

**Form ADV Part 2A – Firm Brochure  
Item 1: Cover Page  
February 2025**

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This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Guardian Wealth Management, LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact our Chief Compliance Officer, James Motte by telephone at 423-510-0409 or email at [james@guardianwealth.com](mailto:james@guardianwealth.com). The information in this brochure has not been approved or verified by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or by any State Securities Authority.

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

Please note that the use of the term "registered investment adviser" and description of Guardian Wealth Management, LLC. and/or our associates as "registered" does not imply a certain level of skill or training. You are encouraged to review this Brochure and Brochure Supplements for our firms' associates who advise you for more information on the qualifications of our firm and its employees.

## **Item 2: Material Changes**

Guardian Wealth Management, LLC. is required to advise you of any material changes to our Firm Brochure ("Brochure") from our last annual update, identify those changes on the cover page of our Brochure or on the page immediately following the cover page, or in a separate communication accompanying our Brochure. We must state clearly that we are discussing only material changes since the last annual update of our Brochure, and we must provide the date of the last annual update of our Brochure.

Please note that we do not have to provide this information to a client or prospective client who has not received a previous version of our brochure.

The date of the last annual update of our Brochure was filed on February 27, 2024. At this time, the following material changes are reported about our Brochure:

- Firm Ownership updated in Item 4: Advisory Business.

### Item 3: Table Of Contents

Item 1: Cover Page .....	1
Item 2: Material Changes .....	2
Item 3: Table Of Contents .....	3
Item 4: Advisory Business .....	4
Item 5: Fees & Compensation .....	6
Item 6: Performance-Based Fees & Side-By-Side Management .....	7
Item 7: Types of Clients & Account Requirements .....	8
Item 8: Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies & Risk of Loss.....	8
Item 9: Disciplinary Information .....	9
Item 10: Other Financial Industry Activities & Affiliations .....	9
Item 11: Code of Ethics, Participation or Interest in Client Transactions & Personal Trading .....	10
Item 12: Brokerage Practices .....	11
Item 13: Review of Accounts or Financial Plans.....	15
Item 14: Client Referrals & Other Compensation .....	15
Item 15: Custody .....	16
Item 16: Investment Discretion .....	17
Item 17: Voting Client Securities .....	17
Item 18: Financial Information .....	19

## Item 4: Advisory Business

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We specialize in the following types of services: Asset Management and Financial Planning & Consultations.

A. Description of our advisory firm, including how long we have been in business and our principal owner(s)<sup>1</sup>.

We are dedicated to providing individuals and other types of clients with a wide array of investment advisory services. Our firm is a corporation formed in the State of Tennessee. Our firm has been in business as an investment adviser since 1997 and is owned as follows:

- GWM, LLC. who is jointly owned by Donald VanLandingham and Mauldin and Jenkins, LLC

B. Description of the types of advisory services we offer.

(i) Asset Management:

We emphasize continuous and regular account supervision. As part of our asset management service, we generally create a portfolio consisting of exchange traded funds (“ETFs”) and mutual funds. The client’s individual investment strategy is tailored to their specific needs and may include some or all of the previously mentioned securities. Each portfolio will be initially designed to meet a particular investment goal, which we determine to be suitable to the client’s circumstances. Once the appropriate portfolio has been determined, we review the portfolio at least quarterly and if necessary, rebalance the portfolio based upon the client’s individual needs, stated goals and objectives.

(ii) Financial Planning & Consultations:

We provide a variety of financial planning and consultation services to individuals, families and other clients regarding the management of their financial resources based upon an analysis of client’s current situation, goals, and objectives. Generally, such financial planning services will involve preparing a financial plan or rendering a financial consultation for client based on the client’s financial goals and objectives. This planning or consulting may encompass one or more of the following areas: Investment Planning, Retirement Planning, Estate Planning, Charitable Planning, Education Planning, Corporate and Personal Tax Planning, Cost Segregation Study, Corporate Structure, Real Estate Analysis, Mortgage/Debt

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that: (1) For purposes of this item, our principal owners include the persons we list as owning 25% or more of our firm on Schedule A of Part 1A of Form ADV (Ownership Codes C, D or E). (2) If we are a publicly held company without a 25% shareholder, we simply need to disclose that we are publicly held. (3) If an individual or company owns 25% or more of our firm through subsidiaries, we must identify the individual or parent company and intermediate subsidiaries. If we are a state-registered adviser, on Form ADV Part 2A Page 2, we must identify all intermediate subsidiaries. If we are an SEC-registered adviser, we must identify intermediate subsidiaries that are publicly held, but not other intermediate subsidiaries.

