

# Etico Partners, LLC

## Regulation Best Interest Disclosure

May 17, 2022

This guide summarizes important information concerning the scope and terms of the brokerage services we offer and details the material conflicts of interest that arise through our delivery of brokerage services to you. We encourage you to review this information carefully, along with any applicable account agreement(s) and disclosure documentation you may receive from us.

As you review this information, we would like to remind you that Etico Partners, LLC (“EP,” the “Firm,” “we” or “our”) is registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) as a broker dealer, providing brokerage services. Etico Wealth Management LLC (“Etico WM”) and Quartz Partners Investment Management (“Quartz”) are separately registered as investment advisers and are affiliated with us through common ownership and control. Our brokerage services are the primary focus of this guide. For more information on our investment advisory services and how they differ from brokerage, please review the Disclosure Brochure (Form ADV, Part 2A) or the Customer Relationship Summary (Form CRS) for Etico WM and Quartz available at <https://www.eticony.com/>. Our Form CRS contains important information about the types of services we offer, along with general information related to compensation, conflicts of interest, disciplinary action and other reportable legal information.

## Brokerage services

When you establish a brokerage account with us, you have the ability to buy, sell and hold investments within your account. The primary service we provide is our trading capability. We execute purchases and sales on your behalf, and as directed by you. In a brokerage services relationship, we can trade with you for our own account, and we can earn a profit on those trades. The capacity in which we act is disclosed on your trade confirmation. However, we are not required to communicate it in advance, obtain your consent, or inform you of any profit earned on trades.

### Cash Brokerage and Margin Brokerage Accounts

We provide brokerage services through either a cash brokerage account or margin brokerage account, based on your eligibility and selection. In a cash brokerage account, you must pay for your purchases in full at the time of purchase. In a margin brokerage account, you must eventually pay for your purchases in full, but you may borrow part of the purchase price from our clearing firm, RBC (the “Clearing Firm”). This is generally referred to as a margin loan. The portion of the purchase price that is loaned you is secured by securities in your account, also referred to as collateral. You will incur interest costs as a result of your margin activity. While many securities are eligible to be used as collateral for a margin loan, some assets are not available for margin collateral purposes.

Given that a margin-enabled brokerage account has specific eligibility requirements, unique costs, and governing regulatory requirements, our default brokerage option is our cash brokerage account. You must execute a separate margin agreement before engaging in margin brokerage activity. Included with your margin agreement is a copy of the Margin Disclosure Statement. This statement contains important information you should understand and consider before establishing a margin brokerage relationship with us. For more information on our margin brokerage services, contact a registered representative or refer to your Margin Agreement.

### Brokerage Account Types

We offer many different brokerage account types including individual and joint accounts, custodial accounts, estate and trust accounts, partnership accounts, individual retirement accounts and other types of retirement accounts as outlined in our account agreement(s). You should refer to our account agreement(s) for more information concerning available account types or speak with a registered representative.

### ERISA and Individual Retirement Accounts Disclosure

When we provide investment advice to you regarding your retirement plan account or individual retirement account,

we are fiduciaries within the meaning of Title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act and/or the Internal Revenue Code, as applicable, which are laws governing retirement accounts. The way we make money creates some conflicts with your interests, so we operate under a special rule that requires us to act in your best interest and not put our interest ahead of yours.

Under this special rule's provisions, we must:

- Meet a professional standard of care when making investment recommendations (give prudent advice);
- Never put our financial interests ahead of yours when making recommendations (give loyal advice);
- Avoid misleading statements about conflicts of interest, fees, and investments;
- Follow policies and procedures designed to ensure that we give advice that is in your best interest;
- Charge no more than is reasonable for our services; and
- Give you basic information about conflicts of interest.

### **Incidental Brokerage Services, Recommendations and Account Monitoring**

Within your brokerage account, we may also provide other incidental services such as research reports, and recommendations to buy, sell, or hold assets. When we make a securities recommendation, investment strategy recommendation or recommendation to rollover assets from your Qualified Retirement Plan (QRP) to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), the recommendation is made in our capacity as a broker-dealer unless otherwise stated at the time of the recommendation. Any such statement will be made orally to you. Moreover, when we act in a brokerage capacity, we do not agree to enter into a fiduciary relationship with you.

