

**Item 1: Cover Page**

**Appendix 1 of Part 2A  
Institutional Intelligent Portfolios™  
Wrap Fee Program Brochure**

March 18, 2021

**Hilltop Partners LLC  
dba Hilltop Wealth Solutions**  
CRD No. 290981

Main Office

527 Park Place, Suite 100  
Mishawaka, IN 46545  
phone: 574-889-PLAN (7526)

Branch Office

13420 Parker Commons Blvd., Suite 106  
Ft. Myers, FL 33912  
phone: 833-889-7526

email: [erikbrenner@hilltopwealthsolutions.com](mailto:erikbrenner@hilltopwealthsolutions.com)  
website: [www.hilltopwealthsolutions.com](http://www.hilltopwealthsolutions.com)

This wrap fee program brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Hilltop Wealth Solutions. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at 574-889-7526. 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. Registration with the SEC or State Regulatory Authority does not imply a certain level of skill or expertise.

Additional information about Hilltop Wealth Solutions also available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov).

## **Item 2: Material Changes**

This Firm Brochure is our disclosure document prepared according to regulatory requirements and rules. We will provide you with interim disclosures about material changes as necessary. At this time there are no material changes.

## Item 3: Table of Contents

Item 1: Cover Page.....	1
Item 2: Material Changes.....	2
Item 3: Table of Contents.....	3
Item 4: Services, Fees and Compensation.....	4
A. Hilltop Partners LLC.....	4
B. Disclosure of Cost Difference if Services Purchased Separately.....	5
C. Additional Client Fees and Terms of Payment.....	5
D. Compensation for Recommending the Hilltop Wrap Fee Program.....	6
E. External Compensation for the Sale of Securities to Clients.....	6
F. Important Disclosure – Custodian Investment Programs.....	6
G. Client Assets Under Management.....	8
Item 5: Account Requirements and Types of Clients.....	9
Item 6: Portfolio Manager Selection and Evaluation.....	10
A. Portfolio Manager Selection and Review.....	10
B. The Firm Acts as Both a Wrap Fee Sponsor and Portfolio Manager.....	10
Item 7: Client Information Provided to Portfolio Managers.....	19
Item 8: Client Contact with Portfolio Managers.....	20
Item 9: Additional Information.....	21
A. Disciplinary and Other Financial Activities and Affiliations.....	21
B. Code of Ethics, Brokerage Trading Practices, Account Reviews, and Financial and Related Matters.....	22

## Item 4: Services, Fees and Compensation

### A. Hilltop Partners LLC

Hilltop Partners LLC dba Hilltop Wealth Solutions ("Hilltop Wealth" or "the firm") is an Indiana limited liability company. The firm is owned by Erik Brenner (85%) and Elizabeth Foley (15%). The firm has been providing investment advisory services since January 2018.

#### A.1. Schwab Institutional Intelligent Portfolios™

We offer an automated investment program (the "Program") through which clients are invested in a range of investment strategies we have constructed and manage, each consisting of a portfolio of exchange-traded funds ("ETFs") and a cash allocation. The client may instruct us to exclude up to three ETFs from their portfolio. The client's portfolio is held in a brokerage account opened by the client at Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. ("CS&Co"). We use the Institutional Intelligent Portfolios® platform ("Platform"), offered by Schwab Performance Technologies ("SPT"), a software provider to independent investment advisors and an affiliate of CS&Co., to operate the Program. We are independent of and not owned by, affiliated with, or sponsored or supervised by SPT, CS&Co., or their affiliates (together, "Schwab"). We, and not Schwab, are the client's investment advisor and primary point of contact with respect to the Program. We are solely responsible, and Schwab is not responsible, for determining the appropriateness of the Program for the client, choosing a suitable investment strategy and portfolio for the client's investment needs and goals, and managing that portfolio on an ongoing basis. We have contracted with SPT to provide us with the Platform, which consists of technology and related trading and account management services for the Program. The Platform enables us to make the Program available to clients online and includes a system that automates certain key parts of our investment process (the "System"). The System includes an online questionnaire that helps us determine the client's investment objectives and risk tolerance and select an appropriate investment strategy and portfolio. Clients should note that we will recommend a portfolio via the System in response to the client's answers to the online questionnaire. The client may then indicate an interest in a portfolio that is one level less or more conservative or aggressive than the recommended portfolio, but we then make the final decision and select a portfolio based on all the information we have about the client. The System also includes an automated investment engine through which we manage the client's portfolio on an ongoing basis through automatic rebalancing and tax-loss harvesting (if the client is eligible and elects).

#### A.2. Fees and Compensation

##### A.2.a. Fee Schedule

We charge clients a fee for our services as described below. Our fees are not set or supervised by Schwab.

- Investment management on automated platform for fee of 75bps plus cost of ETFs.

There is a minimum \$5000 account size to be enrolled in the Program.

We charge wrap fee program clients a single fee calculated as a percentage of the assets in the account. The fee covers investment management services and the costs of executing trades. Clients do not pay brokerage commissions or any other fees to CS&Co. as part of the Program. Schwab does receive other revenues in connection with the Program.

Please be advised that due to differences in fee structures, Hilltop Wealth has an economic incentive to recommend its clients use its proprietary investment management services versus the Institutional Intelligent Portfolios™, as it yields a higher economic benefit.

Asset-based fees are always subject to the investment advisory agreement between the client and Hilltop Wealth. Such fees are payable monthly in arrears. The fees will be prorated if the investment advisory relationship commences otherwise than at the beginning of a calendar month. Adjustments for significant contributions to a client's portfolio (10% of portfolio value) are prorated for the month in which the change occurs; no adjustments will be made for withdrawals.

