell to you. Insurance commissions earned by these persons are separate from our advisory fees. Please see the *Fees and Compensation* section in this brochure for more information on the compensation received by insurance agents who are affiliated with our firm.

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

### **Description of Our Code of Ethics**

We strive to comply with applicable laws and regulations governing our practices. Therefore, our Code of Ethics includes guidelines for professional standards of conduct for persons associated with our firm. Our goal is to protect your interests at all times and to demonstrate our commitment to our fiduciary duties of honesty, good faith, and fair dealing with you. All persons associated with our firm are expected to adhere strictly to these guidelines. Persons associated with our firm are also required to report any violations of our Code of Ethics. Additionally, we maintain and enforce written policies reasonably designed to prevent the misuse or dissemination of material, non-public information about you or your account holdings by persons associated with our firm. Clients or prospective clients may obtain a copy of our Code of Ethics by contacting us at the telephone number on the cover page of this brochure.

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

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

### **Personal Trading Practices**

Our firm or persons associated with our firm may buy or sell the same securities that we recommend to you or securities in which you are already invested. A conflict of interest exists in such cases because we have the ability to trade ahead of you and potentially receive more favorable prices than you will receive. To mitigate this conflict of interest, it is our policy that neither our firm nor persons associated with our firm shall have priority over your account in the purchase or sale of securities.

## **Item 12 Brokerage Practices**

### **The Custodian and Brokers We Use**

We do not maintain custody of your assets that we manage, although we may be deemed to have custody of your assets if you give us authority to withdraw assets from your account (see *Item 15 - Custody*, below). Your assets must be maintained in an account at a "qualified custodian," generally a broker/dealer or bank. We recommend that our clients use Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. (Schwab), a registered broker-dealer, member SIPC, as the qualified custodian. We are independently owned and operated and are not affiliated with Schwab. Schwab will hold your assets in a brokerage account and buy and sell securities when we instruct them to. While we recommend that you use Schwab as custodian/broker, you will decide whether to do so and will open your account with Schwab by entering into an account agreement directly with them. We do not open the account for you, although we may assist you in doing so. Not all advisors require their clients to use a particular broker-dealer or other custodian selected by the advisor. Even though your account is maintained at Schwab, we can still use other brokers to execute trades for your account as described below (see "*Your Brokerage and Custody Costs*").

### **How We Select Brokers/Custodians**

We seek to recommend a custodian/broker who will hold your assets and execute transactions on terms that are, overall, most advantageous when compared to other available providers and their services. We consider a wide range of factors, including, among others:

- Combination of transaction execution services and asset custody services (generally without a separate fee for custody)
- Capability to execute, clear, and settle trades (buy and sell securities for your account)

- Capability to facilitate transfers and payments to and from accounts (wire transfers, check requests, bill payment, etc.)
- Breadth of available investment products (stocks, bonds, mutual funds, exchange-traded funds (ETFs), etc.)
- Availability of investment research and tools that assist us in making investment decisions
- Quality of services
- Competitiveness of the price of those services (commission rates, margin interest rates, other fees, etc.) and willingness to negotiate the prices
- Reputation, financial strength, and stability
- Prior service to us and our other clients
- Availability of other products and services that benefit us, as discussed below (see "*Products and Services Available to Us From Schwab*")

### **Your Brokerage and Custody Costs**

For our clients' accounts that Schwab maintains, Schwab generally does not charge you separately for custody services but is compensated by charging you commissions or other fees on trades that it executes or that settle into your Schwab account. This commitment benefits you because the overall commission rates you pay are lower than they would be otherwise. In addition to commissions, Schwab charges you a flat dollar amount as a "prime broker" or "trade away" fee for each trade that we have executed by a different broker-dealer but where the securities bought or the funds from the securities sold are deposited (settled) into your Schwab account. These fees are in addition to the commissions or other compensation you pay the executing broker-dealer. Because of this, in order to minimize your trading costs, we have Schwab execute most trades for your account. We have determined that having Schwab execute most trades is consistent with our duty to seek "best execution" of your trades. Best execution means the most favorable terms for a transaction based on all relevant factors, including those listed above (see "*How We Select Brokers/Custodians*").

