

# BlackRock ETF Trust

## Statement of Additional Information

Dated September 22, 2020

This Statement of Additional Information (“SAI”) is not a prospectus. It should be read in conjunction with the current prospectus (the “Prospectus”) for the following series of BlackRock ETF Trust (the “Trust”):

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Ticker</u>	<u>Listing Exchange</u>
BlackRock Future Innovators ETF (the “Fund”) . . . . .	BFTR	NYSE Arca

The Prospectus for the Fund is dated September 22, 2020, as amended and supplemented from time to time. Capitalized terms used herein that are not defined have the same meaning as in the Prospectus, unless otherwise noted. A copy of the Prospectus for the Fund may be obtained without charge by writing to the Trust’s distributor, BlackRock Investments, LLC (the “Distributor” or “BRIL”), 1 University Square Drive, Princeton, NJ 08540, calling 1-800-441-7762 or visiting [www.blackrock.com](http://www.blackrock.com). The Fund’s Prospectus is incorporated by reference into this SAI.

References to the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the “Investment Company Act” or the “1940 Act”), or other applicable law, will include any rules promulgated thereunder and any guidance, interpretations or modifications by the Securities and Exchange Commission (the “SEC”), SEC staff or other authority with appropriate jurisdiction, including court interpretations, and exemptive, no action or other relief or permission from the SEC, SEC staff or other authority.

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# General Description of the Trust and the Fund

The Trust currently consists of 4 investment series or portfolios. The Trust was organized as a Delaware statutory trust on October 31, 2018 and is authorized to have multiple series or portfolios. The Trust is an open-end management investment company registered with the SEC under the 1940 Act. The offering of the Trust's shares is registered under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "1933 Act"). This SAI relates solely to the Fund.

The Fund seeks long-term capital appreciation. The Fund is managed by BlackRock Fund Advisors ("BFA" or the "Investment Adviser"), an indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of BlackRock, Inc.

The Fund offers and issues shares at their net asset value per share ("NAV") only in aggregations of a specified number of shares (each, a "Creation Unit"), generally in exchange for a designated portfolio of securities (including any portion of such securities for which cash may be substituted) (the "Deposit Securities" or "Creation Basket"), together with the deposit of a specified cash payment (the "Cash Component"). Shares of the Fund are listed for trading on NYSE Arca, Inc. (the "Listing Exchange" or "NYSE Arca"), a national securities exchange. Shares of the Fund are traded in the secondary market and elsewhere at market prices that may be at, above or below the Fund's NAV. Shares are redeemable by the Fund only in Creation Units by Authorized Participants (as defined in the *Portfolio Holdings Information* section of this SAI), and, generally, in exchange for portfolio securities and a Cash Amount (as defined in the *Redemption of Creation Units* section of this SAI). Creation Units typically are a specified number of shares, generally 10,000 or multiples thereof.

The Trust reserves the right to permit or require that creations and redemptions of shares are effected fully or partially in cash and reserves the right to permit or require the substitution of Deposit Securities in lieu of cash. Shares may be issued in advance of receipt of Deposit Securities, subject to various conditions, including a requirement that the Authorized Participant maintain with the Trust collateral as set forth in the handbook for Authorized Participants. The Trust may use such collateral at any time to purchase Deposit Securities. See the *Creation and Redemption of Creation Units* section of this SAI. Transaction fees and other costs associated with creations or redemptions that include a cash portion may be higher than the transaction fees and other costs associated with in-kind creations or redemptions. In all cases, conditions with respect to creations and redemptions of shares and fees will be limited in accordance with the requirements of SEC rules and regulations applicable to management investment companies offering redeemable securities.

## Exchange Listing and Trading

A discussion of exchange listing and trading matters associated with an investment in the Fund is contained in the *Shareholder Information* section of the Fund's Prospectus. The discussion below supplements, and should be read in conjunction with, that section of the Prospectus.

Shares of the Fund are listed for trading, and trade throughout the day, on the Listing Exchange and in other secondary markets. Shares of the Fund may also be listed on certain non-U.S. exchanges. There can be no assurance that the requirements of the Listing Exchange necessary to maintain the listing of shares of the Fund will continue to be met. The Listing Exchange may, but is not required to, remove

the shares of the Fund from listing if, among other things: (i) the Fund is no longer eligible to operate in reliance on Rule 6c-11 under the 1940 Act; (ii) if any of the other listing requirements are not continuously maintained; (iii) following the initial 12-month period beginning upon the commencement of trading of Fund shares, there are fewer than 50 record and/or beneficial owners of shares of the Fund; or (iv) any other event shall occur or condition shall exist that, in the opinion of the Listing Exchange, makes further dealings on the Listing Exchange inadvisable. The Listing Exchange will also remove shares of the Fund from listing and trading upon termination of the Fund.