We do not pay SPT fees for the Program so long as we maintain \$100 million in client assets in accounts at CS&Co. that are not enrolled in the Program. If we do not meet this condition, then we pay SPT an annual licensing fee of 0.10% (10 basis points) on the value of our clients' assets in the Program. This fee arrangement gives us an incentive to recommend or require that our clients with accounts not enrolled in the Program be maintained with CS&Co.

## **B. Disclosure of Cost Difference if Services Purchased Separately**

Depending on a number of factors, such as the number, size and nature of the securities transactions in an advisory account, the overall fees and charges borne by the client over time could be more or less than what these fees and charges would be if the same services were provided on a separate basis. Bundled fees generally provide an economic incentive for the advisory firm to select investments and strategies that minimize trading costs. Frequent trading in an account where transaction fees are included as part of the overall advisory fee to the client drive trading costs higher and reduce the overall fee revenue to the advisor. As a result, higher trading costs in a bundled fee account have a negative impact on the advisory firm's profitability.

## **C. Additional Client Fees and Terms of Payment**

### **C.1. Client Payment of Fees**

Hilltop Wealth's fees are payable monthly in arrears. Hilltop Wealth's fees will either be paid directly by the client or disbursed to Hilltop Wealth by the qualified custodian of the client's investment accounts, subject to prior written consent of the client. The custodian will deliver directly to the client an account statement, at least quarterly, showing all investment and transaction activity for the period, including fee disbursements from the account.

A client investment advisory agreement may be canceled at any time by the client, or by Hilltop Wealth with 30 days' prior written notice to the client. Upon termination of any account, any

earned, unpaid fees will be due and payable. The client has the right to terminate an agreement without penalty within five business days after entering into the agreement.

Hilltop Wealth requires clients to authorize the direct debit of fees from their accounts. Exceptions may be granted subject to the firm's consent for clients to be billed directly for our fees. For directly debited fees, the custodian's periodic statements will show each fee deduction from the account. Clients may withdraw this authorization for direct billing of these fees at any time by notifying us or their custodian in writing.

Hilltop Wealth will deduct advisory fees directly from the client's account provided that (i) the client provides written authorization to the qualified custodian, and (ii) the qualified custodian sends the client a statement, at least quarterly, indicating all amounts disbursed from the account. The client is responsible for verifying the accuracy of the fee calculation, as the client's custodian will not verify the calculation.

### **C.3. Additional Fees**

Clients do not pay fees to SPT or brokerage commissions or other fees to CS&Co as part of the Program. Schwab does receive other revenues in connection with the Program. Please refer to the Brokerage Practices section (Items 9.B.2 and 9.B.3) for additional information regarding the firm's brokerage practices.

## **D. Compensation for Recommending the Hilltop Wrap Fee Program**

The Wrap Fee Program is a proprietary product offered exclusively through Hilltop Wealth. Please refer to Item 4.A.2 above for disclosure of fees.

## **E. External Compensation for the Sale of Securities to Clients**

Hilltop Wealth advisory professionals are compensated primarily through receipt of a percentage of the total advisory fee billed to the client. No sales professionals are primarily compensated through a salary and bonus structure. Hilltop Wealth may be paid sales, service or administrative fees for the sale of mutual funds or any other investment products, including insurance products, with respect to managed advisory assets. Investment adviser representatives, in their capacity as a Purshe Kaplan and Sterling registered representative, are prohibited from earning an advisory fee on the securities value transferred from an advisory client's Purshe Kaplan and Sterling brokerage account unless commissions earned on such securities transactions occurred at least a 12–18 months prior to the transfer.

## **F. Important Disclosure – Custodian Investment Programs**

Please be advised that certain of the firm's investment adviser representatives are registered with a broker-dealer and/or the firm is a broker-dealer or affiliated with a broker-dealer. Under these arrangements, we can access certain investment programs offered through the broker-dealer that offer certain compensation and fee structures that create conflicts of interest of which clients need to be aware. As such, the investment adviser representative and/or the firm

may have an economic incentive to recommend the purchase of 12b-1 or revenue share class mutual funds offered through the broker-dealer platform rather than from the investment adviser platform.

Please be advised that the firm utilizes certain custodians/broker-dealers. Under these arrangements we can access certain investment programs offered through such custodian(s) that offer certain compensation and fee structures that create conflicts of interest of which clients need to be aware. Please note the following:

***Limitation on Mutual Fund Universe for Custodian Investment Programs:*** Please note that as a matter of policy we prohibit the receipt of revenue share fees from any mutual funds utilized for our advisory clients' portfolios. There are certain programs in which we participate where a client's investment options may be limited in certain of these programs to those mutual funds and/or mutual fund share classes that pay 12b-1 fees and other revenue sharing fee payments, and the client should be aware that the firm is not selecting from among all mutual funds available in the marketplace when recommending mutual funds to the client.

***Conflict Between Revenue Share Class (12b-1) and Non-Revenue Share Class Mutual Funds:*** Revenue share class/12b-1 fees are deducted from the net asset value of the mutual fund and generally, all things being equal, cause the fund to earn lower rates of return than those mutual funds that do not pay revenue sharing fees. The client is under no obligation to utilize such programs or mutual funds. Although many factors will influence the type of fund to be used, the client should discuss with their investment adviser representative whether a share class from a comparable mutual fund with a more favorable return to investors is available that does not include the payment of any 12b-1 or revenue sharing fees given the client's individual needs and priorities and anticipated transaction costs. In addition, the receipt of such fees can create conflicts of interest in instances (i) where our adviser representative is also licensed as a registered representative of a broker-dealer and receives a portion of 12b-1 and or revenue sharing fees as compensation – such compensation creates an incentive for the investment adviser representative to use programs which utilize funds that pay such additional compensation; and (ii) where the custodian receives the entirety of the 12b-1 and/or revenue sharing fees and takes the receipt of such fees into consideration in terms of benefits it may elect to provide to the firm, even though such benefits may or may not benefit some or all of the firm clients.

