

STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**VARIANT ALTERNATIVE INCOME FUND**  
**Institutional Class Shares**  
**Investor Class Shares**

Dated June 1, 2021

c/o UMB Fund Services, Inc.  
235 West Galena Street  
Milwaukee, WI, 53212

(877) 770-7717

This Statement of Additional Information ("SAI") is not a prospectus. This SAI relates to and should be read in conjunction with the Prospectus (the "Prospectus") of Variant Alternative Income Fund (the "Fund") dated June 1, 2021, and as it may be further amended or supplemented from time to time. This SAI is incorporated by reference in its entirety into the Prospectus. The Fund's audited financial statements and financial highlights appearing in the [Annual Report](#) to Shareholders for the fiscal year ended April 30, 2020 (the "Annual Report") and the unaudited financial statements and financial highlights appearing in the [Semi-Annual Report](#) for the period ended October 31, 2020 (the "Semi-Annual Report") are incorporated by reference into this SAI. No other part of the Annual Report or Semi-Annual Report is incorporated by reference herein. A copy of the Prospectus, Annual Report, and Semi-Annual Report may be obtained without charge by contacting the Fund at the telephone number or address set forth above. You may also obtain the Prospectus and Annual Report by visiting the Fund's website at <https://funds.variantinvestments.com>.

This SAI is not an offer to sell shares of beneficial interest ("Shares") of the Fund and is not soliciting an offer to buy Shares in any state where the offer or sale is not permitted.

Capitalized terms not otherwise defined herein have the same meaning set forth in the Prospectus.

Shares are distributed by Foreside Fund Services, LLC ("Distributor") to institutions and financial intermediaries who may distribute Shares to clients and customers (including affiliates and correspondents) of the Fund's investment manager, and to clients and customers of other organizations. The Fund's Prospectus, which is dated June 1, 2021 provides basic information investors should know before investing. This SAI is intended to provide additional information regarding the activities and operations of the Fund and should be read in conjunction with the Prospectus.

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## INVESTMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES

The investment objective of the Fund, as well as the principal investment strategies of the Fund and the principal risks associated with such investment strategies, are set forth in the Prospectus. Certain additional information regarding the investment program of the Fund is set forth below.

### FUNDAMENTAL POLICIES

The Fund's fundamental policies, which are listed below, may only be changed by the affirmative vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund. At the present time the Shares are the only outstanding voting securities of the Fund. As defined by the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the "Investment Company Act"), the vote of a "majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund" means the vote, at an annual or special meeting of the Shareholders of the Fund, duly called, (i) of 67% or more of the Shares represented at such meeting, if the holders of more than 50% of the outstanding Shares are present in person or represented by proxy or (ii) of more than 50% of the outstanding Shares, whichever is less. No other policy is a fundamental policy of the Fund, except as expressly stated. Within the limits of the fundamental policies of the Fund, the management of the Fund has reserved freedom of action. The Fund may not:

- (1) Issue any senior security, except to the extent permitted by Section 18 of the Investment Company Act, as interpreted, modified, or otherwise permitted by the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC") or any other applicable authority.
- (2) Borrow money, except to the extent permitted by Section 18 of the Investment Company Act, as interpreted, modified, or otherwise permitted by the SEC or any other applicable authority. This investment restriction does not apply to borrowings from affiliated investment companies or other affiliated persons of the Fund to the extent permitted by the Investment Company Act, the SEC or any other applicable authority. The Fund may borrow for investment and other purposes, such as for satisfying repurchase offers or to otherwise provide the Fund with liquidity.

- (3) Underwrite securities of other issuers, except insofar as the Fund may be deemed to be an underwriter under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act"), in connection with the disposition of its portfolio securities.
- (4) Make loans, except as permitted under the 1940 Act, and as interpreted, modified, or otherwise permitted by regulatory authority having jurisdiction, from time to time.
- (5) Purchase or sell real estate except as permitted under the 1940 Act, and as interpreted, modified, or otherwise permitted by regulatory authority having jurisdiction, from time to time.
- (6) Invest in commodities and commodity contracts, except that the Fund (i) may purchase and sell non-U.S. currencies, options, swaps, futures and forward contracts, including those related to indexes, options and options on indexes, as well as other financial instruments and contracts that are commodities or commodity contracts, (ii) may also purchase or sell commodities if acquired as a result of ownership of securities or other instruments, (iii) may invest in commodity pools and other entities that purchase and sell commodities and commodity contracts, and (iv) may make such investments as otherwise permitted by the Investment Company Act.
- (7) Invest 25% or more of the value of its total assets in the securities of issuers that the Fund's investment advisor determines are engaged in any single industry, except that U.S. government securities and repurchase agreements collateralized by U.S. government securities may be purchased without limitation. To the extent that an Underlying Fund has adopted a policy to concentrate in a particular industry or group of industries, the Fund will consider such a policy for purposes of determining compliance with its concentration policy.

With respect to these investment restrictions and other policies described in this SAI or the Prospectus, if a percentage restriction is adhered to at the time of an investment or transaction, a later change in percentage resulting from a change in the values of investments or the value of the Fund's total assets, unless otherwise stated, will not constitute a violation of such restriction or policy.

In addition to the above, the Fund has adopted a fundamental policy that it will make quarterly repurchase offers for no less than for 5% of the shares outstanding at per-class net asset value ("NAV") per share, unless suspended or postponed in accordance with regulatory requirements, and each repurchase pricing shall occur no later than the close of business on the 14th day after the Repurchase Request Deadline, or the next business day if the 14th is not a business day. Shareholders can obtain the date of the next Repurchase Request Deadline by writing to the Fund, c/o UMB Fund Services, Inc., 235 West Galena Street, Milwaukee, WI 53212, or by calling the Fund toll-free at (877) 770-7717.

THE FUND MAY CHANGE ITS INVESTMENT OBJECTIVE, POLICIES, RESTRICTIONS, STRATEGIES, AND TECHNIQUES.

Except as otherwise indicated, the Fund may change its investment objectives and any of its policies, restrictions, strategies, and techniques without Shareholder approval. The investment objective of the Fund is not a fundamental policy of the Fund and may be changed by the Board of Trustees of the Fund (the "Board") without the vote of a majority (as defined by the Investment Company Act) of the Fund's outstanding Shares.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON INVESTMENT TECHNIQUES OF THE FUND AND RELATED RISKS**

As discussed in the Prospectus, the Fund pursues its investment objective by investing, directly or indirectly, a majority of its net assets (plus any borrowings for investment purposes) in alternative income-generating investments. Such investments are typically domestic and foreign privately-held investments that are outside of traditional public equity and bond markets. These positions typically generate an interest payment, pay dividends, or have other forms of distributions that generally accrue value over time. These assets may include, but are not limited to, real estate equity and debt securities, life settlements, receivables, specialty finance, litigation finance-related investments, royalties, transportation finance, portfolio finance, collateralized loan obligation warehouse facility-investments, as well as purchases of interests in private credit funds in the secondary market. The Fund may also invest in public securities, including public debt, master limited partnerships, business development companies, and preferred stock. The Fund allocates its investments across multiple strategies in both developed and emerging markets with varying levels of liquidity and credit quality, including distressed and defaulted investments. The Fund may use derivative investments and may have exposure to long and short positions across its asset classes to obtain the desired risk exposure consistent with its investment strategies. The Fund may allocate its assets through direct investments and investments in a wide range of investment vehicles ("Underlying Funds"). This section provides additional information about various types of investments and investment techniques that may be employed by the Fund, both directly and through its investments in Underlying Funds, and their related risks. Any decision to invest in the Fund should take into account that the Fund's investments will be subject to related risks, which can be substantial.

### **PRINCIPAL INVESTMENTS**

#### **Asset-Backed (Including Mortgage-Backed) Securities**

To the extent described in the Prospectus, the Fund may purchase asset-backed securities, which are securities backed by mortgages, real estate debt, consumer loans, senior living debt, installment contracts, small business loans, credit card receivables, municipal securities or other financial assets. The investment characteristics of asset-backed securities differ from those of traditional fixed-income securities. Asset-backed securities represent interests in "pools" of assets in which payments of both interest and principal on the securities are made periodically, thus in effect "passing through" such payments made by the individual borrowers on the assets that underlie the securities, net of any fees paid to the issuer or guarantor of the securities. The average life of asset-backed securities varies with the maturities of the underlying instruments, and the average life of a mortgage-backed instrument, in particular, is likely to be substantially less than the original maturity of the mortgage pools underlying the securities as a result of mortgage prepayments. For this and other reasons, an asset-backed security normally is subject to both call risk and extension risk, and an asset-backed security's stated maturity may be shortened. In addition, the security's total return may be difficult to predict precisely. These differences can result in significantly greater price and yield volatility than is the case with traditional fixed-income securities.

If an asset-backed security is purchased at a premium, a prepayment rate that is faster than expected will reduce yield to maturity, while a prepayment rate that is slower than expected will have the opposite effect of increasing yield to maturity. Conversely, if an asset-backed security is purchased at a discount, faster than expected prepayments will increase, while slower than expected prepayments will decrease, yield to maturity. In calculating the average weighted maturity of the Fund's fixed income investments, the maturity of asset-backed securities will be based on estimates of average life. Prepayments on asset-backed securities generally increase with falling interest rates and decrease with rising interest rates; furthermore, prepayment rates are influenced by a variety of economic and social factors. In general, the collateral supporting non-mortgage asset-backed securities is of shorter maturity than mortgage loans and is less likely to experience substantial prepayments.

Asset-backed securities acquired by the Fund may include collateralized mortgage obligations ("CMOs"). CMOs provide the holder with a specified interest in the cash flow of a pool of underlying mortgages or other mortgage-backed securities. Issuers of CMOs ordinarily elect to be taxed as pass-through entities known as real estate mortgage investment conduits ("REMICs"). CMOs are issued in multiple classes, each with a specified fixed or floating interest rate and a final distribution date. The relative payment rights of the various CMO classes may be structured in a variety of ways, and normally are considered derivative securities. In some cases CMOs may be highly leveraged and very speculative. The Funds will not purchase "residual" CMO interests, which normally exhibit greater price volatility.

### **Business Development Companies**

The Fund may invest in business development companies ("BDCs"). A BDC is regulated under the Investment Company Act, but may carry risks similar to those of a private equity fund or a venture capital fund. Certain BDCs are not publicly traded and are illiquid investments. It may not be possible to redeem shares of non-publicly-traded BDCs without paying a substantial penalty. Publicly-traded BDCs usually trade at a discount to their NAV because they invest in unlisted securities and have a limited access to capital markets. BDC investments may take the form of equity, preferred stock, or debt issuance. Leverage provided by BDC debt often serves to increase a BDC's yield, but subjects the BDC to increased risks, including the increased volatility and the possibility that the BDC's common share income will fall if the dividend rate of the preferred shares or interest rate on borrowings rises. BDCs value a significant portion of their investments at fair value, which is determined under procedures approved by the BDC's board of directors. Such fair valuation of securities may create increased uncertainty with respect to the value of the BDC's investments.

### **Derivatives**

The Fund may use a variety of special investment techniques as more fully discussed below to hedge a portion of the Fund's investment portfolio against various risks or other factors that generally affect the values of securities. The Fund may also use these techniques for non-hedging purposes in pursuing its investment objective. These techniques may involve the use of derivative transactions. The techniques the Fund may employ may change over time as new instruments and techniques are introduced or as a result of regulatory developments. Certain of the special investment techniques that the Fund may use are speculative and involve a high degree of risk, particularly when used for non-hedging purposes. It is possible that any hedging transaction may not perform as anticipated and that the Fund may suffer losses as a result of its hedging activities.

Derivatives are securities and other instruments the value or return of which is based on the performance of an underlying asset, index, interest rate or other investment. Derivatives may be volatile and involve various risks, depending upon the derivative and its function in a portfolio. Special risks may apply to instruments that are invested in by the Fund in the future that cannot be determined at this time or until such instruments are developed or invested in by the Fund. Certain swaps, options and other derivative instruments may be subject to various types of risks, including market risk, liquidity risk, and the risk of non-performance by the counterparty, including risks relating to the financial soundness and creditworthiness of the counterparty, legal risk and operations risk.

## Options and Futures

The Investment Manager may utilize options and futures contracts. Such transactions may be effected on securities exchanges, in the over-the-counter market, or negotiated directly with counterparties. When such transactions are purchased over-the-counter or negotiated directly with counterparties, the Fund bears the risk that the counterparty will be unable or unwilling to perform its obligations under the contract. Such transactions may also be illiquid and, in such cases, the Fund may have difficulty closing out its position. Over-the-counter options purchased and sold by the Fund may include options on baskets of specific securities. The Fund may utilize European-style or American-style options. European-style options are only exercisable at their expiration. American-style options are exercisable at any time prior to the expiration date of the option.

The Investment Manager may purchase call and put options on specific securities, on indices, on currencies or on futures, and may write and sell covered or uncovered call and put options for hedging purposes and non-hedging purposes to pursue their investment objectives. A put option gives the purchaser of the option the right to sell, and obligates the writer to buy, the underlying security at a stated exercise price. Similarly, a call option gives the purchaser of the option the right to buy, and obligates the writer to sell, the underlying security at a stated exercise price. A covered call option is a call option with respect to which the Fund owns the underlying security. The sale of such an option exposes the Fund during the term of the option to possible loss of opportunity to realize appreciation in the market price of the underlying security or to possible continued holding of a security that might otherwise have been sold to protect against depreciation in the market price of the security. A covered put option is a put option with respect to which cash or liquid securities have been placed in a segregated account on the Fund's books. The sale of such an option exposes the seller during the term of the option to a decline in price of the underlying security while also depriving the seller of the opportunity to invest the segregated assets.

The Fund may close out a position when writing options by purchasing an option on the same security with the same exercise price and expiration date as the option that it has previously written on the security. The Fund will realize a profit or loss if the amount paid to purchase an option is less or more, as the case may be, than the amount received from the sale thereof. To close out a position as a purchaser of an option, the Fund would ordinarily effect a similar "closing sale transaction," which involves liquidating a position by selling the option previously purchased, although the Fund could exercise the option should the Investment Manager deem it advantageous to do so.

The Fund may enter into futures contracts in U.S. domestic markets or on exchanges located outside the United States. Foreign markets may offer advantages such as trading opportunities or arbitrage possibilities not available in the United States. Foreign markets, however, may have greater risk potential than domestic markets. For example, some foreign exchanges are principal markets so that no common clearing facility exists and an investor may look only to the broker for performance of the contract. In addition, any profits that might be realized in trading could be eliminated by adverse changes in the exchange rate, or a loss could be incurred as a result of those changes. Transactions on foreign exchanges may include both commodities which are traded on domestic exchanges and those which are not. Unlike trading on domestic commodity exchanges, trading on foreign commodity exchanges is not regulated by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

Engaging in these transactions involves risk of loss, which could adversely affect the value of the Fund's net assets. No assurance can be given that a liquid market will exist for any particular futures contract at any particular time. Many futures exchanges and boards of trade limit the amount of fluctuation permitted in futures contract prices during a single trading day. Once the daily limit has been reached in a particular contract, no trades may be made that day at a price beyond that limit or trading may be suspended for specified periods during the trading day. Futures contract prices could move to the limit for several consecutive trading days with little or no trading, thereby preventing prompt liquidation of futures positions and potentially subjecting the Fund to substantial losses.

Successful use of futures also is subject to the Investment Manager's ability to correctly predict movements in the direction of the relevant market, and, to the extent the transaction is entered into for hedging purposes, to ascertain the appropriate correlation between the transaction being hedged and the price movements of the futures contract.

The Fund may purchase and sell stock index futures contracts. A stock index future obligates the Fund to pay or receive an amount of cash equal to a fixed dollar amount specified in the futures contract multiplied by the difference between the settlement price of the contract on the contract's last trading day and the value of the index based on the stock prices of the securities that comprise it at the opening of trading in those securities on the next business day.

The Fund may purchase and sell interest rate futures contracts. A contract for interest rate futures represents an obligation to purchase or sell an amount of a specific debt security at a future date at a specific price.

The Fund may purchase and sell currency futures. A currency future creates an obligation to purchase or sell an amount of a specific currency at a future date at a specific price.

The Fund currently intends to limit investments in commodity futures, commodity options contracts and swaps to below the de minimis thresholds adopted by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission ("CFTC") in its 2012 amendments to Rule 4.5 (see below for a description of these thresholds). For this reason, the Investment Manager is not required to register as a "commodity pool operator" ("CPO") under the Commodity Exchange Act with respect to the Fund at this time.

With respect to investments in swap transactions, commodity futures, commodity options or certain other derivatives used for purposes other than *bona fide* hedging purposes, an investment company must meet one of the following tests under the amended regulations in order to claim an exemption from being considered a "commodity pool" or the investment manager having to register as a CPO. First, the aggregate initial margin and premiums required to establish an investment company's positions in such investments may not exceed five percent (5%) of the liquidation value of the investment company's portfolio (after accounting for unrealized profits and unrealized losses on any such investments). Alternatively, the aggregate net notional value of such instruments, determined at the time of the most recent position established, may not exceed one hundred percent (100%) of the liquidation value of the investment company's portfolio (after accounting for unrealized profits and unrealized losses on any such positions). In addition to meeting one of the foregoing trading limitations, the investment company may not market itself as a commodity pool or otherwise as a vehicle for trading in the commodity futures, commodity options or swaps and derivatives markets. In the event that the Investment Manager is required to register as a CPO with respect to the Fund, the disclosure and operations of the Fund would need to comply with all applicable CFTC regulations.

### **Options on Securities Indexes**

The Fund may purchase and sell call and put options on stock indexes listed on national securities exchanges or traded in the over-the-counter market for hedging purposes and non-hedging purposes to pursue its investment objective. A stock index fluctuates with changes in the market values of the stocks included in the index. Accordingly, successful use by the Fund of options on stock indexes will be subject to the Investment Manager's ability to predict correctly movements in the direction of the stock market generally or of a particular industry or market segment. This requires different skills and techniques than predicting changes in the price of individual stocks.



## **Swap Agreements**

The Fund may enter into equity, interest rate, index and currency rate swap agreements. These transactions are entered into in an attempt to obtain a particular return when it is considered desirable to do so, possibly at a lower cost than if an investment was made directly in the asset that yielded the desired return. Swap agreements are two-party contracts entered into primarily by institutional investors for periods ranging from a few weeks to more than a year. In a standard swap transaction, two parties agree to exchange the returns (or differentials in rates of return) earned or realized on particular predetermined investments or instruments, which may be adjusted for an interest factor. The gross returns to be exchanged or "swapped" between the parties are generally calculated with respect to a "notional amount," i.e., the return on or increase in value of a particular dollar amount invested at a particular interest rate, in a particular foreign currency, or in a "basket" of securities representing a particular index. Forms of swap agreements include interest rate caps, under which, in return for a premium, one party agrees to make payments to the other to the extent interest rates exceed a specified rate or "cap"; interest rate floors, under which, in return for a premium, one party agrees to make payments to the other to the extent interest rates fall below a specified level or "floor"; and interest rate collars, under which a party sells a cap and purchases a floor or vice versa in an attempt to protect itself against interest rate movements exceeding given minimum or maximum levels.