As in the case of other publicly-traded securities, when you buy or sell shares of the Fund through a broker, you may incur a brokerage commission determined by that broker, as well as other charges.

The Trust reserves the right to adjust the share prices of the Fund in the future to maintain convenient trading ranges for investors. Any adjustments would be accomplished through stock splits or reverse stock splits, which would have no effect on the net assets of the Fund or an investor's equity interest in the Fund.

## Investment Strategies and Risks of the Fund

Under normal market conditions, the Fund will invest at least 80% of its net assets plus any borrowings for investment purposes in equity securities issued by mid- and small-capitalization companies that BFA believes have above-average earnings growth potential.

Equity securities include common stocks, preferred stocks, convertible securities, warrants and depositary receipts, though the Fund seeks to buy primarily common stock. Although universal definitions of small-capitalization companies and mid-capitalization companies do not exist, the Fund generally defines small-capitalization and mid-capitalization companies as those companies with market capitalizations, at the time of the Fund's investment, comparable in size to the companies in the Russell 2500™ Growth Index (between approximately \$50.71 million and \$20.70 billion as of September 15, 2020). In the future, the Fund may define small- or mid-capitalization companies using a different index or classification system.

In selecting investments for the Fund, BFA focuses on equity securities of small- and mid-capitalization growth companies that are "innovative." These are companies that have introduced, or are seeking to introduce, a new product or service that potentially changes the marketplace. In evaluating innovative companies, BFA seeks to identify, using its own internal research and analysis, companies capitalizing on innovation or that are enabling the further development of the theme of innovation in the markets in which they operate.

The Fund may invest in shares of companies through initial public offerings ("IPOs"). The Fund may invest up to 25% of its assets in securities of foreign companies, including companies located in emerging markets. Foreign securities in which the Fund may invest may be U.S. dollar-denominated or non-U.S. dollar-denominated.

The Fund may also invest in securities of other open- or closed-end investment companies, subject to applicable regulatory limits, that invest primarily in securities of the types in which the Fund may invest directly. The Fund classifies its investments in such investment companies as "equity securities" for purposes of its investment policies based upon such investment companies' stated investment objectives, policies and restrictions.

During temporary defensive periods (i.e., in response to adverse market, economic or political conditions), the Fund may invest up to 100% of its total assets in liquid, short-term investments, including high quality, short-term securities. The Fund may not achieve its investment objectives under these circumstances. BFA's determination that it is temporarily unable to follow the Fund's investment strategy or that it is impractical to do so will generally occur only in situations in which a market disruption event has occurred and where trading in the securities selected through application of the Fund's investment strategy is extremely limited or absent.

The Fund may lend securities representing up to one-third of the value of the Fund's total assets (including the value of the collateral received).

Although the Fund does not seek leveraged returns, certain instruments used by the Fund may have a leveraging effect as described below.

**Borrowing.** The Fund may borrow for temporary or emergency purposes, including to meet payments due from redemptions or to facilitate the settlement of securities or other transactions.

The purchase of securities while borrowings are outstanding may have the effect of leveraging the Fund. The incurrence of leverage increases the Fund's exposure to risk, and borrowed funds are subject to interest costs that will reduce net income. Purchasing securities while borrowings are outstanding creates special risks, such as the potential for greater volatility in the NAV of Fund shares and in the yield on the Fund's portfolio. In addition, the interest expenses from borrowings may exceed the income generated by the Fund's portfolio and, therefore, the amount available (if any) for distribution to shareholders as dividends may be reduced. BFA may determine to maintain outstanding borrowings if it expects that the benefits to the Fund's shareholders will outweigh the current reduced return.

Certain types of borrowings by the Fund must be made from a bank or may result in the Fund being subject to covenants in credit agreements relating to asset coverage, portfolio composition requirements and other matters. It is not anticipated that observance of such covenants would impede BFA's management of the Fund's portfolio in accordance with the Fund's investment objectives and policies. However, a breach of any such covenants not cured within the specified cure period may result in acceleration of outstanding indebtedness and require the Fund to dispose of portfolio investments at a time when it may be disadvantageous to do so.