Analysis, Insurance Analysis, Lines of Credit Evaluation, Business and Personal Financial Planning.

Our written financial plans or financial consultations rendered to clients usually include general recommendations for a course of activity or specific actions to be taken by the clients. For example, recommendations may be made that the clients begin or revise investment programs, create or revise wills or trusts, obtain or revise insurance coverage, commence or alter retirement savings, or establish education or charitable giving programs. It should also be noted that we refer clients to an accountant, attorney or other specialist, as necessary for non-advisory related services. For written financial planning engagements, we provide our clients with a written summary of their financial situation, observations, and recommendations. For financial consulting engagements, we usually do not provide our clients with a written summary of our observations and recommendations as the process is less formal than our planning service. Plans or consultations are typically completed within three (3) months of the client signing a contract with us, assuming that all the information and documents we request from the client are provided to us promptly. Implementation of the recommendations will be at the discretion of the client.

C. Explanation of whether (and, if so, how) we tailor our advisory services to the individual needs of clients, whether clients may impose restrictions on investing in certain securities or types of securities.

(i) Individual Tailoring of Advice to Clients:

We offer individualized investment advice to clients utilizing our Asset Management Services. We also offer general investment advice to clients utilizing our Financial Planning and Consultation services.

(ii) Ability of Clients to Impose Restrictions on Investing in Certain Securities or Types of Securities:

We usually do not allow clients to impose restrictions on investing in certain securities or types of securities due to the level of difficulty this would entail in managing their account. In the rare instance that we would allow restrictions, it would be limited to our Asset Management Services. We do not manage assets through our other services.

D. Participation in Wrap Fee Programs.

We do not offer wrap fee programs.

E. Disclosure of the amount of client assets we manage on a discretionary basis and the amount of client assets we manage on a non-discretionary basis as of December 31, 2024.

We manage<sup>2</sup> \$340,429,000 on a discretionary basis and \$2,669,000 on a non-discretionary basis.

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that our method for computing the amount of "client assets we manage" can be different from the method for computing "assets under management" required for Item 5.F in Part 1A of Form ADV. However, we have chosen to follow the method outlined for Item 5.F in Part 1A of Form ADV. If we decide to use a different method at a later date to compute "client assets we manage," we must keep documentation describing the method we use and inform you of the change. The amount of assets we manage may be disclosed by rounding

## Item 5: Fees & Compensation

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We are required to describe our brokerage, custody, fees and fund expenses so you will know how much you are charged and for the advisory services provided to you. Our fees are generally not negotiable until the assets exceed \$2,000,000.

A. Description of how we are compensated for our advisory services provided to you.

(i) Asset Management:

**Annualized Fees**

<b>From:</b>	<b>To:</b>	<b>Per Year:</b>
\$0	\$250,000	1.50%
\$250,001	\$500,000	1.25%
\$500,001	\$1,000,000	1.00%
\$1,000,001	\$2,000,000	0.75%
Over \$2,000,000		Negotiable

(ii) Financial Planning & Consultations:

We charge on an hourly or flat fee basis for financial planning and consultation services. The total estimated fee, as well as the ultimate fee that we charge you, is based on the scope and complexity of our engagement with you. Our hourly fees are \$200 for financial advisors with a \$200 minimum. Fees for a comprehensive Financial Plan are generally \$2,000.

B. Description of whether we deduct fees from clients' assets or bill clients for fees incurred.

(i) Asset Management:

Our fees are paid quarterly in advance and are due on the first day of the calendar quarter. The fees are based on the account's value as of the last business day of the prior calendar quarter month and are pro-rated for cash inflows which change the fee by \$30. Fees are pro-rated for accounts opened during the quarter and are billed at the next quarterly billing date. Fees will be automatically deducted from your managed account. Employees and their families and the Investment Adviser's family may qualify for reduced fees. As part of this process, you understand and acknowledge the following:

- a) Your independent custodian sends statements at least quarterly to you showing all disbursements for your account, including the amount of the advisory fees paid to us;
- b) You provide authorization permitting us to be directly paid by these terms;

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to the nearest \$100,000. Our "as of" date must not be more than three months before the date we last updated our Brochure in response to Item 4.E of Form ADV Part 2A.