Most swap agreements entered into by the Fund would require the calculation of the obligations of the parties to the agreements on a "net basis." Consequently, the Fund's current obligations (or rights) under a swap agreement generally will be equal only to the net amount to be paid or received under the agreement based on the relative values of the positions held by each party to the agreement (the "net amount"). The risk of loss with respect to swaps is limited to the net amount of interest payments that a party is contractually obligated to make. If the other party to a swap defaults, the Fund's risk of loss consists of the net amount of payments that it contractually is entitled to receive.

The Fund may enter into swap agreements under which the Fund may agree, on a net basis, to pay a return based on a floating interest rate, such as the London Interbank Offered Rate ("LIBOR"), and to receive the total return of the reference investment vehicle over a stated time period. The Fund may seek to achieve the same investment result through the use of other derivatives in similar circumstances. The U.S. federal income tax treatment of swap agreements and other derivatives used in the above manner is unclear. The Fund does not currently intend to use swaps or other derivatives in this manner.

On July 27, 2017, the head of the UK Financial Conduct Authority announced a desire to phase out the use of LIBOR by the end of 2021. For more information on the transition away from LIBOR, see LIBOR Transition, below.

## **Fixed Income Securities**

The Fund may invest in fixed-income securities. The Fund will invest in these securities when their yield and potential for capital appreciation are considered sufficiently attractive, and also may invest in these securities for defensive purposes and to maintain liquidity. Fixed income securities include, among other securities: bonds, notes and debentures issued by U.S. and non-U.S. corporations; U.S. government securities or debt securities issued or guaranteed by a non-U.S. government; municipal securities; and mortgage-backed and asset backed securities. These securities may pay fixed, variable or floating rates of interest, and may include zero coupon obligations. Fixed-income securities are subject to the risk of the issuer's inability to meet principal and interest payments on its obligations (i.e., credit risk) and are subject to the risk of price volatility due to such factors as interest rate sensitivity, market perception of the creditworthiness or financial condition of the issuer and general market liquidity (i.e., market risk). Certain portfolio securities, such as those with interest rates that fluctuate directly or indirectly based on multiples of a stated index, are designed to be highly sensitive to changes in interest rates and can subject the holders thereof to significant reductions of yield and possible loss of principal.

The Fund may invest in both investment grade and non-investment grade debt securities. Investment grade debt securities are securities that have received a rating from at least one nationally recognized statistical rating organization (a "Rating Agency") in one of the four highest rating categories or, if not rated by any Rating Agency, have been determined by the Investment Manager to be of comparable quality. There is no minimum credit standard as a prerequisite to an investment in any security. As a result, the Fund may invest in debt securities that are rated below investment grade (commonly referred to as "junk bonds") and are considered speculative, including distressed bonds. The Fund may invest in securities of companies in IPOs or shortly after those offerings are complete.

The Fund's investments in non-investment grade debt securities, including convertible debt securities, are considered by the Rating Agencies to be predominantly speculative with respect to the issuer's capacity to pay interest and repay principal. Non-investment grade securities in the lowest rating categories may involve a substantial risk of default or may be in default. Adverse changes in economic conditions or developments regarding the individual issuer are more likely to cause price volatility and weaken the capacity of the issuers of non-investment grade securities to make principal and interest payments than is the case for higher grade securities. In addition, the market for lower grade securities may be thinner and less liquid than the market for higher grade securities.

### **Hedging Transactions**

The Fund may utilize a variety of financial instruments, such as derivatives, options, interest rate swaps, caps and floors, futures and forward contracts to seek to hedge against declines in the values of its portfolio positions as a result of changes in currency exchange rates, certain changes in the equity markets and market interest rates and other events. Hedging transactions may also limit the opportunity for gain if the value of the hedged portfolio positions should increase. It may not be possible for the Fund to hedge against a change or event at a price sufficient to protect its assets from the decline in value of the portfolio positions anticipated as a result of such change. In addition, it may not be possible to hedge against certain changes or events at all. While the Fund may enter into such transactions to seek to reduce currency exchange rate and interest rate risks, or the risks of a decline in the equity markets generally or one or more sectors of the equity markets in particular, or the risks posed by the occurrence of certain other events, unanticipated changes in currency or interest rates or increases or smaller than expected decreases in the equity markets or sectors being hedged or the nonoccurrence of other events being hedged against may result in a poorer overall performance for the Fund than if the Fund had not engaged in any such hedging transaction. In addition, the degree of correlation between price movements of the instruments used in a hedging strategy and price movements in the portfolio position being hedged may vary. Moreover, for a variety of reasons, the Investment Manager may not seek to establish a perfect correlation between such hedging instruments and the portfolio holdings being hedged. Such imperfect correlation may prevent the Fund from achieving the intended hedge or expose the Fund to additional risk of loss.

### **Highly Volatile Markets**

Price movements of forwards, futures and other derivative contracts in which the Fund may be invested are influenced by, among other things, interest rates, changing supply and demand relationships, trade, fiscal, monetary and exchange control programs and policies of governments, and national and international political and economic events and policies. The prices of commodities contracts and all derivative instruments, including futures and options, can be highly volatile. In addition, governments from time to time intervene, directly and by regulation, in certain markets, particularly those in currencies, financial instruments, futures and options. Such intervention often is intended directly to influence prices and may, together with other factors, cause all of such markets to move rapidly in the same direction because of, among other things, interest rate fluctuations. The Fund is also subject to the risk of the failure of any exchanges on which its positions trade or of the clearinghouses for those exchanges.

## **Hybrid Securities**

The Fund may invest in hybrid securities. A hybrid security is a type of security that also has equity and debt characteristics. Like equities, which have no final maturity, a hybrid security may be callable at the option of the issuer on a date specified at issue. Additionally, like common equities, which may stop paying dividends at virtually any time without violating any contractual terms or conditions, hybrids typically allow for issuers to withhold payment of interest until a later date or to suspend coupon payments entirely without triggering an event of default. Hybrid securities are normally at the bottom of an issuer's debt capital structure because holders of an issuer's hybrid securities are structurally subordinated to the issuer's senior creditors. In bankruptcy, hybrid security holders should only get paid after all senior creditors of the issuer have been paid out before any disbursements are made to the issuer's equity holders. Accordingly, hybrid securities may be more sensitive to economic changes than more senior debt securities. Such securities may also be viewed as more equity-like by the market when the issuer or its parent company experiences financial difficulties.

## **Infrastructure Companies**

The Fund considers a company to be engaged in the infrastructure business if it derives at least 50% of its revenues or earnings from, or devotes at least 50% of its assets to, infrastructure-related activities. The Fund defines infrastructure as the systems and networks of energy, transportation, utilities, communication and other services required for the normal function of society. Infrastructure companies are involved in, among other things: (1) the generation, transmission and distribution of electric energy; (2) the storage, transportation and distribution of natural resources, such as natural gas, used to produce energy; (3) alternative energy sources; (4) the building, operation and maintenance of highways, toll roads, tunnels, bridges and parking lots; (5) the building, operation and maintenance of airports and ports, railroads and mass transit systems; (6) telecommunications, including wireless and cable networks; (7) water treatment and distribution; and (8) other public services such as health care and education.

Investments in infrastructure-related companies have greater exposure to the potential adverse economic, regulatory, political and other changes affecting such entities. Infrastructure-related companies are subject to a variety of factors that may adversely affect their business or operations including high interest costs in connection with capital construction programs, costs associated with compliance with and changes in environmental and other regulations, difficulty in raising capital in adequate amounts on reasonable terms in periods of high inflation and unsettled capital markets, the effects of surplus capacity, increased competition from other providers of services in a developing deregulatory environment, uncertainties concerning the availability of fuel at reasonable prices, the effects of energy conservation policies and other factors. Additionally, infrastructure-related entities may be subject to regulation by various governmental authorities and may also be affected by governmental regulation of rates charged to customers, government budgetary constraints, service interruption due to environmental, operational or other mishaps and the imposition of special tariffs and changes in tax laws, regulatory policies and accounting standards. Other factors that may affect the operations of infrastructure-related companies include innovations in technology that could render the way in which a company delivers a product or service obsolete, significant changes to the number of ultimate end-users of a company's products, increased susceptibility to terrorist acts or political actions, risks of environmental damage due to a company's operations or an accident, and general changes in market sentiment towards infrastructure and utilities assets.

## **Leverage**

The Fund may leverage the Fund through (i) borrowings, (ii) swap agreements, options or other derivative instruments, or (iii) a combination of these methods. The financing entity or counterparty on any swap, option or other derivative instrument may be any entity or institution which the Investment Manager determines to be creditworthy.

As a result of this leverage, a relatively small movement in the spread relationship between the securities and commodities interests the Fund indirectly owns and those which it has indirectly sold short may result in substantial losses.

### **LIBOR Transition**

The Fund's investments, payment obligations and financing terms may be based on floating rates, such as LIBOR. LIBOR is used extensively in the U.S. and globally as a "benchmark" or "reference rate" for various commercial and financial contracts, including corporate and municipal bonds, bank loans, asset-backed and mortgage-related securities, interest rate swaps and other derivatives. On July 27, 2017, the head of the UK Financial Conduct Authority announced a desire to phase out the use of LIBOR by the end of 2021. Regulators and industry working groups have suggested alternative reference rates, but global consensus is lacking and the process for amending existing contracts or instruments to transition away from LIBOR remains unclear. Abandonment of or modifications to LIBOR could have adverse impacts on newly issued financial instruments and existing financial instruments which reference LIBOR. There also remains uncertainty and risk regarding the willingness and ability of issuers to include enhanced provisions in new and existing contracts or instruments. The transition away from LIBOR may lead to increased volatility and illiquidity in markets that are tied to LIBOR, reduced values of LIBOR-related investments, and reduced effectiveness of hedging strategies, adversely affecting the Fund's performance or NAV. In addition, the alternative reference rate may be an ineffective substitute resulting in prolonged adverse market conditions for the Fund.

### **Life Settlement Investments.**

The Fund may invest in life settlements, which are sales to third parties, such as the Fund, of existing life insurance contracts for more than their cash surrender value but less than the net benefits to be paid under the policies. When the Fund acquires such a contract, it pays the policy premiums in return for the expected receipt of the net benefit as the beneficiary under the policy. Investments in these contracts involve certain risks, including liquidity risk, credit risk of the insurance company, and inaccurate estimations of life expectancy of the insured individuals (viators). These policies are considered illiquid in that they are bought and sold in a secondary market through life settlement agents. Also, in the event of a bankruptcy of the insurance carrier for a policy, the Fund may receive reduced or no benefits under the contract. The Fund seeks to minimize credit risk by investing in policies issued by a diverse range of highly-rated insurance carriers. Furthermore, the Fund may encounter losses on its investments if there is an inaccurate estimation of the life expectancies of viators. The Fund intends to reduce this life expectancy risk by investing only in contracts where the life expectancy was reviewed by an experienced actuary, as well as by diversifying its investments across viators of varying ages and medical profiles. In addition, it is unclear whether the income from life settlements is qualifying income for purposes of the Internal Revenue Service 90% gross income test the Fund must satisfy each year to qualify as a RIC. The Fund intends to monitor its investments to ensure that the Fund remains qualified as a RIC.

### **Master Limited Partnerships**

The Fund may invest up to 25% of its net assets in equity securities of master limited partnerships ("MLPs") and their affiliates. An MLP generally has two classes of partners, the general partner and the limited partners. The general partner normally controls the MLP through an equity interest plus units that are subordinated to the common (publicly traded) units for an initial period and then only converting to common if certain financial tests are met. As a motivation for the general partner to successfully manage the MLP and increase cash flows, the terms of most MLPs typically provide that the general partner receives a large portion of the net income as distributions reach higher target levels. As cash flow grows, the general partner receives greater interest in the incremental income compared to the interest of limited partners. The general partner's incentive compensation typically increases to up to 50% of incremental income. Nevertheless, the aggregate amount distributed to limited partners will increase as MLP distributions reach higher target levels. Given this incentive structure, the general partner has an incentive to streamline operations and undertake acquisitions and growth projects in order to increase distributions to all partners.

MLP common units represent an equity ownership interest in a partnership, providing limited voting rights and entitling the holder to a share of the company's success through distributions and/or capital appreciation. Unlike shareholders of a corporation, common unit holders do not elect directors annually and generally have the right to vote only on certain significant events, such as mergers, a sale of substantially all of the assets, removal of the general partner or material amendments to the partnership agreement. MLPs are required by their partnership agreements to distribute a large percentage of their current operating earnings. Common unit holders generally have first right to a minimum quarterly distribution prior to distributions to the convertible subordinated unit holders or general partner (including incentive distributions). Common unit holders typically have arrearage rights if the minimum quarterly distribution is not met. In the event of liquidation, MLP common unit holders have first right to the partnership's remaining assets after bondholders, other debt holders, and preferred unit holders have been paid in full. MLP common units trade on a national securities exchange or over-the-counter. Some limited liability companies ("LLCs") may be treated as MLPs for federal income tax purposes.

Similar to MLPs, LLCs typically do not pay federal income tax at the entity level and are required by their operating agreements to distribute a large percentage of their current operating earnings. In contrast to MLPs, LLCs have no general partner and there are no incentives that entitle management or other unit holders to increased percentages of cash distributions as distributions reach higher target levels. In addition, LLC common unit holders typically have voting rights with respect to the LLC, whereas MLP common units have limited voting rights. MLP common units and other equity securities can be affected by macro-economic and other factors affecting the stock market in general, expectations of interest rates, investor sentiment toward MLPs or a MLP's business sector, changes in a particular issuer's financial condition, or unfavorable or unanticipated poor performance of a particular issuer (in the case of MLPs, generally measured in terms of distributable cash flow).

Prices of common units of individual MLPs and other equity securities can also be affected by fundamentals unique to the partnership or company, including earnings power and coverage ratios. MLP convertible subordinated units are typically issued by MLPs to founders, corporate general partners of MLPs, entities that sell assets to the MLP, and institutional investors, and may be purchased in direct placements from such persons. The purpose of the convertible subordinated units is to increase the likelihood that during the subordination period there will be available cash to be distributed to common unit holders. Convertible subordinated units generally are not entitled to distributions until holders of common units have received specified minimum quarterly distributions, plus any arrearages, and may receive less in distributions upon liquidation. Convertible subordinated unit holders generally are entitled to a minimum quarterly distribution prior to the payment of incentive distributions to the general partner, but are not entitled to arrearage rights. Therefore, they generally entail greater risk than MLP common units. They are generally convertible automatically into the senior common units of the same issuer at a one-to-one ratio upon the passage of time or their satisfaction of certain financial tests. These units do not trade on a national exchange or over-the-counter, and there is no active market for convertible subordinated units. The value of a convertible security is a function of its worth if converted into the underlying common units. Convertible subordinated units generally have similar voting rights to MLP common units. Because convertible subordinated units generally convert to common units on a one-to-one ratio, the price that the Fund could be expected to pay upon the purchase or to realize upon resale is generally tied to the common unit price less a discount. The size of the discount varies depending on a variety of factors including the likelihood of conversion, and the length of time remaining to conversion, and the size of the block purchased.

MLP I-Shares represent an indirect investment in MLP I-units. I-units are equity securities issued to affiliates of MLPs, typically a limited liability company, that own an interest in and manage the MLP. The issuer has management rights but is not entitled to incentive distributions. The I-Share issuer's assets consist exclusively of MLP I-units. Distributions by MLPs to I-unit holders are made in the form of additional I-units, generally equal in amount to the cash received by common unit holders of MLPs. Distributions to I-Share holders are made in the form of additional I-Shares, generally equal in amount to the I-units received by the I-Share issuer. The issuer of the I-Share is taxed as a corporation for federal income tax purposes; however, the MLP does not allocate income or loss to the I-Share issuer. Accordingly, investors receive a Form 1099, are not allocated their proportionate share of income of the MLPs and are not subject to state income tax filing obligations. The price of I-Shares and their volatility tend to be correlated to the price of common units, although the price correlation is not precise.

### **Non-U.S. Securities**

The Fund may invest in equity and fixed-income securities of non-U.S. issuers and in depositary receipts, such as American Depositary Receipts ("ADRs") that represent indirect interests in securities of non-U.S. issuers. Non-U.S. securities in which the Fund may invest may be listed on non-U.S. securities exchanges or traded in non-U.S. over-the-counter markets or may be purchased in private placements and not be publicly traded. Investments in non-U.S. securities are affected by risk factors generally not thought to be present in the U.S.

The Fund is not required to hedge against non-U.S. currency risks, including the risk of changing currency exchange rates, which could reduce the value of non-U.S. currency denominated portfolio securities irrespective of the underlying investment. However, from time to time, the Fund may enter into forward currency exchange contracts ("forward contracts") for hedging purposes and non-hedging purposes to pursue its investment objective. Forward contracts are transactions involving the Fund's obligation to purchase or sell a specific currency at a future date at a specified price. Forward contracts may be used by the Fund for hedging purposes to protect against uncertainty in the level of future non-U.S. currency exchange rates, such as when the Fund anticipates purchasing or selling a non-U.S. security. This technique would allow the Fund to "lock in" the U.S. dollar price of the security. Forward contracts also may be used to attempt to protect the value of the Fund's existing holdings of non-U.S. securities. There may be, however, imperfect correlation between the Fund's non-U.S. securities holdings and the forward contracts entered into with respect to such holdings. Forward contracts also may be used for non-hedging purposes to pursue the Fund's investment objective, such as when the Investment Manager anticipates that particular non-U.S. currencies will appreciate or depreciate in value, even though securities denominated in such currencies are not then held in the Fund's investment portfolio.

ADRs involve substantially the same risks as investing directly in securities of non-U.S. issuers, as discussed above. ADRs are receipts typically issued by a U.S. bank or trust company that show evidence of underlying securities issued by a non-U.S. corporation. Issuers of unsponsored depositary receipts are not obligated to disclose material information in the United States, and therefore, there may be less information available regarding such issuers.

The United Kingdom ("UK") left the European Union ("EU") on January 31, 2020, and a transition period during which the UK and the EU negotiated terms of departure ended on December 31, 2020. This departure is commonly referred to as "Brexit." There is significant uncertainty regarding the consequences of Brexit. The political divisions within the UK, as well as those between the UK and the EU, which the referendum vote highlighted coupled with the uncertain consequences of Brexit, may have a significant impact upon the UK and European economies as well as the broader global economy. The Fund may be exposed to risks related to Brexit, including volatile trading markets and significant and unpredictable currency fluctuations. Securities issued by companies domiciled in the UK could be subject to changing regulatory and tax regimes. Banking and financial services companies that operate in the UK or EU could be disproportionately impacted by these actions. Further insecurity in EU membership or the abandonment of the euro could exacerbate market and currency volatility and negatively impact investments in securities issued by companies located in EU countries. Brexit also may cause additional member states to contemplate departing the EU, which would likely perpetuate political and economic instability in the region and cause additional market disruption in global financial markets. As a result, markets in the UK, Europe and globally could experience increased volatility and illiquidity, and potentially lower economic growth which in return could potentially have an adverse effect on the value of the Fund's investments.