It is important for you to understand that when our registered representatives make a brokerage recommendation to you, we are obligated to ensure the recommendation is in your best interest, considering reasonably available alternatives, and based on your stated investment objective, risk tolerance, liquidity needs, time horizon, financial needs, tax status, and other financial information you provide us. You may accept or reject any recommendation. It is also your responsibility to monitor the investments in your brokerage account, and we encourage you to do so regularly. We do not commit to provide ongoing monitoring of your brokerage account. If you prefer ongoing monitoring of your account or investments, you should speak with a registered representative about whether an advisory services relationship is more appropriate for you.

Please also consider that from time to time we may provide you with additional information and resources to assist you with managing your brokerage account. This may include but is not limited to educational resources, sales and marketing materials, performance reports, asset allocation guidance, and/or periodic brokerage account reviews. When we offer these services and information, we do so as a courtesy to you. These activities are not designed to monitor specific investment holdings in your brokerage account, they do not contain specific investment recommendations about investment holdings, and you should not consider them a recommendation to trade or hold any particular securities in your brokerage account. Upon your request, we will review such information and reports with you and may provide you with investment recommendations, but we are not under a specific obligation to do so.

### **Clearing Services**

We have entered into an agreement with RBC to carry your account and provide certain back-office functions. We and RBC share responsibilities with respect to your account as set forth in the Designation of Responsibilities that was delivered to you upon opening of your account. Please refer to the Designation of Responsibilities for more information on how such responsibilities have been allocated between us.

### **Understanding Risk**

It is important for you to understand that all investment recommendations and activities involve risk, including the risk that you may lose your entire principal. Further, some investments involve more risk than other investments. Higher-risk investments may have the potential for higher returns but also for greater losses. The higher your risk tolerance, meaning the amount of risk or loss you are willing and able to accept in order to achieve your investment goals, the more you may decide to invest in higher-risk investments offering the potential for greater returns. We align risk tolerances with investment needs to offer you different investment objectives from which to choose (see below). You should select the investment objective and risk tolerance best aligned with your brokerage account goals and

needs.

Investment goals typically have different time horizons and different income and growth objectives. Generally, investment goals are on a spectrum, with “Preservation of Principal/Income” investors typically holding the smallest percentage of higher- risk investments, followed by “Growth” investors holding *some* higher-risk investments, and finally “Speculation” investors holding a significant portion of their portfolio in higher-risk investments. Risk tolerance also varies, and we measure it on a continuum that increases from Minimal, Low, Moderate, High and Maximum risk. See the chart below for details:

Investment Objective	Investment Objective Description	Risk Tolerance	Risk Tolerance Definition
Preservation of Principal/Income	The investment goal is capital preservation and generation of current income.	Minimal	Investors with a minimal tolerance for risk who are willing to accept the lowest possible returns which may not keep pace with inflation.
		Low	Investors with a low tolerance for risk who are willing to accept some level of volatility to seek returns with less fluctuation in value.
Balanced Growth	The investment goal is a balance between capital appreciation and wealth preservation.	Minimal	Investors with a minimal tolerance for risk who are willing to accept the lowest possible returns which may not keep pace with inflation.
		Low	Investors with a low tolerance for risk who are willing to accept some level of volatility to seek returns with less fluctuation in value.
		Moderate	Investors with a moderate tolerance for risk who are willing to accept modest returns with potential for some fluctuation in value.
Growth	The investment goal is capital appreciation	Low	Investors with a low tolerance for risk who are willing to accept some level of volatility to seek returns with less fluctuation in value.
		Moderate	Investors with a moderate tolerance for risk who are willing to accept modest returns with potential for some fluctuation in value.
		High	Investors with a moderate to high tolerance for risk willing to accept the potential for greater fluctuation in value to seek higher returns.
Aggressive Growth / Aggressive Income	The investment goal is significant capital appreciation and/or income generation.	Moderate	Investors with a moderate tolerance for risk who are willing to accept modest returns with potential for some fluctuation in value.
		High	Investors with a moderate to high tolerance for risk willing to accept the potential for greater fluctuation in value to seek higher returns.
		Maximum	Investors with a high tolerance for risk who are willing to accept the potential for significant fluctuation or loss in value while seeking to maximize potential returns.
Speculation	The investment goal is to maximize capital appreciation.	High	Investors with a moderate to high tolerance for risk willing to accept the potential for greater fluctuation in value to seek higher returns.
		Maximum	Investors with a high tolerance for risk who are willing to accept the potential for significant fluctuation or loss in value while seeking to maximize potential returns.