***Additional Disclosure Concerning Wrap Programs:*** To the extent that we either sponsor or recommend wrap fee programs, please be advised that certain wrap fee programs may (i) allow our investment adviser representatives to select mutual fund classes that either have no transaction fee costs associated with them but include embedded 12b-1 fees that lower the investor's return ("sometimes referred to as "A-Shares," depending on the mutual fund issuer), or (ii) allow the use of mutual fund classes that have transaction fees associated with them but do not carry embedded 12b-1 fees (sometimes referred to as "I-Shares," depending on the mutual fund sponsor). Wrap fee programs offer investment services and related transaction services for one all-inclusive fee (except as may be described in the applicable wrap fee program brochure). The trading costs are typically absorbed by the firm and/or the investment representative. If a client's account holds A-Shares within a wrap fee program, the firm and/or its

investment adviser representative avoids paying the transaction fees charged by other mutual fund classes, which in effect decreases the firm's costs and increases its revenues from the account. Effectively, the cost is transferred to the client from the firm in the form of a lower rate of return on the specific mutual fund. This creates an incentive for the firm or investment adviser representative to utilize such funds as opposed to those funds that may be equally appropriate for a client but do not carry the additional cost of 12b-1 fees. As a policy matter, the firm does not allow funds that impose 12b-1 or revenue sharing fees on the client's investment within its wrap fee programs. Clients should understand and discuss with their investment adviser representative the types of mutual fund share classes available in the wrap fee program and the basis for using one share class over another in accordance with their individual circumstances and priorities.

## **G. Client Assets Under Management**

As of December 31, 2020, Hilltop Wealth had \$269,241,483 of discretionary assets under management, and \$32,804,396 of non-discretionary assets under management.



## **Item 5: Account Requirements and Types of Clients**

For Institutional Intelligent Portfolios™, clients eligible to enroll in the Program include individuals, IRAs, and revocable living trusts. Clients that are organizations (such as corporations and partnerships) or government entities, and clients that are subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, are not eligible for the Program. The minimum investment required to open an account in the Program is \$5,000; however, Hilltop Wealth reserves the right to waive this requirement. The minimum account balance to enroll in the tax-loss harvesting feature is \$50,000.

## Item 6: Portfolio Manager Selection and Evaluation

### A. Portfolio Manager Selection and Review

The firm is the sole sponsor and sole portfolio manager for the Wrap Fee Program.

### B. The Firm Acts as Both a Wrap Fee Sponsor and Portfolio Manager

The Wrap Fee Program is a proprietary product offered exclusively through the firm. Other than offering its Wrap Fee Program, the firm does not participate in wrap fee programs.

#### B.1. Institutional Intelligent Portfolios™ Wrap Fee Program

We offer an automated investment program (the "Program") through which clients are invested in a range of investment strategies we have constructed and manage, each consisting of a portfolio of exchange-traded funds ("ETFs") and a cash allocation. The client may instruct us to exclude up to three ETFs from their portfolio. The client's portfolio is held in a brokerage account opened by the client at Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. ("CS&Co"). We use the Institutional Intelligent Portfolios® platform ("Platform"), offered by Schwab Performance Technologies ("SPT"), a software provider to independent investment advisors and an affiliate of CS&Co., to operate the Program. We are independent of and not owned by, affiliated with, or sponsored or supervised by SPT, CS&Co., or their affiliates (together, "Schwab"). We, and not Schwab, are the client's investment advisor and primary point of contact with respect to the Program. We are solely responsible, and Schwab is not responsible, for determining the appropriateness of the Program for the client, choosing a suitable investment strategy and portfolio for the client's investment needs and goals, and managing that portfolio on an ongoing basis. We have contracted with SPT to provide us with the Platform, which consists of technology and related trading and account management services for the Program. The Platform enables us to make the Program available to clients online and includes a system that automates certain key parts of our investment process (the "System"). The System includes an online questionnaire that helps us determine the client's investment objectives and risk tolerance and select an appropriate investment strategy and portfolio. Clients should note that we will recommend a portfolio via the System in response to the client's answers to the online questionnaire. The client may then indicate an interest in a portfolio that is one level less or more conservative or aggressive than the recommended portfolio, but we then make the final decision and select a portfolio based on all the information we have about the client. The System also includes an automated investment engine through which we manage the client's portfolio on an ongoing basis through automatic rebalancing and tax-loss harvesting (if the client is eligible and elects).

#### B.2. Client-Tailored Services and Client-Imposed Restrictions

Each client's account will be managed on the basis of the client's financial situation and investment objectives, and in accordance with any reasonable restrictions imposed by the client on the management of the account—for example, restricting the type or amount of security to be purchased in the portfolio.

### **B.3. Performance-Based Fees and Side-by-Side Management**

The firm does not charge performance-based fees and therefore has no economic incentive to manage clients' portfolios in any way other than what is in the clients' best interests.

### **B.4. Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies and Risk of Loss**

Hilltop Wealth uses a variety of sources of data to conduct its economic, investment and market analysis, such as financial newspapers and magazines, economic and market research materials prepared by others, conference calls hosted by mutual funds, corporate rating services, annual reports, prospectuses, and company press releases. It is important to keep in mind that there is no specific approach to investing that guarantees success or positive returns; investing in securities involves risk of loss that clients should be prepared to bear.

Hilltop Wealth and its investment adviser representatives are responsible for identifying and implementing the methods of analysis used in formulating investment recommendations to clients. The methods of analysis may include quantitative methods for optimizing client portfolios, computer-based risk/return analysis, technical analysis, and statistical and/or computer models utilizing long-term economic criteria.