**Currency Transactions.** A currency forward contract is an over-the-counter ("OTC") obligation to purchase or sell a specific currency at a future date, which may be any fixed number of days greater than two days from the date on which the contract is agreed upon by the parties, at a price set at the time of the contract. A non-deliverable currency forward is an OTC currency forward settled in a specified currency, on a specified date, based on the difference between the agreed-upon exchange rate and the market exchange rate. A currency futures contract is a contract that trades on an organized futures exchange involving an obligation to deliver or acquire a specified amount of a specific currency, at a specified price and at a specified future time. Currency futures contracts may be settled on a net cash payment basis rather than by the sale and delivery of the underlying currency. To the extent required by law, liquid assets committed to futures contracts will be maintained. The Fund does not expect to engage in currency transactions for the purpose of hedging against declines in the value of the Fund's assets that are denominated in a non-U.S. currency. The Fund may also enter into physically-settled non-U.S. currency forwards, non-deliverable currency forwards, non-U.S. currency futures transactions and spot currency transactions to facilitate local securities settlements or to protect against currency exposure in connection with its distributions to shareholders, but may not enter into such contracts for speculative purposes. As described above, reliance on physically-settled foreign currency may require the Fund to set aside a greater amount of liquid assets than would generally be



required if the fund were relying on cash-settled foreign currency forward contracts or NDFs. This would also generally be true if the funds were to use other types of physically-settled currency contracts to facilitate local securities settlements or protect against currency exposure.

A forward currency contract is an obligation to purchase or sell a specific currency at a future date, which may be any fixed number of days from the date of the contract agreed upon by the parties, at a price set at the time of the contract.

A currency futures contract is a contract involving an obligation to deliver or acquire the specified amount of a specific currency, at a specified price and at a specified future time. Currency futures contracts may be settled on a net cash payment basis rather than by the sale and delivery of the underlying currency. To the extent required by law, liquid assets committed to futures contracts will be maintained.

The rapid fluctuations in the market prices of currency contracts generally make such investments volatile. Volatility is caused by, among other things: changes in supply and demand relationships; trade, fiscal, monetary and exchange control programs; domestic and foreign political and economic events and policies; and changes in interest rates. The Fund's trading methods may not take into account all of these factors. In addition, governments from time to time intervene, directly and by regulation, in certain markets, often with the intent to influence prices directly. The effects of governmental intervention may be particularly significant at certain times in the currency markets, and this intervention may cause these markets to move rapidly.

Foreign exchange transactions involve a significant degree of risk and the markets in which foreign exchange transactions are effected may be highly volatile, highly specialized and highly technical. Significant changes, including changes in liquidity and prices, can occur in such markets within very short periods of time, often within minutes. Foreign exchange trading risks include, but are not limited to, exchange rate risk, counterparty risk, maturity gap, interest rate risk, and potential interference by foreign governments through regulation of local exchange markets, foreign investment or particular transactions in non-U.S. currency. If BFA utilizes foreign exchange transactions at an inappropriate time or judges market conditions, trends or correlations incorrectly, foreign exchange transactions may not serve their intended purpose of improving the Fund's performance and may lower the Fund's return. The Fund could experience losses if the value of its currency forwards, options or futures positions were poorly correlated with its other investments or if it could not close out its positions because of an illiquid market or otherwise. In addition, the Fund could incur transaction costs, including trading commissions, in connection with certain non-U.S. currency transactions and costs related to investment opportunities due to the fact it will be required to set aside liquid assets equal to its obligations under its currency forwards in order to satisfy applicable requirements under the 1940 Act.

**Diversification Status.** The Fund is classified as "non-diversified." A non-diversified fund is a fund that is not limited by the 1940 Act with regard to the percentage of its assets that may be invested in the securities of a single issuer. The securities of a particular issuer (or securities of issuers in particular industries) may constitute a significant percentage of the fund's investment portfolio. This may adversely affect the fund's performance or subject the fund's shares to greater price volatility than that experienced by more diversified investment companies.

The Fund intends to maintain the required level of diversification and otherwise conduct its operations so as to qualify as a regulated investment company ("RIC") for purposes of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Internal Revenue Code"), and to relieve the Fund of any liability for U.S. federal income tax to the extent that its earnings are distributed to shareholders, provided that the Fund satisfies a minimum distribution requirement. Compliance with the diversification requirements of the Internal Revenue Code may limit the investment flexibility of the Fund and may make it less likely that the Fund will meet its investment objective.



**Futures, Options on Futures and Securities Options.** Futures contracts, options on futures and securities options may be used by the Fund to facilitate trading or to reduce transaction costs. The Fund may enter into futures contracts and options on futures that are traded on a U.S. or non-U.S. futures exchange. The Fund does not currently intend to use futures, options on futures or securities options for speculative purposes. The Fund intends to use futures and options on futures in accordance with Rule 4.5 of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (the “CFTC”) promulgated under the Commodity Exchange Act (“CEA”). BFA, with respect to the Fund, has claimed an exclusion from the definition of the term “commodity pool operator” in accordance with Rule 4.5 so that BFA, with respect to the Fund, is not subject to registration or regulation as a commodity pool operator under the CEA. See the Regulation Regarding Derivatives section of this SAI for more information.

