

**Item 1    Cover Page**

# **Carret Asset Management, LLC**

SEC File Number: 801 – 63093

## **Brochure**

**Dated March 31, 2022**

**Contact: Marco A. Vega, Chief Compliance**

**Officer 320 Park Avenue, 18th Floor**

**New York, New York 10022**

**[www.carret.com](http://www.carret.com)**

This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Carret Asset Management, LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at (212) 593-3800 or [mvega@carret.com](mailto:mvega@carret.com). The information in this brochure has not been approved or verified by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or by any state securities authority.

Additional information about Carret Asset Management, LLC also is available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov).

References herein to Carret Asset Management, LLC as a "registered investment adviser" or any reference to being "registered" does not imply a certain level of skill or training.

## Item 2 Material Changes

Since Carret Asset Management, LLC’s (the “Registrant”) most recent annual amendment filing on March 30, 2021, there has been a change to this Disclosure Brochure. On March 16, 2022, Morningstar Japan KK acquired the remaining 33% of Registrant’s parent, Carret Holdings Inc. In addition, although not material, this disclosure statement has been amended at Item 4 to enhance disclosure regarding the Registrant’s investment advisory business, including retirement account rollovers, management of cash positions, and cryptocurrency.

**ANY QUESTIONS:** Carret’s Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client has regarding this Brochure, including any of the above referenced disclosure changes and/or enhancements.

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## Item 4 Advisory Business

- A. Carret Asset Management, LLC (the “Registrant”) is a limited liability company formed in May 2004 in the State of New York. The Registrant became registered as an Investment Adviser Firm in May 2004. The Registrant is wholly owned by Carret Holdings, Inc. Carret Holdings, Inc. is ultimately owned through various intermediaries, including Morningstar Japan KK, by SBI Holdings, Inc.
- B. As discussed below, the Registrant offers to its clients (individuals, investment companies, investment limited partnerships, pension and profit sharing plans, Taft Hartley clients, investment advisors, business entities, trusts, estates and charitable organizations, etc.) investment advisory services. To the extent specifically requested by a client, Registrant may provide limited consultation services to its investment management clients on investment and non-investment related matters. Any such consultation services, to the extent rendered, shall be rendered on an unsolicited basis, for which Registrant shall generally not charge a fee. In the event that the client requires extraordinary consultation services (to be determined in the sole discretion of the Registrant), the Registrant may determine to charge for such additional services, the dollar amount of which shall be set forth in a separate written notice to the client.

To commence the investment advisory process, Registrant will ascertain each client’s investment objective(s) and then invest the client’s assets consistent with the client’s designated investment objective(s). Once invested, Registrant provides ongoing supervision of the account(s). Before engaging Registrant to provide investment advisory services, clients are required to enter into an Investment Advisory Agreement with Registrant setting forth the terms and conditions of the engagement (including termination), describing the scope of the services to be provided, and the fee that is due from the client.

### **INVESTMENT ADVISORY SERVICES**

The client can determine to engage the Registrant to provide discretionary or non-discretionary investment advisory services on a *fee* basis. The Registrant’s annual investment advisory fee is based upon a percentage (%) of the market value of the assets placed under the Registrant’s management (between 0.65% and 1.25%) as follows:

<b>Portfolio Value</b>	<b>Annual Fee</b>
First \$2 million of value	1.25% annually (0.3125% quarterly)
Next \$3 million of value	1.00% annually (0.2500% quarterly)
Next \$5 million of value	0.75% annually (0.1875% quarterly)
Next \$10 million of value	0.70% annually (0.1750% quarterly)
Thereafter	0.65% annually (0.1625% quarterly)

Registrant, in its sole discretion, may charge a lesser investment advisory fee and/or charge a flat fee based upon certain criteria (i.e. anticipated future earning capacity, anticipated future additional assets, dollar amount of assets to be managed, related accounts, account composition, prior fee schedules, competition, negotiations with client, etc.). **Please Note:** As result of the above, similarly situated clients could pay different fees. In addition, similar advisory services may be available from other investment advisers for similar or lower fees. **ANY QUESTIONS:** Registrant’s Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client

or prospective client may have regarding advisory fees.

### **SUB-ADVISORY SERVICES**

The Registrant may serve as a sub-advisor to unaffiliated registered investment advisors according to the terms and conditions of a written Sub-Advisory Agreement. With respect to its sub-advisory services, the unaffiliated entities that engage the Firm's sub-advisory services maintain both the initial and ongoing day-to-day relationship with the underlying client, including initial and ongoing determination of client suitability for the Registrant's designated investment strategies and/or programs. If the custodian/broker-dealer is determined by the unaffiliated investment adviser, Registrant will be unable to negotiate commissions and/or transaction costs, and/or seek better execution. As a result, clients may pay higher commissions or other transaction costs or greater spreads, or receive less favorable net prices, on transactions for the account than would otherwise be the case through alternative clearing arrangements recommended by Registrant. Higher transaction costs adversely impact account performance.

The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions concerning the Registrant's sub-advisory arrangements.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

**Limitations of Sub-Advisory Services:** The Registrant can also be engaged to serve as a sub-adviser to registered investment advisers and/or other unaffiliated entities. With respect to these types of engagements, the unaffiliated entities that engage the Registrant's sub-advisory services and/or assist their clients in selecting the Registrant as a separate account manager, maintain both the initial and ongoing day-to-day relationship with the underlying client, including the initial and ongoing determination of client suitability for the Registrant's investment strategies. The Registrant's obligation shall be to manage the client's account consistent with the investment strategy designated by the unaffiliated firm. In addition, for all such engagements, the Registrant does not generally have the ability to choose and/or determine: (1) the custodian and/or broker-dealer for the client's account; (2) whether the services are part of a wrap program or provided on an unbundled basis; or (3) program and/or transaction cost pricing. Thus, the Registrant is unable to control or confirm best execution for account transactions. Higher fees and transaction costs adversely impact account performance

**Please Note-Use of Mutual and Exchange Traded Funds:** Most mutual funds and exchange-traded funds are available directly to the public. Thus, a prospective client can obtain many of the funds that may be utilized by Registrant independent of engaging Registrant as an investment advisor. However, if a prospective client determines to do so, he/she will not receive Registrant's initial and ongoing investment advisory services. **Please Note:** In addition to Registrant's investment advisory fee described below, and transaction and/or custodial fees discussed below, clients will also incur, relative to all mutual fund and exchange traded fund purchases, charges imposed at the fund level (e.g. management fees and other fund expenses). **ANY QUESTIONS: Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above.**