### **Products and Services Available to Us From Schwab**

Schwab Advisor Services™ (formerly called Schwab Institutional®) is Schwab's business serving independent investment advisory firms like us. They provide us and our clients with access to its institutional brokerage—trading, custody, reporting, and related services—many of which are not typically available to Schwab retail customers. Schwab also makes available various support services. Some of those services help us manage or administer our clients' accounts, while others help us manage and grow our business. Following is a more detailed description of Schwab's support services:

**Services That Benefit You.** Schwab's institutional brokerage services include access to a broad range of investment products, execution of securities transactions, and custody of client assets. The investment products available through Schwab include some to which we might not otherwise have access or that would require a significantly higher minimum initial investment by our clients. Schwab's services described in this paragraph generally benefit you and your account.

**Services That May Not Directly Benefit You.** Schwab also makes available to us other products and services that benefit us but may not directly benefit you or your account. These products and services assist us in managing and administering our clients' accounts. They include investment research, both Schwab's own and that of third parties. We may use this research to service all or a substantial number of our clients' accounts, including accounts not maintained at Schwab. In addition to investment research, Schwab also makes available software and other technology that:

- Provide access to client account data (such as duplicate trade confirmations and account statements)
- Facilitate trade execution and allocate aggregated trade orders for multiple client accounts
- Provide pricing and other market data
- Facilitate payment of our fees from our clients' accounts



- Assist with back-office functions, recordkeeping, and client reporting

**Services That Generally Benefit Only Us.**

Schwab also offers other services intended to help us manage and further develop our business enterprise. These services include:

- Educational conferences and events
- Consulting on technology, compliance, legal, and business needs
- Publications and conferences on practice management and business succession
- Access to employee benefits providers, human capital consultants, and insurance providers

Schwab may provide some of these services itself. In other cases, it will arrange for third-party vendors to provide the services to us. Schwab may also discount or waive its fees for some of these services or pay all or a part of a third party's fees. Schwab may also provide us with other benefits, such as occasional business entertainment of our personnel.

**Our Interest in Schwab's Services**

The availability of these services from Schwab benefits us because we do not have to produce or purchase them. We don't have to pay for Schwab's services so long as our clients collectively keep their assets in accounts at Schwab. This may give us an incentive to recommend that you maintain your account with Schwab, based on our interest in receiving Schwab's services that benefit our business rather than based on your interest in receiving the best value in custody services and the most favorable execution of your transactions. This is a potential conflict of interest. We believe, however, that our selection of Schwab as custodian and broker is in the best interests of our clients. Our selection is primarily supported by the scope, quality, and price of Schwab's services (see "*How We Select Brokers/Custodians*") and not Schwab's services that benefit only us. We do not believe that recommending our clients to collectively maintain assets at Schwab in order to avoid paying Schwab quarterly service fees presents a material conflict of interest.

**Brokerage for Client Referrals**

We do not receive client referrals from broker-dealers in exchange for cash or other compensation, such as brokerage services or research.

**Directed Brokerage**

In limited circumstances, and at our discretion, some clients may instruct our firm to use one or more particular brokers for the transactions in their accounts. This practice may prevent our firm from obtaining favorable net price and execution. Thus, when directing brokerage business, you should consider whether the commission expenses, execution, clearance, and settlement capabilities that you will obtain through your broker are adequately favorable in comparison to those that we would otherwise obtain for you.

**Research and Other Soft Dollar Benefits**

In selecting or recommending a broker-dealer, we will consider the value of research and additional brokerage products and services a broker-dealer has provided or will provide to our clients and our firm. Please see above for disclosures about the types of benefits we receive from Schwab.

**Block Trades**

We may combine multiple orders for shares of the same securities purchased for discretionary accounts; however, we do not combine orders for non-discretionary accounts. Where client accounts participate in block trade orders, each participating client account will be billed a separate transaction fee imposed by the client's acting custodian, Charles Schwab & Co., Inc.