## **Short Selling**

The Fund may engage in short selling. Short selling involves selling securities that are not owned and borrowing the same securities for delivery to the purchaser, with an obligation to replace the borrowed securities at a later date. Short selling allows an investor to profit from declines in market prices to the extent such declines exceed the transaction costs and the costs of borrowing the securities. A short sale creates the risk of an unlimited loss, as the price of the underlying security could theoretically increase without limit, thus increasing the cost of buying those securities to cover the short position. There can be no assurance that the securities necessary to cover a short position will be available for purchase. Purchasing securities to close out the short position can itself cause the price of the securities to rise further, thereby exacerbating the loss. For these reasons, short selling is considered a speculative investment practice.

The Fund may also effect short sales "against the box." These transactions involve selling short securities that are owned (or that the Fund has the right to obtain). When the Fund enters into a short sale against the box, it will set aside securities equivalent in kind and amount to the securities sold short (or securities convertible or exchangeable into such securities) and will hold such securities while the short sale is outstanding. The Fund will incur transaction costs, including interest expenses, in connection with opening, maintaining and closing short sales against the box.

## **NON-PRINCIPAL INVESTMENTS**

### **Agriculture and Timber Companies**

The Fund may invest its assets in securities issued by companies in the agriculture industry or private funds that invest in such securities. Companies involved in the agriculture industry and farming-related activities may be affected by certain legislative or regulatory developments related to food safety, the environment, taxes and other governmental policies. Companies involved in the agriculture industry and farming-related activities may be subject to the risk of liability for environmental damage, depletion of resources and mandated expenditures for safety and pollution control devices. An increased competitive landscape, caused by increased availability of food and other agricultural commodities, economic recession or labor difficulties, may lead to a decrease in demand for products and services provided by companies involved in agriculture and farming-related activities. Furthermore, agricultural and farming-related activities are subject to risks associated with cyclicalities of revenues and earnings, economic recession, currency fluctuations, changing consumer tastes, extensive competition, consolidation and excess capacity. Generally, companies involved in the agriculture industry and farming-related activities are affected by the economic health of consumers. As a result, a weak economy and its effect on consumer spending could adversely affect such companies.

Timber companies may be affected by numerous factors, including events occurring in nature and international politics. For example, the volume and value of timber that can be harvested from timberlands may be limited by natural disasters and other events such as fire, volcanic eruptions, insect infestation, disease, ice storms, wind storms, flooding, other weather conditions and other causes. In periods of poor logging conditions, timber companies may harvest less timber than expected. Timber companies are subject to many federal, state and local environmental and health and safety laws and regulations. In addition, rising interest rates and general economic conditions may affect the demand for timber products.

## **Convertible Securities**

Convertible securities share investment characteristics of both fixed income and equity securities. However, the value of these securities tends to vary more with fluctuations in the value of the underlying common stock than with fluctuations in interest rates. The value of convertible securities also tends to exhibit lower volatility than the underlying common stock. Convertible securities generally offer lower interest or dividend yields than non-convertible securities of similar quality. Investors could lose money if the issuer of a convertible security is unable to meet its financial obligations or goes bankrupt. Lower quality convertible securities, also known as "junk bonds," involve greater risk of default or price changes due to the issuer's creditworthiness. The market prices of these securities may fluctuate more than those of higher quality securities and may decline significantly in periods of general economic difficulty, which may follow periods of rising interest rates. Securities in the lowest quality category may present the risk of default, or may be in default.

## **Credit Default Swaps**

The Fund may enter into credit default swaps. Under these instruments, the Fund will usually have a contractual relationship only with the counterparty of such credit default swaps and not the issuer of the obligation (the "Reference Obligation") subject to the credit default swap (the "Reference Obligor"). The Fund will have no direct rights or recourse against the Reference Obligor with respect to the terms of the Reference Obligation nor any rights of set-off against the Reference Obligor, nor any voting rights with respect to the Reference Obligation. The Fund will not directly benefit from the collateral supporting the Reference Obligation and will not have the benefit of the remedies that would normally be available to a holder of such Reference Obligation. In addition, in the event of the insolvency of the credit default swap counterparty, the Fund will be treated as a general creditor of such counterparty and will not have any claim with respect to the Reference Obligation. Consequently, the Fund will be subject to the credit risk of the counterparty and in the event the Fund will be selling credit default swaps, the Fund will also be subject to the credit risk of the Reference Obligor. As a result, concentrations of credit default swaps in any one counterparty expose the Fund to risk with respect to defaults by such counterparty.

## **Equity Securities**

The investment portfolio of the Fund may include long and short positions in common stocks, limited partnership or limited liability units, preferred stocks, business development company ("BDC") equity securities and convertible and hybrid securities of U.S. and foreign issuers. The value of equity securities depends on business, economic and other factors affecting those issuers. Equity securities fluctuate in value, often based on factors unrelated to the value of the issuer of the securities, and such fluctuations can be pronounced. Equity securities can be affected by macroeconomic and other factors affecting the stock market in general, expectations about changes in interest rates, investor sentiment towards equities, changes in a particular issuer's or industry's financial condition, or unfavorable or unanticipated poor performance of a particular issuer or industry. Prices of equity securities of individual entities also can be affected by fundamentals unique to the company or partnership, including earnings power and coverage ratios. An adverse event, such as an unfavorable earnings report, may depress the value of a particular equity security held by the Fund. In addition, prices of equity securities are sensitive to general movements in the stock market and a drop in the stock market may depress the price of equity securities to which the Fund has exposure. Equity security prices may fluctuate for several reasons including changes in investors' perceptions of the financial condition of an issuer or the general condition of the relevant stock market, or the occurrence of political or economic events that affect the issuers. In addition, equity security prices may be particularly sensitive to rising interest rates, which increases borrowing costs and the costs of capital.



The Fund may invest in equity securities without restriction. These investments may include securities of companies with small- to medium-sized market capitalizations, including micro cap companies and growth stage companies. The securities of certain companies, particularly smaller-capitalization companies, involve higher risks in some respects than do investments in securities of larger companies. For example, prices of small-capitalization and even medium-capitalization stocks are often more volatile than prices of large-capitalization stocks, and the risk of bankruptcy or insolvency of many smaller companies (with the attendant losses to investors) is higher than for larger, "blue-chip" companies. In addition, due to thin trading in the securities of some small-capitalization companies, an investment in those companies may be illiquid. The Fund may invest in securities of companies in initial public offerings ("IPOs") or shortly after those offerings are complete.

### **Marketplace Loans and Pass-Throughs**

The Fund may make marketplace lending investments through a combination of: (i) investing in loans to consumers, small- and mid-sized companies ("SMEs") and other borrowers, including borrowers of student loans, originated through online platforms (or an affiliate) that provide a marketplace for lending ("Marketplace Loans") through purchases of whole loans (either individually or in aggregations); (ii) investing in notes or other pass-through obligations issued by a marketplace lending platform (or an affiliate) representing the right to receive the principal and interest payments on a Marketplace Loan (or fractional portions thereof) originated through the platform ("Pass-Through Notes"); (iii) purchasing asset-backed securities representing ownership in a pool of Marketplace Loans; (iv) investing in private investment funds that purchase Marketplace Loans, (v) acquiring an equity interest in a marketplace lending platform (or an affiliate); and (vi) providing loans, credit lines or other extensions of credit to a marketplace lending platform (or an affiliate) (collectively, "Marketplace Lending Instruments"). Marketplace Lending Instruments are generally not rated by the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations ("NRSROs"). Such unrated instruments, however, are considered to be comparable in quality to securities falling into any of the ratings categories used by such NRSROs to classify "junk" bonds. Accordingly, the Fund's unrated Marketplace Lending Instrument investments constitute highly risky and speculative investments similar to investments in "junk" bonds.

A portion of the Marketplace Loans in which the Fund may invest will not be secured by any collateral, will not be guaranteed or insured by a third party and will not be backed by any governmental authority. Accordingly, the platforms and any third-party collection agencies will be limited in their ability to collect on defaulted Marketplace Loans. With respect to Marketplace Loans secured by collateral, there can be no assurance that the liquidation of any such collateral would satisfy a borrower's obligation in the event of a default under its Marketplace Loan.

Furthermore, Marketplace Loans may not contain any cross-default or similar provisions. A cross-default provision makes a default under certain debt of a borrower an automatic default on other debt of that borrower. The effect of this can be to allow other creditors to move more quickly to claim any assets of the borrower. To the extent a Marketplace Loan does not contain a cross-default provision, the loan will not be placed automatically in default upon that borrower's default on any of the borrower's other debt obligations, unless there are relevant independent grounds for a default on the loan. In addition, the Marketplace Loan will not be referred to a third-party collection agency for collection because of a borrower's default on debt obligations other than the Marketplace Loan. If a borrower first defaults on debt obligations other than the Marketplace Loan, the creditors to such other debt obligations may seize the borrower's assets or pursue other legal action against the borrower, which may adversely impact the ability to recoup any principal and interest payments on the Marketplace Loan if the borrower subsequently defaults on the loan. In addition, an operator of a platform is generally not required to repurchase Marketplace Loans from a lender except under very narrow circumstances, such as in cases of verifiable identity fraud by the borrower or as may otherwise be negotiated by the Fund when purchasing whole loans.

Borrowers may seek protection under federal bankruptcy law or similar laws. If a borrower files for bankruptcy (or becomes the subject of an involuntary petition), a stay will go into effect that will automatically put any pending collection actions on hold and prevent further collection action absent bankruptcy court approval. Whether any payment will ultimately be made or received on a Marketplace Loan after bankruptcy status is declared depends on the borrower's particular financial situation and the determination of the court. It is possible that the borrower's liability on the Marketplace Loan will be discharged in bankruptcy. In most cases involving the bankruptcy of a borrower with an unsecured Marketplace Loan, unsecured creditors will receive only a fraction of any amount outstanding on their loan, if anything at all.

As Pass-Through Notes are pass-through obligations of the operators of the lending platforms, and not direct obligations of the borrowers under the underlying Marketplace Loans originated by such platforms, holders of certain Pass-Through Notes are exposed to the credit risk of the operator. An operator that becomes subject to bankruptcy proceedings may be unable to make full and timely payments on its Pass-Through Notes even if the borrowers of the underlying Marketplace Loans timely make all payments due from them. In addition, Pass-Through Notes are non-recourse obligations (except to the extent that the operator actually receives payments from the borrower on the loan). Accordingly, lenders assume all of the borrower credit risk on the loans they fund and are not entitled to recover any deficiency of principal or interest from the operator if the borrower defaults on its payments.

There may be a delay between the time the Fund commits to purchase a Pass-Through Note and the issuance of such note and, during such delay, the funds committed to such an investment will not be available for investment in other Marketplace Lending Instruments. Because the funds committed to an investment in Pass-Through Notes do not earn interest until the issuance of the note, the delay in issuance will have the effect of reducing the effective rate of return on the investment.

### **Money Market Instruments**

The Fund may invest during periods of adverse market or economic conditions for defensive purposes some or all of their assets in high quality money market instruments and other short-term obligations, money market mutual funds or repurchase agreements with banks or broker-dealers or may hold cash or cash equivalents in such amounts as the Investment Manager deems appropriate under the circumstances. The Fund also may invest in these instruments for liquidity purposes pending allocation of their respective offering proceeds and other circumstances. Money market instruments are high quality, short-term fixed-income obligations, which generally have remaining maturities of one year or less, and may include U.S. government securities, commercial paper, certificates of deposit and bankers' acceptances issued by domestic branches of United States banks that are members of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and repurchase agreements.

### **Mortgage Servicing Rights**

Mortgage servicing rights are the contractual rights to cash flows payable to the actual mortgage servicer of a pool of mortgage loans for their ongoing administrative duties. An investment in mortgage servicing rights is negatively impacted if prepayments are higher than projected (often precipitated by a decline in interest rates), defaults and/or delinquencies are higher than projected, mortgage servicing advances are higher than projected, or a prior mortgage servicing GSE approval is revoked. A mortgage servicer requires approval from a GSE such as Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac before they are allowed to service conforming mortgages. Mortgage servicing rights can also be negatively impacted by changes in state and/or federal regulations.

## **Municipal Debt**

Municipal securities may be subject to credit or default risk, interest rate risk and certain additional risk. The municipal securities comprising the Fund's investments may include debt obligations issued to obtain funding for various public purposes, including the construction of a wide range of public infrastructure and facilities (including housing), essential social, health and/or public service sector programs and initiatives, refunding of outstanding obligations and obtaining funds for general operating expenses and loans to other public institutions and facilities. In addition, certain types of securities are issued by or on behalf of public authorities, for example, to finance privately owned or operated facilities, including in respect of electric energy or gas, sewage, solid waste disposal and other specialized facilities. In addition, other private activity securities, the proceeds of which are used, for example, for the construction, equipment or improvement of privately operated industrial or commercial facilities, may constitute municipal securities, but current federal tax laws place substantial limitations on the size of such issues. The interest on the Fund's investments may bear a fixed rate or be payable at a variable or floating rate. The Fund's investments in municipal debt may be more sensitive to adverse economic, business or political developments if it invests a significant portion of its assets in the debt securities of similar projects (such as those relating to education, health care, housing, transportation and utilities), industrial development bonds, or in particular types of municipal securities (such as general obligation bonds, private activity bonds and moral obligation bonds).

## **Purchasing Initial Public Offerings**

The Fund may purchase securities of companies in initial public offerings ("IPOs") or shortly after those offerings are complete. Special risks associated with these securities may include a limited number of shares available for trading, lack of a trading history, lack of investor knowledge of the issuer, and limited operating history. These factors may contribute to substantial price volatility for the shares of these companies. The limited number of shares available for trading in some IPOs may make it more difficult for the Fund to buy or sell significant amounts of shares without an unfavorable effect on prevailing market prices. In addition, some companies in IPOs are involved in relatively new industries or lines of business, which may not be widely understood by investors. Some of these companies may be undercapitalized or regarded as developmental stage companies, without revenues or operating income, or near-term prospects of achieving revenues or operating income. Further, when the Fund's asset base is small, a significant portion of the Fund's performance could be attributable to investments in IPOs, because such investments would have a magnified impact on the Fund.

## **Real Estate Investment Trusts**

The Fund may invest in real estate investment trusts ("REITs"). REITs are pooled investment vehicles which invest primarily in real estate or real estate related loans. REITs are generally classified as equity REITs, mortgage REITs or a combination of equity and mortgage REITs. Equity REITs invest the majority of their assets directly in real property and derive income primarily from the collection of rents. Equity REITs can also realize capital gains by selling properties that have appreciated in value. Equity REITs may further be categorized by the type of real estate securities they own, such as apartment properties, retail shopping centers, office and industrial properties, hotels, healthcare facilities, manufactured housing and mixed property types. Mortgage REITs invest the majority of their assets in real estate mortgages and derive income from the collection of interest payments. Hybrid REITs combine the characteristics of both equity and mortgage REITs. Like regulated investment companies such as the Fund, REITs are not taxed on income distributed to shareholders provided they comply with certain requirements under the Code. The Fund will indirectly bear its proportionate share of any expenses paid by REITs in which it invests in addition to the expenses paid by the Fund.

Investing in REITs involves certain unique risks. Equity REITs may be affected by changes in the value of the underlying property owned by such REITs, while mortgage REITs may be affected by the quality of any credit extended. REITs are dependent upon management skills, are not diversified (except to the extent the Code requires), and are subject to the risks of financing projects. REITs are subject to heavy cash flow dependency, default by borrowers, self-liquidation, and the possibilities of failing to qualify for the exemption from tax for distributed income under the Code and failing to maintain their exemptions from the 1940 Act. REITs (especially mortgage REITs) are also subject to interest rate risks. Investing in REITs also involves risks similar to those associated with investing in small capitalization companies. That is, they may have limited financial resources, may trade less frequently and in a limited volume and may be subject to abrupt or erratic price movements in comparison to larger capitalization companies. To the extent that assets underlying a REIT are concentrated geographically, by property type or in certain other respects, these risks may be heightened.

In addition, the value of such securities may fluctuate in response to the market's perception of the creditworthiness of the issuers of mortgage-related securities owned by the Fund. Because investments in mortgage-related securities are interest sensitive, the ability of the issuer to reinvest or to reinvest favorably in underlying mortgages may be limited by government regulation or tax policy. For example, action by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System to limit the growth of the nation's money supply may cause interest rates to rise and thereby reduce the volume of new residential mortgages. Additionally, although mortgages and mortgage-related securities are generally supported by some form of government or private guarantees and/or insurance, there is no assurance that private guarantors or insurers will be able to meet their obligation. REITs (especially mortgage REITs) are also subject to interest rate risks. When interest rates decline, the value of a REIT's investment in fixed rate obligations can be expected to rise. Conversely, when interest rates rise, the value of a REIT's investment in fixed rate obligations can be expected to decline. In contrast, as interest rates on adjustable rate mortgage loans are reset periodically, yields on a REIT's investments in such loans will gradually align themselves to reflect changes in market interest rates, causing the value of such investments to fluctuate less dramatically in response to interest rate fluctuations than would investments in fixed rate obligations.

The REIT investments of the Fund may often not provide complete tax information to the Fund until after the calendar year-end. Consequently, because of the delay, it may be necessary for the Fund to request permission to extend the deadline for issuance of Forms 1099-DIV beyond January 31. Also, under current provisions of the Code, distributions attributable to operating income of REITs in which the Fund invests are not eligible for favorable tax treatment as long-term capital gains and will be taxable to you as ordinary income. To the extent, however, that the Fund designates dividends it pays to its shareholders as "section 199A dividends" such shareholder may be eligible for a 20% deduction with respect to such dividends. The amount of section 199A dividends that the Fund may pay and report to its shareholders is limited to the excess of the ordinary REIT dividends, other than capital gain dividends and portions of REIT dividends designated as qualified dividend income, that the Fund receives from REITs for a taxable year over the Fund's expenses allocable to such dividends.

#### **Reinsurance-Related Securities.**

Reinsurance occurs when insurance or reinsurance companies share risk by purchasing insurance policies from other insurers or reinsurers to limit the total loss the original insurer or reinsurer would experience in case of disaster. Reinsurance involves the practice of insurers or reinsurers transferring portions of risk portfolios to other parties by agreement in order to reduce the likelihood of having to pay a large obligation resulting from an insurance claim. The intent of reinsurance is for an insurance or reinsurance company to reduce the risks associated with underwritten policies by spreading risks across alternative institutions. The party seeking reinsurance is known as the ceding party. The party that accepts a portion of the potential obligation in exchange for a share of the insurance premium is known as the reinsurer.

The Fund may invest in reinsurance-related securities. The principal risk of an investment in a reinsurance-related security is that a triggering event(s) (natural events such as a hurricane, tornado or earthquake or non-natural events such as large aviation disasters) will occur and the Fund will lose all or a portion of the principal it has invested in the security and the right to additional interest payments with respect to the security. If multiple triggering events occur that impact a significant portion of the Fund's portfolio, the Fund could suffer substantial losses and an investor will lose money. There is no way to accurately predict whether a triggering event will occur and because of this significant uncertainty, reinsurance-related securities carry a high degree of risk.