**Custodian Charges-Additional Fees:** As discussed below at Item 12 below, when requested to recommend a broker-dealer/custodian for client accounts, Registrant generally recommends that Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. ("Schwab") and/or Fidelity Investments and National Financial Services, LLC (Collectively "Fidelity") serve as the broker-dealer/custodian for client investment

management assets. Broker-dealers such as Schwab and Fidelity charge transaction fees for effecting securities transactions (i.e. including transaction fees for certain mutual funds, and mark-ups and mark-downs charged for fixed income transactions, etc.). The types of securities for which transaction fees, commissions, and/or other type fees (as well as the amount of those fees) shall differ depending upon the broker-dealer/custodian (while certain custodians, including Schwab and Fidelity, do not currently charge fees on individual equity transactions, others do). When beneficial to the client, individual fixed-income and/or equity transactions may be effected through broker-dealers with whom the client has entered into arrangements for prime brokerage clearing services, including effecting certain client transactions through other SEC registered and FINRA member broker-dealers (in which event, the client generally will incur both the transaction fee charged by the executing broker-dealer and a “trade-away” fee charged by Schwab and/or Fidelity and /or other custodians). In addition to Registrant’s investment advisory fee referenced in Item 5 below, the client will also incur transaction fees to purchase securities for the client’s account **ANY QUESTIONS: Registrant’s Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above.**

In addition, Schwab (as do its primary competitors that provide similar pricing arrangements) require that cash proceeds to automatically be swept into a Schwab proprietary or affiliated money market mutual funds or cash sweeps accounts, which proprietary/affiliated Schwab funds/accounts do not provide the highest return available.

**Non-Affiliated Mutual Fund.** The Registrant also serves as the investment manager to the Carret Kansas Tax Exempt Bond Fund, which is an investment company (also referred to as mutual fund) registered under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the “Fund”). A complete description of the Fund, its strategy, objectives, and cost is set forth in the Fund’s then-current prospectus, a copy of which is available from the Registrant upon request. As the investment manager to the Fund, Registrant has discretionary authority over the management of the Funds’ assets. Registrant does not recommend the Fund to its managed account clients

**Retirement Rollovers – No Obligation / Conflict of Interest:** A client or prospective client leaving an employer typically has four options regarding an existing retirement plan (and may engage in a combination of these options): (i) leave the money in the former employer’s plan, if permitted, (ii) roll over the assets to the new employer’s plan, if one is available and rollovers are permitted, (iii) roll over to an Individual Retirement Account (“IRA”), or (iv) cash out the account value (which could, depending upon the client’s age, result in adverse tax consequences). If the Registrant recommends that a client roll over their retirement plan assets into an account to be managed by the Registrant, such a recommendation creates a conflict of interest if the Registrant will earn a new (or increase its current) advisory fee as a result of the rollover. If Registrant provides a recommendation as to whether a client should engage in a rollover or not (whether it is from an employer’s plan or an existing IRA), Registrant is acting as a fiduciary 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. No client is under any obligation to roll over retirement plan assets to an account managed by Registrant whether it is from an employer’s plan or an existing IRA.

The Registrant’s Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the potential for conflict of interest presented by such rollover recommendation.

**Portfolio Activity.** Registrant has a fiduciary duty to provide services consistent with the client's best interest. As part of its investment advisory services, Registrant will review client portfolios on an ongoing basis to determine if any changes are necessary based upon various factors, including, but not limited to, investment performance, account additions/withdrawals, mutual fund manager tenure, style drift, and/or a change in the client's investment objective. Based upon these factors, there may be extended periods of time when Registrant determines that changes to a client's portfolio are neither necessary nor prudent. Of course, as indicated below, there can be no assurance that investment decisions made by Registrant will be profitable or equal any specific performance level(s). Clients nonetheless remain subject to the fees described in Item 5 below during periods of account inactivity.

**Limited Consulting / Implementation Services.** Although the Registrant does not hold itself out as providing financial planning, estate planning or accounting services, to the extent specifically requested by the client, the Registrant may provide limited consultation services to its investment management clients on investment and non-investment related matters, such as estate planning, tax planning, insurance, etc. Registrant shall not receive any separate or additional fee for any such consultation services. Neither the Registrant, nor any of its representatives, serves as an attorney, accountant, or licensed insurance agent, and no portion of the Registrant's services should be construed as same. Accordingly, the Registrant does not prepare legal documents or tax returns, nor does it sell insurance products. To the extent requested by a client, the Registrant may recommend the services of other professionals for certain non-investment implementation purposes (i.e. attorneys, accountants, insurance, etc.). The client is under no obligation to engage the services of any such recommended professional. The client retains absolute recommendation from the Registrant.

**Please Note:** If the client engages any professional (i.e. attorney, accountant, insurance agent, etc.), recommended or otherwise, and a dispute arises thereafter relative to such engagement, the client agrees to seek recourse exclusively from the engaged professional. At all times, the engaged licensed professional(s), and not Registrant, shall be responsible for the quality and competency of the services provided.

**Please Also Note:** It remains the client's responsibility to promptly notify the Registrant if there is ever any change in his/her/its financial situation or investment objectives for the purpose of reviewing/evaluating/revising Registrant's previous recommendations and/or services.

**Private Investment Funds.** Registrant does not recommend private investment funds. To the extent requested by a client, the Registrant may provide investment advice regarding private investment funds (generally, positions purchased by the client independent of the Registrant). The Registrant's role relative to such private investment funds shall be limited to its ongoing monitoring services. The amount of assets invested in the fund(s) shall not be included as part of "assets under management" for purposes of Registrant calculating its investment advisory fee. Registrant's clients are under absolutely no obligation to consider or make an investment in a private investment fund(s).

**Please Note:** Private investment funds generally involve various risk factors, including, but not limited to, potential for complete loss of principal, liquidity constraints and lack of transparency, a complete discussion of which is set forth in each fund's offering documents, which will be provided to each client for review and consideration. Unlike liquid investments

that a client may maintain, private investment funds do not provide daily liquidity or pricing. Each prospective client investor will be required to complete a Subscription Agreement, pursuant to which the client shall establish that he/she is qualified for investment in the fund and acknowledges and accepts the various risk factors that are associated with such an investment.

**Please Also Note: Valuation.** In the event that the Registrant references private investment funds owned by the client on any supplemental account reports prepared by the Registrant, the value(s) for all such private investment funds shall reflect either the initial purchase and/or the most recent valuation provided by the fund sponsor. If the valuation reflects the initial purchase price (and/or a value as of a previous date), the current value(s) (to the extent ascertainable) could be significantly more or less than the original purchase price.

**Please Note: Cash Positions.** Registrant continues to treat cash as an asset class. As such, unless determined to the contrary by Registrant, all cash positions (money markets, etc.) shall continue to be included as part of assets under management for purposes of calculating Registrant's advisory fee. At any specific point in time, depending upon perceived or anticipated market conditions/events (there being **no guarantee** that such anticipated market conditions/events will occur), Registrant may maintain cash positions for defensive purposes. In addition, while assets are maintained in cash, such amounts could miss market advances. Depending upon current yields, at any point in time, Registrant's advisory fee could exceed the interest paid by the client's money market fund.