- Optimization involves the use of mathematical algorithms to determine the appropriate mix of assets given the firm's current capital market rate assessment and a particular client's risk tolerance.
- Quantitative methods include analysis of historical data such as price and volume statistics, performance data, standard deviation and related risk metrics, how the security performs relative to the overall stock market, earnings data, price to earnings ratios, and related data.
- Technical analysis involves charting price and volume data as reported by the exchange where the security is traded to look for price trends.
- Computer models may be used to derive the future value of a security based on assumptions of various data categories such as earnings, cash flow, profit margins, sales, and a variety of other company specific metrics.

In addition, Hilltop Wealth reviews research material prepared by others, as well as corporate filings, corporate rating services, and a variety of financial publications. Hilltop Wealth may employ outside vendors or utilize third-party software to assist in formulating investment recommendations to clients.

#### **B.4.a. Mutual Funds and Exchange-Traded Funds**

Hilltop Wealth may recommend no-load and load-waived mutual funds and individual securities (including fixed income instruments).

A description of the criteria to be used in formulating an investment recommendation for mutual funds, ETFs, and individual securities (including fixed-income securities), is set forth below.

Hilltop Wealth has formed relationships with third-party vendors that

- provide a technological platform for separate account management
- prepare performance reports
- perform or distribute research of individual securities
- perform billing and certain other administrative tasks

Hilltop Wealth may utilize additional independent third parties to assist it in recommending and monitoring individual securities and mutual funds to clients as appropriate under the circumstances.

Hilltop Wealth reviews certain quantitative and qualitative criteria related to mutual funds and to formulate investment recommendations to its clients. Quantitative criteria may include

- the performance history of a mutual fund evaluated against that of its peers and other benchmarks
- an analysis of risk-adjusted returns
- an analysis of the fund's contribution to the investment return, standard deviation of returns over specific time periods, sector and style analysis
- the fund's fee structure
- the relevant portfolio manager's tenure

Qualitative criteria used in selecting/recommending mutual funds include the investment objectives and/or management style and philosophy of a mutual fund, a mutual fund's consistency of investment style, and employee turnover and efficiency and capacity.

Quantitative and qualitative criteria related to mutual funds are reviewed by Hilltop Wealth on a quarterly basis or such other interval as appropriate under the circumstances. In addition, mutual funds are reviewed to determine the extent to which their investments reflect efforts to time the market, or evidence style drift such that their portfolios no longer accurately reflect the particular asset category attributed to the mutual fund by Hilltop Wealth (both of which are negative factors in implementing an asset allocation structure).

Hilltop Wealth may negotiate reduced account minimum balances and reduced fees under various circumstances (e.g., for clients with minimum level of assets committed for specific periods of time, etc.). There can be no assurance that clients will receive any reduced account minimum balances or fees, or that all clients, even if apparently similarly situated, will receive any reduced account minimum balances or fees available to some other clients. Also, account minimum balances and fees may significantly differ between clients. Each client's individual needs and circumstances will determine portfolio weighting, which can have an impact on fees given the funds utilized. Hilltop Wealth will endeavor to obtain equal treatment for its clients with funds, but cannot assure equal treatment.

Hilltop Wealth will regularly review the activities of mutual funds utilized for the client. Clients that invest in mutual funds should first review and understand the disclosure documents of those mutual funds, which contain information relevant to such retention or investment, including information on the methodology used to analyze securities, investment strategies, fees and conflicts of interest.

## **B.5. Investment Strategy, Method of Analysis, Material Risks**

Our investment strategy is custom-tailored to the client's goals, investment objectives, risk tolerance, and personal and financial circumstances.

### **B.5.a. Margin Leverage**

Although the firm, as a general business practice, does not utilize leverage, there may be instances in which exchange-traded funds, other separate account managers and, in very limited circumstances, the firm will utilize leverage. In this regard please review the following:

The use of margin leverage enhances the overall risk of investment gain and loss to the client's investment portfolio. For example, investors are able to control \$2 of a security for \$1. So if the price of a security rises by \$1, the investor earns a 100% return on their investment. Conversely, if the security declines by \$.50, then the investor loses 50% of their investment.

The use of margin leverage entails borrowing, which results in additional interest costs to the investor.

Broker-dealers who carry customer accounts require a minimum equity requirement when clients utilize margin leverage. The minimum equity requirement is stated as a percentage of the value of the underlying collateral security with an absolute minimum dollar requirement. For example, if the price of a security declines in value to the point where the excess equity used to satisfy the minimum requirement dissipates, the broker-dealer will require the client to deposit additional collateral to the account in the form of cash or marketable securities. A deposit of securities to the account will require a larger deposit, as the security being deposited is included in the computation of the minimum equity requirement. In addition, when leverage is utilized and the client needs to withdraw cash, the client must sell a disproportionate amount of collateral securities to release enough cash to satisfy the withdrawal amount based upon similar reasoning as cited above.

Regulations concerning the use of margin leverage are established by the Federal Reserve Board and vary if the client's account is held at a broker-dealer versus a bank custodian. Broker-dealers and bank custodians may apply more stringent rules as they deem necessary.

### **B.5.b. Short-Term Trading**

Although the firm, as a general business practice, does not utilize short-term trading, there may be instances in which short-term trading may be necessary or an appropriate strategy. In this regard, please read the following:

There is an inherent risk for clients who trade frequently in that high-frequency trading creates substantial transaction costs that in the aggregate could negatively impact account performance.