Our recommendations are based in part on your risk tolerance and investment objective as outlined above. We encourage you to carefully consider your investment objective and risk tolerance before investing. More information about risks can be found on our website: <https://www.eticony.com/disclosures-and-policies/general-investment-risks/>.

#### Cash Sweep Program

Our brokerage services include a Cash Sweep Program feature. This program permits you to earn a return on uninvested cash balances in your brokerage account by allowing cash balances to be automatically “swept” into a “Cash Sweep Vehicle,” until such balances are otherwise required to satisfy obligations arising in your account. These Cash Sweep Vehicles include interest-bearing deposit accounts, and if permissible, money market mutual funds or such other sweep arrangements made available to you. You will receive additional information concerning the Cash Sweep Program in your account agreement(s). More information about the Cash Sweep Program can be found in your

Customer Agreement in the Automatic Sweep Investment section. Call your registered representative if you need a copy of your Customer Agreement or if you have questions.

### **Account Minimums and Activity Requirements**

There is no minimum initial account balance required to open a brokerage account with us. However, if you either fail to fund your account or do not return account opening documents as required, your account will be closed. Some registered representatives may establish their own minimum account balance requirements for the brokerage accounts they service. For example, a dedicated registered representative may choose to service only those brokerage account clients who satisfy account-specific or total household asset conditions. Minimum asset requirements are disclosed to you orally by your registered representative.

## **Brokerage service models and products**

We offer full-service brokerage, providing recommendations in the purchase and sale of a variety of products. Most frequently, we'll recommend transactions in equities, exchange traded funds (ETFs), mutual funds, bonds and money market funds. Occasionally, we'll recommend transactions in Unit Investment Trusts (UITs), new issued preferred stocks, structured notes, private placements, options or variable annuities. Other products may be recommended, when deemed to be in your best interest.

## **Brokerage fees and our compensation**

It is important to consider that while a brokerage relationship can be a cost-effective way of investing your assets, it is not for everyone given the fees and costs involved.

### **Transaction-Based Fees**

You will pay transaction-based fees for trades you decide to enter into, such as buying and selling stocks, bonds, Exchange Traded Products, mutual funds, annuity contracts, exercising options and other investment purchases and sale. These transaction-based fees are generally referred to as a commission, mark up, sales load, or a sales charge. Transaction-based fees are based on a host of factors, including, but not limited to:

- Underlying product selection
- Your brokerage service model and account type
- Size of your transaction and/or overall value of your account
- Frequency of your trade activity
- Available discounts and/or fee waivers

### **Account and Service Fees**

You will pay fees for various operational services provided to you through your brokerage account. These fees are set at least annually and communicated to you through information included in your account statement and other notifications. These fees do not apply to all account types and may be waived under certain conditions.

Aside from the fees we charge you for providing investment recommendations, you will have to pay other fees related to brokerage services. Fees can be charged directly or indirectly. Depending on services selected, direct fees could include postage and handling fees on each transaction, account maintenance fees (including IRA fees) charged by RBC; markups and markdowns; redemption fees; fees associated with checks and wires; transfer fees; ACAT fees; IRA termination fees; duplicate document requests fees for safekeeping of physical securities; etc. Direct fees will be shown on your trade confirmation and/or custodial statement. Indirect fees include internal expenses charged by mutual funds and ETF's (including 12b-1 fees and annual fund operating expenses).

RBC charges an annual account fee of \$50 on all brokerage accounts except IRA accounts. The fee can be waived if your brokerage account is open for less than 12 months; you maintain a margin balance; you elect to receive paperless statements, confirmations, prospectuses and proxy voting; or you are part of a household with more than \$150,000 in assets.