Catastrophe bonds carry large uncertainties and major risk exposures to adverse conditions. If a trigger event, as defined within the terms of the bond, involves losses or other metrics exceeding a specific magnitude in the geographic region and time period specified therein, the Fund may lose a portion or all of its investments in such security, including accrued interest and/or principal invested in such security. Such losses may be substantial. Because catastrophe bonds cover "catastrophic" events that, if they occur, will result in significant losses, catastrophe bonds carry a high degree of risk of loss and are considered "high yield" or "junk" bonds. The rating, if any, of catastrophe bonds, reflects the rating agency's calculated probability that a pre-defined trigger event will occur. Thus, lower-rated bonds have a greater likelihood of a triggering event occurring and resulting in a loss to the Fund. Catastrophe bonds are also subject to extension risk. The sponsor of such an investment might have the right to extend the maturity of the bond or note to verify that the trigger event did occur or to process and audit insurance claims.

Event-linked bonds are a type of reinsurance-related security. The Funds may invest in event-linked bonds in one or more of three ways: the Funds may purchase event-linked bonds when initially offered; the Funds may purchase event-linked bonds in the secondary, over-the-counter market; or the Funds may gain indirect exposure to event-linked bonds using derivatives. As the market for event-linked bonds evolves, the Funds expect to participate in that market and to include new types of event-linked bond offerings in their portfolios.

Trigger events are typically defined by three criteria: an event; a geographic area in which the event must occur; and a threshold of economic or physical loss (either actual or modeled) caused by the event, together with a method to measure such loss. In order for a trigger event to be deemed to have occurred, each of the three criteria must be satisfied while the bond is outstanding. The Funds have no limit as to the types of events, geographic areas or thresholds of loss referenced by event-linked bonds in which they can invest. Generally, the event is either a natural or non-natural peril of a kind that results in significant physical or economic loss. Natural perils include disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, windstorms, fires and floods. Non-natural perils include disasters resulting from human activity such as commercial and industrial accidents or business interruptions. Some event-linked bonds reference only a single event. Other event-linked bonds may reference multiple events, the occurrence of any one (or other number) of which would satisfy this criteria. Or, an event-linked bond may not specify a particular peril. In these cases, only the geographic area and threshold of physical or economic loss determines whether a trigger event has occurred. For example, certain event-linked bonds, commonly referred to as "mortality" bonds (discussed further below), have trigger events that are deemed to occur if a specific number of deaths occur in an identified geographic area regardless of the peril which caused the loss of life.

- Indemnity triggers. Indemnity triggers are based on losses paid and reserved for by an identified insurance company. Generally the identified company sponsored the special purpose vehicle issuing the event-linked bonds. The trigger event would be considered to have occurred only if that company's losses on catastrophic insurance claims exceeded a certain threshold of insured claims. If the company's losses (paid and reserved for) were less than the pre-determined aggregate amount, then the trigger event would not be considered to have occurred and the Funds would be entitled to recover their principal plus accrued but unpaid interest. Indemnity triggers require investors and rating agencies to understand the risks of the insurance and reinsurance policies underwritten by the company, which may be difficult to obtain and ascertain, particularly in the case of complex commercial insurance and reinsurance policies. In addition, event-linked bond investors are dependent upon the company's ability to estimate and settle catastrophe claims in a manner that would not be disadvantageous to investors' interests.

- **Index triggers.** Index triggers are based on pre-defined formulas, which eliminate the risks relating to a company's insurance claims-handling practices and potential information barriers. However, investors are dependent upon the accuracy of the models and other information received from reporting services used to calculate the loss or metric. Index triggers follow one of the three broad approaches: modeled-loss, industry loss and parametric.
- o **Modeled-Loss.** Modeled-loss triggers are based upon a catastrophe-modeling firm's database estimate of a hypothetical company's losses based on a model policy portfolio.
- o **Industry Loss.** Industry loss triggers are based upon the estimated loss for the insurance industry as a whole from a particular catastrophe. Estimates are derived from a reporting service, such as Property Claim Services.
- o **Parametric.** Parametric triggers are based upon the occurrence of a catastrophic event with certain defined physical parameters (e.g., wind speed of a hurricane, as measured from a pre-determined location, or magnitude of an earthquake, as measured from a pre-determined location).
- **Hybrid triggers.** Hybrid triggers involve more than one metric of physical or economic loss in a single event-linked bond transaction. For example, after the occurrence of a qualifying U.S. earthquake, a modeled-loss index is used to establish a company's overall market share, and then applied to the industry-loss index associated with the qualifying event to determine any principal reduction. Hybrid triggers may be more complicated and difficult to understand for investors, and involve the applicable risks associated with the types of triggers described above.

### **Repurchase and Reverse Repurchase Agreements**

The Fund may enter into repurchase and reverse repurchase agreements. When the Fund enters into a repurchase agreement, they "sell" securities to a broker-dealer or financial institution and agree to repurchase such securities on a mutually agreed date for the price paid by the broker-dealer or financial institution, plus interest at a negotiated rate. In a reverse repurchase transaction, the Fund "buys" securities issued from a broker-dealer or financial institution, subject to the obligation of the broker-dealer or financial institution to repurchase such securities at the price paid by the Fund, plus interest at a negotiated rate. The use of repurchase and reverse repurchase agreements by the Fund involves certain risks. For example, if the seller of securities to the Fund under a reverse repurchase agreement defaults on its obligation to repurchase the underlying securities, as a result of its bankruptcy or otherwise, the Fund will seek to dispose of such securities, which action could involve costs or delays. If the seller becomes insolvent and subject to liquidation or reorganization under applicable bankruptcy or other laws, the Fund's ability to dispose of the underlying securities may be restricted. It is possible, in a bankruptcy or liquidation scenario, that the Fund may not be able to substantiate its interest in the underlying securities. Finally, if a seller defaults on its obligation to repurchase securities under a reverse repurchase agreement, the Fund may suffer a loss to the extent that it is forced to liquidate its position in the market, and proceeds from the sale of the underlying securities are less than the repurchase price agreed to by the defaulting seller. Similar elements of risk arise in the event of the bankruptcy or insolvency of the buyer.

## Royalty Trusts

The Fund may invest in royalty trusts. A royalty trust typically controls an operating company which purchases oil and gas properties using the trust's capital. The royalty trust then receives royalties and/or interest payments from its operating company and distributes them as income to its unitholders. Units of the royalty trust represent an economic interest in the underlying assets of the trust.

The yield generated by a royalty trust is not guaranteed and because developments in the oil, gas and natural resource markets will affect payouts, can be volatile. For example, the yield on an oil royalty trust can be affected by changes in production levels, natural resources, political and military developments, regulatory changes and conservation efforts. In addition, natural resources are depleting assets. Eventually, the income-producing ability of the royalty trust will be exhausted. Generally, higher yielding trusts have less time until depletion of proven reserves. Depending on the U.S. federal income tax classifications of the royalty trusts in which the Fund invests, securities issued by certain royalty trusts (such as royalty trusts which are grantor trusts for U.S. federal income tax purposes) may not produce qualifying income for purposes of the income requirements of the Code. Additionally, the Fund may be deemed to own the assets of each royalty trust and would need to look to such assets when determining its compliance with the diversification requirements under the Code. The Fund will monitor its investments in royalty trusts with the objective of maintaining its continued qualification as a RIC.

The Fund may invest in oil royalty trusts that are traded on stock exchanges. Oil royalty trusts are income trusts that own or control oil and gas operating companies. Oil royalty trusts pay out substantially all of the cash flow they receive from the production and sale of underlying crude oil and natural gas reserves to unitholders in the form of monthly dividends (distributions). As a result of distributing the bulk of their cash flow to unitholders, royalty trusts are effectively precluded from internally originating new oil and gas prospects. Therefore, these royalty trusts typically grow through acquisition of producing companies or those with proven reserves of oil and gas, funded through the issuance of additional equity or, where the trust is able, additional debt. Consequently, oil royalty trusts are considered less exposed to the uncertainties faced by a traditional exploration and production corporation. However, they are still exposed to commodity risk and reserve risk, as well as operating risk.

The operations and financial condition of oil royalty trusts, and the amount of distributions or dividends paid on their securities, is dependent on oil prices. Prices for commodities vary and are determined by supply and demand factors, including weather and general economic and political conditions. A decline in oil prices could have a substantial adverse effect on the operations and financial conditions of the trusts. Such trusts are also subject to the risk of an adverse change in the regulations of the natural resource industry and other operational risks relating to the energy sector. In addition, the underlying operating companies held or controlled by the trusts are usually involved in oil exploration; however, such companies may not be successful in holding, discovering, or exploiting adequate commercial quantities of oil, the failure of which will adversely affect their values. Even if successful, oil and gas prices have fluctuated widely during the most recent years and may continue to do so in the future. The combination of global demand growth and depleting reserves, together with current geopolitical instability, will likely continue to support strong crude oil prices over the long term. However, there is no guarantee that these prices will not decline. Declining crude oil prices may cause the Fund to incur losses on its investments. In addition, the demand in and supply to the developing markets could be affected by other factors such as restrictions on imports, increased taxation, and creation of government monopolies, as well as social, economic and political uncertainty and instability. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that non-conventional sources of natural gas will not be discovered which would adversely affect the oil industry.

Moreover, as the underlying oil and gas reserves are produced, the remaining reserves attributable to the royalty trust are depleted. The ability of a royalty trust to replace reserves is therefore fundamental to its ability to maintain distribution levels and unit prices over time. Certain royalty trusts have demonstrated consistent positive reserve growth year-over-year and, as such, certain royalty trusts have been successful to date in this respect and are thus currently trading at unit prices significantly higher than those of five or ten years ago. Oil royalty trusts manage reserve depletion through reserve additions resulting from internal capital development activities and through acquisitions. When the Fund invests in foreign oil royalty trusts, it will also be subject to foreign securities risks.

## **Sovereign Debt**

Sovereign debt instruments, which are debt obligations issued or guaranteed by a foreign governmental entity, are subject to the risk that the governmental entity may delay or fail to pay interest or repay principal on debt that it has issued or guaranteed, due, for example, to cash flow problems, insufficient foreign currency reserves, political considerations, relationships with other lenders such as commercial banks, the relative size of the governmental entity's debt position in relation to the economy or the failure to put in place economic reforms required by the International Monetary Fund or other multi-lateral agencies. If a governmental entity defaults, it may ask for more time in which to pay or for further loans, or it may ask for forgiveness of interest or principal on its existing debt. On the other hand, a governmental entity may be unwilling to renegotiate the terms of its sovereign debt. There may be no established legal process for a U.S. bondholder (such as a portfolio) to enforce its rights against a governmental entity that does not fulfill its obligations, nor are there bankruptcy proceedings through which all or part of the sovereign debt that a governmental entity has not repaid may be collected. Certain countries in Europe currently have large sovereign debts and/or fiscal deficits which has led to significant uncertainties in the market as to whether or not the governments of those countries will be able to pay in full and on time the amounts due in respect of those debts.

## **Trade Finance**

Trade finance consists of the financing of goods or materials during the time it takes to transport the goods from one geographic location to another. There may be political risks (expropriation, confiscation, nationalization, war) in the movement of goods across certain countries. Economic risks exist, which include interest rate risk, changes in tax rates, and currency movements. Counterparty risks of default and fraud as well as custody risks of theft and natural disaster also exist. To the extent the buyer does not follow through on the contractual purchase, the Fund will also bear the price risk of reselling the goods to a new buyer.

## **U.S. Government Obligations Risk**

While U.S. Treasury obligations are backed by the "full faith and credit" of the U.S. Government, such securities are nonetheless subject to credit risk (i.e., the risk that the U.S. Government may be, or be perceived to be, unable or unwilling to honor its financial obligations, such as making payments). Securities issued or guaranteed by federal agencies or authorities and U.S. Government-sponsored instrumentalities or enterprises may or may not be backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government.

## **When-Issued, Delayed Delivery and Forward Commitment Securities**

To reduce the risk of changes in securities prices and interest rates, the Fund may purchase securities on a forward commitment, when-issued or delayed delivery basis, which means delivery and payment take place a number of days after the date of the commitment to purchase. The payment obligation and the interest rate receivable with respect to such purchases are fixed when the Fund enters into the commitment, but the Fund does not make payment until it receives delivery from the counterparty. After the Fund commits to purchase such securities, but before delivery and settlement, it may sell the securities if it is deemed advisable.



Securities purchased on a forward commitment or when-issued or delayed delivery basis are subject to changes in value, generally changing in the same way, i.e., appreciating when interest rates decline and depreciating when interest rates rise, based upon the public's perception of the creditworthiness of the issuer and changes, real or anticipated, in the level of interest rates. Securities so purchased may expose the Fund to risks because they may experience such fluctuations prior to their actual delivery. Purchasing securities on a when-issued or delayed delivery basis can involve the additional risk that the yield available in the market when the delivery takes place actually may be higher than that obtained in the transaction itself. Purchasing securities on a forward commitment, when-issued or delayed delivery basis when the Fund is fully or almost fully invested results in a form of leverage and may result in greater potential fluctuation in the value of the net assets of the Fund. In addition, there is a risk that securities purchased on a when-issued or delayed delivery basis may not be delivered and that the purchaser of securities sold by the Fund on a forward basis will not honor its purchase obligation. In such cases, the Fund may incur a loss.

#### THE FUND MAY CHANGE ITS INVESTMENT OBJECTIVE, POLICIES, RESTRICTIONS, STRATEGIES, AND TECHNIQUES.

Except as otherwise indicated, the Fund may change its investment objectives and any of its policies, restrictions, strategies, and techniques without Shareholder approval. The Fund's investment objective is not a fundamental policy and it may be changed by the Board without Shareholder approval.

#### OTHER POTENTIAL RISKS AND ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT INFORMATION

##### **Dependence on the Investment Manager**

The success of the Fund depends upon the ability of the Investment Manager to develop and implement investment strategies that achieve the investment objective of the Fund. Shareholders will have no right or power to participate in the management or control of the Fund.

##### **Business and Regulatory Risks**

Legal, tax and regulatory developments that may adversely affect the Fund or the Investment Manager could occur during the term of the Fund. Securities and futures markets are subject to comprehensive statutes, regulations and margin requirements enforced by the SEC, other regulators and self-regulatory organizations and exchanges authorized to take extraordinary actions in the event of market emergencies. The regulation of derivatives transactions and funds that engage in such transactions is an evolving area of law and is subject to modification by government and judicial actions. It is impossible to predict what, if any, changes in regulations may occur, but any regulations which restrict the ability of the Fund to trade in securities or the ability of the Fund to employ, or brokers and other counterparties to extend, credit in its trading (as well as other regulatory changes that result) could have a material adverse impact on the Fund's portfolio.

##### **Reliance on Key Personnel**

The Fund's ability to identify and invest in attractive opportunities is dependent upon the Investment Manager. If one or more key individuals leaves the Investment Manager, the Investment Manager may not be able to hire qualified replacements, or may require an extended time to do so. This could prevent the Fund from achieving its investment objective.

### **Financial Failure of Intermediaries**

There is always the possibility that the institutions, including brokerage firms and banks, with which the Fund does business, or to which securities have been entrusted for custodial purposes, will encounter financial difficulties that may impair their operational capabilities or result in losses to the Fund.

### **Suspensions of Trading**

Each exchange typically has the right to suspend or limit trading in all securities that it lists. Such a suspension could render it impossible for the Fund to liquidate its positions and thereby expose it to losses. In addition, there is no guarantee that non-exchange markets will remain liquid enough for the Fund to close out positions.

### **Cyber Security Risk**

The Fund and its service providers may be prone to operational and information security risks resulting from breaches in cyber security. A breach in cyber security refers to both intentional and unintentional events that may cause the Fund to lose proprietary information, suffer data corruption, or lose operational capacity. Breaches in cyber security include, among other behaviors, stealing or corrupting data maintained online or digitally, denial of service attacks on websites, the unauthorized release of confidential information or various other forms of cyber-attacks. Cyber security breaches affecting the Fund, the Investment Manager, financial intermediaries and other third-party service providers may adversely impact the Fund. For instance, cyber security breaches may interfere with the processing of Shareholder transactions, impact the Fund's ability to calculate its net asset value, cause the release of private Shareholder information or confidential business information, impede investment activities, subject the Fund to regulatory fines or financial losses and/or cause reputational damage. The Fund may also incur additional costs for cyber security risk management purposes.

### **Payment in Kind for Repurchased Shares**

The Fund does not expect to distribute securities as payment for repurchased Shares except in unusual circumstances, such as in the unlikely event that making a cash payment would result in a material adverse effect on the Fund or on Shareholders not requesting that their Shares be repurchased. In the event that the Fund makes such a distribution of securities as payment for Shares, Shareholders will bear any risks of the distributed securities and may be required to pay a brokerage commission or other costs to dispose of such securities.

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS OF THE FUND**

The business operations of the Fund are managed and supervised under the direction of the Board, subject to the laws of the State of Delaware and the Fund's Agreement and Declaration of Trust. The Board has overall responsibility for the management and supervision of the business affairs of the Fund on behalf of its Shareholders, including the authority to establish policies regarding the management, conduct and operation of its business. The Board exercises the same powers, authority and responsibilities on behalf of the Fund as are customarily exercised by the board of directors of a registered investment company organized as a corporation. The officers of the Fund conduct and supervise the daily business operations of the Fund.

The members of the Board (each, a "Trustee") are not required to contribute to the capital of the Fund or to hold Shares. A majority of Trustees of the Board are not "interested persons" (as defined in the Investment Company Act) of the Fund (collectively, the "Independent Trustees"). Any Trustee who is not an Independent Trustee is an interested trustee ("Interested Trustee"). In December 2018, the Board voted to appoint Gary E. Shugrue as an advisory board member. As an advisory board member, Mr. Shugrue attends meetings of the Board and acts as a non-voting participant.

The identity of Trustees of the Board, the advisory board member and officers of the Fund, and their brief biographical information, including their addresses, their year of birth and descriptions of their principal occupations during the past five years is set forth below.

The Trustees serve on the Board for terms of indefinite duration. A Trustee's position in that capacity will terminate if the Trustee is removed or resigns or, among other events, upon the Trustee's death, incapacity, retirement or bankruptcy. A Trustee may resign upon written notice to the other Trustees of the Fund, and may be removed either by (i) the vote of at least two-thirds of the Trustees of the Fund not subject to the removal vote or (ii) the vote of Shareholders of the Fund holding not less than two-thirds of the total number of votes eligible to be cast by all Shareholders of the Fund. In the event of any vacancy in the position of a Trustee, the remaining Trustees of the Fund may appoint an individual to serve as a Trustee so long as immediately after the appointment at least two-thirds of the Trustees of the Fund then serving have been elected by the Shareholders of the Fund. The Board may call a meeting of the Fund's Shareholders to fill any vacancy in the position of a Trustee of the Fund, and must do so if the Trustees who were elected by the Shareholders of the Fund cease to constitute a majority of the Trustees then serving on the Board.