#### **ERISA PLAN ENGAGEMENTS:**

**Trustee Directed Plans.** Registrant may be engaged to provide discretionary investment advisory services to ERISA retirement plans, whereby the Firm shall manage Plan assets consistent with the investment objective designated by the Plan trustees. In such engagements, Registrant will serve as an investment fiduciary as that term is defined under The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 ("ERISA"). Registrant will generally provide services on an "assets under management" fee basis per the terms and conditions of an *Investment Advisory Agreement* between the Plan and the Firm.

**Participant Directed Retirement Plans.** Registrant may also provide investment advisory and consulting services to participant directed retirement plans per the terms and conditions of a *Retirement Plan Services Agreement* between Registrant and the plan. For such engagements, Registrant shall assist the Plan sponsor with the selection of an investment platform from which Plan participants shall make their respective investment choices (which may include investment strategies devised and managed by Registrant), and, to the extent engaged to do so, may also provide corresponding education to assist the participants with their decision making process.

**Please Note (Wrap/Managed Account Programs).** The Registrant does not sponsor a wrap program. In the event that Registrant is engaged to provide investment management services as part of an unaffiliated wrap-fee program, Registrant will be unable to negotiate commissions and/or transaction costs. Under a wrap program, the wrap program sponsor arranges for the investor participant to receive investment advisory services, the execution of securities brokerage transactions, custody and reporting services for a single specified fee. In the event the Registrant elects to effect fixed income securities transactions through broker dealers other than the wrap program sponsor, the investor participant may incur costs in addition to those arranged by the

wrap program sponsor.

Participation in a wrap program may cost the participant more or less than purchasing such services separately. In the event that Registrant is engaged to provide investment management services as part of an unaffiliated managed account program, Registrant will likewise be unable to negotiate commissions and/or transaction costs. If the program is offered on a non-wrap basis, the program sponsor will determine the broker-dealer through which transactions must be effected, and the amount of transaction fees and/or commissions to be charged to the participant investor accounts.

**Cryptocurrency.** For clients who want exposure to cryptocurrencies, including Bitcoin, the Registrant will consider investment in corresponding exchange traded securities, /or an allocation to separate account managers and/or private funds that provide cryptocurrency exposure. Crypto is a digital currency that can be used to buy goods and services but uses an online ledger with strong cryptography (i.e. a method of protecting information and communications with codes) to secure online transactions. Unlike conventional currencies issued by a monetary authority, cryptocurrencies are generally not controlled or regulated, and their price is determined by the supply and demand of their market. Cryptocurrency is currently considered to be a speculative investment. The speculative nature of cryptocurrencies notwithstanding, the Registrant may (but is not obligated to) utilize crypto exposure in one or more of its asset allocation strategies for diversification purposes. **Please Note:** Investment in cryptocurrencies is subject to the potential for **liquidity constraints, extreme price volatility and complete loss of principal.**

**Notice to Opt Out.** Clients can notify the Registrant, **in writing**, to exclude cryptocurrency exposure from their accounts. Absent the Registrant's receipt of such written notice from the client, the Registrant may (**but is not obligated to**) utilize cryptocurrency as part of its asset allocation strategies for client accounts.

**Please Note: Inverse/Enhanced Market Strategies.** The Registrant may utilize long and short mutual funds and/or exchange traded funds that are designed to perform in either an: (1) inverse relationship to certain market indices (at a rate of 1 or more times the inverse [opposite] result of the corresponding index) as an investment strategy and/or for the purpose of hedging against downside market risk; and (2) enhanced relationship to certain market indices (at a rate of 1 or more times the actual result of the corresponding index) as an investment strategy and/or for the purpose of increasing gains in an advancing market. There can be no assurance that any such strategy will prove profitable or successful. In light of these enhanced risks/rewards, a client may direct the Registrant, in writing, not to employ any or all such strategies for his/her/their/its accounts.

**Interval Funds/Risks and Limitations:** Where appropriate, Registrant may utilize interval funds. An interval fund is a non-traditional type of closed-end mutual fund that periodically offers to buy back a percentage of outstanding shares from shareholders. Investments in an interval fund involve additional risk, including lack of liquidity and restrictions on withdrawals. During any time periods outside of the specified repurchase offer window(s), investors will be unable to sell their shares of the interval fund. There is no assurance that an investor will be able to tender shares when or in the amount desired. There can also be situations where an interval fund has a limited amount of capacity to repurchase shares and may not be able to fulfill all purchase orders. In addition, the eventual sale price for the interval fund could be less than the interval fund value on the date that the sale was requested. While an interval fund periodically offers to repurchase a portion of its securities, there is no guarantee that investors may sell their shares at any given time or in the

desired amount. As interval funds can expose investors to liquidity risk, investors should consider interval fund shares to be an illiquid investment. Typically, the interval funds are not listed on any securities exchange and are not publicly traded. Thus, there is no secondary market for the fund's shares. Because these types of investments involve certain additional risk, these funds will only be utilized when consistent with a client's investment objectives, individual situation, suitability, tolerance for risk and liquidity needs. Investment should be avoided where an investor has a short-term investing horizon and/or cannot bear the loss of some, or all, of the investment. There can be **no assurance** that an interval fund investment will prove profitable or successful.

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

**Non-Discretionary Services Limitations.** Clients that determine to engage Registrant on a non-discretionary investment advisory basis must be willing to accept that Registrant cannot effect any account transactions without obtaining prior consent to such transaction(s) from the client. Thus, in the event that Registrant would like to make a transaction for a client's account (including in the event of an individual holding or general market correction), and the client is unavailable, the Registrant will be unable to effect the account transaction(s) (as it would for its discretionary clients) without first obtaining the client's consent.

**Disclosure Brochure.** A copy of the Registrant's written Brochure as set forth on Part 2A of Form ADV, along with our Form CRS Relationship Summary, shall be provided to each client prior to, or contemporaneously with, the execution of the *Investment Advisory Agreement*. Any client who has not received a copy of Registrant's written Brochure at least 48 hours prior to executing the *Investment Advisory Agreement* shall have five business days subsequent to executing the agreement to terminate the Registrant's services without penalty.

- C. The Registrant shall provide investment advisory services specific to the needs of each client. Prior to providing investment advisory services, an investment adviser representative will ascertain each client's investment objective(s). Thereafter, the Registrant shall allocate and/or recommend that the client allocate investment assets consistent with the designated investment objective(s). The client may, at any time, impose reasonable restrictions, in writing, on the Registrant's services.
- D. The Registrant does not sponsor a wrap program. There is no significant difference between how the Registrant manages wrap fee accounts and non-wrap fee accounts. However, as stated above, if a client determines to engage the Registrant on a wrap fee basis the client will pay a single fee for bundled services (i.e. investment advisory, brokerage, custody). In the event the Registrant elects to effect fixed income securities transactions through broker dealers other than the wrap program sponsor, the client may incur additional costs. Questions should be directed to the wrap program sponsor. For more information relating to wrap fee programs, please refer to each wrap program sponsor's Form ADV Part 2A, Appendix 1 (Wrap Fee Program Brochure).
- E. As of December 31, 2021, the Registrant had \$3,407,625,984 in assets under management on a discretionary basis.