RBC also charges a \$35 annual fee on all IRA accounts which can be waived if you are part of a household with more than \$150,000 in assets.

You should understand that, based on the brokerage service model you choose, the same or similar products, accounts and services may vary in the fees and costs charged to you. For more information concerning our administrative and service fees, contact your registered representative.

### **How We Are Compensated**

We receive direct and indirect compensation in connection with your accounts. Direct compensation is taken directly from the affected account. Indirect compensation is compensation paid in ways other than directly from the account and may impact the value of the associated investments in your account. The sections below describe the compensation that we receive in connection with various investments that may be available to you. In many cases, the descriptions that follow refer to a prospectus or offering documents. In addition to the commissions detailed below, there is a \$4 Postage, Insurance and Handling fee charged on all trades executed through RBC. This charge is disclosed on your trade confirmation.

### **Commission Schedule for Stocks, Rights, Warrants, Secondary Market Closed End Funds (CEFs) and Exchange Traded Products**

The Broker will receive certain forms of commission in connection with the service provided. Equity trading commissions rates vary depending on the number of shares, trade price, and principal value of transaction. Commission rates decrease as the number of shares, trade price, and principal value increase. The commission rate is based on a dollar amount plus a percentage of the principal amount and may be discounted at the registered representative's discretion. A Commission is charged every time a trade is placed and will be disclosed on the trade confirmation.

### **Option Rates Equity and Index**

Options compensation is received as direct compensation. Option commissions vary based on the number of contracts, trade price of the contract, and principal value of the transactions. Commission rates decrease as the number of contracts, trade price of the contract, and principal value increase. The commission on an option transaction will be deducted from your account every time an options trade is executed. The commission rate is based on a percentage of the principal amount plus a dollar amount based on the number of contracts and may be discounted at the registered representative's discretion. The amount of the specific option commission will be disclosed on the trade confirmation.

### **Debt Securities**

For debt securities, including corporate bonds, municipal bonds, structured products, preferred securities and CDs, we may apply a charge (i.e., markup or markdown) of up to 4% of the amount of your secondary market transaction. The markup or markdown may be discounted at the registered representative's discretion. The amount of the specific commission, markup or markdown will be disclosed on the trade confirmation.

### **Mutual Funds and 529 Accounts**

We currently offer thousands of mutual funds through traditional accounts and through 529 accounts varying in share class structure and investment style. If you invest in mutual funds, we may receive direct and indirect compensation in connection with such mutual fund investments, as described below. The amount of fees, including any ticket fee, front-end sales charge, and/or contingent deferred sales charge can be found in the mutual fund prospectus and direct fees will be disclosed on the trade confirmation. The fees and costs of mutual funds vary depending on the fund family and share class. Below is a summary of these costs.

### **12b-1/Shareholder Service Fees**

Annual 12b-1 fees, also known as trails, are paid by the fund and paid to us out of fund assets under a distribution and servicing arrangement to cover distribution expenses and sometimes shareholder service expenses that we may provide on the fund's behalf. Shareholder servicing fees are paid to respond to investor inquiries and provide investors with information about their investments. These fees are asset-based fees

charged by the fund family. These fees range from 0.25% to 1.00%, depending on share class and are set by the fund. 12b-1 fees may be passed on to us and may in turn be passed on to your Financial Advisor as a commission; however other operating expenses of the fund are not paid to us. 12b-1 fees are typically charged on Class A, Class B and Class C shares and may be charged on other share classes. Please note that 12b-1s and similar fees or compensation received in connection with our affiliated funds are not received, or are rebated, on ERISA assets held in Advisory Program accounts.

#### **Front-end Sales Charge Fees/Contingent Deferred Sales Charges (CDSC)**

Front-end sales charge fees may be charged and paid to us, including your Financial Advisor, when you purchase a fund. The front-end sales charge is a direct fee and is deducted from the initial investment on certain share classes. This charge normally ranges from 0.00% to 5.75%. Some purchases may qualify for a reduced front-end sales charge due to breakpoint discounts based on the amount of transaction and rights of accumulation. In addition, some purchases may qualify for a sales charge waiver based on the type of account, and/or certain qualifications within the account. You should contact your registered representative or consult the mutual fund prospectus if you believe you are eligible for sales charge waivers. Front-end Sales Charges are typically charged on Class A shares and may be charged on other share classes.