- c) We send a copy of our invoice to you quarterly;
- d) Our invoice includes a legend as required by paragraph (a)(2) of Rule 206(4)-2 under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940.\*\*

\*We do not offer direct billing as an option to our asset management clients.

\*\*The legend urges the client to compare the information provided in their billing statements with the statements from the qualified custodian.

(ii) Financial Planning & Consultations:

Certain engagements may require a retainer of fifty-percent (50%) of the ultimate financial planning or consultation fee with the remainder of the fee directly billed to you and due to us within thirty (30) days of your financial plan being delivered or consultation rendered to you. In all cases, we will not require a retainer exceeding \$1,200 when services cannot be rendered within three (3) months.

C. Description of any other types of fees or expenses clients may pay in connection with our advisory services, such as custodian fees or mutual fund expenses.

Clients will incur transaction charges for trades executed in their accounts. These transaction fees are separate from our fees and will be disclosed by the firm that the trades are executed through. Custodians may also charge accounts for Retirement Plan fees and Administration fees. In addition, clients will pay the following separately incurred expenses, of which we do not receive any part: charges imposed directly by a mutual fund, index fund, or exchange traded fund which shall be disclosed in the fund's prospectus (i.e., fund management fees and other fund expenses).

D. Client's advisory fees are due quarterly in advance.

We charge our advisory fees quarterly in advance. In the event that you wish to terminate our services, we will refund the unearned portion of our advisory fee to you. You need to contact us with 30 days written notice and state that you wish to terminate our services. Upon receipt of your letter of termination, we will proceed to close out your account and process a pro-rata refund of unearned advisory fees.

E. Commissionable Securities Sales.

We do not sell securities for a commission. In order to sell securities for a commission, we would need to have our associated persons registered with a broker-dealer. We have chosen not to do so.

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

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We do not charge performance fees to our clients.

## Item 7: Types of Clients & Account Requirements

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We have the following types of clients:

- Individuals; and
- High Net Worth Individuals.

Our requirements for opening and maintaining accounts or otherwise engaging us:

- We require a minimum account balance of \$500,000 for our asset management service. Generally, this minimum account balance requirement is negotiable depending on the client's existing relationship with the firm.
- We also require a minimum advisory fee of \$5,000 annually, excluding clients by association who have a Qualified Retirement Plan participant account (i.e. Simple IRA, 401(k), SEP IRA, etc.), whose account assets are less than \$350,000. Fees for comprehensive financial planning services are generally \$2,000.

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

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A. Description of the methods of analysis and investment strategies we use in formulating investment advice or managing assets.

### Methods of Analysis:

- Fundamental;

### Investment Strategies We Use:

- Long term purchases (securities held at least a year);

### Please Note:

Investing in securities involves the risk of decline in values and that is something that clients should be prepared to bear. While the stock market may increase and your account(s) could enjoy a gain, it is also possible that the stock market may decrease and your account(s) could decline in value. It is important that you understand the risks associated with investing in the stock market, you are appropriately diversified in your investments, and ask us any questions you may have.

B. We primarily use a particular method of analysis or strategy. The specific risks involved are:

Asset class diversification analysis based on Modern Portfolio Theory (MPT) and Efficient Market Hypothesis. MPT was theorized by Harry Markowitz in 1952. The theory looks at the portfolio performance based upon a combination of the assets' risk and return. MPT helps us understand through the use of mathematical quadratic equations, the relationship between risk and return. The set of portfolios that is the foundation of modern portfolio theory is known as the efficient frontier. For a given level of expected return, there is no other portfolio characterized by lower



risk. For a given level of risk, there is no portfolio with a higher expected return. The rational investor will choose the highest expected return with the lowest risk.

Investors attempt to find the optimum portfolio, balancing risk and return by using indifference curves. These measure the risk/reward preferences that an investor is willing to make along the efficient frontier. These curves do not intersect with one another since they represent different investor preferences. The slope of any curve is a function of the risk-averse nature of the investor. The higher the curve, the greater is the investor's aversion to risk. Portfolio possibilities are represented all along the efficient frontier curve, and the rational investor will seek out the optimum portfolio position. This occurs at a point where the highest indifference curve is tangent to the efficient frontier curve.

