

# Aperture Advisors LLC

## Firm Brochure - Form ADV Part 2A

*This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Aperture Advisors LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at (917) 734-2804 or by email at: [info@apertureadvisors.io](mailto:info@apertureadvisors.io). 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 Aperture Advisors LLC is also available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov). Aperture Advisors LLC's CRD number is: 327627.*

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

Version Date: 10/13/2023

## **Item 2: Material Changes**

Aperture Advisors LLC has the following material changes to report. Material changes relate to Aperture Advisors LLC's policies, practices or conflicts of interests.

- Forest Hill Investment Advisors LLC has updated its legal business name to Aperture Advisors LLC.

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## Item 4: Advisory Business

### A. Description of the Advisory Firm

Aperture Advisors LLC (hereinafter "AAL") is a Limited Liability Company organized in the State of Connecticut. The firm was formed in June 2023, and the principal owner is Christian De Berardinis.

### B. Types of Advisory Services

#### *Portfolio Management Services*

AAL offers ongoing portfolio management services based on the individual goals, objectives, time horizon, and risk tolerance of each client. AAL creates an Investment Policy Statement for each client, which outlines the client's current situation (income, tax levels, and risk tolerance levels). Portfolio management services include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

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

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

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

AAL generally limits its investment advice to mutual funds, fixed income securities, real estate funds (including REITs), insurance products including annuities, equities, ETFs (including ETFs in the gold and precious metal sectors), treasury inflation

protected/inflation linked bonds, commodities, non-U.S. securities, venture capital funds and private placements, although AAL primarily recommends equities and fixed income. AAL may use other securities as well to help diversify a portfolio when applicable.

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

When we provide investment advice to you regarding your retirement plan account or individual retirement account, we are fiduciaries within the meaning of Title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act and/or the Internal Revenue Code, as applicable, which are laws governing retirement accounts. The way we make money creates some conflicts with your interests, so we operate under a special rule that requires us to act in your best interest and not put our interest ahead of yours. Under this special rule's provisions, we must:

- Meet a professional standard of care when making investment recommendations (give prudent advice);
- Never put our financial interests ahead of yours when making recommendations (give loyal advice);
- Avoid misleading statements about conflicts of interest, fees, and investments;
- Follow policies and procedures designed to ensure that we give advice that is in your best interest;
- Charge no more than is reasonable for our services; and
- Give you basic information about conflicts of interest.

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

AAL offers the same suite of services to all of its clients. However, specific client investment strategies and their implementation are dependent upon the client Investment Policy Statement which outlines each client's current situation (income, tax levels, and risk tolerance levels). Clients may not impose restrictions in investing in certain securities or types of securities in accordance with their values or beliefs.

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

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

### **E. Assets Under Management**

AAL has the following assets under management:

Discretionary Amounts:	Non-discretionary Amounts:	Date Calculated:
\$0	\$0	June 2023

## Item 5: Fees and Compensation

### A. Fee Schedule

#### *Portfolio Management Fees*

Total Assets Under Management	Annual Fees
\$100,000 - \$1,000,000	1.50%
\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	1.25%
\$5,000,001 - \$10,000,000	1.00%
\$10,000,000 - AND UP	0.80%

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

These fees are generally negotiable and the final fee schedule will be memorialized in the client's advisory agreement. Clients may terminate the agreement without penalty for a full refund of AAL's fees within five business days of signing the Investment Advisory Contract. Thereafter, clients may terminate the Investment Advisory Contract generally with 30 days' written notice.

### B. Payment of Fees

#### *Payment of Portfolio Management Fees*

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

### C. Client Responsibility For Third Party Fees

Clients are responsible for the payment of all third-party fees (i.e. custodian fees, brokerage fees, mutual fund fees, transaction fees, etc.). Those fees are separate and distinct from the fees and expenses charged by AAL. Please see Item 12 of this brochure regarding broker-dealer/custodian.

## **D. Prepayment of Fees**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is an account minimum of \$100,000, which may be waived by AAL in its discretion.

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

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

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

AAL's methods of analysis include Charting analysis, Cyclical analysis, Fundamental analysis, Modern portfolio theory, Quantitative analysis and Technical analysis.