## Item 13 Review of Accounts

### Portfolio Management / Pension Consulting

The investment adviser representative assigned to your account will monitor your accounts on an ongoing basis and will conduct internal account reviews at least quarterly and upon your request to ensure that the advisory services provided to you are consistent with your stated investment needs and objectives. Additional reviews may be conducted based on various circumstances, including, but not limited to: contributions and withdrawals; year-end tax planning; market moving events; security specific events; and/or, changes in your risk/return objectives.

We typically do not provide you with additional or regular written reports in conjunction with account reviews. You will receive trade confirmations and monthly or quarterly statements from your account custodian(s).

### Financial Planning

We will review your financial plan only at your request or as agreed upon in the financial planning agreement that you sign with our firm. Otherwise, we do not review or monitor your financial plan beyond the terms negotiated in the financial planning agreement.

## Item 14 Client Referrals and Other Compensation

We do not receive any compensation from any third party in connection with providing investment advice to you nor do we compensate any individual or firm for client referrals.

Please refer to the *Brokerage Practices* section above for disclosures on research and other benefits we may receive resulting from our relationship with Schwab.

As disclosed under the *Fees and Compensation* section in this brochure, persons providing investment advice on behalf of our firm may be licensed insurance agents. For information on the conflicts of interest this presents, and how we address these conflicts, please refer to the *Fees and Compensation* section.

## Item 15 Custody

As paying agent for our firm, your independent custodian will directly debit your account(s) for the payment of our advisory fees. We do not have physical custody of any of your funds and/or securities. Your funds and securities will be held with a bank, broker-dealer, or other independent, qualified custodian. You will receive account statements from the independent, qualified custodian(s) holding your funds and securities at least quarterly. The account statements from your custodian(s) will indicate the amount of our advisory fees deducted from your account(s) each billing period. You should carefully review account statements for accuracy. If you have a question regarding your account statement, or if you did not receive a statement from your custodian, please contact us directly at the telephone number on the cover page of this brochure.



## Item 16 Investment Discretion

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

If you enter into non-discretionary arrangements with our firm, we will obtain your approval prior to the execution of any transactions for your account(s). You have an unrestricted right to decline to implement any advice provided by our firm on a non-discretionary basis.

## Item 17 Voting Client Securities

### Proxy Voting

We will not vote proxies on behalf of your advisory accounts. At your request, we may offer you advice regarding corporate actions and the exercise of your proxy voting rights. If you own shares of applicable securities, you are responsible for exercising your right to vote as a shareholder.

In most cases, you will receive proxy materials directly from the account custodian. However, in the event we were to receive any written or electronic proxy materials, we would forward them directly to you by mail, unless you have authorized our firm to contact you by electronic mail, in which case, we would forward any electronic solicitation to vote proxies.

## Item 18 Financial Information

Our firm does not have any financial condition or impairment that would prevent us from meeting our contractual commitments to you. We do not take physical custody of client funds or securities, or serve as trustee or signatory for client accounts. We do not require the prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees for services not performed within six months from the date of engagement. Moreover, we have never filed a bankruptcy petition at any time in the past ten years. Therefore, we are not required to include a financial statement with this brochure.

## Item 19 Requirements for State-Registered Advisers

Our firm is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission; therefore, we are not required to respond to this section.

## Item 20 Additional Information

### Your Privacy

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

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

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

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

### **Trade Errors**

From time-to-time we may make an error in submitting a trade order on your behalf. When this occurs, we may place a correcting trade with the broker-dealer which has custody of your account. If an investment gain results from the correcting trade, the gain will remain in your account unless the same error involved other client account(s) that should have received the gain, it is not permissible for you to retain the gain, or we confer with you and you decide to forego the gain (e.g., due to tax reasons). If the gain does not remain in your account and Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. ("Schwab") is the custodian, Schwab will donate the amount of any gain \$100 and over to charity. If a loss occurs greater than \$100, we will pay for the loss. Schwab will maintain the loss or gain (if such gain is not retained in your account) if it is under \$100 to minimize and offset its administrative time and expense. Generally, if related trade errors result in both gains and losses in your account, they may be netted.

### **Class Action Lawsuits**

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