INDEPENDENT TRUSTEES AND ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

<b>NAME, ADDRESS AND YEAR OF BIRTH</b>	<b>POSITION(S) HELD WITH THE FUND</b>	<b>LENGTH OF TIME SERVED</b>	<b>PRINCIPAL OCCUPATION(S) DURING PAST 5 YEARS AND OTHER DIRECTORSHIPS HELD BY TRUSTEE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PORTFOLIOS IN FUND COMPLEX * OVERSEEN BY TRUSTEE</b>	<b>OTHER DIRECTORSHIPS HELD BY TRUSTEES</b>
David G. Lee Year of Birth: 1952  c/o UMB Fund Services, Inc. 235 W. Galena St. Milwaukee, WI 53212	Chairman and Trustee	Chairman since May 2019; Trustee since Inception	President and Director, Client Opinions, Inc. (market research firm) (2003-2011); Chief Operating Officer, Brandywine Global Investment Management (1998-2002).	10	None
Robert Seyferth Year of Birth: 1952  c/o UMB Fund Services, Inc. 235 W. Galena St. Milwaukee, WI 53212	Trustee	Since Inception	Chief Procurement Officer/Senior Managing Director, Bear Stearns/JP Morgan Chase (financial services firm) (1993-2009).	10	None

Gary E. Shugrue Year of Birth: 1954  c/o UMB Fund Services, Inc. 235 W. Galena St. Milwaukee, WI 53212	Advisory Board Member	Since December 2018	Managing Director, Veritable LP (investment advisory firm) (2016-Present); Founder/President, Ascendant Capital Partners, LP (private equity firm) (2001– 2015).	6	Trustee, Quaker Investment Trust (5 portfolios)(registered investment company); Scotia Institutional Funds (2006-2014) (3 portfolios) (registered investment company).
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\* The fund complex consists of the Fund, Agility Multi-Asset Income Fund, Corbin Multi-Strategy Fund, LLC, Keystone Private Income Fund, Cliffwater Corporate Lending Fund, Infinity Long/Short Equity Fund, LLC, The Relative Value Fund, Infinity Core Alternative Fund, Aspiriant Risk-Managed Real Asset Fund and Aspiriant Risk-Managed Capital Appreciation Fund.

#### INTERESTED TRUSTEE AND OFFICERS

<b>NAME, ADDRESS AND YEAR OF BIRTH</b>	<b>POSITION(S) HELD WITH THE FUND</b>	<b>LENGTH OF TIME SERVED</b>	<b>PRINCIPAL OCCUPATION(S) DURING PAST 5 YEARS AND OTHER DIRECTORSHIPS HELD BY TRUSTEE OR OFFICER</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PORTFOLIOS IN FUND COMPLEX* OVERSEEN</b>	<b>OTHER DIRECTORSHIPS HELD BY TRUSTEES</b>
Terrance P. Gallagher**  Year of Birth: 1958  c/o UMB Fund Services, Inc. 235 W. Galena St. Milwaukee, WI 53212	Trustee	Since June 2020	Executive Vice President and Director of Fund Accounting, Administration and Tax; UMB Fund Services, Inc. (2007 – present); President, Investment Managers Series Trust II (registered investment company) (2013-Present); Treasurer, American Independence Funds Trust (registered investment company) (2016-2018); Treasurer, Commonwealth International Series Trust (registered investment company) (2010-2015).	10	Trustee, Investment Managers Series Trust II (13 portfolios) (registered investment company).

Robert W. Elsasser Year of Birth: 1968  c/o UMB Fund Services, Inc. 235 W. Galena St. Milwaukee, WI 53212	President	Since Inception	Principal, Variant Investments, LLC (2017 –Present); Director of Fixed Income, CTC myCFO, LLC (investment advisory firm) (2010-2016).	N/A	N/A
Curtis Fintel Year of Birth: 1970  c/o UMB Fund Services, Inc. 235 W. Galena St. Milwaukee, WI 53212	Treasurer	Since Inception	Principal, Variant Investments, LLC (2017 –Present); Chief Investment Strategist, CTC myCFO, LLC (investment advisory firm) (2006-2016).	N/A	N/A
Perpetua Seidenburg Year of Birth: 1990  c/o UMB Fund Services, Inc. 235 W. Galena St. Milwaukee, WI 53212	Chief Compliance Officer	Since June 5, 2018	Compliance Director, Vigilant Compliance, LLC (an investment management services company) (2014 – Present); Auditor, PricewaterhouseCoopers (professional services firm) (2012 – March 2014).	N/A	N/A

Ann Maurer Year of Birth: 1972 c/o UMB Fund Services, Inc. 235 W. Galena St. Milwaukee, WI 53212	Secretary	Since September 2018	Senior Vice President, Client Services, Inc. (financial services firm) (September 2017 - Present); Vice President, Senior Client Service Manager (January 2013 - September 2017); Assistant Vice President, Client Relations Manager (2002 - January 2013).	N/A	N/A
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\* The fund complex consists of the Fund, Agility Multi-Asset Income Fund, Corbin Multi-Strategy Fund, LLC, Keystone Private Income Fund, Cliffwater Corporate Lending Fund, Infinity Long/Short Equity Fund, LLC, The Relative Value Fund, Infinity Core Alternative Fund, Aspiriant Risk-Managed Real Asset Fund and Aspiriant Risk-Managed Capital Appreciation Fund.

\*\* Mr. Gallagher is deemed to be an interested person of the Fund because of his affiliation with the Fund's Administrator.

The Board believes that each of the Trustees' experience, qualifications, attributes and skills on an individual basis and in combination with those of the other Trustees lead to the conclusion that each Trustee should serve in such capacity. Among the attributes common to all Trustees is the ability to review critically, evaluate, question and discuss information provided to them, to interact effectively with the other Trustees, the Investment Manager, the Fund's other service providers, counsel and the independent registered public accounting firm, and to exercise effective business judgment in the performance of their duties as Trustees. A Trustee's ability to perform his or her duties effectively may have been attained through the Trustee's business, consulting, and public service; experience as a board member of non-profit entities or other organizations; education or professional training; and/or other life experiences. In addition to these shared characteristics, set forth below is a brief discussion of the specific experience, qualifications, attributes or skills of each Trustee.

*David G. Lee.* Mr. Lee has been a Trustee since the Fund's inception. He has more than 25 years of experience in the financial services industry.

*Robert Seyferth.* Mr. Seyferth has been a Trustee since the Fund's inception. Mr. Seyferth has more than 30 years of business and accounting experience.

*Terrance P. Gallagher.* Mr. Gallagher has been a Trustee since June 2020. Mr. Gallagher has more than 40 years of experience in the financial service industry.

Specific details regarding each Trustee's principal occupations during the past five years are included in the table above.

*Gary E. Shugrue.* Mr. Shugrue has served as an advisory board member since December 2018. Mr. Shugrue has more than 30 years of experience in the financial service industry.

### **Leadership Structure and Oversight Responsibilities**

Overall responsibility for oversight of the Fund rests with the Board. The Fund has engaged the Investment Manager to manage the Fund on a day-to-day basis. The Board is responsible for overseeing the Investment Manager, and other service providers in the operations of the Fund in accordance with the provisions of the Investment Company Act, applicable provisions of state and other laws and the Fund's Agreement and Declaration of Trust. The Board is currently composed of three members, two of whom are Independent Trustees. The Board meets in-person at regularly scheduled meetings four times each year. In addition, the Board may hold special in-person or telephonic meetings or informal conference calls to discuss specific matters that may arise or require action between regular meetings. The Independent Trustees have also engaged independent legal counsel to assist them in performing their oversight responsibility. The Independent Trustees meet with their independent legal counsel in person prior to and during each quarterly in-person board meeting. As described below, the Board has established a Valuation Committee, an Audit Committee and a Nominating Committee, and may establish ad hoc committees or working groups from time to time to assist the Board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities.

The Board has appointed David Lee, an Independent Trustee, to serve in the role of Chairman. The Chairman's role is to preside at all meetings of the Board and to act as liaison with the Investment Manager, other service providers, counsel and other Trustees generally between meetings. The Chairman serves as a key point person for dealings between management and the Trustees. The Chairman may also perform such other functions as may be delegated by the Board from time to time. The Board has determined that the Board's leadership structure is appropriate because it allows the Board to exercise informed and independent judgment over matters under its purview and it allocates areas of responsibility among committees of Trustees and the full Board in a manner that enhances effective oversight.

The Fund is subject to a number of risks, including investment, compliance, operational and valuation risks, among others. Risk oversight forms part of the Board's general oversight of the Fund and are addressed as part of various Board and committee activities. Day-to-day risk management functions are subsumed within the responsibilities of the Investment Manager and other service providers (depending on the nature of the risk), which carry out the Fund's investment management and business affairs. The Investment Manager and other service providers employ a variety of processes, procedures and controls to identify various events or circumstances that give rise to risks, to lessen the probability of their occurrence and/or to mitigate the effects of such events or circumstances if they do occur. Each of the Investment Manager and other service providers has its own independent interests in risk management, and their policies and methods of risk management will depend on their functions and business models. The Board recognizes that it is not possible to identify all of the risks that may affect the Fund or to develop processes and controls to eliminate or mitigate their occurrence or effects. The Board requires senior officers of the Fund, including the President, Treasurer and Chief Compliance Officer ("CCO") and the Investment Manager, to report to the full Board on a variety of matters at regular and special meetings of the Board, including matters relating to risk management. The Board and the Audit Committee also receive regular reports from the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm on internal control and financial reporting matters. The Board also receives reports from certain of the Fund's other primary service providers on a periodic or regular basis, including the Fund's custodian, distributor and administrator. The Board may, at any time and in its discretion, change the manner in which it conducts risk oversight.

### **Committees of the Board of Trustees**

#### *Audit Committee*

The Board has formed an Audit Committee that is responsible for overseeing the Fund's accounting and financial reporting policies and practices, its internal controls, and, as appropriate, the internal controls of certain service providers; overseeing the quality and objectivity of the Fund's financial statements and the independent audit of those financial statements; and acting as a liaison between the Fund's independent auditors and the full Board. In performing its responsibilities, the Audit Committee will select and recommend annually to the entire Board a firm of independent certified public accountants to audit the books and records of the Fund for the ensuing year, and will review with the firm the scope and results of each audit. The Audit Committee currently consists of each of the Fund's Independent Trustees. The Audit Committee held three meetings during the fiscal year ended April 30, 2021.

### *Nominating Committee*

The Board has formed a Nominating Committee that is responsible for selecting and nominating persons to serve as Trustees of the Fund. The Nominating Committee is responsible for both nominating candidates to be appointed by the Board to fill vacancies and for nominating candidates to be presented to Shareholders for election. In performing its responsibilities, the Nominating Committee will consider candidates recommended by management of the Fund and by Shareholders and evaluate them both in a similar manner, as long as the recommendation submitted by a Shareholder includes at a minimum: the name, address and telephone number of the recommending Shareholder and information concerning the Shareholder's interests in the Fund in sufficient detail to establish that the Shareholder held Shares on the relevant record date; and the name, address and telephone number of the recommended nominee and information concerning the recommended nominee's education, professional experience, and other information that might assist the Nominating Committee in evaluating the recommended nominee's qualifications to serve as a trustee. The Nominating Committee may solicit candidates to serve as trustees from any source it deems appropriate. With the Board's prior approval, the Nominating Committee may employ and compensate counsel, consultants or advisers to assist it in discharging its responsibilities. The Nominating Committee currently consists of each of the Fund's Independent Trustees. The Nominating Committee did not hold any meetings during the fiscal year ended April 30, 2021.

### *Valuation Committee*

The Board has formed a Valuation Committee that is responsible for reviewing fair valuations of securities held by the Fund in instances as required by the valuation procedures adopted by the Board and is responsible for carrying out the provisions of its charter. The Valuation Committee currently consists of each of the Fund's Trustees. The Valuation Committee did not hold any meetings during the fiscal year ended April 30, 2021.

### **Trustee and Officer Ownership of Securities**

As of December 31, 2020, none of the Trustees owned Shares of the Fund.

As of May 1, 2021, the Trustees and officers of the Fund as a group owned less than one percent of the outstanding shares of the Fund.

### **Independent Trustee Ownership of Securities**

As of December 31, 2020, none of the Independent Trustees (or their immediate family members) owned beneficially or of record securities of the Investment Manager, or of an entity (other than a registered investment company) controlling, controlled by or under common control with the Investment Manager.

### **Trustee Compensation**

In consideration of the services rendered by the Independent Trustees, the Fund pays each Independent Trustee a retainer of \$10,000 per fiscal year. Trustees that are interested persons are compensated by the Fund's administrator and/or its affiliates and will not be separately compensated by the Fund. Mr. Shugrue does not receive any compensation from the Fund for his services as an advisory board member.

### **CODES OF ETHICS**

The Fund and the Investment Manager have each adopted a code of ethics pursuant to Rule 17j-1 of the Investment Company Act, which is designed to prevent affiliated persons of the Fund and the Investment Manager from engaging in deceptive, manipulative, or fraudulent activities in connection with securities held or to be acquired by the Fund. The codes of ethics permit persons subject to them to invest in securities, including securities that may be held or purchased by the Fund, subject to a number of restrictions and controls. Compliance with the codes of ethics is carefully monitored and enforced.



The codes of ethics are included as exhibits to the Fund's registration statement filed with the SEC and are available on the EDGAR database on the SEC's website at <https://www.sec.gov>. and may also be obtained after paying a duplicating fee, by electronic request at the following E-mail address: [publicinfo@sec.gov](mailto:publicinfo@sec.gov).

## INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT AND OTHER SERVICES

### The Investment Manager

Variant Investments, LLC (the "Investment Manager"), serves as the investment advisor to the Fund. The Investment Manager is an investment adviser registered with the SEC under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, as amended. Subject to the general supervision of the Board, and in accordance with the investment objective, policies, and restrictions of the Fund, the Investment Manager is responsible for the management and operation of the Fund and the investment of the Fund's assets. The Investment Manager provides such services to the Fund pursuant to the Investment Management Agreement. Founded in 2017, the Investment Manager and its affiliates have approximately \$847 million in assets under management as of May 1, 2021. Variant Investments is managed by Curtis Fintel, Robert Elsasser and J.B. Hayes. The firm is owned by Curtis Fintel, Robert Elsasser and J.B. Hayes, Boco Investments, LLC, Joseph Zimlich, and Brian Klemsz.

The Investment Management Agreement became effective as of June 29, 2018, and continued in effect for an initial two-year term. Thereafter, the Investment Management Agreement continues in effect from year to year provided such continuance is specifically approved at least annually by (i) the vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund or a majority of the Board, and (ii) the vote of a majority of the Independent Trustees of the Fund, cast in person at a meeting called for the purpose of voting on such approval. A discussion regarding the basis for the Board's approval of the Agreements, or any other investment advisory contracts, is available in the Fund's April 30, 2020 annual report to Shareholders.

Pursuant to the Investment Management Agreement, the Fund pays the Investment Manager a monthly Investment Management Fee equal to 0.95% on an annualized basis of the Fund's NAV of the average monthly "Managed Assets" of the Fund. "Managed Assets" means the total assets of the Fund (including any assets attributable to any leverage that may be outstanding) minus the sum of accrued liabilities (other than debt representing financial leverage and the aggregate liquidation preference of any outstanding preferred shares). Average monthly Managed Assets is the sum of the daily managed assets for the month divided by the number of the days in a month. The Investment Management Fee will be paid to the Investment Manager before giving effect to any repurchase of Shares in the Fund effective as of that date, and will decrease the net profits or increase the net losses of the Fund that are credited to its Shareholders. The Investment Management Fee is calculated and accrued daily, and is paid monthly within five (5) days after the end of each calendar month.

The Investment Manager has entered into an expense limitation and reimbursement agreement (the "Expense Limitation and Reimbursement Agreement") with the Fund, whereby the Investment Manager has agreed to waive fees that it would otherwise have been paid, and/or to assume expenses of the Fund (a "Waiver"), if required to ensure the Total Annual Expenses (excluding any taxes, leverage interest, brokerage commissions, dividend and interest expenses on short sales, acquired fund fees and expenses (as determined in accordance with SEC Form N-2), expenses incurred in connection with any merger or reorganization, and extraordinary expenses, such as litigation expenses) do not exceed 1.70% and 1.45% of the average daily net assets of Investor Class Shares and Institutional Class Shares, respectively (the "Expense Limit"). Because taxes, leverage interest, brokerage commissions, dividend and interest expenses on short sales, acquired fund fees and expenses, expenses incurred in connection with any merger or reorganization, and extraordinary expenses are excluded from the Expense Limit, Total Annual Expenses (after fee waivers and expense reimbursements) are expected to exceed 1.70% and 1.45% of the average daily net assets of Investor Class Shares and Institutional Class Shares, respectively. For a period not to exceed three years from the date on which a Waiver is made, the Investment Manager may recoup amounts waived or assumed, provided it is able to effect such recoupment without causing the Fund's expense ratio (after recoupment) to exceed the lesser of (i) the expense limit in effect at the time of the Waiver and (ii) the expense limit in effect at the time of the recoupment. The Expense Limitation and Reimbursement Agreement is in effect until October 31, 2020. The Expense Limitation and Reimbursement Agreement will automatically renew for consecutive one-year terms thereafter. This Agreement may be terminated at any time by the Fund's Board of Trustees upon thirty (30) days' written notice to the Investment Manager. This Agreement may be terminated by the Investment Manager as of the end of its then-current term upon thirty (30) days' written notice to the Fund.

For the fiscal period ended April 30, 2019 the Fund paid the Investment Manager management fees (after waivers and reimbursements) and the Investment Manager waived management fees and reimbursed expenses, as follows:

	Management Fees	Waivers	Reimbursements	Management Fees Paid (After Waivers and Reimbursements)
Investment Manager	\$ 185,218	\$ (281,409)	\$ 0	\$ 0

For the fiscal year ended April 30, 2020 the Fund paid the Investment Manager management fees (after waivers and reimbursements) and the Investment Manager waived management fees and reimbursed expenses, as follows:

	Management Fees	Waivers	Reimbursements	Management Fees Paid (After Waivers and Reimbursements)
Investment Manager	\$ 1,979,976	\$(10,222)	\$(69,905)	\$ 1,899,849

### The Portfolio Managers

#### *Other Accounts Managed by the Portfolio Managers<sup>(1)</sup>*

	Type of Accounts	Total # of Accounts Managed	Total Assets (\$mm)	# of Accounts Managed that Advisory Fee Based on Performance	Total Assets that Advisory Fee Based on Performance (\$mm)
1. Curtis Fintel	Registered Investment Companies:	0	\$0	0	\$0
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles:	0	\$0	0	\$0
	Other Accounts:	0	\$0	0	\$0
2. Robert Elsasser	Registered Investment Companies:	0	\$0	0	\$0
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles:	0	\$0	0	\$0
	Other Accounts:	0	\$0	0	\$0
3. J. B. Hayes	Registered Investment Companies:	0	\$0	0	\$0
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles:	0	\$0	0	\$0
	Other Accounts:	0	\$0	0	\$0

(1) As of April 30, 2021.