## Item 5 Fees and Compensation

- A. The client can determine to engage the Registrant to provide discretionary investment advisory services on a *fee* basis.

### INVESTMENT ADVISORY SERVICES

If a client determines to engage the Registrant to provide discretionary investment advisory services on a *fee* basis, the Registrant's annual investment advisory fee shall be based upon a percentage (%) of the market value of assets placed under the Registrant's management (between 0.65% and 1.25%) as follows:

Portfolio Value	Annual Fee
First \$2 million of value	1.25% annually (0.3125% quarterly)
Next \$3 million of value	1.00% annually (0.2500% quarterly)
Next \$5 million of value	0.75% annually (0.1875% quarterly)
Next \$10 million of value	0.70% annually (0.1750% quarterly)
Thereafter	0.65% annually (0.1625% quarterly)

**Please Note – Fee Dispersion.** Registrant, in its sole discretion, may charge a lesser investment advisory fee and/or charge a flat fee based upon certain criteria (i.e. anticipated future earning capacity, anticipated future additional assets, dollar amount of assets to be managed, related accounts, account composition, prior fee schedules, competition, complexity of the engagement, anticipated services to be rendered, grandfathered fee schedules, employees and family members, courtesy accounts, negotiations with client, etc.). **Please Note:** As result of the above, similarly situated clients could pay different fees. In addition, similar advisory services may be available from other investment advisers for similar or lower fees. **ANY QUESTIONS:** Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding advisory fees.

Please note, Registrant includes the value of certain month or quarter end interest or dividend payments when calculating client fees. Because these payments may be credited to the appropriate account subsequent to the issuance of the applicable brokerage statement, the market value reflected on the client brokerage statement may differ slightly from the value used in Registrant's fee billing process.

Please Note: Conflict of Interest. Registrant shall generally compensate its representatives based upon the revenues derived from accounts that they service. The representative generally maintains the authority to determine/negotiate the percentage advisory fee. Thus, a conflict of interest is presented because the higher the advisory fee, the greater the representative's (and Registrant's) compensation.

**Please Note: Fee Differentials.** Registrant shall generally price its advisory services based upon various objective and subjective factors. As a result, our clients could pay diverse fees based upon the type, amount and market value of their assets, the anticipated complexity of the engagement, the anticipated level and scope of the overall investment advisory services to be rendered, and negotiations. Additional factors effecting pricing can include related accounts, employee accounts,

competition, and negotiations. As a result of these factors, similarly situated clients could pay diverse fees, and the services to be provided by Registrant to any particular client could be available from other advisers at lower fees. All clients and prospective clients should be guided accordingly. **ANY QUESTIONS:** Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco Vega, remains available to address any questions regarding advisory fees.

#### **NON-LEVEL FEES: IF FIXED INCOME FEES/RANGES ARE LOWER**

**Please Note: Conflict of Interest:** Although Registrant will invest client assets consistent with the client's designated investment objective, the fact that Registrant earns a higher fee for management of securities other than fixed income as referenced in the above fee range, Registrant has a **conflict of interest** since it will present an economic incentive to allocate more assets to those types of securities from which it will earn a higher advisory fee. **ANY QUESTIONS:** Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco Vega, remains available to address any questions regarding this conflict of interest.

#### **SUB-ADVISORY SERVICES**

The Registrant can also be engaged to serve as a sub-advisor to unaffiliated registered investment advisers according to the terms and conditions of a written Sub-Advisory Agreement. The Registrant's annual sub-advisory fee shall be based upon a percentage of the market value of assets placed under the Registrant's management. Registrant will individually negotiate fees with each sub-advisory client, with annual fees not exceeding 1.25% of assets placed under Registrant's management. **See Limitations of Sub-Advisory Services above.**

- B. Clients may elect to have the Registrant's advisory fees deducted from their custodial account. Both Registrant's Investment Advisory Agreement and the custodial/clearing agreement may authorize the custodian to debit the account for the amount of the Registrant's investment advisory fee and to directly remit that management fee to the Registrant in compliance with regulatory procedures. In the event that the Registrant bills the client directly, payment is due upon receipt of the Registrant's invoice. The Registrant shall deduct fees and/or bill clients quarterly in advance or arrears (as the case may be), based upon the market value of the assets on the last business day of the previous quarter.
  
- C. As discussed below, unless the client directs otherwise or an individual client's circumstances require, the Registrant shall generally recommend that ("Schwab") and/or serve as the broker-dealer/custodian for client investment management assets. Broker-dealers such as Schwab and Fidelity charge brokerage commissions and/or transaction fees for effecting certain securities transactions (i.e. transaction fees are charged for certain no-load mutual funds, commissions are charged for individual equity and fixed income securities transactions). In addition to Registrant's investment management fee, brokerage commissions and/or transaction fees, clients will also incur, relative to all mutual fund and exchange traded fund purchases, charges imposed at the fund level (e.g. management fees and other fund expenses). When beneficial to the client, individual fixed-income and/or equity transactions may be effected through broker-dealers with whom Registrant and/or the client have entered into arrangements for prime brokerage clearing services, including effecting certain client transactions through other SEC registered and FINRA member broker-dealers (in which event, the client generally will incur both the transaction fee charged by the executing broker-dealer and a "trade-away" fee charged by the Schwab and/or Fidelity).

- D. Registrant's annual investment advisory fee shall be prorated and paid quarterly, in advance or arrears (as the case may be), based upon the market value of the assets on the last business day of the previous quarter. Registrant will individually negotiate fees with each client, with annual fees not exceeding 1.25% of assets placed under Registrant's management.

The Investment Advisory Agreement between the Registrant and the client will continue in effect until terminated by either party by written notice in accordance with the terms of the Investment Advisory Agreement. Upon termination, if billed in advance, the Registrant shall refund the prorated portion of the advanced advisory fee paid based upon the number of days remaining in the billing quarter. Upon termination, if billed in arrears, the Registrant shall debit the account for the pro-rated portion of the unpaid advanced advisory fee based upon the number of days that services were provided during the billing quarter. The Registrant's policy is to treat intra-quarter (intra-month, if billing is monthly) account additions and withdrawals equally, where deposits or withdrawals in excess of 25% of the account's value will result in an intra-period adjustment to the client's quarterly fee.