All possible portfolios below the line are attainable, but they may not maximize the return for the risk level assumed. No attainable portfolio can lie above the efficient frontier. Portfolios outside the efficient frontier are not included in the feasible set or array of possible options.

This is because no risk and expected return level is attainable at that point. Ultimately it is the individual who will have to decide what combination of risk and return in a portfolio is to be selected.

C. Our practices regarding cash balances in client accounts, including whether we invest cash balances for temporary purposes and, if so, how.

We generally invest the client's cash balances in Money Market Funds, FDIC Insured Deposit Accounts, Short-Term Taxable and Non-Taxable Municipal Bond Funds with duration of approximately a year. Ultimately, we try to achieve the highest return on our client's cash balances through relatively low-risk conservative investments. In most cases, at least a partial cash balance will be maintained in a Money Market Account so that our firm may debit advisory fees for our services related to comprehensive portfolio management, asset management service and portfolio monitoring, as applicable.

## **Item 9: Disciplinary Information**

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There are no legal or disciplinary events that are material to a client's or prospective client's evaluation of our advisory business or the integrity of our management.

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

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We have no other financial industry activities and affiliations to disclose.

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

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We recognize that the personal investment transactions of members and employees of our firm demand the application of a high Code of Ethics and require that all such transactions be carried out in a way that does not endanger the interest of any client. At the same time, we believe that if investment goals are similar for clients and for members and employees of our firm, it is logical and even desirable that there be common ownership of some securities.

Therefore, in order to prevent conflicts of interest, we have in place a set of procedures with respect to transactions effected by our members, officers and employees for their personal accounts<sup>3</sup>. In order to monitor compliance with our personal trading policy, we have a quarterly securities transaction reporting system for all of our associates.

Furthermore, our firm has established a Code of Ethics which applies to all of our associated persons. An investment adviser is considered a fiduciary. As a fiduciary, it is an investment adviser's responsibility to provide fair and full disclosure of all material facts and to act solely in the best interest of each of our clients at all times. We have a fiduciary duty to all clients. Our fiduciary duty is considered the core underlying principle for our Code of Ethics which also includes Insider Trading and Personal Securities Transactions Policies and Procedures. We require all of our supervised persons to conduct business with the highest level of ethical standards and to comply with all federal and state securities laws at all times. Upon employment or affiliation and at least annually thereafter, all supervised persons will sign an acknowledgement that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with our Code of Ethics. Our firm and supervised persons must conduct business in an honest, ethical, and fair manner and avoid all circumstances that might negatively affect or appear to affect our duty of complete loyalty to all clients. This disclosure is provided to give all clients a summary of our Code of Ethics. However, if a client or a potential client wishes to review our Code of Ethics in its entirety, a copy will be provided promptly upon request.

Related persons of our firm may buy or sell securities and other investments that are also recommended to clients. In order to minimize this conflict of interest, our related persons will place client interests ahead of their own interests and adhere to our firm's Code of Ethics, a copy of which is available upon request.

Related persons of our firm may buy or sell securities for themselves at or about the same time they buy or sell the same securities for client accounts. In order to minimize this conflict of interest, our related persons will place client interests ahead of their own interests and adhere to our firm's Code of Ethics, a copy of which is available upon request. If related persons' accounts are included in a block trade, our related persons will always trade personal accounts last.

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<sup>3</sup> For purposes of the policy, our associate's personal account generally includes any account (a) in the name of our associate, his/her spouse, his/her minor children or other dependents residing in the same household, (b) for which our associate is a trustee or executor, or (c) which our associate controls, including our client accounts which our associate controls and/or a member of his/her household has a direct or indirect beneficial interest in.

## Item 12: Brokerage Practices

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A. Description of the factors that we consider in selecting or recommending broker-dealers for client transactions and determining the reasonableness of their compensation (e.g., commissions).