### *Conflicts of Interest*

The Fund may be subject to a number of actual and potential conflicts of interest.

The Investment Manager and its affiliates engage in financial advisory activities that are independent from, and may from time to time conflict with, those of the Fund. In the future, there might arise instances where the interests of such affiliates conflict with the interests of the Fund. The Investment Manager and its affiliates may provide services to, invest in, advise, sponsor and/or act as investment manager to investment vehicles and other persons or entities (including prospective investors in the Fund) which may have structures, investment objectives and/or policies that are similar to (or different than) those of the Fund; which may compete with the Fund for investment opportunities; and which may, subject to applicable law, co-invest with the Fund in certain transactions. In addition, the Investment Manager and its affiliates and respective clients may themselves invest in securities that would be appropriate for the Fund. By acquiring Shares, each Shareholder will be deemed to have acknowledged the existence of any such actual and potential conflicts of interest and to have waived any claim with respect to any liability arising from the existence of any such conflict of interest.

Although the Investment Manager and its affiliates seek to allocate investment opportunities among the Fund and their other clients in a fair and reasonable manner, there can be no assurance that an investment opportunity which comes to the attention of the Investment Manager or its affiliates will be appropriate for the Fund or will be referred to the Fund. The Investment Manager and its affiliates are not obligated to refer any investment opportunity to the Fund.

The directors, partners, trustees, managers, members, officers and employees of the Investment Manager and its affiliates may buy and sell securities or other investments for their own accounts (including through funds managed by the Investment Manager or its affiliates). As a result of differing trading and investment strategies or constraints, investments may be made by directors, partners, trustees, managers, members, officers and employees that are the same, different from or made at different times than investments made for the Fund. To reduce the possibility that the Fund will be materially adversely affected by the personal trading described above, the Fund and the Investment Manager have individually adopted codes of ethics (collectively, the "Codes of Ethics") in compliance with Section 17(j) of the Investment Company Act that restricts securities trading in the personal accounts of investment professionals and others who normally come into possession of information regarding the portfolio transactions of the Fund. The Codes of Ethics can be reviewed and may be obtained by calling the SEC at 1-202-551-8090. The Codes of Ethics are also available on the EDGAR Database on the SEC's website at <https://www.sec.gov>.

## Compensation of the Portfolio Managers

Total compensation paid to each Portfolio Manager includes a base salary fixed from year to year and a variable performance bonus consisting of cash incentives. The amounts paid to the Portfolio Managers are based on a percentage of the fees earned by the Investment Manager from managing the Fund and other investment accounts. The performance bonus reflects individual performance and the performance of the Investment Manager's business as a whole. These individuals will also participate in a 401K program and receive medical/dental insurance benefits on the same basis as other officers of the Investment Manager.

The compensation structure of key investment professionals is structured to incent long-term client retention and client service.

## Portfolio Managers' Ownership of Shares

<b>Name of Portfolio Management Team Member:</b>	<b>Dollar Range of Shares Beneficially Owned by Portfolio Management Team Member <sup>(1)</sup>:</b>
Robert W. Elsasser	\$100,001 - \$500,000
Curt Fintel	Over \$1,000,000
J.B. Hayes	\$100,001 - \$500,000

(1) As of April 30, 2021

## BROKERAGE

It is the Fund's policy to obtain the best results in connection with effecting its portfolio transactions, taking into account factors such as price, size of order, difficulty of execution and operational facilities of a brokerage firm and the firm's risk in positioning a block of securities. Generally, equity securities are bought and sold through brokerage transactions for which commissions are payable. Purchases from underwriters will include the underwriting commission or concession, and purchases from dealers serving as market makers will include a dealer's mark-up or reflect a dealer's mark-down. Money market securities and other debt securities are usually bought and sold directly from the issuer or an underwriter or market maker for the securities. Generally, the Fund will not pay brokerage commissions for such purchases. When a debt security is bought from an underwriter, the purchase price will usually include an underwriting commission or concession. The purchase price for securities bought from dealers serving as market makers will similarly include the dealer's mark up or reflect a dealer's mark down. When the Fund executes transactions in the over-the-counter market, it will generally deal with primary market makers unless prices that are more favorable are otherwise obtainable.

In addition, the Investment Manager may place a combined order for two or more accounts it manages, including the Fund, that are engaged in the purchase or sale of the same security if, in its judgment, joint execution is in the best interest of each participant and will result in best price and execution. Transactions involving commingled orders are allocated in a manner deemed equitable to each account or fund. Although it is recognized that, in some cases, the joint execution of orders could adversely affect the price or volume of the security that a particular account or the Fund may obtain, it is the opinion of the Investment Manager that the advantages of combined orders outweigh the possible disadvantages of separate transactions. The Investment Manager believes that the ability of the Fund to participate in higher volume transactions will generally be beneficial to the Fund.

The Investment Manager may pay a higher commission than otherwise obtainable from other brokers in return for brokerage or research services only if a good faith determination is made that the commission is reasonable in relation to the services provided.

While it is the Fund's general policy to seek to obtain the most favorable price and execution available in selecting a broker-dealer to execute portfolio transactions for the Fund, weight is also given to the ability of a broker-dealer to furnish brokerage and research services as defined in Section 28(e) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, to the Fund or to the Investment Manager, even if the specific services are not directly useful to the Fund and may be useful to the Investment Manager in advising other clients. When one or more brokers is believed capable of providing the best combination of price and execution, the Investment Manager may select a broker based upon brokerage or research services provided to the Investment Manager. In negotiating commissions with a broker or evaluating the spread to be paid to a dealer, the Fund may therefore pay a higher commission or spread than would be the case if no weight were given to the furnishing of these supplemental services, provided that the amount of such commission or spread has been determined in good faith by the Investment Manager to be reasonable in relation to the value of the brokerage and/or research services provided by such broker-dealer. The standard of reasonableness is to be measured in light of the Investment Manager's overall responsibilities to the Fund.

## **TAX MATTERS**

The following is intended to be a general summary of certain U.S. federal income tax consequences of investing, holding and disposing of Shares of the Fund. It is not intended to be a complete discussion of all such federal income tax consequences, nor does it purport to deal with all categories of investors. **INVESTORS ARE THEREFORE ADVISED TO CONSULT WITH THEIR TAX ADVISORS BEFORE MAKING AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUND.**

Set forth below is a discussion of certain U.S. federal income tax issues concerning the Fund and the purchase, ownership and disposition of Shares. This discussion does not purport to be complete or to deal with all aspects of federal income taxation that may be relevant to Shareholders in light of their particular circumstances. Unless otherwise noted, this discussion assumes you are a U.S. Shareholder and that you hold your Shares as a capital asset. This discussion is based upon present provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), the regulations promulgated thereunder, and judicial and administrative ruling authorities, all of which are subject to change, which change may be retroactive. Prospective investors should consult their own tax advisers with regard to the federal tax consequences of the purchase, ownership, or disposition of Shares, as well as the tax consequences arising under the laws of any state, foreign country, or other taxing jurisdiction.

The Fund has qualified and intends to continue to qualify annually as a regulated investment company (a "RIC") under the Code. To qualify for the favorable U.S. federal income tax treatment generally accorded to regulated investment companies, the Fund must, among other things, (a) derive in each taxable year at least 90% of its gross income from dividends, interest, payments with respect to certain securities loans and gains from the sale or other disposition of stock, securities or foreign currencies or other income derived with respect to its business of investing in such stock, securities or currencies and net income derived from interests in qualified publicly traded partnerships; (b) diversify its holdings so that, at the end of each quarter of its taxable year, (i) at least 50% of the market value of the Fund's assets is represented by cash and cash items (including receivables), U.S. Government securities, the securities of other regulated investment companies and other securities, with such other securities of any one issuer limited for the purposes of this calculation to an amount not greater than 5% of the value of the Fund's total assets and not greater than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of such issuer, and (ii) not more than 25% of the value of its total assets is invested in the securities (other than U.S. Government securities or the securities of other regulated investment companies) of a single issuer, in the securities (other than securities of other regulated investment companies) of two or more issuers which the Fund controls and are engaged in the same, similar or related trades or businesses, or in the securities of one or more qualified publicly traded partnerships; and (c) distribute for each taxable year an amount at least equal to the sum of 90% of its investment company taxable income (determined without regard to the deduction for dividends paid) and 90% of its net tax exempt interest income.

The Fund might not distribute all of its net investment income, and the Fund is not required to distribute any portion of its net capital gain. If the Fund qualifies for treatment as a regulated investment company but does not distribute all of its net capital gain and net investment income, it will be subject to tax at regular corporate rates on the amount retained. If the Fund retains any net capital gain, it may designate the retained amount of capital gain as undistributed capital gain in a notice to its Shareholders who, if subject to federal income tax on long-term capital gains, (i) will be required to include in income for federal income tax purposes, as long-term capital gain, their share of such undistributed amount; (ii) will be deemed to have paid their proportionate share of the tax paid by the Fund on such undistributed amount and will be entitled to credit that amount of tax against their federal income tax liabilities, if any; and (iii) will be entitled to claim refunds to the extent the credit exceeds such liabilities. For federal income tax purposes, the tax basis of Shares owned by a Shareholder of the Fund will be increased by an amount equal to the difference between the amount of undistributed capital gains included in the Shareholder's gross income and the tax deemed paid by the Shareholder.

As a regulated investment company, the Fund generally will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax on its investment company taxable income (as that term is defined in the Code, but without regard to the deduction for dividends paid) and net capital gain (the excess of net long-term capital gain over net short-term capital loss), if any, that it distributes to Shareholders. The Fund intends to distribute to its Shareholders, at least annually, substantially all of its net investment income and net capital gain. Amounts not distributed on a timely basis in accordance with a calendar year distribution requirement are subject to a nondeductible 4% excise tax. To prevent imposition of the excise tax, the Fund must distribute during each calendar year an amount equal to the sum of (1) at least 98% of its ordinary income (not taking into account any capital gains or losses) for the calendar year, (2) at least 98.2% of its capital gains in excess of its capital losses (adjusted for certain ordinary losses) for the one-year period ending October 31 of the calendar year, and (3) any ordinary income and capital gains for previous years that were not distributed during those years. To prevent application of the excise tax, the Fund intends to make its distributions in accordance with the calendar year distribution requirement.

Although dividends generally will be treated as distributed when paid, any dividend declared by the Fund in October, November or December and payable to Shareholders of record in such a month that is paid during the following January will be treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes as received by Shareholders on December 31 of the calendar year in which it was declared. In addition, certain other distributions made after the close of a taxable year of the Fund may be "spilled back" and treated for certain purposes as paid by the Fund during such taxable year. In such case, Shareholders generally will be treated as having received such dividends in the taxable year in which the distributions were actually made. For purposes of calculating the amount of a regulated investment company's undistributed income and gain subject to the 4% excise tax described above, such "spilled back" dividends are treated as paid by the regulated investment company when they are actually paid.

If the Fund fails to satisfy the qualifying income or diversification requirements in any taxable year, the Fund may be eligible for certain relief provisions if the failures are due to reasonable cause and not willful neglect and if a penalty tax is paid with respect to each failure to satisfy the applicable requirements. Additionally, relief is provided for certain de minimis failures of the diversification requirements where the Fund corrects the failure within a specified period. In order to be eligible for the relief provisions with respect to a failure to meet the diversification requirements, the Fund may be required to dispose of certain assets. If these relief provisions are not available to the Fund and it fails to qualify for treatment as a regulated investment company for a taxable year, the Fund will be taxable at regular corporate tax rates (and, to the extent applicable, at corporate alternative minimum tax rates). In such an event, all distributions (including capital gain distributions) will be taxable as ordinary dividends to the extent of the Fund's current and accumulated earnings and profits, subject to the dividends-received deduction for corporate Shareholders and to the tax rates applicable to qualified dividend income distributed to noncorporate Shareholders. In such an event, distributions in excess of the Fund's current and accumulated earnings and profits will be treated first as a return of capital to the extent of the holder's adjusted tax basis in the Shares (reducing that basis accordingly), and any remaining distributions will be treated as a capital gain. To requalify for treatment as a RIC in a subsequent taxable year, the Fund would be required to satisfy the RIC qualification requirements for that year and to distribute any earnings and profits from any year in which the Fund failed to qualify for tax treatment as a RIC. In addition, if the Fund were to fail to qualify as a regulated investment company for a period greater than two taxable years, it would generally be required to pay a Fund-level tax on certain net built-in gains recognized with respect to certain of its assets upon a disposition of such assets within ten years of qualifying as a regulated investment company in a subsequent year.

The Board reserves the right not to maintain the qualification of the Fund for treatment as a RIC if it determines such course of action to be beneficial to Shareholders.

### **Distributions**

Dividends paid out of the Fund's net investment income generally will be taxable to a Shareholder as ordinary income to the extent of the Fund's earnings and profits, whether paid in cash or reinvested in additional Shares under the DRIP. The Fund may be able to report a portion of its income as "qualified dividend income," however, which is taxable to noncorporate Shareholders at rates of up to 20%.

In general, dividends may be reported by the Fund as qualified dividend income if they are attributable to qualified dividend income received by the Fund. Qualified dividend income generally means dividend income received from investments in common and preferred stock of U.S. companies and stock of certain qualified foreign corporations, provided that certain holding period and other requirements are met by both the Fund and the Shareholders.

A foreign corporation is treated as a qualified foreign corporation for this purpose if it is incorporated in a possession of the United States or it is eligible for the benefits of certain income tax treaties with the United States and meets certain additional requirements. Certain foreign corporations that are not otherwise qualified foreign corporations will be treated as qualified foreign corporations with respect to dividend paid by them if the stock with respect to which the dividends are paid is readily tradable on an established securities market in the United States. Passive foreign investment companies are not qualified foreign investment companies for this purpose. Dividends received by the Fund from REITs generally are not expected to qualify for treatment as qualified dividend income, but may be eligible for reduced rates of taxation as described below.

A dividend that is attributable to qualified dividend income of the Fund that is paid by the Fund to a Shareholder will not be taxable as qualified dividend income to such Shareholder (1) if the dividend is received with respect to any share of the Fund held for fewer than 61 days during the 121-day period beginning on the date which is 60 days before the date on which such share became ex-dividend with respect to such dividend, (2) to the extent that the Shareholder is under an obligation (whether pursuant to a short sale or otherwise) to make related payments with respect to positions in substantially similar or related property, or (3) if the Shareholder elects to have the dividend treated as investment income for purposes of the limitation on deductibility of investment interest. The ex-dividend date is the date on which the owner of the share at the commencement of such date is entitled to receive the next issued dividend payment for such share even if the share is sold by the owner on that date or thereafter.

The Fund may make distributions to a Shareholder of "section 199A dividends" with respect to qualified dividends that it receives with respect to its investments in REITs. A section 199A dividend is any dividend or part of such dividend that the Fund pays to a Shareholder and reports as a section 199A dividend in written statements furnished to a Shareholder. Distributions paid by the Fund that are eligible to be treated as section 199A dividends for a taxable year may not exceed the "qualified REIT dividends" received by the Fund from REITs reduced by the Fund's allocable expenses. Section 199A dividends may be taxed to individuals and other non-corporate shareholders at a reduced effective federal income tax rate, provided the Shareholder receiving the dividends has satisfied a holding period requirement for the Shares and satisfied certain other conditions. For the lower rates to apply, the Shareholder must have owned his or her Shares for at least 46 days during the 91-day period beginning on the date that is 45 days before the Fund's ex-dividend date, but only to the extent that the Shareholder is not under an obligation (under a short-sale or otherwise) to make related payments with respect to positions in substantially similar or related property.

Distributions of net capital gain (the excess of net long-term capital gain over net short-term capital loss), if any, reported as capital gain dividends are generally taxable to a Shareholder as long-term capital gains regardless of how long the Shareholder has held Shares, at rates of up to 20% for noncorporate taxpayers. Certain capital gain dividends attributable to dividends the Fund receives from REITs may be taxed to noncorporate taxpayers at a rate of 25%. Distributions of short-term capital gain are taxable to Shareholders as ordinary income. Shareholders receiving distributions in the form of additional Shares, rather than cash, generally will have a cost basis in each such share equal to the greater of the net asset value or fair market value of a share of the Fund on the reinvestment date. A distribution of an amount in excess of the Fund's current and accumulated earnings and profits will first be treated by a Shareholder as a return of capital which is applied against and reduces the Shareholder's basis in his or her Shares. To the extent that the amount of any such distribution exceeds the Shareholder's basis in his or her Shares, the excess will be treated by the Shareholder as gain from a sale or exchange of Shares.

Shareholders will be notified annually as to the U.S. federal tax status of distributions, and Shareholders receiving distributions in the form of additional Shares will receive a report as to the net asset value of those Shares.

A dividend or distribution received shortly after the purchase of Shares reduces the net asset value of the Shares by the amount of the dividend or distribution and, although in effect a return of capital, will be taxable to the Shareholder. If the net asset value of Shares were reduced below the Shareholder's cost by dividends and distributions representing gains realized on sales of securities, such dividends and distributions, although also in effect returns of capital, would be taxable to the Shareholder in the same manner as other dividends or distributions.

Capital losses in excess of capital gains ("net capital losses") are not permitted to be deducted against a RIC's net investment income. Instead, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, potentially subject to certain limitations, the Fund may carry net capital losses from any taxable year forward to offset capital gains in future years. For U.S. federal income tax purposes, the Fund is permitted to carry forward a net capital loss from any taxable year that began on or before December 22, 2010 to offset its capital gains, if any, for up to eight years following the year of the loss. The Fund is permitted to carry forward indefinitely a net capital loss from any taxable year that began after December 22, 2010 to offset its capital gains, if any, in years following the year of the loss. To the extent subsequent capital gains are offset by such losses, they will not result in U.S. federal income tax liability to the Fund and may not be distributed as capital gains to Shareholders. Carryforwards of losses from taxable years that began after December 22, 2010 must be fully utilized before the Fund may utilize carryforwards of losses from taxable years that began on or before December 22, 2010. Generally, the Fund may not carry forward any losses other than net capital losses. Under certain circumstances, the Fund may elect to treat certain losses as though they were incurred on the first day of the taxable year immediately following the taxable year in which they were actually incurred.



## **Sale or Exchange of Fund Shares**

Sales and repurchases generally are taxable events for Shareholders that are subject to tax. Shareholders should consult their own tax advisers with reference to their individual circumstances to determine whether any particular transaction in Shares is properly treated as a sale for tax purposes, as the following discussion assumes, and to ascertain the tax treatment of any gains or losses recognized in such transactions. In general, if Shares are sold, the Shareholder will recognize gain or loss equal to the difference between the amount realized on the sale and the Shareholder's adjusted tax basis in the Shares. Such gain or loss generally will be treated as long-term capital gain or loss if the Shares were held for more than one year and otherwise generally will be treated as short-term capital gain or loss. Any loss recognized by a Shareholder upon the sale, repurchase or other disposition of Shares with a tax holding period of six months or less will be treated as a long-term capital loss to the extent of any amounts treated as distributions to the Shareholder of long-term capital gain with respect to such Shares (including any amounts credited to the Shareholder as undistributed capital gains).