**Margin Accounts: Risks/Conflict of Interest.** Except with respect to its Leveraged Opportunity Strategy (*see* Item 6 below), the Registrant does not recommend the use of margin. A *margin account* is a brokerage *account* that allows investors to borrow money to buy securities. By using borrowed funds, the customer is employing leverage that will magnify both account gains and losses. The broker charges the investor interest for the right to borrow money and uses the securities as collateral. Should a client determine to use margin, Registrant will include the entire market value of the margined assets when computing its advisory fee. Accordingly, Registrant's fee shall be based upon a higher margined account value, resulting in Registrant earning a correspondingly higher advisory fee. As a result, the potential of conflict of interest arises since Registrant may have an economic disincentive to recommend that the client terminate the use of margin. **ANY QUESTIONS:** Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to discuss any questions that a client has regarding the use of margin.

- E. Neither the Registrant, nor its representatives, accept compensation from the sale of securities or other investment products.

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

The Registrant offers its Leveraged Opportunity Strategy on a performance fee basis. Registrant may charge performance-based fees to clients who have at least \$1,000,000 in portfolio assets managed by the firm, or who together with their spouse have a net worth of at least \$2,100,000 excluding principal residence. Clients are advised that performance-based fees involve a sharing of any portfolio gains between the client and the investment manager. Such performance-based fees create an economic incentive for Registrant to take additional risks, such as using leverage, in the management of a client portfolio that may be in conflict with the client's current investment objectives and tolerance for risk. No performance-based fees will be assessed until the portfolio, on a cumulative basis from account inception, is in a net gain position.

Performance-based fees are in addition to the asset-based fees detailed in Item 5 of this Brochure. Clients are also advised that as a result of the standard asset-based fee and the performance-based fee, the investment manager has a conflict of interest and an economic incentive to recommend a performance-based fee structure.

Performance-based fees may only be offered to clients who meet one of the following criteria:

- A natural person who or a company that immediately after entering into the contract has at least \$1,000,000 under the management of the investment adviser
- A natural person who or a company that the investment adviser entering into the contract (and any person acting on his behalf) reasonably believes, immediately prior to entering into the contract, either:
  - Has a net worth (together, in the case of a natural person, with assets held jointly with a spouse, excluding principal residence) of more than \$2,100,000, at the time the contract is entered into; or
  - Is a qualified purchaser as defined in section 2(a)(51)(A) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a-2(51)(A)) at the time the contract is entered into; or
- A natural person who immediately prior to entering into the contract is:
  - An executive officer, director, trustee, general partner, or person serving in similar capacity of the investment adviser; or
  - An employee of the investment adviser (other than an employee performing solely clerical, secretarial, or administrative functions with regard to the investment adviser) who, in connection with his or her regular functions or duties, participates in the investment activities of such investment adviser, provided that such employee has been performing such functions and duties for or on behalf of the investment adviser, or substantially similar functions or duties for or on behalf of another company for at least 12 months.

## Item 7 Types of Clients

The Registrant's clients shall generally include individuals, investment companies, investment limited partnerships, pension and profit sharing plans, Taft Hartley clients, investment advisors, "business entities, trusts, estates and charitable organizations. The Registrant, in its sole discretion, may reduce its investment management fee, charge a flat fee, or reach some other mutually agreeable fee arrangement based upon certain criteria (i.e. anticipated future earning capacity, anticipated future additional assets, dollar amount of assets to be managed, related accounts, account composition, competition, negotiations with client, etc.).

**Please Note:** Because of the above, similarly situated clients could pay disparate fees, and similar advisory services may be available from other investment advisers for similar or lower fees. **ANY QUESTIONS:** Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client may have regarding advisory fees.

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

- A. The Registrant may utilize the following methods of security analysis:
- Charting - (analysis performed using patterns to identify current trends and trend reversals to forecast the direction of prices)
  - Fundamental - (analysis performed on historical and present data, with the goal of making financial forecasts)
  - Technical - (analysis performed on historical and present data, focusing on price and trade volume, to forecast the direction of prices)
  - Cyclical - (analysis performed on historical relationships between price and market trends,

to forecast the direction of prices)

The Registrant may utilize the following investment strategies when implementing investment advice given to clients:

- Long Term Purchases (securities held at least a year)
- Short Sales (contracted sale of borrowed securities with an obligation to make the lender whole)
- Margin Transactions (use of borrowed assets to purchase financial instruments)
- Options (contract for the purchase or sale of a security at a predetermined price during a specific period of time)

**Please Note: Investment Risk.** Different types of investments involve varying degrees of risk, and it should not be assumed that future performance of any specific investment or investment strategy (including the investments and/or investment strategies recommended or undertaken by the Registrant) will be profitable or equal any specific performance level(s).

- B. The Registrant's methods of analysis do not present any unusual risks. However, the Registrant does recommend strategies that carry a high level of risk and that may be in conflict with the clients' investment objectives through the use of margin and the charging of performance fees.

However, every method of analysis has its own inherent risks. To perform an accurate market analysis, the Registrant must have access to current/new market information. The Registrant has no control over the dissemination rate of market information; therefore, unbeknownst to the Registrant, certain analyses may be compiled with outdated market information, severely limiting the value of the Registrant's analysis. Furthermore, an accurate market analysis can only produce a forecast of the direction of market values. There can be no assurances that a forecasted change in market value will materialize into actionable and/or profitable investment opportunities.

The Registrant's primary investment strategies - long term purchases are a fundamental investment strategy. However, every investment strategy has its own inherent risks and limitations. For example, longer term investment strategies require a longer investment time period to allow for the strategy to potentially develop. Shorter term investment strategies require a shorter investment time period to potentially develop but, as a result of more frequent trading, may incur higher transactional costs when compared to a longer term investment strategy.

In addition to the fundamental investment strategies discussed above, the Registrant may also implement and/or recommend – short selling, use of margin, and/or options transactions. Each of these strategies has a high level of inherent risk. (See discussion below).

Short selling is an investment strategy with a high level of inherent risk. Short selling involves the selling of assets that the investor does not own. The investor borrows the assets from a third party lender (i.e. Broker-Dealer) with the obligation of buying identical assets at a later date to return to the third party lender. Individuals who engage in this activity shall only profit from a decline in the price of the assets between the original date of sale and the date of repurchase. Conversely, the short seller will incur a loss if the price of the assets rises. Other costs of shorting may include a fee for borrowing the assets and payment of any dividends paid on the borrowed assets.

Margin is an investment strategy with a high level of inherent risk. A margin transaction occurs

when an investor uses borrowed assets to purchase financial instruments. The investor generally obtains the borrowed assets by using other securities as collateral for the borrowed sum. The effect of purchasing a security using margin is to magnify any gains or losses sustained by the purchase of the financial instruments on margin.