CDSC is a direct charge you pay upon withdrawal of money from a fund prior to the end of the fund's CDSC period. CDSC charges range from 0.00% to 5.50%. CDSC periods can range from zero to seven years. This charge typically exists only on share classes that do not have a front-end sales charge. It is sometimes referred to as the back-end load. CDSCs are not charged when you purchase a fund. The fee charged will depend on the share class purchased by the investor. A CDSC is not passed on to your Financial Advisor. You can find a description of the amount and payment frequency of all fees and expenses charged and paid by the fund in the fund's prospectus. Fees and expenses disclosed in the fund's prospectus are charged against the investment values of the fund. Please note that 12b-1s and similar fees or compensation received in connection with our affiliated funds are not received, or are rebated, on ERISA assets held in Advisory Program accounts. CDSC fees are typically charged on Class B shares with a seven-year CDSC period; and on Class C shares with a one-year CDSC period and may be charged on other share classes.

Different fund families offer different share classes, which is why it is important to review the fund prospectus, which outlines the differences between the different share classes available for the respective fund family. The specific breakpoint schedules, front end sales charge, CDSC fee/CDSC period, 12b-1 fee, and other operating expenses will be disclosed in the prospectus. You can also find a description of any fees or costs, including the payment frequency in the fund's prospectus. In addition, your registered representative can explain the different share class options available, and how the available share classes differ. Fees and expenses disclosed in the fund's prospectus are charged against the investment values of the fund.

#### **Annuities**

Our annuities consist of fixed, index, and variable annuities. Under arrangements with insurance companies, we, including your Financial Advisor, receive commissions from the insurance companies for the sale of annuities, as well as trail commissions, and they are considered indirect compensation. Commissions and trails paid to us vary by product type and may vary by insurance carrier. Specific information regarding commissions and other fees can be found in the annuity prospectus.

#### **Unit Investment Trusts (UITs)**

Our UITs consist of Equity and Fixed-Income UITs. We, along with your registered representatives, are compensated in ways that vary depending on the type and terms of the UIT portfolio selected. The types of fees received by us are described below and are disclosed via the prospectus issued by the UIT provider. Your financial advisor can provide you a copy of the most recent prospectus. The UIT provider deducts fees as compensation from the proceeds available for investments for marketing and distribution expenses, which may include compensating us as described in each UIT prospectus, which is typically 2% of the assets invested.

### **Revenue Sharing**

Revenue sharing may occur from time to time with RBC our Clearing Firm and Investment companies. Clients may incur certain charges imposed by third party investment and other third parties such as the Bank Deposit Sweep, and margin interest charged on debit balances. In addition, we receive a portion of the Postage, Insurance and Handling fees charged on all transactions. The Firm does not limit our recommendations to these products that generate third party payment.

### **Training and Education**

We work closely with many product and service providers who provide training and education compensation to offset or reimburse us for costs incurred in conducting comprehensive training and educational meetings for our registered representatives. These meetings or events are held to educate registered representatives on product characteristics, business building ideas, successful sales techniques, suitability as well as various other topics. In addition, certain vendors provide free or discounted research or other vendor products and services, which can assist our registered representatives with providing services to the plan.

Likewise, from time to time, product providers will reimburse us for expenses incurred by individual branch offices in connection with conducting training and educational meetings, conferences, or seminars for registered representatives and participants. Also, registered representatives may receive promotional items, meals or entertainment or other non-cash compensation from product providers.

Although training and education compensation is not related to individual transactions or assets held in client accounts, it is important to understand that, due to the total number of product providers whose products are offered by us, it is not possible for all companies to participate in a single meeting or event. Consequently, those product providers that do participate in training or educational meetings, seminars or other events gain an opportunity to build relationships with Registered representatives; these relationships could lead to sales of that particular company's products.