Losses on sales, repurchases or other dispositions of Shares may be disallowed under "wash sale" rules in the event of other investments in the Fund (including investments made pursuant to reinvestment of dividends and/or capital gain distributions) within a period of 61 days beginning 30 days before and ending 30 days after the sale or other disposition of Shares or in the event the Shareholder enters into a contract or option to repurchase Shares within such period. In such a case, the disallowed portion of any loss generally would be included in the adjusted tax basis of the Shares acquired in the other investments.

## **Nature of Fund's Investments**

Certain of the Fund's investment practices are subject to special and complex federal income tax provisions that may, among other things, (i) disallow, suspend or otherwise limit the allowance of certain losses or deductions, (ii) convert long-term capital gain into short-term capital gain or ordinary income, (iii) convert an ordinary loss or a deduction into a capital loss (the deductibility of which is more limited), (iv) cause the Fund to recognize income or gain without a corresponding receipt of cash, (v) change the time at which a purchase or sale of stock or securities is deemed to occur and (vi) adversely alter the characterization of certain complex financial transactions. The Fund may make certain tax elections in order to mitigate the effect of these provisions.

The Code imposes constructive sale treatment for federal income tax purposes on certain hedging strategies with respect to appreciated financial positions. Under these rules, taxpayers will recognize gain, but not loss, with respect to securities if they enter into short sales or "offsetting notional principal contracts" (as defined by the Code) with respect to, or futures or forward contracts to deliver, the same or substantially identical property, or if they enter into such transactions and then acquire the same or substantially identical property.

As a result of entering into swap contracts, the Fund may make or receive periodic net payments. The Fund may also make or receive a payment when a swap is terminated prior to maturity through an assignment of the swap or other closing transaction. Periodic net payments will generally constitute ordinary income or expense, while termination of a swap will generally result in capital gain or loss (which will be long-term capital gain or loss if the Fund has been a party to the swap for more than one year).

## **Original Issue Discount Securities**

Investments by the Fund in zero coupon or other discount securities will result in income to the Fund equal to a portion of the excess of the face value of the securities over their issue price ("original issue discount") each year that the securities are held, even though the Fund may receive no cash interest payments or may receive cash interest payments that are less than the income recognized for tax purposes. This income is included in determining the amount of income which the Fund must distribute to avoid the payment of federal income tax and the 4% excise tax. Because such income may not be matched by a corresponding cash payment to the Fund, the Fund may be required to borrow money or dispose of securities to be able to make distributions to its Shareholders.

## **Investments in Real Estate Investment Trusts**

The Fund may invest in REITs that hold residual interests in real estate mortgage investment conduits ("REMICs"). Under Treasury regulations that have not yet been issued, but may apply retroactively, a portion of the Fund's income from a REIT that is attributable to the REIT's residual interest in a REMIC (referred to in the Code as an "excess inclusion") will be subject to federal income tax in all events. These regulations are also expected to provide that excess inclusion income of a regulated investment company, such as the Fund, will be allocated to Shareholders of the regulated investment company in proportion to the dividends received by such Shareholders, with the same consequences as if the Shareholders held the related REMIC residual interest directly. The Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") in Notice 2006-97 set forth some basic principles for the application of these rules until such regulations are issued. In general, the applicable rules under the Code and expected rules under the regulations will provide that the excess inclusion income allocated to Shareholders (i) cannot be offset by net operating losses (subject to a limited exception for certain thrift institutions), (ii) will constitute unrelated business taxable income to entities (including a qualified pension plan, an individual retirement account, a 401(k) plan, a Keogh plan or other tax-exempt entity) subject to tax on unrelated business income, thereby potentially requiring such an entity that is allocated excess inclusion income, and otherwise might not be required to file a tax return, to file a tax return and pay tax on such income, and (iii) in the case of a foreign Shareholder, will not qualify for any reduction in U.S. federal withholding tax. In addition, if at any time during any taxable year a "disqualified organization" (as defined in the Code to include governmental units, tax-exempt entities and certain cooperatives) is a record holder of a share in a regulated investment company, then the regulated investment company will be subject to a tax equal to that portion of its excess inclusion income for the taxable year that is allocable to the disqualified organization, multiplied by the highest federal income tax rate imposed on corporations.

## **Investments in Non-U.S. Securities**

The Fund may invest in non-U.S. securities, which investments could subject the Fund to complex provisions of the Code applicable to equity interests in passive foreign investment companies (each, a "PFIC"). A PFIC is an equity interest (under Treasury regulations that may be promulgated in the future, generally including not only stock but also an option to acquire stock such as is inherent in a convertible bond) in certain foreign corporations (i) that receive at least 75% of their annual gross income from passive sources (such as interest, dividends, certain rents and royalties, or capital gains) or (ii) where at least 50% of the corporation's assets (computed based on average fair market value) either produce or are held for the production of passive income. If the Fund invests in PFICs, the Fund could be subject to U.S. federal income tax and nondeductible interest charges on "excess distributions" received from such companies or on gain from the sale of stock in such companies, even if all income or gain actually received by the Fund is timely distributed to its Shareholders. The Fund would not be able to pass through to its Shareholders any credit or deduction for such a tax. A "qualified electing fund" election or a "mark-to-market" election may be available that would ameliorate these adverse tax consequences, but such elections could require the Fund to recognize taxable income or gain (subject to the distribution requirements applicable to RICs, as described above) without the concurrent receipt of cash. In order to satisfy the distribution requirements and avoid a tax at the Fund level, the Fund may be required to liquidate portfolio securities that it might otherwise have continued to hold, potentially resulting in additional taxable gain or loss to the Fund. Gains from the sale of stock of PFICs may also be treated as ordinary income. In order for the Fund to make a qualified electing fund election with respect to a PFIC, the PFIC would have to agree to provide certain tax information to the Fund on an annual basis, which it might not agree to do. The Fund may limit and/or manage its holdings in PFICs to limit its tax liability or maximize its returns from these investments.

Dividends received by the Fund on foreign securities may give rise to withholding and other taxes imposed by foreign countries. Tax conventions between certain countries and the United States may reduce or eliminate such taxes. Shareholders of the Fund generally will not be entitled to a credit or deduction with respect to any such taxes paid by the Fund.

Gains or losses attributable to fluctuations in exchange rates between the time the Fund accrues income or receivables or expenses or other liabilities denominated in a foreign currency and the time the Fund actually collects such income or receivables or pays such liabilities are generally treated as ordinary income or loss. Similarly, gains or losses on foreign currency forward contracts and the disposition of debt securities denominated in foreign currency, to the extent attributable to fluctuations in exchange rates between the acquisition and disposition dates, are also treated as ordinary income or loss.

### **Backup Withholding**

The Fund is required to withhold (as "backup withholding") a portion of dividends and certain other payments paid to certain holders of Shares who do not to provide the Fund with their correct taxpayer identification number (or, in the case of individuals, their social security numbers) or to make required certifications, or who are otherwise subject to backup withholding. The withholding rate is 24%. Corporate Shareholders and certain other Shareholders specified in the Code generally are exempt from such backup withholding. This withholding is not an additional tax. Any amounts withheld from payments made to a Shareholder may be refunded or credited against the Shareholder's U.S. federal income tax liability, provided the required information and forms are timely furnished to the IRS.

### **Foreign Shareholders**

U.S. taxation of a Shareholder who, as to the United States, is a nonresident alien individual, a foreign trust or estate, a foreign corporation or foreign partnership ("Foreign Shareholder") generally depends on whether the income received from the Fund is "effectively connected" with a U.S. trade or business carried on by the Shareholder. In addition, unless certain foreign entities that hold Shares comply with IRS requirements that will generally require them to report information regarding U.S. persons investing in, or holding accounts with, such entities, a 30% withholding tax may apply to Fund distributions payable to such entities. A Foreign Shareholder may be exempt from the withholding described in this paragraph under an applicable intergovernmental agreement between the U.S. and a foreign government, provided that the Shareholder and the applicable foreign government comply with the terms of such agreement.

### **Income not Effectively Connected with a U.S. Trade or Business**

If the income received from the Fund is not "effectively connected" with a U.S. trade or business carried on by the Foreign Shareholder, distributions of net investment income (including distributions of short-term capital gain) will generally be subject to a U.S. withholding tax of 30% (or lower treaty rate, except in the case of any excess inclusion income allocated to the Shareholder (see "Investments in Real Estate Investment Trusts" above)), which tax is generally withheld from such distributions. Dividends reported by the Fund as (i) interest-related dividends, to the extent such dividends are derived from the Fund's "qualified net interest income," or (ii) short-term capital gain dividends, to the extent such dividends are derived from the Fund's "qualified short-term gain," are generally exempt from this 30% withholding tax. "Qualified net interest income" is the Fund's net income derived from U.S.-source interest and original issue discount, subject to certain exceptions and limitations. "Qualified short-term gain" generally means the excess of the Fund's net short-term capital gain for the taxable year over its net long-term capital loss, if any.

Distributions of net capital gain and any amounts retained by the Fund which are designated as undistributed capital gains generally will not be subject to U.S. tax at the rate of 30% (or lower treaty rate). In the case of a Foreign Shareholder who is a nonresident alien individual, the Fund may be required to withhold U.S. income tax from distributions of net capital gain unless the Foreign Shareholder certifies his or her non-U.S. status under penalties of perjury or otherwise establishes an exemption

### **Income Effectively Connected with a U.S. Trade or Business**

If the income from the Fund is "effectively connected" with a U.S. trade or business carried on by a Foreign Shareholder, then distributions of net investment income and capital gain dividends, any amounts retained by the Fund which are designated as undistributed capital gains and any gains realized upon the sale or exchange of Shares will be subject to U.S. federal income tax at the graduated rates applicable to U.S. citizens, residents and domestic corporations. Foreign corporate Shareholders may also be subject to the branch profits tax imposed by the Code. Certain certification and disclosure requirements, including delivery of a properly executed IRS Form W-8ECI, must be satisfied for income effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business to be exempt from the 30% withholding described above under "Income not Effectively Connected with a U.S. Trade or Business."

The Fund may be required to apply special withholding rules to distributions to certain non-U.S. persons to the extent such distributions are attributable to gain from sales of "United States real property interests" held directly or indirectly by the Fund. Those rules, if applicable, require withholding at the rate of 21% of such a distribution payable with respect to a class of Shares. A distribution that is subject to 21% withholding will not also be subject to the 30% withholding tax described in "Income not Effectively Connected with a U.S. Trade or Business," above. Distributions subject to 21% withholding will be treated as income effectively connected with a trade or business within the United States, and a non-U.S. person receiving such a distribution generally will be required to file a U.S. federal income tax return for the period in which such distribution is received. Under certain circumstances, a sale of Shares may be treated as a disposition of "United States real property interests," requiring non-U.S. Shareholders to file U.S. federal income tax returns and pay tax on the sale. Prospective non-U.S. Shareholders should consult their tax advisers regarding these rules before purchasing Shares.

The tax consequences to a Foreign Shareholder entitled to claim the benefits of an applicable tax treaty may differ from those described herein. Foreign Shareholders are advised to consult their own tax advisers with respect to the particular tax consequences to them of an investment in the Fund.

### **Other Tax Considerations**

A 3.8% Medicare contribution tax generally applies to all or a portion of the net investment income of a Shareholder who is an individual and not a nonresident alien for federal income tax purposes and who has adjusted gross income (subject to certain adjustments) that exceeds a threshold amount (\$250,000 if married filing jointly or if considered a "surviving spouse" for federal income tax purposes, \$125,000 if married filing separately, and \$200,000 in other cases). This 3.8% tax also applies to all or a portion of the undistributed net investment income of certain Shareholders that are estates and trusts. For these purposes, interest, dividends, and certain capital gains (among other categories of income) are generally taken into account in computing a Shareholder's net investment income.

Fund Shareholders may be subject to state, local and foreign taxes on their Fund distributions. Shareholders are advised to consult their own tax advisers with respect to the particular tax consequences to them of an investment in the Fund.

If a Shareholder recognizes a loss on a disposition of Shares of \$2 million or more for an individual Shareholder, or \$10 million or more for a corporate Shareholder, in any single taxable year (or certain greater amounts over a combination of years), the Shareholder must file with the IRS a disclosure statement on Form 8886. Direct Shareholders of portfolio securities are in many cases excepted from this reporting requirement, but under current guidance, Shareholder of a RIC are not excepted. In addition, significant penalties may be imposed for the failure to comply with the reporting requirements. The fact that a loss is reportable under these regulations does not affect the legal determination of whether the taxpayer's treatment of the loss is proper. Shareholders should consult their tax advisers to determine the applicability of these regulations in light of their individual circumstances.

The foregoing discussion is a summary only and is not intended as a substitute for careful tax planning. Purchasers of Shares should consult their own tax advisers as to the tax consequences of investing in such Shares, including under state, local and other tax laws.

#### **INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM; LEGAL COUNSEL**

Cohen & Company, Ltd. located at 151 North Franklin Street, Suite 575, Chicago, IL 60606, has been selected as the independent registered public accounting firm for the Fund and in such capacity will audit the Fund's annual financial statements and financial highlights.

Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, One Logan Square, Suite 2000, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-6996, serves as counsel to the Fund and the Independent Trustees.

#### **CUSTODIAN**

UMB Bank, n.a. (the "Custodian"), serves as the primary custodian of the assets of the Fund, and may maintain custody of such assets with U.S. and non-U.S. subcustodians (which may be banks, trust companies, securities depositories and clearing agencies) in accordance with the requirements of Section 17(f) of the Investment Company Act. Assets of the Fund are not held by the Investment Manager or commingled with the assets of other accounts other than to the extent that securities are held in the name of the Custodian or U.S. or non-U.S. subcustodians in a securities depository, clearing agency or omnibus customer account of such custodian. The Custodian's principal business address is 1010 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64106. The Custodian is an affiliate of UMB Fund Services, Inc., which serves as the Fund's Administrator.

#### **DISTRIBUTOR**

Foreside Fund Services, LLC, (the "Distributor") is the distributor of Shares and is located at Three Canal Plaza, Suite 100, Portland, Maine 04101. The Distributor is a registered broker-dealer and is a member of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. Pursuant to the Distribution Agreement, the Distributor acts as the agent of the Fund in connection with the continuous offering of Shares of the Fund. The Distributor continually distributes Shares of the Fund on a best efforts basis. The Distributor has no obligation to sell any specific quantity of Shares. The Distributor and its officers have no role in determining the investment policies of the Fund.

#### **PROXY VOTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Board has delegated responsibility for decisions regarding proxy voting for securities held by the Fund to the Investment Manager. The Investment Manager will vote such proxies in accordance with its proxy policies and procedures. Copies of the Investment Manager's proxy policies and procedures are included as Appendix A to this SAI. The Board will periodically review the Fund's proxy voting record.

The Fund is required to file Form N-PX, with its complete proxy voting record for the twelve months ended June 30, no later than August 31 of each year. The Fund's Form N-PX filing will be available: (i) without charge, upon request, by calling the Fund at (877) 770-7717 or (ii) by visiting the SEC's website at <https://www.sec.gov>.

### CONTROL PERSONS AND PRINCIPAL SHAREHOLDERS

As of May 1, 2021, the following persons were the only persons who were record owners (or to the knowledge of the Fund, beneficial owners) of 5% or more of the Shares.

#### INSTITUTIONAL

<b>Name and Address</b>	<b>Percentage of Ownership</b>
CHARLES SCHWAB & CO INC 211 MAIN ST SAN FRANCISCO CA, 94105	64.69%

#### INVESTOR

<b>Name and Address</b>	<b>Percentage of Ownership</b>
CHARLES SCHWAB & CO INC 211 MAIN ST SAN FRANCISCO CA, 94105	73.64%
CHARLES LEVI REVOCABLE TRUST 2471 N GOWER ST LOS ANGELES CA 90068	7.91%
GREGORY HOPPER PO BOX 903 DORSET, VT 05251	7.74%

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Fund's audited financial statements and financial highlights for the fiscal year ended April 30, 2020 (the "Annual Report"), and the report of Cohen & Co. Ltd., the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm, also appearing therein, are incorporated by reference into this SAI. The Fund's unaudited financial statements and financial highlights for the six-month period ended October 31, 2020 (the "Semi-Annual Report") are also incorporated by reference into this SAI. No other part of the Annual Report or Semi-Annual Report is incorporated by reference herein. Copies of the Annual Report and Semi-Annual Report may be obtained without charge by contacting the Fund at the telephone number or address set forth above. You may also obtain the Annual Report and Semi-Annual Report by visiting the Fund's website at <https://funds.variantinvestments.com> or by following the hyperlinks: [https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1736510/000139834420013429/fp0055084\\_ncsr.htm](https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1736510/000139834420013429/fp0055084_ncsr.htm) for the Annual Report and [https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/0001736510/000139834421000407/fp0060679\\_ncsrs.htm](https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/0001736510/000139834421000407/fp0060679_ncsrs.htm) for the Semi-Annual Report.

## APPENDIX A – PROXY VOTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

For most fixed income investments, the voting matters generally involve amendments to loan documentation, borrower compliance with financial covenants, registration rights, prepayments, insolvency, and other distressed creditor situations. The Investment Manager does not have specific proxy voting policies or guidelines regarding categories of proxy matters submitted to fixed income security holders. Instead, the Investment Manager votes fixed income proxy matters on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the unique circumstances related to a particular borrower and other relevant factors.

The Investment Manager also votes proxies related to equity securities held in discretionary portfolios. Additionally, the Investment Manager may vote proxies or other matters on the closed end funds, BDCs, private funds and other vehicles, exchange traded notes or exchange traded funds in which it invests.

Routine proxy matters associated with equity securities (including but not limited to electing boards of directors, selecting auditors, shareholder rights, proxy contests, corporate governance matters, and executive and director compensation) typically are voted in accordance with the recommendations of management of the issuer. In the event it is determined to be in the best interests of shareholders to vote against issuer management recommendations, the reasons for such determination will be documented. On non-routine matters, such as amendments to governing instruments, proposals relating to compensation and stock option and equity compensation plans, corporate governance proposals and shareholder proposals, the Investment Manager will vote, or abstain from voting if deemed appropriate, on a case-by-case basis in a manner it believes to be in the best economic interest of the Fund's shareholders.

The Investment Manager may delegate our responsibilities under the Proxy Policy to a third party proxy voting service, however, no such delegation will relieve the Investment Manager of its responsibilities. The Investment Manager will retain final authority and fiduciary responsibility for such proxy voting.

The Portfolio Managers are responsible for monitoring proxy voting actions and ensuring that (i) proxies are received and forwarded to the appropriate decision makers; and (ii) proxies are voted in a timely manner upon receipt of voting instructions. The Investment Manager is not responsible for voting proxies that are not received but will make reasonable efforts to obtain missing proxies. The Chief Compliance Officer shall identify and monitor potential conflicts of interest that could affect the proxy voting process, including (i) significant client relationships; (ii) other potential material business relationships; and (iii) material personal and family relationships. The Investment Manager may determine not to vote a particular proxy if the costs and burdens exceed the benefits of voting.