**Please Note:** To the extent that a client authorizes the use of margin, and margin is thereafter employed by the Registrant in the management of the client's investment portfolio, the market value of the client's account and corresponding fee payable by the client to the Registrant may be increased. As a result, in addition to understanding and assuming the additional principal risks associated with the use of margin, clients authorizing margin are advised of the conflict of interest whereby the client's decision to employ margin *may* correspondingly increase the management fee payable to the Registrant. Accordingly, the decision as to whether to employ margin is left totally to the discretion of client.

The use of options transactions as an investment strategy involves a high level of inherent risk. Option transactions establish a contract between two parties concerning the buying or selling of an asset at a predetermined price during a specific period of time. During the term of the option contract, the buyer of the option gains the right to demand fulfillment by the seller. Fulfillment may take the form of either selling or purchasing a security depending upon the nature of the option contract. Generally, the purchase or the recommendation to purchase an option contract by the Registrant shall be with the intent of offsetting/"hedging" a potential market risk in a client's portfolio.

**Please Note:** Although the intent of the options-related transactions that may be implemented by the Registrant is to hedge against principal risk, certain of the options-related strategies (i.e. straddles, short positions, etc.), may, in and of themselves, produce principal volatility and/or risk. Thus, a client must be willing to accept these enhanced volatility and principal risks associated with such strategies. In light of these enhanced risks, client may direct the Registrant, in writing, not to employ any or all such strategies for his/her/their/its accounts.

- C. Currently, the Registrant primarily allocates client investment assets among various individual equity (stocks) and debt (bonds) securities, exchange traded funds ("ETFs") (including inverse ETFs and/or mutual funds that are designed to perform in an inverse relationship to certain market indices), and, to a much lesser extent, among no load and/or load waived mutual funds, on a discretionary basis in accordance with the client's designated investment objective(s).

As disclosed above, the Registrant may utilize long and short mutual funds and/or exchange traded funds that are designed to perform in either an: (1) inverse relationship to certain market indices (at a rate of 1 or more times the inverse [opposite] result of the corresponding index) as an investment strategy and/or for the purpose of hedging against downside market risk; and (2) enhanced relationship to certain market indices (at a rate of 1 or more times the actual result of the corresponding index) as an investment strategy and/or for the purpose of increasing gains in an advancing market. There can be no assurance that any such strategy will prove profitable or successful. In light of these enhanced risks/rewards, a client may direct the Registrant, in writing, not to employ any or all such strategies for his/her/their/its accounts. (See Item 4 B).

The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above and any corresponding conflict of interest such investment strategies and risks may create.

## Item 9 Disciplinary Information

The Registrant has not been the subject of any disciplinary actions.

## Item 10 Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations

- A. One of Registrant's investment adviser representatives is also a registered representative of Brean Capital, LLC, an SEC-registered and FINRA member broker/dealer.
- B. Neither the Registrant, nor its representatives, are registered or have an application pending to register, as a futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator, a commodity trading advisor, or a representative of the foregoing.
- C. **Private Investment Fund.** The Registrant, on a non-discretionary basis, may recommend that qualified clients consider allocating a portion of their investment assets in private investment funds. The terms and conditions for participation in any private investment fund, including management fees, conflicts of interest, and risk factors, are set forth in each fund's offering documents.

**Please Note:** Private investment funds generally involve various risk factors, including, but not limited to, potential for complete loss of principal, liquidity constraints and lack of transparency, a complete discussion of which is set forth in each fund's offering documents, which will be provided to each client for review and consideration. Unlike other liquid investments that a client may maintain, private investment funds do not provide daily liquidity or pricing. Each prospective client investor will be required to complete a Subscription Agreement, pursuant to which the client shall establish that he/she is qualified for investment in the fund and acknowledges and accepts the various risk factors that are associated with such an investment.

**Please Also Note: Valuation.** In the event that the Registrant references private investment funds owned by the client on any supplemental account reports prepared by the Registrant, the value(s) for all such private investment funds shall reflect either the initial purchase and/or the most recent valuation provided by the fund sponsor. If the valuation reflects the initial purchase price (and/or a value as of a previous date), the current value(s) (to the extent ascertainable) could be significantly more or less than the original purchase price.

**Broker Dealer.** As disclosed above in Item 5.E, one of the Registrant's representatives is a registered representative of Brean Capital, LLC, a FINRA member broker-dealer and an SEC registered investment advisor. Registrant's representative does not offer brokerage services to any of Registrant's clients. Since neither the Registrant, nor its representative, will recommend brokerage products or services to Registrant's clients, any potential conflict of interest associated with this affiliation is mitigated. Clients who seek the services of a broker-dealer may purchase securities products through other non-affiliated broker-dealers.

The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above conflicts of interest. \_

- D. The Registrant does not receive, directly or indirectly, compensation from investment advisors that it recommends or selects for its clients.

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

- A. The Registrant maintains an investment policy relative to personal securities transactions. This investment policy is part of Registrant's overall Code of Ethics, which serves to establish a standard of business conduct for all of Registrant's Representatives that is based upon fundamental principles of openness, integrity, honesty and trust, a copy of which is available upon request. In accordance with Section 204A of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, the Registrant also maintains and enforces written policies reasonably designed to prevent the misuse of material non-public information by the Registrant or any person associated with the Registrant.
- B. The Registrant and/or representatives of the Registrant *may* buy or sell securities that are also recommended to clients. This practice may create a situation where the Registrant and/or representatives of the Registrant are in a position to materially benefit from the sale or purchase of those securities. Therefore, this situation creates a potential conflict of interest. Practices such as "scalping" (i.e. a practice whereby the owner of shares of a security recommends that security for investment and then immediately sells it at a profit upon the rise in the market price which follows the recommendation) could take place if the Registrant did not have adequate policies in place to detect such activities. In addition, this requirement can help detect insider trading, "front-running" (i.e. personal trades executed prior to those of the Registrant's clients) and other potentially abusive practices.

The Registrant has a personal securities transaction policy in place to monitor the personal securities transactions and securities holdings of each of the Registrant's "Access Persons." The Registrant's securities transaction policy requires that an Access Person of the Registrant must provide the Chief Compliance Officer or his/her designee with a written report of their current securities holdings within ten (10) days after becoming an Access Person. Additionally, each Access Person must provide the Chief Compliance Officer or his/her designee with a written report of the Access Person's current securities holdings at least once each twelve (12) month period thereafter on a date the Registrant selects; provided, however that at any time that the Registrant has only one Access Person, he or she shall not be required to submit any securities report described above.

- C. The Registrant and/or representatives of the Registrant *may* buy or sell securities, at or around the same time as those securities are recommended to clients. This practice creates a situation where the Registrant and/or representatives of the Registrant are in a position to materially benefit from the sale or purchase of those securities. Therefore, this situation creates a potential conflict of interest. As indicated above in Item 11 C, the Registrant has a personal securities transaction policy in place to monitor the personal securities transaction and securities holdings of each of Registrant's Access Persons.