We seek to recommend a custodian/broker who will hold your assets and execute transactions on terms that are overall most advantageous when compared to other available providers and their services. We consider a wide range of factors, including, among others, these:

- Ability to maintain the confidentiality of trading intentions
- Timeliness of execution
- Timeliness and accuracy of trade confirmations
- Liquidity of the securities traded
- Willingness to commit capital
- Ability to place trades in difficult market environments
- Research services provided
- Ability to provide investment ideas
- Execution facilitation services provided
- Record keeping services provided
- Custody services provided
- Frequency and correction of trading errors
- Ability to access a variety of market venues
- Expertise as it relates to specific securities
- Financial condition
- Business reputation

With this in consideration, our firm has an arrangement with Schwab Institutional, a division of Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. (“Schwab”). Schwab offers to independent investment advisers non-soft dollar services which include custody of securities, trade execution, clearance and settlement of transactions. We receive some non-soft dollar benefits from Schwab through our participation in the program. Please see the disclosure under Item 14 of this Brochure.

1. Research & Other Soft Dollar Benefits if we receive research or other products or services other than execution from a broker-dealer or a third party in connection with client securities transactions (“soft dollar benefits”), we are required to disclose our practices and discuss the conflicts of interest they create. Please note that we must disclose all soft dollar benefits we receive, including, in the case of research, both proprietary research (created or developed by the broker-dealer) and research created or developed by a third party.

Schwab may make certain research and brokerage services available at no additional cost to our firm. These services may be directly from independent research companies, as selected by our firm (within specific parameters). Research products and services provided by Schwab may include research reports on recommendations or other information about, particular companies or industries; economic surveys, data and analyses; financial

publications; portfolio evaluation services; financial database software and services; computerized news and pricing services; quotation equipment for use in running software used in investment decision-making; and other products or services that provide lawful and appropriate assistance by Schwab to our firm in the performance of our investment decision-making responsibilities.

- a. Explanation of when we use client brokerage commissions (or markups or markdowns) to obtain research or other products or services, and how we receive a benefit because our firm does not have to produce or pay for the research, products or services.

We do not use client brokerage commissions to obtain research or other products or services. The aforementioned research and brokerage services are used by our firm to manage accounts for which we have investment discretion. Without this arrangement, our firm might be compelled to purchase the same or similar services at our own expense.

- b. Incentive to select or recommend a broker-dealer based on our interest in receiving the research or other products or services, rather than on our clients' interest in receiving best execution.

As a result of receiving the services discussed in 12A(1)a of this Firm Brochure for no additional cost, we may have an incentive to continue to use or expand the use of Schwab's services. Our firm examined this potential conflict of interest when we chose to enter into the relationship with Schwab and we have determined that the relationship is in the best interest of our firm's clients and satisfies our client obligations, including our duty to seek best execution.

Schwab charges brokerage commissions and transaction fees for effecting certain securities transactions (i.e., transaction fees are charged for certain no-load mutual funds, commissions are charged for individual equity and debt securities transactions). Schwab enables us to obtain many no-load mutual funds without transaction charges and other no-load funds at nominal transaction charges. Schwab's commission rates are generally discounted from customary retail commission rates. However, the commission and transaction fees charged by Schwab may be higher or lower than those charged by other custodians and broker-dealers.

- c. Causing clients to pay commissions (or markups or markdowns) higher than those charged by other broker-dealers in return for soft dollar benefits (known as paying-up).

Our clients may pay a commission to Schwab that is higher than another qualified broker dealer might charge to affect the same transaction where we determine in good faith that the commission is reasonable in relation to the value of the brokerage and research services received. In seeking best execution, the determinative factor is not the lowest possible cost, but whether the transaction represents the best qualitative execution, taking into consideration the full range of a broker-dealer's services, including the value of research provided, execution capability, commission rates, and responsiveness. Accordingly, although we will seek competitive rates, to the benefit of all clients, we may not necessarily obtain the lowest possible commission rates for specific client account transactions.

- d. Disclosure of whether we use soft dollar benefits to service all of our clients' accounts or only those that paid for the benefits, as well as whether we seek to allocate soft dollar benefits to client accounts proportionately to the soft dollar credits the accounts generate.

Although the investment research products and services that may be obtained by our firm will generally be used to service all our clients, a brokerage commission paid by a specific client may be used to pay for research that is not used in managing that specific client's account.

Our relationship with Dimensional Fund Advisors ("DFA") gives you the opportunity to invest in the mutual funds and ETFs managed by them. DFA does offer use of their website, software and marketing materials because of our association with them, which we utilize.