**Charting analysis** involves the use of patterns in performance charts. AAL uses this technique to search for patterns used to help predict favorable conditions for buying and/or selling a security.

**Cyclical analysis** involves the analysis of business cycles to find favorable conditions for buying and/or selling a security.

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

**Modern portfolio theory** is a theory of investment that attempts to maximize portfolio expected return for a given amount of portfolio risk, or equivalently minimize risk for a given level of expected return, each by carefully choosing the proportions of various asset.

**Quantitative analysis** deals with measurable factors as distinguished from qualitative considerations such as the character of management or the state of employee morale, such as the value of assets, the cost of capital, historical projections of sales, and so on.

**Technical analysis** involves the analysis of past market data; primarily price and volume.

### *Investment Strategies*

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

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

## **B. Material Risks Involved**

### *Methods of Analysis*

**Charting analysis** strategy involves using and comparing various charts to predict long and short-term performance or market trends. The risk involved in using this method is that only past performance data is considered without using other methods to crosscheck data. Using charting analysis without other methods of analysis would be making the assumption that past performance will be indicative of future performance. This may not be the case.

**Cyclical analysis** assumes that the markets react in cyclical patterns which, once identified, can be leveraged to provide performance. The risks with this strategy are two-fold: 1) the markets do not always repeat cyclical patterns; and 2) if too many investors begin to implement this strategy, then it changes the very cycles these investors are trying to exploit.

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



**Modern portfolio theory** assumes that investors are risk averse, meaning that given two portfolios that offer the same expected return, investors will prefer the less risky one. Thus, an investor will take on increased risk only if compensated by higher expected returns. Conversely, an investor who wants higher expected returns must accept more risk. The exact trade-off will be the same for all investors, but different investors will evaluate the trade-off differently based on individual risk aversion characteristics. The implication is that a rational investor will not invest in a portfolio if a second portfolio exists with a more favorable risk-expected return profile – i.e., if for that level of risk an alternative portfolio exists which has better expected returns.

**Quantitative analysis** Investment strategies using quantitative models may perform differently than expected as a result of, among other things, the factors used in the models, the weight placed on each factor, changes from the factors' historical trends, and technical issues in the construction and implementation of the models.

**Technical analysis** attempts to predict a future stock price or direction based on market trends. The assumption is that the market follows discernible patterns and if these patterns can be identified then a prediction can be made. The risk is that markets do not always follow patterns and relying solely on this method may not take into account new patterns that emerge over time.

### ***Investment Strategies***

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

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

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

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

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

**Short term trading** risks include liquidity, economic stability, and inflation, in addition to the long term trading risks listed above. Frequent trading can affect investment performance, particularly through increased brokerage and other transaction costs and taxes.

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

### **C. Risks of Specific Securities Utilized**

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

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

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

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

**Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs):** An ETF is an investment fund traded on stock exchanges, similar to stocks. Investing in ETFs carries the risk of capital loss (sometimes up to a 100% loss in the case of a stock holding bankruptcy). Areas of concern include the lack of transparency in products and increasing complexity, conflicts of interest and the possibility of inadequate regulatory compliance. Risks in investing in ETFs include trading risks, liquidity and shutdown risks, risks associated with a change in authorized