### **Compensation for Termination of Services**

Other than any contingent deferred sales charge for a fund (as described under the Mutual Funds section above, if applicable) the firm would not receive any additional compensation in connection with the termination of its services. However, other fees may be charged by RBC or product sponsors. This includes an account transfer fee, IRA termination fee, Plan termination fee and early redemption fees, if applicable. In addition, there may be tax consequences if you liquidate your positions. If you have questions or need additional copies, contact your registered representative and tax advisor.

### **Brokerage – Excluded Advisory Assets**

As described above, our brokerage services differ from our advisory services. However, in some instances we may allow a Etico WM advisory client to trade what are referred to as “excluded assets” within their advisory services account. Excluded assets are not subject to our advisory program fees. Instead of our advisory fees, these excluded assets are subject to our standard brokerage charges when traded.

## **Conflicts of interest**

Conflicts of interest exist when we provide brokerage services to you. A conflict of interest is a situation in which we engage in a transaction or activity where our interest is materially adverse to your interest. The mere presence of a conflict of interest does not imply that harm to your interests will occur, but it is important that we acknowledge the presence of conflicts. Moreover, our regulatory obligations require that we establish, maintain, and enforce written policies and procedures reasonably designed to address conflicts of interest associated with our recommendations to you.

Our conflicts of interest are typically the result of compensation structures and other financial arrangements between us, our registered representatives, our clients and third parties. We offer a broad range of investment services and

products, and we receive various forms of compensation from our clients, affiliated and non-affiliated product providers and money managers, and other third parties as described above. Securities rules allow for us, our registered representatives, and our affiliates to earn compensation when we provide brokerage services to you. However, the compensation that we and our registered representatives receive from you varies based upon the product or service you purchase, which creates a financial incentive to recommend investment products and services that generate greater compensation to us.

We are committed to taking appropriate steps to identify, mitigate and avoid conflicts of interest to ensure we act in your best interest when providing brokerage recommendations to you. Below you will find additional information related to our conflicts of interest. This information is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of our conflicts, but generally describes those conflicts that are material to your brokerage relationship. In addition to this disclosure, conflicts of interest are disclosed to you in your account agreement(s) and disclosure documents, our product guides and other information we make available to you.

## **Compensation We Receive from Clients**

### **Transaction-based conflicts**

In your brokerage account you pay certain fees (commissions and sales charges) in connection with the buying and selling of each investment product, including mutual funds, variable annuities, alternative investments, exchange traded funds, equity securities, and bonds. Where these fees apply, the more transactions you enter into, the more compensation that we and your registered representative receive. This compensation creates an incentive for us to recommend that you buy and sell, rather than hold, these investments. We also have an incentive to recommend that you purchase investment products that carry higher fees, instead of products that carry lower fees or no fees at all.

### **Markups and markdowns for principal transactions**

When you buy or sell securities in a brokerage account, and in accordance with industry regulations, we may impose a markup (increase) or markdown (decrease) in the price of transactions we execute on a principal basis. We are compensated based upon the difference (markup) between the price you pay for securities purchased from us and the price we sell such securities to you over the prevailing market price, or the difference (markdown) between the price you sell securities to us and the price we purchase such securities from you over the prevailing market price. We maintain policies and procedures reasonably designed to help ensure compliance with the markup and markdown industry rules.

### **Account maintenance and other administrative fees**

For the services we provide or make available to you with respect to your brokerage account, we charge certain account maintenance and other administrative fees, including the Postage, Insurance and Handling fee on each transaction. The higher the fees we charge, the more we are compensated.

## **Compensation We Receive from Third Parties**

Third-party payments we receive may be based on new sales of investment products, creating an incentive for us to recommend you buy and sell, rather than hold, investments. In other cases, these payments are made on an ongoing basis as a percentage of invested assets, creating an incentive for us to recommend that you buy and hold investments (or continue to invest through a third-party manager or adviser).

