

Form ADV Part 3 – Client Relationship Summary

Date: 6/22/2020

Item 1: Introduction

STERLING INVESTMENT COUNSEL, LLC is an investment adviser registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission offering advisory accounts and services. This document gives you a summary of the types of services and fees we offer. Please visit www.investor.gov/CRS for free, simple tools to research firms and for educational materials about broker-dealers, investment advisers, and investing.

Item 2: Relationships and Services

Questions to ask us: Given my financial situation, should I choose an investment advisory service? Why or why not? How will you choose investments to recommend to me? What is your relevant experience, including your licenses, education and other qualifications? What do these qualifications mean?

What investment services and advice can you provide me? Our firm primarily offers the following investment advisory services to retail clients: portfolio management and financial planning. As part of our standard services, we typically monitor client accounts on a daily basis. Our firm has discretionary management without any material limitations. We limit the types of investments that are recommended since not every type of investment vehicle is needed to create an appropriate portfolio. We do not have any account minimums. Please also see our Form ADV Part 2A ("[Brochure](#)"), specifically Items 4 & 7.

Item 3: Fees, Costs, Conflicts, and Standard of Conduct

Questions to ask us: Help me understand how these fees and costs might affect my investments. If I give you \$10,000 to invest, how much will go to fees and costs, and how much will be invested for me? What are your legal obligations to me when acting as my investment adviser? How else does your firm make money and what conflicts of interest do you have? How might your conflicts of interest affect me, and how will you address them?

What fees will I pay? Our fees vary depending on the services you receive. Additionally, the amount of assets in your account affects our advisory fee; the more assets you have in your advisory account, the more you will pay us and thus we have an incentive to increase those assets in order to increase our fee. For hourly fee arrangements, each additional hour (or portion thereof) we spend working for you would increase the advisory fee. Our fixed fee arrangements are based on the amount of work we expect to perform for you, so material changes in that amount of work will affect the advisory fee we quote you. Portfolio management fees are typically charged quarterly in advance. You pay our fees even if you do not have any transactions and the advisory fee paid to us generally does not vary based on the type of investments selected. Please also see Items 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 of our [Brochure](#).

Third Party Costs: Some investments (e.g., mutual funds, variable annuities, etc.) impose additional fees (e.g., transactional fees and product-level fees) that reduce the value of your investment over time. You may also pay fees to a custodian that will hold your assets. Additionally, you will typically pay transaction fees when we buy and sell an investment for your account. **You will pay fees and costs whether you make or lose money on your investments. Fees and costs will reduce any amount of money you make on your investments over time. Please make sure you understand what fees and costs you are paying.** Please also see our [Brochure](#) for additional details.

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Conflicts of Interest: *When we act as your investment adviser, we have to act in your best interest and not put our interest ahead of yours. As described in Item 2, some of our financial professionals are also registered representatives of an unaffiliated broker-dealer. In this capacity, they may provide brokerage services for which they receive transaction-based commissions. This practice presents a conflict of interest because these persons have an incentive to recommend products based on the compensation received rather than solely on your needs. You should understand and ask us about these conflicts because they can affect the investment advice we provide you. For example, some of our Financial Professionals are registered representatives of LPL Financial LLC (“LPL”), an SEC registered broker-dealer and investment adviser. Your Financial Professional may offer you brokerage services through LPL or investment advisory services through our firm. Brokerage services and investment advisory services are different, and the fees we, and LPL, charge for those services are different. It is important that you understand the differences. In particular, your Financial Professional may earn additional transaction-based compensation and have additional conflicts of interest as a result of providing brokerage services through LPL. You are encouraged to learn more about LPL by reviewing <https://www.lpl.com/disclosures.html> and having a discussion with your Financial Professional.*

How do your financial professionals make money? Primarily, we and our financial professionals benefit from the advisory services we provide to you because of the advisory fees we receive from you. This compensation may vary based on different factors, such as those listed above in this Item. As indicated above, our financial professionals also have the ability to receive commissions from clients. Please also see Item 10 of our [Brochure](#) for additional details.

Item 4: Disciplinary History

***Questions to ask us:** As a financial professional, do you have any disciplinary history? For what type of conduct?*

Do you or your financial professionals have legal or disciplinary history? We do not have legal and disciplinary events. Visit <https://www.investor.gov/> for a free, simple search tool to research us and our financial professionals.

Item 5: Additional Information

***Questions to ask us:** Who is my primary contact person? Is he or she a representative of an investment adviser or a broker-dealer? Who can I talk to if I have concerns about how this person is treating me?*

For additional information on our advisory services, see our [Brochure](#) available at <https://adviserinfo.sec.gov/firm/summary/282624> and any individual brochure supplement your representative provides. If you have any questions, need additional up-to-date information, or want another copy of this Client Relationship Summary, then please contact us at (716) 783-7054.

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Exhibit A – Material Changes to Client Relationship Summary

This is the initial version of our Client Relationship Summary.