participants and non-participation of authorized participants, risks that trading price differs from indicative net asset value (iNAV), or price fluctuation and disassociation from the index being tracked. With regard to trading risks, regular trading adds cost to your portfolio thus counteracting the low fees that one of the typical benefits of ETFs. Additionally, regular trading to beneficially “time the market” is difficult to achieve. Even paid fund managers struggle to do this every year, with the majority failing to beat the relevant indexes. With regard to liquidity and shutdown risks, not all ETFs have the same level of liquidity. Since ETFs are at least as liquid as their underlying assets, trading conditions are more accurately reflected in implied liquidity rather than the average daily volume of the ETF itself. Implied liquidity is a measure of what can potentially be traded in ETFs based on its underlying assets. ETFs are subject to market volatility and the risks of their underlying securities, which may include the risks associated with investing in smaller companies, foreign securities, commodities, and fixed income investments (as applicable). Foreign securities in particular are subject to interest rate, currency exchange rate, economic, and political risks, all of which are magnified in emerging markets. ETFs that target a small universe of securities, such as a specific region or market sector, are generally subject to greater market volatility, as well as to the specific risks associated with that sector, region, or other focus. ETFs that use derivatives, leverage, or complex investment strategies are subject to additional risks. Precious Metal ETFs (e.g., Gold, Silver, or Palladium Bullion backed “electronic shares” not physical metal) specifically may be negatively impacted by several unique factors, among them (1) large sales by the official sector which own a significant portion of aggregate world holdings in gold and other precious metals, (2) a significant increase in hedging activities by producers of gold or other precious metals, (3) a significant change in the attitude of speculators and investors. The return of an index ETF is usually different from that of the index it tracks because of fees, expenses, and tracking error. An ETF may trade at a premium or discount to its net asset value (NAV) (or indicative value in the case of exchange-traded notes). The degree of liquidity can vary significantly from one ETF to another and losses may be magnified if no liquid market exists for the ETF’s shares when attempting to sell them. Each ETF has a unique risk profile, detailed in its prospectus, offering circular, or similar material, which should be considered carefully when making investment decisions.

**Real estate** funds (including REITs) face several kinds of risk that are inherent in the real estate sector, which historically has experienced significant fluctuations and cycles in performance. Revenues and cash flows may be adversely affected by: changes in local real estate market conditions due to changes in national or local economic conditions or changes in local property market characteristics; competition from other properties offering the same or similar services; changes in interest rates and in the state of the debt and equity credit markets; the ongoing need for capital improvements; changes in real estate tax rates and other operating expenses; adverse changes in governmental rules and fiscal policies; adverse changes in zoning laws; the impact of present or future environmental legislation and compliance with environmental laws.

**Annuities** are a retirement product for those who may have the ability to pay a premium now and want to guarantee they receive certain monthly payments or a return on investment later in the future. Annuities are contracts issued by a life insurance company designed to meet requirement or other long-term goals. An annuity is not a life insurance

policy. Variable annuities are designed to be long-term investments, to meet retirement and other long-range goals. Variable annuities are not suitable for meeting short-term goals because substantial taxes and insurance company charges may apply if you withdraw your money early. Variable annuities also involve investment risks, just as mutual funds do.

**Private placements** carry a substantial risk as they are subject to less regulation than are publicly offered securities, the market to resell these assets under applicable securities laws may be illiquid, due to restrictions, and the liquidation may be taken at a substantial discount to the underlying value or result in the entire loss of the value of such assets.

**Venture capital funds** invest in start-up companies at an early stage of development in the interest of generating a return through an eventual realization event; the risk is high as a result of the uncertainty involved at that stage of development.

**Commodities** are tangible assets used to manufacture and produce goods or services. Commodity prices are affected by different risk factors, such as disease, storage capacity, supply, demand, delivery constraints and weather. Because of those risk factors, even a well-diversified investment in commodities can be uncertain.

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

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

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

## Item 9: Disciplinary Information

### A. Criminal or Civil Actions

There are no criminal or civil actions to report.

## **B. Administrative Proceedings**

There are no administrative proceedings to report.

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

There are no self-regulatory organization proceedings to report.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **A. Code of Ethics**

AAL has a written Code of Ethics that covers the following areas: Prohibited Purchases and Sales, Insider Trading, Personal Securities Transactions, Exempted Transactions,

Prohibited Activities, Conflicts of Interest, Gifts and Entertainment, Confidentiality, Service on a Board of Directors, Compliance Procedures, Compliance with Laws and Regulations, Procedures and Reporting, Certification of Compliance, Reporting Violations, Compliance Officer Duties, Training and Education, Recordkeeping, Annual Review, and Sanctions. AAL's Code of Ethics is available free upon request to any client or prospective client.

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

Client approval will be sought for client investment in such recommendations and, if granted, such approval will be binding. If a principal transaction arises, AAL will only execute such transaction with the consent of the applicable client. Principal transactions are generally defined as transactions where an adviser, acting as principal for its own account or the account of a related person, buys from or sells any security to any advisory client.