### **B.5.c. Short Selling**

The firm generally does not engage in short selling but reserves the right to do so in the exercise of its sole judgment. Short selling involves the sale of a security that is borrowed rather than owned. When a short sale is effected, the investor is expecting the price of the security to

decline in value so that a purchase or closeout of the short sale can be effected at a significantly lower price. The primary risks of effecting short sales is the availability to borrow the stock, the unlimited potential for loss, and the requirement to fund any difference between the short credit balance and the market value of the security.

#### **B.5.d. Technical Trading Models**

Technical trading models are mathematically driven based upon historical data and trends of domestic and foreign market trading activity, including various industry and sector trading statistics within such markets. Technical trading models, through mathematical algorithms, attempt to identify when markets are likely to increase or decrease and identify appropriate entry and exit points. The primary risk of technical trading models is that historical trends and past performance cannot predict future trends, and there is no assurance that the mathematical algorithms employed are designed properly, updated with new data, and can accurately predict future market, industry, and sector performance.

#### **B.5.e. Concentration Risk**

There is an inherent risk for clients who have their investment portfolios heavily weighted in one security, one industry or industry sector, one geographic location, one investment manager, one type of investment instrument (equities versus fixed income). Clients who have diversified portfolios, as a general rule, incur less volatility and therefore less fluctuation in portfolio value than those who have concentrated holdings. Concentrated holdings may offer the potential for higher gain, but also offer the potential for significant loss.

### **B.6. Material Risks of Investment Instruments**

Hilltop Wealth may invest in open-end mutual funds and exchange-traded funds for the vast majority of its clients. In addition, for certain clients, Hilltop Wealth may effect transactions in the following types of securities:

- Equity securities
- Mutual fund securities
- Exchange-traded funds
- Fixed income securities
- Corporate debt securities, commercial paper, and certificates of deposit
- Municipal securities
- Corporate debt obligations
- Variable annuities

#### **B.6.a. Equity Securities**

Investing in individual companies involves inherent risk. The major risks relate to the company's capitalization, quality of the company's management, quality and cost of the company's services, the company's ability to manage costs, efficiencies in the manufacturing or service delivery process, management of litigation risk, and the company's ability to create shareholder value (i.e., increase the value of the company's stock price). Foreign securities, in

addition to the general risks of equity securities, have geopolitical risk, financial transparency risk, currency risk, regulatory risk and liquidity risk.

#### **B.6.b. Mutual Fund Securities**

Investing in mutual funds carries inherent risk. The major risks of investing in a mutual fund include the quality and experience of the portfolio management team and its ability to create fund value by investing in securities that have positive growth, the amount of individual company diversification, the type and amount of industry diversification, and the type and amount of sector diversification within specific industries. In addition, mutual funds tend to be tax inefficient and therefore investors may pay capital gains taxes on fund investments while not having yet sold the fund.

#### **B.6.c. Exchange-Traded Funds ("ETFs")**

ETFs are investment companies whose shares are bought and sold on a securities exchange. An ETF holds a portfolio of securities designed to track a particular market segment or index. Some examples of ETFs are SPDRs<sup>®</sup>, streetTRACKS<sup>®</sup>, DIAMONDS<sup>SM</sup>, NASDAQ 100 Index Tracking Stock<sup>SM</sup> ("QQQs<sup>SM</sup>") iShares<sup>®</sup> and VIPERs<sup>®</sup>. The funds could purchase an ETF to gain exposure to a portion of the U.S. or foreign market. The funds, as a shareholder of another investment company, will bear their pro-rata portion of the other investment company's advisory fee and other expenses, in addition to their own expenses.

Investing in ETFs involves risk. Specifically, ETFs, depending on the underlying portfolio and its size, can have wide price (bid and ask) spreads, thus diluting or negating any upward price movement of the ETF or enhancing any downward price movement. Also, ETFs require more frequent portfolio reporting by regulators and are thereby more susceptible to actions by hedge funds that could have a negative impact on the price of the ETF. Certain ETFs may employ leverage, which creates additional volatility and price risk depending on the amount of leverage utilized, the collateral and the liquidity of the supporting collateral.

Further, the use of leverage (i.e., employing the use of margin) generally results in additional interest costs to the ETF. Certain ETFs are highly leveraged and therefore have additional volatility and liquidity risk. Volatility and liquidity can severely and negatively impact the price of the ETF's underlying portfolio securities, thereby causing significant price fluctuations of the ETF.

#### **B.6.d. Fixed Income Securities**

Fixed income securities carry additional risks than those of equity securities described above. These risks include the company's ability to retire its debt at maturity, the current interest rate environment, the coupon interest rate promised to bondholders, legal constraints, jurisdictional risk (U.S. or foreign) and currency risk. If bonds have maturities of ten years or greater, they will likely have greater price swings when interest rates move up or down. The shorter the maturity the less volatile the price swings. Foreign bonds have liquidity and currency risk.

**B.6.e. Corporate Debt, Commercial Paper and Certificates of Deposit**

Fixed income securities carry additional risks than those of equity securities described above. These risks include the company's ability to retire its debt at maturity, the current interest rate environment, the coupon interest rate promised to bondholders, legal constraints, jurisdictional risk (U.S. or foreign) and currency risk. If bonds have maturities of ten years or greater, they will likely have greater price swings when interest rates move up or down. The shorter the maturity the less volatile the price swings. Foreign bonds also have liquidity and currency risk.

Commercial paper and certificates of deposit are generally considered safe instruments, although they are subject to the level of general interest rates, the credit quality of the issuing bank and the length of maturity. With respect to certificates of deposit, depending on the length of maturity there can be prepayment penalties if the client needs to convert the certificate of deposit to cash prior to maturity.