## **Item 12 Brokerage Practices**

- A. In the event that the client requests that the Registrant recommend a broker-dealer/custodian for execution and/or custodial services (exclusive of those clients that may direct the Registrant to use a specific broker-dealer/custodian), Registrant generally recommends that investment management accounts be maintained at Schwab and/or Fidelity. Prior to engaging Registrant to provide investment management services, the client will be required to enter into a formal *Investment Advisory Agreement* with Registrant setting forth the terms and conditions under which

Registrant shall manage the client's assets, and a separate custodial/clearing agreement with each designated broker-dealer/custodian.

Factors that Registrant considers in recommending Schwab, Fidelity (or any other broker-dealer/custodian to clients) include historical relationship with Registrant, financial strength, reputation, execution capabilities, pricing, research, and service. Broker-dealers such as Schwab can charge transaction fees for effecting certain securities transactions (*See* Item 4 above). To the extent that a transaction fee will be payable by the client to Schwab or Fidelity, the transaction fee shall be in addition to Registrant's investment advisory fee referenced in Item 5 above.

To the extent that a transaction fee is payable, Registrant shall have a duty to obtain best execution for such transaction. However, that does not mean that the client will not pay a transaction fee that is higher than another qualified broker-dealer might charge to effect the same transaction where Registrant determines, in good faith, that the transaction fee is reasonable. In seeking best execution, the determinative factor is not the lowest possible cost, but whether the transaction represents the best qualitative execution, taking into consideration the full range of a broker-dealer's services, including the value of research provided, execution capability, transaction rates, and responsiveness. Accordingly, although Registrant will seek competitive rates, it may not necessarily obtain the lowest possible rates for client account transactions.

The brokerage commissions or transaction fees charged by the designated broker-dealer/custodian are exclusive of, and in addition to, Registrant's investment management fee.

**Research and Benefits:** Although not a material consideration when determining whether to recommend that a client utilize the services of a particular broker-dealer/custodian, Registrant can receive from Schwab and/or Fidelity (or another broker-dealer/custodian, investment manager, platform sponsor, mutual fund sponsor, or vendor) without cost (and/or at a discount) support services and/or products, certain of which assist Registrant to better monitor and service client accounts maintained at such institutions. Included within the support services that can be obtained by Registrant can be investment-related research, pricing information and market data, software and other technology that provide access to client account data, compliance and/or practice management-related publications, discounted or gratis consulting services, discounted and/or gratis attendance at conferences, meetings, and other educational and/or social events, marketing support-including client events, computer hardware and/or software and/or other products used by Registrant in furtherance of its investment advisory business operations.

Certain of the above support services and/or products assist Registrant in managing and administering client accounts. Others do not directly provide such assistance, but rather assist Registrant to manage and further develop its business enterprise.

Registrant's clients do not pay more for investment transactions effected and/or assets maintained at Schwab or Fidelity as the result of this arrangement. There is no corresponding commitment made by Registrant to Schwab, Fidelity, or any other any entity, to invest any specific amount or percentage of client assets in any specific mutual funds, securities or other investment products as result of the above arrangement.

**ANY QUESTIONS: Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above arrangements and the corresponding conflicts of interest presented by such arrangements.**

**Referrals from Schwab.** As indicated below at Item 14, the Registrant also participates in the Schwab Advisor Network™, pursuant to which the Registrant compensates Schwab for client introductions. Please see disclosure below at Item 14, including the corresponding conflict of interest presented by such arrangement.

**Directed Brokerage.** Registrant recommends that its clients utilize the brokerage and custodial services provided by Schwab and/or Fidelity. The Firm may accept directed brokerage arrangements (when a client requires that account transactions be effected through a specific broker-dealer). In such client directed arrangements, the client will negotiate terms and arrangements for their account with that broker-dealer, and Firm will not seek better execution services or prices from other broker-dealers or be able to "batch" the client's transactions for execution through other broker-dealers with orders for other accounts managed by Registrant. As a result, a client may pay higher commissions or other transaction costs or greater spreads, or receive less favorable net prices, on transactions for the account than would otherwise be the case.

**Please Note:** In the event that the client directs Registrant to effect securities transactions for the client's accounts through a specific broker-dealer, the client correspondingly acknowledges that such direction may cause the accounts to incur higher commissions or transaction costs than the accounts would otherwise incur had the client determined to effect account transactions through alternative clearing arrangements that may be available through Registrant. Higher transaction costs adversely impact account performance. **Please Also Note:** Transactions for directed accounts will generally be executed following the execution of portfolio transactions for non-directed accounts.

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

## Item 13 Review of Accounts

- A. For those clients to whom Registrant provides investment advisory services, account reviews are conducted on an ongoing basis by the Registrant's Principals and/or representatives. All investment advisory clients are advised that it remains their responsibility to advise the Registrant of any changes in their investment objectives and/or financial situation. All clients (in person or via telephone) are encouraged to review financial planning issues (to the extent applicable), investment objectives and account performance with the Registrant on an annual basis.
- B. The Registrant may conduct account reviews other than on a periodic basis upon the occurrence of a triggering event, such as a change in client investment objectives and/or financial situation, market corrections and client request.
- C. Clients are provided, at least quarterly, with written transaction confirmation notices and regular

written summary account statements directly from the broker-dealer/custodian and/or program sponsor for the client accounts. The Registrant may also provide a written periodic report summarizing account activity and performance.

- D. The Registrant is compliant on a firm wide and composite basis with the Global Investment Performance Standards ("GIPS). ACA Performance Services, a nationally recognized independent firm that specializes in GIPS, performs examinations of the Firm and the Firm's Municipal Bond Composite and Taxable Bond Composite. A copy of their most recent report is available upon request.

## Item 14 Client Referrals and Other Compensation

- A. As indicated at Item 12 above, Registrant can receive from Schwab and/or Fidelity without cost (and/or at a discount), support services and/or products. Registrant's clients do not pay more for investment transactions effected and/or assets maintained at Schwab or Fidelity as result of this arrangement. There is no corresponding commitment made by Registrant to Schwab, Fidelity, or to any other entity, to invest any specific amount or percentage of client assets in any specific mutual funds, securities, or other investment products as a result of the above arrangement. **ANY QUESTIONS: Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above arrangement and the corresponding conflicts of interest presented by such arrangements.**

B. Schwab Referrals

Registrant receives client referrals from Schwab through Registrant's participation in Schwab Advisor Network™ ("the Service"), designed to help investors find an independent investment advisor. Schwab is a broker-dealer independent of and unaffiliated with Registrant. Schwab does not supervise Registrant and has no responsibility for Registrant's management of clients' portfolios or Registrant's other advice or services. Registrant pays Schwab fees to receive client referrals through the Service. Registrant's participation in the Service raises potential conflicts of interest described below.