- e. Description of the types of products and services our firm or any of our related persons acquired with client brokerage commissions (or markups or markdowns) within our last fiscal year.

We do not acquire client brokerage commissions (or markups or markdowns).

- f. Explanation of the procedures we used during our last fiscal year to direct client transactions to a particular broker-dealer in return for soft dollar benefits we received.

We do not receive any soft dollar relationships and do not direct client transactions to a particular broker-dealer in return for soft dollar benefits.

## 2. Brokerage for Client Referrals.

If we use client brokerage to compensate or otherwise reward brokers for client referrals, we must disclose this practice, the conflicts of interest it creates, and any procedures we used to direct client brokerage to referring brokers during the last fiscal year (i.e., the system of controls used by us when allocating brokerage)

Our firm does not receive brokerage for client referrals.

## 3. Directed Brokerage

- a. If we routinely recommend, request, or require that a client directs us to execute transactions through a specified broker-dealer, we are required to describe our practice or policy. Further, we must explain that not all advisers require their clients to direct brokerage. If our firm and the broker-dealer are affiliates or have another economic relationship that creates a material conflict of interest, we are further required to describe the relationship and discuss the conflicts of interest it presents by explaining that through the direction of brokerage we may be unable to achieve best execution of client transactions, and that this practice may cost our clients more money.

Our firm does have discretionary authority in making the determination of the brokers with whom orders for the purchase or sale of securities are placed for execution, and the commission rates at which such securities transactions are affected.

b. Special Considerations for ERISA Clients

A retirement or ERISA plan client may direct all or part of portfolio transactions for its account through a specific broker or dealer in order to obtain goods or services on behalf of the plan. Such direction is permitted provided that the goods and services provided are reasonable expenses of the plan incurred in the ordinary course of its business for which it otherwise would be obligated and empowered to pay. ERISA prohibits directed brokerage arrangements when the goods or services purchased are not for the exclusive benefit of the plan. Consequently, we will request that plan sponsors who direct plan brokerage provide us with a letter documenting that this arrangement will be for the exclusive benefit of the plan.

- c. If we permit a client to direct brokerage, we are required to describe our practice. If applicable, we must also explain that we may be unable to achieve best execution of your transactions. Directed brokerage may cost clients more money. For example, in a directed brokerage account, you may pay higher brokerage commissions because we may not be able to aggregate orders to reduce transaction costs, or you may receive less favorable prices on transactions.

We do not allow clients to direct brokerage.

- B. Discussion of whether, and under what conditions, we aggregate the purchase or sale of securities for various client accounts in quantities sufficient to obtain reduced transaction costs (known as bunching). If we do not bunch orders when we have the opportunity to do so, we are required to explain our practice and describe the costs to clients of not bunching.

We perform investment management services for various clients. There are occasions on which portfolio transactions may be executed as part of concurrent authorizations to purchase or sell the same security for numerous accounts served by our firm, which involve accounts with similar investment objectives. Although such concurrent authorizations potentially could be either advantageous or disadvantageous to any one or more particular accounts, they are affected only when we believe that to do so will be in the best interest of the effected accounts. When such concurrent authorizations occur, the objective is to allocate the executions in a manner which is deemed equitable to the accounts involved. In any given situation, we attempt to allocate trade executions in the most equitable manner possible, taking into consideration client objectives, current asset allocation and availability of funds using price averaging, proration and consistently non-arbitrary methods of allocation.

## Item 13: Review of Accounts or Financial Plans

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- A. Review of client accounts or financial plans, along with a description of the frequency and nature of our review, and the titles of our employees who conduct the review.

We review accounts on at least a quarterly basis for our clients subscribing to our Asset Management service. The nature of these reviews is to learn whether clients' accounts are in line with their investment objectives, appropriately positioned based on market conditions, and investment policies, if applicable. Only our Financial Advisors or Portfolio Managers will conduct reviews.

Financial planning clients do not receive reviews of their written plans unless they take action to schedule a financial consultation with us. We do not provide ongoing services to financial planning clients, but are willing to meet with such clients upon their request to discuss updates to their plans, changes in their circumstances, etc.

- B. Review of client accounts on other than a periodic basis, along with a description of the factors that trigger a review.

We may review client accounts more frequently than described above. Among the factors which may trigger an off-cycle review are major market or economic events, the client's life events, requests by the client, etc.