The total amount of payments we receive varies from product to product and varies with respect to the third-party investment management products we recommend. It also varies from the compensation we receive in connection with other products and services we may make available to you, including advisory services. We have an incentive to recommend investment products and services that generate greater payments to us. This compensation generally represents an expense embedded in the investment products and services that is borne by investors, even where it is not paid by the Product Sponsor and not directly from the investment product or other fees you pay. The types of third-party compensation we receive include:



- **Revenue Sharing.** We share in revenue with RBC, our Clearing Firm, and investment companies. This includes fees generated from the Automatic Investment Sweep (Bank Sweep), margin interest charged on debit balances and Postage, Insurance and Handling fees on each transaction. The Firm does not limit our recommendations to these products that generate third party payment.
- **Trail Compensation.** Ongoing compensation from Product Sponsors may be received by us and shared with our registered representatives. This compensation (commonly known as trails, service fees or Rule 12b-1 fees in the case of mutual funds) is typically paid from the assets of the investment product under a distribution or servicing arrangement and is calculated as an annual percentage of invested assets. The amount of this compensation varies from product to product. We have an incentive to recommend that you purchase and hold interests in products that pay us higher trails.

### **Additional Compensation from Product Sponsors and Other Third Parties**

We and our registered representatives, associates, employees, and agents receive additional compensation from Product Sponsors and other third parties including:

- Gifts and awards, an occasional dinner or ticket to a sporting event, or reimbursement in connection with educational meetings or marketing or advertising initiatives, including services for identifying prospective clients.
- Payment or reimbursement for the costs associated with education or training events that are attended by our employees, agents, and registered representatives, and for conferences and events that we sponsor.

**Note:** The amount of these payments is not dependent or related to the level of assets you or any other of our clients invest in or with the Product Sponsor.

### **Product Share Classes**

Some Product Sponsors offer multiple structures of the same product (e.g., mutual fund share classes) with each option having a unique expense structure, and some having lower costs to you as compared to others. We are incentivized to make available those share classes or other product structures that will generate the highest compensation to us.

### **Compensation Related to Our Affiliates**

Etico WM and Quartz are both registered investment advisers and are affiliated with EP through common ownership and control. Individual registered representatives of EP may also be registered with Etico WM or Quartz as investment adviser representatives. These representatives may recommend advisory services for brokerage clients. Moreover, EP, Etico WM and Quartz share office space and management and operational personnel. If you are a client of EP and are referred to Etico WM or Quartz, please understand this is a conflict of interest. EP's recommendation to use Etico WM or Quartz is based, almost entirely, on the fact that the companies are affiliated, and EP has a financial and economic interest to recommend Etico WM and Quartz over other investment adviser that provide similar advisory services because we will receive investment advisory fees that would otherwise be paid to another investment adviser firm. EP clients are not required or mandated to utilize the services of Etico WM or Quartz. Etico WM manages such conflicts through disclosure and oversight of client accounts.

Many EP registered representatives are also separately licensed as insurance agents. Variable annuities are offered through EP; other insurance products are offered through various insurance companies. In their capacities as independent insurance agents, representatives receive commission and other fees, which is separate and distinct from the registered representative's compensation related to brokerage services. These arrangements pose a conflict of interest for those individuals to the extent they have a financial incentive to recommend such insurance products.

Advisory fees and insurance commissions charged may be higher or lower than those obtainable from other firms for similar products and services. On average individual registered representatives and the principals of EP spend 50% of their time on advisory or other activities.

## **Compensation Received by Registered Representatives**

Registered representatives are compensated in a variety of ways based on the percentage of revenue generated from sales of products and services to clients and/or total assets under advisement, including brokerage account activity. This compensation may vary by the product or service associated with a brokerage recommendation. In addition to upfront transaction-based compensation, some products feature ongoing residual or trail payments. Thus, registered representatives are incentivized to recommend products that have higher fees as well as those with ongoing payments.

Certain products, such as variable annuity and variable life insurance products provide a financial incentive to the registered representative to offer a contract that includes optional benefit features. Optional benefits also entail additional fees charged to you in addition to the base fee associated with the contract. This presents a conflict of interest in that registered representatives may encourage you to select investment options with relatively higher fees, or to replace an existing contract. EP has procedures in place to review new variable sales and replacements to ensure that such products recommended are suitable.