**B.6.f. Municipal Securities**

Municipal securities carry additional risks than those of corporate and bank-sponsored debt securities described above. These risks include the municipality's ability to raise additional tax revenue or other revenue (in the event the bonds are revenue bonds) to pay interest on its debt and to retire its debt at maturity. Municipal bonds are generally tax free at the federal level, but may be taxable in individual states other than the state in which both the investor and municipal issuer is domiciled.

**B.6.g. Corporate Debt Obligations**

Corporate debt obligations include corporate bonds, debentures, notes, commercial paper and other similar corporate debt instruments. Companies use these instruments to borrow money from investors. The issuer pays the investor a fixed or variable rate of interest and must repay the amount borrowed at maturity. Commercial paper (short-term unsecured promissory notes) is issued by companies to finance their current obligations and normally has a maturity of less than nine months. In addition, the firm may also invest in corporate debt securities registered and sold in the United States by foreign issuers (Yankee bonds) and those sold outside the U.S. by foreign or U.S. issuers (Eurobonds).

**B.6.h. Variable Annuities**

Variable Annuities are long-term financial products designed for retirement purposes. In essence, annuities are contractual agreements in which payment(s) are made to an insurance company, which agrees to pay out an income or a lump sum amount at a later date. There are contract limitations and fees and charges associated with annuities, administrative fees, and charges for optional benefits. They also may carry early withdrawal penalties and surrender charges, and carry additional risks such as the insurance carrier's ability to pay claims. Moreover, variable annuities carry investment risk similar to mutual funds. Investors should carefully review the terms of the variable annuity contract before investing.



**B.6.i. Option Strategies**

Various option strategies give the holder the right to acquire or sell underlying securities at the contract strike price up until expiration of the option. Each contract is worth 100 shares of the underlying security. Options entail greater risk but allow an investor to have market exposure to a particular security or group of securities without the capital commitment required to purchase the underlying security or groups of securities. In addition, options allow investors to hedge security positions held in the portfolio. For detailed information on the use of options and option strategies, please contact the Options Clearing Corporation for the current Options Risk Disclosure Statement.

Hilltop Wealth as part of its investment strategy may employ the following option strategies:

- Covered call writing
- Long call options purchases
- Long put options purchases

***B.6.i.1. Covered Call Writing***

Covered call writing is the sale of in-, at-, or out-of-the-money call option against a long security position held in the client portfolio. This type of transaction is used to generate income. It also serves to create downside protection in the event the security position declines in value. Income is received from the proceeds of the option sale. Such income may be reduced to the extent it is necessary to buy back the option position prior to its expiration. This strategy may involve a degree of trading velocity, transaction costs and significant losses if the underlying security has volatile price movement. Covered call strategies are generally suited for companies with little price volatility.

***B.6.i.2. Long Call Option Purchases***

Long call option purchases allow the option holder to be exposed to the general market characteristics of a security without the outlay of capital necessary to own the security. Options are wasting assets and expire (usually within nine months of issuance), and as a result can expose the investor to significant loss.

***B.6.i.3. Long Put Option Purchases***

Long put option purchases allow the option holder to sell or “put” the underlying security at the contract strike price at a future date. If the price of the underlying security declines in value, the value of the long put option increases. In this way long puts are often used to hedge a long stock position. Options are wasting assets and expire (usually within nine months of issuance), and as a result can expose the investor to significant loss.

**B.7. Proxy Voting**

The firm does not take discretion with respect to voting proxies on behalf of its clients. The firm will endeavor to make recommendations to clients on voting proxies regarding shareholder vote, consent, election or similar actions solicited by, or with respect to, issuers of securities

beneficially held as part of the firm supervised and/or managed assets. In no event will the firm take discretion with respect to voting proxies on behalf of its clients.

Except as required by applicable law, the firm will not be obligated to render advice or take any action on behalf of clients with respect to assets presently or formerly held in their accounts that become the subject of any legal proceedings, including bankruptcies.

From time to time, securities held in the accounts of clients will be the subject of class action lawsuits. The firm has no obligation to determine if securities held by the client are subject to a pending or resolved class action lawsuit. The firm also has no duty to evaluate a client's eligibility or to submit a claim to participate in the proceeds of a securities class action settlement or verdict. Furthermore, the firm has no obligation or responsibility to initiate litigation to recover damages on behalf of clients who may have been injured as a result of actions, misconduct, or negligence by corporate management of issuers whose securities are held by clients.

Where the firm receives written or electronic notice of a class action lawsuit, settlement, or verdict affecting securities owned by a client, it will forward all notices, proof of claim forms, and other materials to the client. Electronic mail is acceptable where appropriate and where the client has authorized contact in this manner.

## **Item 7: Client Information Provided to Portfolio Managers**

The firm is the sole portfolio manager in the Hilltop Wealth Wrap Fee Program and does not share any personal information it collects from its clients other than as required by law or regulatory mandate. The firm may collect the following information in order to formulate its investment recommendations to clients:

- Income
- Employment and residential information
- Social security number
- Cash balance
- Security balances
- Transaction detail history
- Investment objectives, goals, and risk tolerance
- Sources of wealth and/or deposits
- Risk assessment
- Investment time horizon
- Income and liquidity needs
- Asset allocation
- Restrictions on management of accounts
- Client interview(s)
- Review of client's current portfolio
- Analysis of historical risk/return characteristics of various asset classes
- Analysis of the long-term outlook for global financial markets
- Analysis of the long-term global economic and political environments

## **Item 8: Client Contact with Portfolio Managers**

The firm encourages communication with its clients and does not limit or condition the amount of time clients can spend with the firm's advisory professionals.

## Item 9: Additional Information

### A. Disciplinary and Other Financial Activities and Affiliations

#### A.1. Disciplinary

There are no current or pending disclosure items to report on behalf of the firm's advisors.