- C. Description of the content and indication of the frequency of written or verbal regular reports we provide to clients regarding their accounts.

We do provide written reports to clients. Generally verbal reports to clients will take place at least annually.

As mentioned in Item 13A of this Brochure, financial planning clients do not receive written or verbal updated reports regarding their financial plans unless they separately contract with us for a post-financial plan meeting or update to their initial written financial plan.

## Item 14: Client Referrals & Other Compensation

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- A. If someone who is not a client provides an economic benefit to our firm for providing investment advice or other advisory services to our clients, we must generally describe the arrangement. For purposes of this Item, economic benefits include any sales awards or other prizes.

As disclosed under Item 12 of this Brochure, we participate in Schwab's institutional customer program and we may recommend Schwab to Clients for custody and brokerage services. There is no direct link between our firm's participation in the program and the investment advice we give to our Clients, although we receive economic benefits through our participation in the program that are typically not available to Schwab retail investors. These benefits include the following



products and services (provided without cost or at a discount): receipt of duplicate Client statements and confirmations; research related products and tools; consulting services; access to a trading desk serving our firm's participants; access to block trading (which provides the ability to aggregate securities transactions for execution and then allocate the appropriate shares to Client accounts); the ability to have advisory fees deducted directly from Client accounts; access to an electronic communications network for Client order entry and account information; access to mutual funds with no transaction fees and to certain institutional money managers; and discounts on compliance, marketing, research, technology, and practice management products or services provided to us by third party vendors. Schwab may also have paid for business consulting and professional services received by our firm's related persons. Some of the products and services made available by Schwab through the program may benefit our firm but may not benefit our Client accounts. These products or services may assist us in managing and administering Client accounts, including accounts not maintained at Schwab. Other services made available by Schwab are intended to help us manage and further develop our business enterprise. The benefits received by our firm or our personnel through participation in the program do not depend on the amount of brokerage transactions directed to Schwab. Attendance fees for Schwab or DFA sponsored educational conferences may be made available to our supervised persons. As part of our fiduciary duties to our clients, we endeavor at all times to put the interests of our clients first. Clients should be aware, however, that the receipt of economic benefits by our firm or our related persons in and of itself creates a potential conflict of interest and may indirectly influence our firm's choice of Schwab for custody and brokerage services or use of DFA.

- B. If our firm or a related person directly or indirectly compensates any person who is not our employee for client referrals, we are required to describe the arrangement and the compensation.

We do not pay referral fees (non-commission based) to independent solicitors (non-registered representatives) for the referral of their clients to our firm in accordance with Rule 206 (4)-3 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940.

## **Item 15: Custody**

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All of our clients receive at least quarterly account statements directly from their custodians. Upon opening an account with a qualified custodian on a client's behalf, we promptly notify the client in writing of the qualified custodian's contact information. If we decide to also send account statements to clients, such notice and account statements include a legend that recommends that the client compare the account statements received from the qualified custodian with those received from our firm.

Our firm registers and complies with the following law being that we have Custody. The reason we have been deemed to have custody is because we have access to some client's usernames and passwords for their active 401k or held away accounts. By having access to these credentials, we therefore have "Custody". We only use the passwords to manage the investments within and to aggregate data for client reporting, all with the client's knowledge.



We encourage our clients to raise any questions with us about the custody, safety or security of their assets. The custodians we do business with will send you independent account statements listing your account balance(s), transaction history and any fee debits or other fees taken out of your account.

## **Item 16: Investment Discretion**

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Clients have the option of providing our firm with investment discretion on their behalf, pursuant to an executed investment advisory client agreement. By granting investment discretion, we are authorized to execute securities transactions, which securities are bought and sold, the total amount to be bought and sold, and the costs at which the transactions will be effected. Limitations may be imposed by the client in the form of specific constraints on any of these areas of discretion with our firm's written acknowledgement. We do not take or exercise discretion with respect to our Financial Planning & Consultation clients.

## **Item 17: Voting Client Securities**

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A. If we have, or will accept, proxy authority to vote client securities, we must briefly describe our voting policies and procedures, including those adopted pursuant to SEC Rule 206(4)-6.