Typically, a registered representative's payout schedule (periodically adjusted by us at our discretion) is based on a percentage of commissions and other fees charged to you. The same payout schedule is reduced when registered representatives discount certain client fees and commissions. Registered representatives have an incentive to provide brokerage recommendations to gather more assets under management and to increase brokerage trading activity, and to reduce the amount of discounts available to you. In addition, your registered representative has an incentive to reduce the amount of time spent personally managing client's accounts; reduce the number of potential investments to evaluate; and/or provide better service/pricing (commissions) to different clients. We have procedures in place to supervise the recommendations our registered representatives provide to mitigate these conflicts of interest.

Registered representatives have an incentive to recommend you rollover assets from a Qualified Retirement Plan (QRP) to a brokerage Individual Retirement Account (IRA) because of the compensation they will receive. We maintain policies and procedures designed to ensure that rollover recommendations are in your best interest.

Brokerage accounts, unlike advisory accounts, do not feature an ongoing fee based on assets under management. Registered representatives are incentivized to recommend you transition your brokerage services account to an advisory account to generate ongoing revenue where your brokerage account has minimal activity. Further, registered representatives are incentivized to recommend you transition your brokerage account to an advisory account after you have already placed purchases resulting in commissions and/or other transaction-based brokerage fees. We have controls established to identify and mitigate this risk. Registered representatives also have an incentive to provide higher levels of service to those clients who generate the most fees.

The Clearing Firm charges EP for certain fees which are not directly passed on to the client. This includes fees for cancelling and rebooking trades, clearance and execution fees. This may create incentive to markup charges to customer to cover fees charged to or receive rebates, incentives, loans or fee sharing from the Clearing Firm.

Recruitment compensation is provided to registered representatives who join our firm from another financial firm. This compensation, which may vary by registered representative, often includes either an upfront or backend award based upon new client assets to the firm and/or revenue generated from such client assets. This creates an incentive for the registered representative to recommend the transfer of assets to the firm, including brokerage assets, in order to earn this compensation.

Noncash compensation is provided to registered representatives in the form of credits toward business expense accounts and certain titles. Registered representatives are also compensated in the form of education meetings and recognition trips. Portions of these programs is subsidized by external vendors and affiliates, such as mutual fund companies, insurance carriers, or money managers. Consequently, product providers that sponsor and/or participate in education meetings and recognition trips gain opportunities to build relations with registered representatives, which could lead to sales of such product provider's products. Registered representatives also receive promotional items, meals, entertainment, and other noncash compensation from product providers.

### Other Registered representative Activities

Registered representatives may be motivated to place trades ahead of clients in order to receive more favorable prices than their clients. Our written supervisory procedures are designed to assure that the personal securities transactions, activities, and interests of our registered representatives will not interfere with (i) making decisions in the best interests of our customers; or implementing such decisions while, at the same time, allowing registered representatives to invest for their own accounts. Under the Firm's procedures, registered representatives may buy or sell securities that are recommended to customers, subject to certain restrictions. For example, if a registered representative trades ahead of a customer and receives a better price, a price adjustment will be made for the customer. We have procedures to monitor the personal trading activities and securities holdings of each of the Firm's and includes procedures for limitations on personal securities transactions of associated persons. These policies are designed to discourage and prohibit personal trading that would disadvantage clients.

Registered representatives who are transitioning through a succession plan may be incentivized to make brokerage recommendations designed to increase the value of their book of business through asset accumulation or brokerage trades that are not in your best interest. Registered representatives who receive clients from a retiring registered representative are incentivized to meet growth goals and may make recommendations not in your best interest.

Internal campaigns and recognition efforts incentivize registered representatives to engage in activities to reach incentive goals.

## Additional Resources

Additional information can be found in your Customer Agreement and other disclosures that we or RBC provides to you. If you have any questions, you can call your registered representative at (518) 348-0060 to request up-to-date information. Additional information can be found below.

Title	Web address
Form CRS	<a href="https://www.eticony.com/">https://www.eticony.com/</a>
General Investment Risks	<a href="https://www.eticony.com/disclosures-and-policies/general-investment-risks/">https://www.eticony.com/disclosures-and-policies/general-investment-risks/</a>
Business Continuity Planning	<a href="https://www.eticony.com/disclosures-and-policies/business-continuity-plan-disclosure/">https://www.eticony.com/disclosures-and-policies/business-continuity-plan-disclosure/</a>
Cash Sweep Program	