##### A.1.a. Criminal or Civil Actions

There is nothing to report for this item.

##### A.1.b. Administrative Enforcement Proceedings

There is nothing to report for this item.

##### A.1.c. Self-Regulatory Organization Enforcement Proceedings

There is nothing to report for this item.

#### A.2. Other Financial Activities and Affiliations

##### A.2.a. Broker-Dealer or Representative Registration

Neither the firm nor its affiliates are registered broker-dealers and do not have an application to register pending. Certain managers, members, and registered personnel of Hilltop Wealth are associated persons of Purshe Kaplan and Sterling; please see below for conflict disclosure.

##### A.2.b. Futures or Commodity Registration

Neither the firm nor its affiliates are registered as a commodity firm, futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator or commodity trading advisor and do not have an application to register pending.

##### A.2.c. Material Relationships Maintained by this Advisory Business and Conflicts of Interest

###### A.2.c.1. Broker-Dealer Registration

Managers, members, and registered personnel of Hilltop Wealth are associated persons of Purshe Kaplan and Sterling, ("PKS"), a FINRA-registered broker-dealer and member of SIPC. As a result, such professionals, in their capacity as registered representatives of PKS, are subject to the oversight of PKS and the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. ("FINRA"). As such, clients of Hilltop Wealth should understand that their personal and account information is available to FINRA and PKS personnel in the fulfillment of their oversight obligations and duties.

Hilltop Wealth professionals who effect transactions for advisory clients may receive transaction or commission compensation from PKS. The recommendation of securities transactions for commission creates a conflict of interest in that Hilltop Wealth is economically incented to effect securities transactions for clients. Although Hilltop Wealth strives to put its

clients' interests first, such recommendations may be viewed as being in the best interests of Hilltop Wealth rather than in the client's best interest. Hilltop Wealth advisory clients are not compelled to effect securities transactions through PKS.

#### **A.2.c.2. Insurance Sales**

Certain managers, members, and registered employees of Hilltop Wealth are licensed insurance agents. With respect to the provision of financial planning services, Hilltop Wealth professionals may recommend insurance products offered by such carriers for whom they function as an agent and receive a commission for doing so. Please be advised there is a potential conflict of interest in that there is an economic incentive to recommend insurance and other investment products of such carriers. Please also be advised that Hilltop Wealth strives to put its clients' interests first and foremost, and clients may utilize any insurance carrier or insurance agency they desire. Other than for insurance products that require a securities license, such as variable insurance products, clients may utilize any insurance carrier or insurance agency they desire. For products requiring a securities and insurance license, clients may be limited to those insurance carriers that have a selling agreement with Hilltop Wealth's employing broker-dealer.

#### **A.2.d. Recommendation or Selection of Other Investment Advisors and Conflicts of Interest**

The firm does not recommend separate account managers or other investment products in which it receives any form of referral or solicitor compensation from the separate account manager or client

#### **A.2.e. Hilltop Tax Solutions, LLC**

Erik Brenner, Managing Member of Hilltop Wealth Solutions is also an owner of Hilltop Tax Solutions, a limited liability company and affiliate of Hilltop Wealth Solutions. Hilltop Tax Solutions provides tax and accounting services to clients. Clients of Hilltop Wealth Solutions are advised there is a conflict of interest in that there is an economic incentive to recommend Hilltop Tax Solutions. Hilltop Wealth Solution professionals strive to put their clients' interests first and foremost, and clients may utilize tax and accounting services of their choosing.

## **B. Code of Ethics, Brokerage Trading Practices, Account Reviews, and Financial and Related Matters**

### **B.1. Code of Ethics Description**

In accordance with the Advisers Act, the firm has adopted policies and procedures designed to detect and prevent insider trading. In addition, the firm has adopted a Code of Ethics (the "Code"). Among other things, the Code includes written procedures governing the conduct of the firm's advisory and access persons. The Code also imposes certain reporting obligations on persons subject to the Code. The Code and applicable securities transactions are monitored by

the chief compliance officer of the firm. The firm will send clients a copy of its Code of Ethics upon written request.

The firm has policies and procedures in place to ensure that the interests of its clients are given preference over those of the firm, its affiliates and its employees. For example, there are policies in place to prevent the misappropriation of material non-public information, and such other policies and procedures reasonably designed to comply with federal and state securities laws.

**B.1.a. Investment Recommendations Involving a Material Financial Interest and Conflicts of Interest**

The firm does not engage in principal trading (i.e., the practice of selling stock to advisory clients from a firm's inventory or buying stocks from advisory clients into a firm's inventory). In addition, the firm does not recommend any securities to advisory clients in which it has some proprietary or ownership interest.

**B.1.b. Advisory Firm Purchase of Same Securities Recommended to Clients and Conflicts of Interest**

The firm, its affiliates, employees and their families, trusts, estates, charitable organizations and retirement plans established by it may purchase the same securities as are purchased for clients in accordance with its Code of Ethics policies and procedures. The personal securities transactions by advisory representatives and employees may raise potential conflicts of interest when they trade in a security that is:

- owned by the client, or
- considered for purchase or sale for the client.

Such conflict generally refers to the practice of front-running (trading ahead of the client), which the firm specifically prohibits. The firm has adopted policies and procedures that are intended to address these conflicts of interest. These policies and procedures:

- require our advisory representatives and employees to act in the client's best interest,
- prohibit fraudulent conduct in connection with the trading of securities in a client account
- prohibit employees from personally benefitting by causing a client to act, or fail to act in making investment decisions
- prohibit the firm or its employees from profiting or causing others to profit on knowledge of completed or contemplated client transactions
- allocate investment opportunities in a fair and equitable manner
- provide for the review of transactions to discover and correct any trades that result in an advisory representative or employee benefitting at the expense of a client.