We consider proxy voting an important right of our clients as shareholders and believe that reasonable care and diligence must be taken to ensure that such rights are properly and timely exercised. Clients may request a copy of our written policies and procedures regarding proxy voting and/or information on how particular proxies were voted by contacting our Chief Compliance Officer, James Motte by phone at (423) 510-0409 or email at [james@guardianwealth.com](mailto:james@guardianwealth.com).

1. Policy for Voting Proxies.

We vote the proxies online as they come into our office. They are voted in accordance with board recommendations and in a timely manner. We look to ensure that our firm is compliant with the New Exchange Act Rule 14a-11.

2. Proxies Voting Guidelines.

Where voting authority exists, proxies are voted by our firm in accordance with board recommendations.

- a. Detailed records of all votes are maintained electronically and reported to clients as requested.
- b. How we address conflicts of interest between our firm and clients are addressed with respect to voting their securities.

We recognize that under certain circumstances we may have a conflict of interest between us and our clients. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to, situations where our firm or one or more of our affiliates, including officers, directors and employees, has or is seeking a client relationship with the issuer of the security that is the subject of the proxy vote. We shall periodically inform our employees that they are under an obligation to be aware of the potential for conflicts of interest on the part of our firm with respect to voting proxies on behalf of funds, both as a result of our employee's personal relationships and due to circumstances that may arise during the conduct of our business, and to bring conflicts of interest of which they become aware to the attention of the proxy manager. We shall not vote proxies relating to such issuers on behalf of client accounts until we have determined that the conflict of interest is not material or a method of resolving such conflict of interest has been agreed upon by our management team. A conflict of interest will be considered material to the extent that it is determined that such conflict has the potential to influence our decision-making in voting a proxy. Materiality determinations will be based upon an assessment of the particular facts and circumstances. If we determine that a conflict of interest is not material, we may vote proxies notwithstanding the existence of a conflict. If the conflict of interest is determined to be material, the conflict shall be disclosed to our management team and we shall follow the instructions of the management team. We shall keep a record of all materiality decisions and report them to the management team on an annual basis.

c. Description of how clients may obtain information from us about how we voted their securities.

Our Chief Compliance Officer will maintain files relating to our proxy voting procedures. Records will be maintained and preserved for five years from the end of the fiscal year during which the last entry was made on a record, with records for the last two years kept on our premises. Records of the following will be included in the files:

- (i) Copies of the proxy voting policies and procedures, and any amendments thereto.
- (ii) An electronic record of each vote that we cast.
- (iii) A copy of each written client request for information on how we voted such client's proxies, and a copy of any written response to any client request for information on how we voted their proxies.

d. How clients may obtain a copy of our proxy voting policies and procedures upon request.

Clients may request a copy of our written policies and procedures regarding proxy voting and/or information on how particular proxies were voted by contacting our Chief Compliance Officer, James Motte by phone at (423) 510-0409 or email at [james@guardianwealth.com](mailto:james@guardianwealth.com).

A. If we routinely rely on one or more third-party proxy voting services to advise you in connection with voting client securities, we are required to list the proxy voting services that we use<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> We do not need to identify a proxy voting service that a client directs us to use unless we also use the service for the purpose of voting the securities of other clients.

describe how we select the proxy voting services, and explain whether we permit clients to direct the use of a particular proxy voting service with respect to the securities held in their accounts.

We do not use a third-party proxy voting service.

1. Whether we pay for proxy voting services with soft dollars or pass the cost on to our clients through a supplement to our advisory fee.

We do pay for proxy voting services with soft dollars. Our soft dollar procedures are described in Item 12 of this Brochure. We do not charge an additional fee to vote proxies.

- B. If we do not have authority to vote client securities, we must disclose this fact.

See Item 17A of this Brochure.

## **Item 18: Financial Information**

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- A. If we require or solicit prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance, we must include a balance sheet for our most recent fiscal year.

We do not require nor do we solicit prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance, therefore we have not included a balance sheet for our most recent fiscal year.

- B. If we are an SEC-registered adviser and have discretionary authority or custody of client funds or securities, or we require or solicit prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance, we must disclose any financial condition that is reasonably likely to impair our ability to meet contractual commitments to clients.

We have nothing to disclose in this regard.

- C. If we have been the subject of a bankruptcy petition at any time during the past ten years, we must disclose this fact, the date the petition was first brought, and the current status.

We have nothing to disclose in this regard.