## APPENDIX B

### DESCRIPTION OF SECURITIES RATINGS

#### Short-Term Credit Ratings

An *S&P Global Ratings* short-term issue credit rating is generally assigned to those obligations considered short-term in the relevant market. The following summarizes the rating categories used by S&P Global Ratings for short-term issues:

"A-1" – A short-term obligation rated "A-1" is rated in the highest category by S&P Global Ratings. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is strong. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on these obligations is extremely strong.

"A-2" – A short-term obligation rated "A-2" is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher rating categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is satisfactory.

"A-3" – A short-term obligation rated "A-3" exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken an obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

"B" – A short-term obligation rated "B" is regarded as vulnerable and has significant speculative characteristics. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties that could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.

"C" – A short-term obligation rated "C" is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

"D" – A short-term obligation rated "D" is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the "D" rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless S&P Global Ratings believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. The "D" rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. A rating on an obligation is lowered to "D" if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.

Local Currency and Foreign Currency Ratings – S&P Global Ratings' issuer credit ratings make a distinction between foreign currency ratings and local currency ratings. A foreign currency rating on an issuer will differ from the local currency rating on it when the obligor has a different capacity to meet its obligations denominated in its local currency, versus obligations denominated in a foreign currency.

"NR" – This indicates that a rating has not been assigned or is no longer assigned.

*Moody's Investors Service ("Moody's")* short-term ratings are forward-looking opinions of the relative credit risks of financial obligations with an original maturity of thirteen months or less and reflect both on the likelihood of a default or impairment on contractual financial obligations and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default or impairment.

Moody's employs the following designations to indicate the relative repayment ability of rated issuers:

"P-1" – Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Prime-1 have a superior ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

"P-2" – Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Prime-2 have a strong ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

"P-3" – Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Prime-3 have an acceptable ability to repay short-term obligations.

"NP" – Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Not Prime do not fall within any of the Prime rating categories.

"NR" – Is assigned to an unrated issuer.

**Fitch, Inc. / Fitch Ratings Ltd. ("Fitch")** short-term issuer or obligation rating is based in all cases on the short-term vulnerability to default of the rated entity and relates to the capacity to meet financial obligations in accordance with the documentation governing the relevant obligation. Short-term deposit ratings may be adjusted for loss severity. Short-term ratings are assigned to obligations whose initial maturity is viewed as "short-term" based on market convention. Typically, this means up to 13 months for corporate, sovereign, and structured obligations and up to 36 months for obligations in U.S. public finance markets. The following summarizes the rating categories used by Fitch for short-term obligations:

"F1" – Securities possess the highest short-term credit quality. This designation indicates the strongest intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments; may have an added "+" to denote any exceptionally strong credit feature.

"F2" – Securities possess good short-term credit quality. This designation indicates good intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments.

"F3" – Securities possess fair short-term credit quality. This designation indicates that the intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is adequate.

"B" – Securities possess speculative short-term credit quality. This designation indicates minimal capacity for timely payment of financial commitments, plus heightened vulnerability to near term adverse changes in financial and economic conditions.

"C" – Securities possess high short-term default risk. Default is a real possibility.

"RD" – Restricted default. Indicates an entity that has defaulted on one or more of its financial commitments, although it continues to meet other financial obligations. Typically applicable to entity ratings only.

"D" – Default. Indicates a broad-based default event for an entity, or the default of a short-term obligation.

Plus (+) or minus (-) – The "F1" rating may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show the relative status within that major rating category.

"NR" – Is assigned to an unrated issue of a rated issuer.

The **DBRS Morningstar® Ratings Limited ("DBRS Morningstar")** short-term debt rating scale provides an opinion on the risk that an issuer will not meet its short-term financial obligations in a timely manner. Ratings are based on quantitative and qualitative considerations relevant to the issuer and the relative ranking of claims. The R-1 and R-2 rating categories are further denoted by the sub-categories "(high)", "(middle)", and "(low)".

The following summarizes the ratings used by DBRS Morningstar for commercial paper and short-term debt:

"R-1 (high)" - Short-term debt rated "R-1 (high)" is of the highest credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is exceptionally high. Unlikely to be adversely affected by future events.

"R-1 (middle)" – Short-term debt rated "R-1 (middle)" is of superior credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is very high. Differs from "R-1 (high)" by a relatively modest degree. Unlikely to be significantly vulnerable to future events.

"R-1 (low)" – Short-term debt rated "R-1 (low)" is of good credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is substantial. Overall strength is not as favorable as higher rating categories. May be vulnerable to future events, but qualifying negative factors are considered manageable.

"R-2 (high)" – Short-term debt rated "R-2 (high)" is considered to be at the upper end of adequate credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is acceptable. May be vulnerable to future events.

"R-2 (middle)" – Short-term debt rated "R-2 (middle)" is considered to be of adequate credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is acceptable. May be vulnerable to future events or may be exposed to other factors that could reduce credit quality.

"R-2 (low)" – Short-term debt rated "R-2 (low)" is considered to be at the lower end of adequate credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is acceptable. May be vulnerable to future events. A number of challenges are present that could affect the issuer's ability to meet such obligations.

"R-3" – Short-term debt rated "R-3" is considered to be at the lowest end of adequate credit quality. There is a capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due. May be vulnerable to future events and the certainty of meeting such obligations could be impacted by a variety of developments.

"R-4" – Short-term debt rated "R-4" is considered to be of speculative credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is uncertain.

"R-5" – Short-term debt rated "R-5" is considered to be of highly speculative credit quality. There is a high level of uncertainty as to the capacity to meet short-term financial obligations as they fall due.

"D" – Short-term debt rated "D" is assigned when the issuer has filed under any applicable bankruptcy, insolvency or winding up statute or there is a failure to satisfy an obligation after the exhaustion of grace periods, a downgrade to "D" may occur. DBRS Morningstar may also use "SD" (Selective Default) in cases where only some securities are impacted, such as the case of a "distressed exchange".

## Long-Term Credit Ratings

The following summarizes the ratings used by *S&P Global Ratings* for long-term issues:

"AAA" – An obligation rated "AAA" has the highest rating assigned by S&P Global Ratings. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is extremely strong.

"AA" – An obligation rated "AA" differs from the highest-rated obligations only to a small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is very strong.

"A" – An obligation rated "A" is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher-rated categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is still strong.

"BBB" – An obligation rated "BBB" exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

"BB," "B," "CCC," "CC" and "C" – Obligations rated "BB," "B," "CCC," "CC" and "C" are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. "BB" indicates the least degree of speculation and "C" the highest. While such obligations will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions.

"BB" – An obligation rated "BB" is less vulnerable to nonpayment than other speculative issues. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions that could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

"B" – An obligation rated "B" is more vulnerable to nonpayment than obligations rated "BB", but the obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

"CCC" – An obligation rated "CCC" is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. In the event of adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, the obligor is not likely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

"CC" – An obligation rated "CC" is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment. The "CC" rating is used when a default has not yet occurred but S&P Global Ratings expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.

"C" – An obligation rated "C" is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment, and the obligation is expected to have lower relative seniority or lower ultimate recovery compared with obligations that are rated higher.

"D" – An obligation rated "D" is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the "D" rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless S&P Global Ratings believes that such payments will be made within five business days in the absence of a stated grace period or within the earlier of the stated grace period or 30 calendar days. The "D" rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to "D" if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.

Plus (+) or minus (-) – The ratings from "AA" to "CCC" may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the rating categories.

"NR" – This indicates that a rating has not been assigned, or is no longer assigned.

Local Currency and Foreign Currency Risks - S&P Global Ratings' issuer credit ratings make a distinction between foreign currency ratings and local currency ratings. An issuer's foreign currency rating will differ from its local currency rating on it when the obligor has a different capacity to meet its obligations denominated in its local currency, versus obligations denominated in a foreign currency.

**Moody's** long-term ratings are forward-looking opinions of the relative credit risks of financial obligations with an original maturity of one year or more. Such ratings reflect both on the likelihood of default or impairment on contractual financial obligations and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default or impairment. The following summarizes the ratings used by Moody's for long-term debt:

"Aaa" – Obligations rated "Aaa" are judged to be of the highest quality, subject to the lowest level of credit risk.

"Aa" – Obligations rated "Aa" are judged to be of high quality and are subject to very low credit risk.

"A" – Obligations rated "A" are judged to be upper-medium grade and are subject to low credit risk.

"Baa" – Obligations rated "Baa" are judged to be medium-grade and subject to moderate credit risk and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics.

"Ba" – Obligations rated "Ba" are judged to be speculative and are subject to substantial credit risk.

"B" – Obligations rated "B" are considered speculative and are subject to high credit risk.

"Caa" – Obligations rated "Caa" are judged to be speculative of poor standing and are subject to very high credit risk.

"Ca" – Obligations rated "Ca" are highly speculative and are likely in, or very near, default, with some prospect of recovery of principal and interest.

"C" – Obligations rated "C" are the lowest rated and are typically in default, with little prospect for recovery of principal or interest.

Note: Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from "Aa" through "Caa." The modifier 1 indicates that the obligation ranks in the higher end of its generic rating category; the modifier 2 indicates a mid-range ranking; and the modifier 3 indicates a ranking in the lower end of that generic rating category.

"NR" – Is assigned to unrated obligations.

The following summarizes long-term ratings used by **Fitch**:

"AAA" – Securities considered to be of the highest credit quality. "AAA" ratings denote the lowest expectation of credit risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

"AA" – Securities considered to be of very high credit quality. "AA" ratings denote expectations of very low credit risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

"A" – Securities considered to be of high credit quality. "A" ratings denote expectations of low credit risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

"BBB" – Securities considered to be of good credit quality. "BBB" ratings indicate that expectations of credit risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.

"BB" – Securities considered to be speculative. "BB" ratings indicate that there is an elevated vulnerability to credit risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time; however, business or financial alternatives may be available to allow financial commitments to be met.

"B" – Securities considered to be highly speculative. "B" ratings indicate that material credit risk is present.

"CCC" – A "CCC" rating indicates that substantial credit risk is present.

"CC" – A "CC" rating indicates very high levels of credit risk.

"C" – A "C" rating indicates exceptionally high levels of credit risk.

Defaulted obligations typically are not assigned "RD" or "D" ratings but are instead rated in the "CCC" to "C" rating categories, depending on their recovery prospects and other relevant characteristics. Fitch believes that this approach better aligns obligations that have comparable overall expected loss but varying vulnerability to default and loss.

Plus (+) or minus (-) may be appended to a rating to denote relative status within major rating categories. Such suffixes are not added to the "AAA" obligation rating category, or to corporate finance obligation ratings in the categories below "CCC".

"NR" – Is assigned to an unrated issue of a rated issuer.

The **DBRS** Morningstar long-term rating scale provides an opinion on the risk of default. That is, the risk that an issuer will fail to satisfy its financial obligations in accordance with the terms under which an obligation has been issued. Ratings are based on quantitative and qualitative considerations relevant to the issuer, and the relative ranking of claims. All rating categories other than AAA and D also contain subcategories "(high)" and "(low)". The absence of either a "(high)" or "(low)" designation indicates the rating is in the middle of the category. The following summarizes the ratings used by DBRS Morningstar for long-term debt:

"AAA" – Long-term debt rated "AAA" is of the highest credit quality. The capacity for the payment of financial obligations is exceptionally high and unlikely to be adversely affected by future events.

"AA" – Long-term debt rated "AA" is of superior credit quality. The capacity for the payment of financial obligations is considered high. Credit quality differs from "AAA" only to a small degree. Unlikely to be significantly vulnerable to future events.

"A" – Long-term debt rated "A" is of good credit quality. The capacity for the payment of financial obligations is substantial, but of lesser credit quality than "AA." May be vulnerable to future events, but qualifying negative factors are considered manageable.

"BBB" – Long-term debt rated "BBB" is of adequate credit quality. The capacity for the payment of financial obligations is considered acceptable. May be vulnerable to future events.

"BB" – Long-term debt rated "BB" is of speculative, non-investment grade credit quality. The capacity for the payment of financial obligations is uncertain. Vulnerable to future events.

"B" – Long-term debt rated "B" is of highly speculative credit quality. There is a high level of uncertainty as to the capacity to meet financial obligations.

"CCC", "CC" and "C" – Long-term debt rated in any of these categories is of very highly speculative credit quality. In danger of defaulting on financial obligations. There is little difference between these three categories, although "CC" and "C" ratings are normally applied to obligations that are seen as highly likely to default, or subordinated to obligations rated in the "CCC" to "B" range. Obligations in respect of which default has not technically taken place but is considered inevitable may be rated in the "C" category.

"D" – A security rated "D" is assigned when the issuer has filed under any applicable bankruptcy, insolvency or winding up statute or there is a failure to satisfy an obligation after the exhaustion of grace periods, a downgrade to "D" may occur. DBRS Morningstar may also use "SD" (Selective Default) in cases where only some securities are impacted, such as the case of a "distressed exchange".

### **Municipal Note Ratings**

An *S&P Global Ratings* U.S. municipal note rating reflects S&P Global Ratings' opinion about the liquidity factors and market access risks unique to the notes. Notes due in three years or less will likely receive a note rating. Notes with an original maturity of more than three years will most likely receive a long-term debt rating. In determining which type of rating, if any, to assign, S&P Global Ratings' analysis will review the following considerations:

- h Amortization schedule - the larger the final maturity relative to other maturities, the more likely it will be treated as a note; and
- h Source of payment - the more dependent the issue is on the market for its refinancing, the more likely it will be treated as a note.

Municipal Short-Term Note rating symbols are as follows:

"SP-1" – A municipal note rated "SP-1" exhibits a strong capacity to pay principal and interest. An issue determined to possess a very strong capacity to pay debt service is given a plus (+) designation.

"SP-2" – A municipal note rated "SP-2" exhibits a satisfactory capacity to pay principal and interest, with some vulnerability to adverse financial and economic changes over the term of the notes.

"SP-3" – A municipal note rated "SP-3" exhibits a speculative capacity to pay principal and interest.

"D" – This rating is assigned upon failure to pay the note when due, completion of a distressed exchange offer, or the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions.

*Moody's* uses the global short-term Prime rating scale (listed above under Short-Term Credit Ratings) for commercial paper issued by U.S. municipalities and nonprofits. These commercial paper programs may be backed by external letters of credit or liquidity facilities, or by an issuer's self-liquidity.

For other short-term municipal obligations, Moody's uses one of two other short-term rating scales, the Municipal Investment Grade ("MIG") and Variable Municipal Investment Grade ("VMIG") scales provided below.

Moody's uses the MIG scale for U.S. municipal cash flow notes, bond anticipation notes and certain other short-term obligations, which typically mature in three years or less. Under certain circumstances, Moody's uses the MIG scale for bond anticipation notes with maturities of up to five years.

#### MIG Scale

"MIG-1" – This designation denotes superior credit quality. Excellent protection is afforded by established cash flows, highly reliable liquidity support, or demonstrated broad-based access to the market for refinancing.

"MIG-2" – This designation denotes strong credit quality. Margins of protection are ample, although not as large as in the preceding group.

"MIG-3" – This designation denotes acceptable credit quality. Liquidity and cash-flow protection may be narrow, and market access for refinancing is likely to be less well-established.

"SG" – This designation denotes speculative-grade credit quality. Debt instruments in this category may lack sufficient margins of protection.

"NR" – Is assigned to an unrated obligation.

In the case of variable rate demand obligations ("VRDOs"), a two-component rating is assigned: a long or short-term debt rating and a demand obligation rating. The long-term rating addresses the issuer's ability to meet scheduled principal and interests payments. The short-term demand obligation rating addresses the ability of the issuer or the liquidity provider to make payments associated with the purchase-price-upon demand feature ("demand feature") of the VRDO. The short-term demand obligation rating uses the VMIG scale. VMIG ratings with liquidity support use as an input the short-term Counterparty Risk Assessment of the support provider, or the long-term rating of the underlying obligor in the absence of third party liquidity support. Transitions of VMIG Ratings of demand obligations with conditional liquidity support differ from transitions on the Prime scale to reflect the risk that external liquidity support will terminate if the issuer's long-term rating drops below investment grade.



Moody's typically assigns the VMIG short-term demand obligation rating if the frequency of the demand feature is less than every three years. If the frequency of the demand feature is less than three years but the purchase price is payable only with remarketing proceeds, the short-term demand obligation rating is "NR".

"VMIG-1" – This designation denotes superior credit quality. Excellent protection is afforded by the superior short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections that ensure the timely payment of purchase price upon demand.

"VMIG-2" – This designation denotes strong credit quality. Good protection is afforded by the strong short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections that ensure the timely payment of purchase price upon demand.

"VMIG-3" – This designation denotes acceptable credit quality. Adequate protection is afforded by the satisfactory short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections that ensure the timely payment of purchase price upon demand.

"SG" – This designation denotes speculative-grade credit quality. Demand features rated in this category may be supported by a liquidity provider that does not have a sufficiently strong short-term rating or may lack the structural and/or legal protections necessary to ensure the timely payment of purchase price upon demand.

"NR" – Is assigned to an unrated obligation.

### **About Credit Ratings**

An *S&P Global Ratings* issue credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to a specific financial obligation, a specific class of financial obligations, or a specific financial program (including ratings on medium-term note programs and commercial paper programs). It takes into consideration the creditworthiness of guarantors, insurers, or other forms of credit enhancement on the obligation and takes into account the currency in which the obligation is denominated. The opinion reflects S&P Global Ratings' view of the obligor's capacity and willingness to meet its financial commitments as they come due, and this opinion may assess terms, such as collateral security and subordination, which could affect ultimate payment in the event of default.

Ratings assigned on *Moody's* global long-term and short-term rating scales are forward-looking opinions of the relative credit risks of financial obligations issued by non-financial corporates, financial institutions, structured finance vehicles, project finance vehicles, and public sector entities.

*Fitch's* credit ratings relating to issuers are an opinion on the relative ability of an entity to meet financial commitments, such as interest, preferred dividends, repayment of principal, insurance claims or counterparty obligations. Fitch credit ratings are used by investors as indications of the likelihood of receiving the money owed to them in accordance with the terms on which they invested. Fitch's credit ratings cover the global spectrum of corporate, sovereign financial, bank, insurance, and public finance entities (including supranational and sub-national entities) and the securities or other obligations they issue, as well as structured finance securities backed by receivables or other financial assets.

*DBRS Morningstar* provides independent credit ratings services for financial institutions, corporate and sovereign entities and structured finance products and instruments. Credit ratings are forward-looking opinions about credit risk that reflect the creditworthiness of an entity or security. The Rating Committee process facilitates rating decisions, which are a collective assessment of DBRS Morningstar's opinion rather than the view of an individual analyst. Ratings are based on sufficient information that incorporates both global and local considerations and the use of approved methodologies. They are independent of any actual or perceived conflicts of interest. DBRS Morningstar credit ratings are formed and disseminated based on established methodologies, models and criteria (Methodologies) that apply to entities and securities that we rate, including corporate finance issuers, financial institutions, insurance companies, public finance and sovereign entities as well as Structured Finance transactions. DBRS Morningstar methodologies are periodically reviewed and updated by the team.