Advisory representatives and employees must follow the firm's procedures when purchasing or selling the same securities purchased or sold for the client.

**B.1.c. Client Securities Recommendations or Trades and Concurrent Advisory Firm Securities Transactions and Conflicts of Interest**

The firm, its affiliates, employees and their families, trusts, estates, charitable organizations, and retirement plans established by it may effect securities transactions for their own accounts that differ from those recommended or effected for other the firm clients. The firm will make a reasonable attempt to trade securities in client accounts at or prior to trading the securities in its affiliate, corporate, employee or employee-related accounts. Trades executed the same day will likely be subject to an average pricing calculation (please refer to Item 12.B.3 Order Aggregation). It is the policy of the firm to place the clients' interests above those of the firm and its employees.

**B.2. Factors Used to Select Broker-Dealers for Client Transactions**

Client accounts enrolled in the Program are maintained at, and receive the brokerage services of, CS&Co., a broker-dealer registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and a member of FINRA and SIPC. While clients are required to use CS&Co. as custodian/broker to enroll in the Program, the client decides whether to do so and opens its account with CS&Co. by entering into a brokerage account agreement directly with CS&Co. We do not open the account for the client. If the client does not wish to place his or her assets with CS&Co., then we cannot manage the client's account through the Program. CS&Co. may aggregate purchase and sale orders for ETFs across accounts enrolled in the Program, including both accounts for our clients and accounts for clients of other independent investment advisory firms using the Platform.

Schwab Advisor Services™ (formerly called Schwab Institutional) is Schwab's business serving independent investment advisory firms like us. Through Schwab Advisor Services, CS&Co. provides us and our clients, both those enrolled in the Program and our clients not enrolled in the Program, with access to its institutional brokerage services— trading, custody, reporting, and related services—many of which are not typically available to CS&Co. retail customers. CS&Co. 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. CS&Co.'s support services described below are generally available on an unsolicited basis (we don't have to request them) and at no charge to us. The availability to us of CS&Co.'s products and services is not based on us giving particular investment advice, such as buying particular securities for our clients. Here is a more detailed description of CS&Co.'s support services:

CS&Co.'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. CS&Co.'s services described in this paragraph generally benefit the client and the client's account.

CS&Co. also makes available to us other products and services that benefit us but may not directly benefit the client or its 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 some substantial number of our



clients' accounts, including accounts not maintained at CS&Co. In addition to investment research, CS&Co. 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

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

- educational conferences and events
- technology, compliance, legal, and business consulting
- publications and conferences on practice management and business succession
- access to employee benefits providers, human capital consultants, and insurance providers

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

The availability of services from CS&Co. benefits us because we do not have to produce or purchase them. We don't have to pay for these services, and they are not contingent upon us committing any specific amount of business to CS&Co. in trading commissions or assets in custody. With respect to the Program, as described above under Item 4 Advisory Business, we do not pay SPT fees for the Platform so long as we maintain \$100 Million in client assets in accounts at CS&Co. that are not enrolled in the Program. In light of our arrangements with Schwab, we may have an incentive to [recommend/require] that our clients maintain their accounts with CS&Co. based on our interest in receiving Schwab's services that benefit our business rather than based on the client's interest in receiving the best value in custody services and the most favorable execution of transactions. This is a potential conflict of interest. We believe, however, that our selection of CS&Co. as custodian and broker is in the best interests of our clients. It is primarily supported by the scope, quality, and price of CS&Co.'s services and not Schwab's services that benefit only us.

#### **B.4. Review of Accounts**

##### **B.4.a. Schedule for Periodic Review of Client Accounts or Financial Plans and Advisory Persons Involved**

Accounts are reviewed by Hilltop Wealth's Manager. The frequency of reviews is determined based on the client's investment objectives, but reviews are conducted no less frequently than semi-annually. More frequent reviews may also be triggered by a change in the client's

investment objectives, tax considerations, large deposits or withdrawals, large purchases or sales, loss of confidence in corporate management, or changes in macro-economic climate

**B.4.b. Review of Client Accounts on Non-Periodic Basis**

The firm may perform ad hoc reviews on an as-needed basis if there have been material changes in the client's investment objectives or risk tolerance, or a material change in how the firm formulates investment advice.

**B.4.c. Content of Client-Provided Reports and Frequency**

The client's independent custodian provides account statements directly to the client no less frequently than quarterly. The custodian's statement is the official record of the client's securities account and supersedes any statements or reports created on behalf of the client by Hilltop Wealth.

**B.5. Client Referrals and Other Compensation**

**B.5.a. Economic Benefits Provided to the Advisory Firm from External Sources and Conflicts of Interest**

We receive an economic benefit from Schwab in the form of the support products and services it makes available to us. These products and services, how they benefit us, and the related conflicts of interest are described above under *B.2. Factors Used to Select Broker-Dealers for Client Transactions*. The availability to us of Schwab's products and services is not based on us giving particular investment advice, such as buying particular securities for our clients.

**B.5.b. Advisory Firm Payments for Client Referrals**

Hilltop Wealth Solutions compensates its employees who attract additional managed assets to the firm. While this may create a conflict of interest, the firm has a fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of clients as defined in the Code of Ethics, which is further discussed in Item 11.

**B.6. Financial Information**

**B.6.a. Balance Sheet**

The firm does not require the prepayment of fees of \$1200 or more, six months or more in advance, and as such is not required to file a balance sheet

**B.6.b. Financial Conditions Reasonably Likely to Impair Advisory Firm's Ability to Meet Commitments to Clients**

The firm does not have any financial issues that would impair its ability to provide services to clients.

**B.6.c. Bankruptcy Petitions During the Past Ten Years**

There is nothing to report for this item.