Registrant pays Schwab a Participation Fee on all referred clients' accounts that are maintained in custody at Schwab and a Non-Schwab Custody Fee on all accounts that are maintained at, or transferred to, another custodian. The Participation Fee paid by Registrant is a percentage of the fees owed by the client to Registrant or a percentage of the value of the assets in the client's account, subject to a minimum Participation Fee. Registrant pays Schwab the Participation Fee for so long as the referred client's account remains in custody at Schwab. The Participation Fee is billed to Registrant quarterly and may be increased, decreased, or waived by Schwab from time to time. The Participation Fee is paid by Registrant and not by the client. Registrant has agreed not to charge clients referred through the Service fees or costs greater than the fees or costs Registrant charges clients with similar portfolios (pursuant to Registrant's standard fee schedule as in effect from time to time) who were not referred through the Service.

Registrant may pay Schwab a Non-Schwab Custody Fee if custody of a referred client's account is not maintained by, or assets in the account are transferred from Schwab, unless the client was solely responsible for the decision not to maintain custody at Schwab. The Non-Schwab Custody Fee is a one-time payment equal to a percentage of the assets placed in custody other than at Schwab. The Non-Schwab Custody Fee is higher than the Participation Fees Registrant generally would pay in a single year. Thus, Registrant will have an incentive to recommend that client

accounts be held in custody at Schwab.

The Participation and Non-Schwab Custody Fees will be based on assets in accounts of Registrant's clients who were referred by Schwab and those referred clients' family members living in the same household. Thus, Registrant will have incentives to encourage household members of clients referred through the Service to maintain custody of their accounts and execute transactions at Schwab and to instruct Schwab to debit Registrant's fees directly from the accounts.

For accounts of Registrant's clients maintained in custody at Schwab, Schwab will not charge the client separately for custody but will receive compensation from Registrant's clients in the form of commissions or other transaction-related compensation on securities trades executed through Schwab. Schwab also will receive a fee (generally lower than the applicable commission on trades it executes) for clearance and settlement of trades to be executed through Schwab rather than another broker-dealer. Registrant nevertheless acknowledges its duty to seek best execution of trades for client accounts. Trades for client accounts held in custody at Schwab may be executed through a different broker-dealer than trades for Registrant's other clients. Thus, trades for accounts custodied at Schwab may be executed at different times and different prices than trades for other accounts that are executed at other broker-dealers.

**ANY QUESTIONS:** The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above arrangement and the corresponding conflict of interest presented by such arrangement.

## Item 15 Custody

Registrant shall have the ability to deduct its advisory fee from the client's custodial account. Clients are provided with written transaction confirmation notices, and a written summary account statement directly from the custodian (i.e. Schwab, Fidelity, etc.) at least quarterly. **Please Note:** To the extent that Registrant provides clients with periodic account statements or reports, the client is urged to compare any statement or report provided by Registrant with the account statements received from the account custodian. **Please Also Note:** The account custodian does not verify the accuracy of Registrant's advisory fee calculation.

The Registrant engages in certain services and/or practices (i.e. bill payment, password possession, trustee service, etc.) that requires it to indicate that it has custody at Item 9 of Part 1 of Form ADV, and, as the result thereof, undergo an annual surprise CPA examination. In addition, certain clients have established asset transfer authorizations that permit the qualified custodian to rely upon instructions from Registrant to transfer client funds or securities to third parties. These arrangements are disclosed at Item 9 of Part 1 of Form ADV. However, in accordance with the guidance provided in the SEC's February 21, 2017 *Investment Adviser Association* No-Action Letter, the affected accounts are not subject to an annual surprise CPA examination. **ANY QUESTIONS: Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding custody-related issues.**

## Item 16 Investment Discretion

The client can determine to engage the Registrant to provide investment advisory services on a discretionary basis. Prior to the Registrant assuming discretionary authority over a client's account, the client shall be required to execute an Investment Advisory Agreement, naming the Registrant

as the client's attorney and agent in fact, granting the Registrant full authority to buy, sell, or otherwise effect investment transactions involving the assets in the client's name found in the discretionary account.

Clients who engage the Registrant on a discretionary basis may, at any time, impose restrictions, in writing, on the Registrant's discretionary authority (i.e. limit the types/amounts of particular securities purchased for their account, exclude the ability to purchase securities with an inverse relationship to the market, limit or proscribe the Registrant's use of margin, etc.).

## **Item 17 Voting Client Securities**

- A. Unless the Registrant has agreed to otherwise, clients maintain exclusive responsibility for: (1) directing the manner in which proxies solicited by issuers of securities owned by the client shall be voted, and (2) making all elections relative to any mergers, acquisitions, tender offers, bankruptcy proceedings or other type events pertaining to the client's investment assets.

In the event that Registrant does vote proxies, absent mitigating circumstances and/or conflicts of interest (to the extent any such circumstance or conflict is presented, if ever, information pertaining to how the Registrant addressed any such circumstance or conflict shall be maintained by the Registrant), it is the Registrant's general policy to vote proxies in conjunction with the services provided by, and consistent with the recommendations of Broadridge Investor Communications Solutions ("Broadridge"). With regard to Taft-Hartley clients, Registrant has retained Broadridge, at no cost to the client, to vote all proxies in accordance with AFL-CIO Guidelines for Voting Proxies which by definition is in the best interests of the client.

The Registrant (in conjunction with the services provided by Broadridge) shall monitor corporate actions of individual issuers and investment companies consistent with the Registrant's fiduciary duty to vote proxies in the best interests of its clients. With respect to individual issuers, the Registrant may be solicited to vote on matters including corporate governance, adoption, or amendments to compensation plans (including stock options), and matters involving social issues and corporate responsibility. With respect to investment companies (e.g., mutual funds), the Registrant may be solicited to vote on matters including the approval of advisory contracts, distribution plans, and mergers. The Registrant (in conjunction with the services provided by Broadridge) shall maintain records pertaining to proxy voting as required pursuant to Rule 204-2(c)(2) under the Advisers Act. Copies of Rules 206(4)-6 and 204-2(c)(2) are available upon written request. In addition, information pertaining to how the Registrant voted on any specific proxy issue is also available upon written request. Requests should be made by contacting the Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega.

- B. Unless the Registrant has agreed to vote client proxies, clients will receive their proxies or other solicitations directly from their custodian. Clients may contact the Registrant to discuss any questions they may have with a particular solicitation. The Registrant may provide information but will not act or advise Clients in any legal proceedings, including but not limited to class actions, involving securities held or previously held by the Account.

## **Item 18 Financial Information**

- A. The Registrant does not solicit fees of more than \$1,200, per client, six months or more in advance.

- B. The Registrant is unaware of any financial condition that is reasonably likely to impair its ability to meet its contractual commitments relating to its discretionary authority over certain client accounts.
- C. The Registrant has not been the subject of a bankruptcy petition.

**ANY QUESTIONS:** The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Marco A. Vega, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above disclosures and arrangements.