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

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

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

From time to time, representatives of AAL may buy or sell securities for themselves at or around the same time as clients. This may provide an opportunity for representatives of AAL to buy or sell securities before or after recommending securities to clients resulting in representatives profiting off the recommendations they provide to clients. Such transactions may create a conflict of interest; however, AAL will never engage in trading that operates to the client's disadvantage if representatives of AAL buy or sell securities at or around the same time as clients.

## **Item 12: Brokerage Practices**

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

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

AAL recommends Schwab Institutional, a division of Charles Schwab & Co., Inc and Interactive Brokers, LLC (CRD# 36418).

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

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

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

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

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

AAL may permit clients to direct it to execute transactions through a specified broker-dealer. If a client directs brokerage, then the client will be required to acknowledge in writing that the client's direction with respect to the use of brokers supersedes any authority granted to AAL to select brokers; this direction may result in higher

commissions, which may result in a disparity between free and directed accounts; and trades for the client and other directed accounts may be executed after trades for free accounts, which may result in less favorable prices, particularly for illiquid securities or during volatile market conditions. Not all investment advisers allow their clients to direct brokerage.

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

AAL does not aggregate or bunch the securities to be purchased or sold for multiple clients. This may result in less favorable prices, particularly for illiquid securities or during volatile market conditions.

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

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

All client accounts for AAL's advisory services provided on an ongoing basis are reviewed at least Quarterly by Christian De Berardinis, Managing Partner, with regard to clients' respective investment policies and risk tolerance levels. All accounts at AAL are assigned to this reviewer.

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

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

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

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



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

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

AAL does not receive any economic benefit, directly or indirectly from any third party for advice rendered to AAL's clients.

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

Schwab also makes available to AAL other products and services that benefit AAL but may not benefit its clients' accounts. These benefits may include national, regional or AAL specific educational events organized and/or sponsored by Schwab Advisor Services. Other potential benefits may include occasional business entertainment of personnel of AAL by Schwab Advisor Services personnel, including meals, invitations to sporting events, including golf tournaments, and other forms of entertainment, some of which may accompany educational opportunities. Other of these products and services assist AAL in managing and administering clients' accounts. These include software and other technology (and related technological training) that provide access to client account data (such as trade confirmations and account statements), facilitate trade execution (and allocation of aggregated trade orders for multiple client accounts, if applicable), provide research, pricing information and other market data, facilitate payment of AAL's fees from its clients' accounts (if applicable), and assist with back-office training and support functions, recordkeeping and client reporting. Many of these services generally may be used to service all or some substantial number of AAL's accounts. Schwab Advisor Services also makes available to AAL other services intended to help AAL manage and further develop its business enterprise. These services may include professional compliance, legal and business consulting, publications and conferences on practice management, information technology, business succession, regulatory compliance, employee benefits providers, human capital consultants, insurance and marketing. In addition, Schwab may make available, arrange and/or pay vendors for these types of services rendered to AAL by independent third parties. Schwab Advisor Services may discount or waive fees it would otherwise charge for some of these services or pay all or

a part of the fees of a third-party providing these services to AAL. AAL is independently owned and operated and not affiliated with Schwab.

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

AAL may enter into written arrangements with third parties to act as solicitors for AAL's investment management services. Solicitor relationships will be fully disclosed to each Client to the extent required by applicable law. AAL will ensure each solicitor is exempt, notice filed, or properly registered in all appropriate jurisdictions. All such referral activities will be conducted in accordance with Rule 206(4)-1 under the Advisers Act, where applicable.

## **Item 15: Custody**

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

## **Item 16: Investment Discretion**

AAL provides discretionary and non-discretionary investment advisory services to clients. The advisory contract established with each client sets forth the discretionary authority for trading. Where investment discretion has been granted, AAL generally manages the client's account and makes investment decisions without consultation with the client as to when the securities are to be bought or sold for the account, the total amount of the securities to be bought/sold, what securities to buy or sell, or the price per share.

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

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

## **Item 18: Financial Information**

### **A. Balance Sheet**

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

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

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

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

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