THE FIDUCIARY STANDARD

Investment advisors are held to the fiduciary standard. A fiduciary advisor has a legal and ethical obligation to put their clients' needs and interests first. That means helping clients make decisions in their best interests and above the interests of the advisor. We have always kept the fiduciary standard at the core of our firm and our mission to our clients.

Investment advisor representatives who are held to the fiduciary standard must adhere to the following guidelines:

- To act in the interest of the client with the exclusive purpose of providing benefits to the client.
- To pursue the necessary education or consult with outside experts should the need arise.
- To carry out responsibilities prudently, diversify plan investments, and disclose any and all fees and expenses to the client.

If a fiduciary advisor fails to meet any of these standards, they may be personally liable for any damages caused to their client. In contrast, nonfiduciary advisors, or those who are held to the less stringent "suitability standard," are not required to act in their clients' best interests. They are not required to disclose the same level of information to their clients and do not necessarily have to recommend products that best fit their clients' situations.

HOW OUR FIDUCIARY STANDARD HELPS PROTECT YOU:

As our client, your needs will always be put first. We hold ourselves to the highest professional and personal standards, and this commitment is reflected in our service. Our sole focus is and always has been on your financial needs and goals and how we can best help you pursue them.

We always aim to act in your best interest. We take all measures to avoid conflicts of interest, but if they arise and are unavoidable, we fully disclose them to you. We work to provide a high level of transparency around fees and expenses associated with your accounts, which means you will always know what you own and what you're paying for it.

As an independent and objective resource, we have no vested interest in promoting a particular product or service. We strive to provide truly unbiased guidance that is unencumbered by any potential conflicts of interest and focused on your unique needs and goals. Our only interest is that your financial objectives are met.

UNDERSTANDING THE FIDUCIARY STANDARD

Traditionally, there have been two types of standards in financial services: the suitability standard and the fiduciary standard. The suitability standard is defined as determining whether an investment product or strategy is "suitable" for the investor based on their financial objectives and risk comfort level. Under this rule, an advisor simply determines whether a recommended product or strategy is suitable for the client. The fiduciary standard is a higher level of responsibility for the advisor – it goes beyond suitability and requires that any advice about products and strategies be provided in the best interests of the investor. The fiduciary standard of care requires that the advisor takes into consideration whether the fees are reasonable, whether there are any conflicts of interest, and whether the investments are adequately diversified.

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