Futures contracts provide for the future sale by one party and purchase by another party of a specified amount of a specific instrument or index at a specified future time and at a specified price. Stock index contracts are based on investments that reflect the market value of common stock of the firms included in the (investments/applicable interests). The Fund may enter into futures contracts to purchase securities indexes when BFA anticipates purchasing the underlying securities and believes prices will rise before the purchase will be made. Upon entering into a futures contract, the Fund will be required to deposit with the broker an amount of cash or cash equivalents known as “initial margin,” which is similar to a performance bond or good faith deposit on the contract and is returned to the Fund upon termination of the futures contract if all contractual obligations have been satisfied. Subsequent payments, known as “variation margin,” will be made to and from the broker daily as the price of the instrument or index underlying the futures contract fluctuates, making the long and short positions in the futures contract more or less valuable, a process known as “marking-to-market.” At any time prior to the expiration of a futures contract, the Fund may elect to close the position by taking an opposite position, which will operate to terminate the Fund’s existing position in the contract. To the extent required by law, the Fund will segregate liquid assets in an amount equal to its delivery obligations under the futures contracts. An option on a futures contract, as contrasted with a direct investment in such a contract, gives the purchaser the right, but no obligation, in return for the premium paid, to assume a position in the underlying futures contract at a specified exercise price at any time prior to the expiration date of the option. Upon exercise of an option, the delivery of the futures position by the writer of the option to the holder of the option will be accompanied by delivery of the accumulated balance in the writer’s futures margin account that represents the amount by which the market price of the futures contract exceeds (in the case of a call) or is less than (in the case of a put) the exercise price of the option on the futures contract. The potential for loss related to the purchase of an option on a futures contract is limited to the premium paid for the option plus transaction costs. Because the value of the option is fixed at the point of sale, there are no daily cash payments by the purchaser to reflect changes in the value of the underlying contract; however, the value of the option changes daily and that change would be reflected in the NAV of the Fund. The potential for loss related to writing call options is unlimited. The potential for loss related to writing put options is limited to the agreed-upon price per share, also known as the “strike price,” less the premium received from writing the put. The Fund may purchase and write put and call options on futures contracts that are traded on an exchange as a hedge against changes in value of its portfolio securities or in anticipation of the purchase of securities, and may enter into closing transactions with respect to such options to terminate existing positions. There is no guarantee that such closing transactions can be effected.

A call option gives a holder the right to purchase a specific security at a specified price (“exercise price”) within a specified period of time. A put option gives a holder the right to sell a specific security at an exercise price within a specified period of time. The initial purchaser of a call option pays the “writer” a premium, which is paid at the time of purchase and is retained by the writer whether or not such option is exercised. The Fund may purchase put options to hedge its portfolio against the risk of a decline in the market value of securities held and may purchase call options to hedge against an increase in the price of securities it is committed to purchase. The Fund may write put and call options

along with a long position in options to increase its ability to hedge against a change in the market value of the securities it holds or is committed to purchase. The Fund may purchase or sell securities options on a U.S. or non-U.S. securities exchange or in the OTC market through a transaction with a dealer. Options on a securities index are typically settled on a net basis based on the appreciation or depreciation of the index level over the strike price. Options on single name securities may be cash- or physically-settled, depending upon the market in which they are traded. Options may be structured so as to be exercisable only on certain dates or on a daily basis. Options may also be structured to have conditions to exercise (i.e., "Knock-in Events") or conditions that trigger termination (i.e., "Knock-out Events"). Investments in futures contracts and other investments that contain leverage may require the Fund to maintain liquid assets in an amount equal to its delivery obligations under these contracts and other investments. Generally, the Fund maintains an amount of liquid assets equal to its obligations relative to the position involved, adjusted daily on a marked-to-market basis. With respect to futures contracts that are contractually required to "cash-settle," the Fund maintains liquid assets in an amount at least equal to the Fund's daily marked-to-market obligation (i.e., the Fund's daily net liability, if any), rather than the contracts' notional value (i.e., the value of the underlying asset). By maintaining assets equal to its net obligation under cash-settled futures contracts, the Fund may employ leverage to a greater extent than if the Fund were required to set aside assets equal to the futures contracts' full notional value. The Fund bases its asset maintenance policies on methods permitted by the SEC and its staff and may modify these policies in the future to comply with any changes in the guidance articulated from time to time by the SEC or its staff. Changes in SEC guidance regarding the use of derivatives by registered investment companies may adversely impact the Fund's ability to invest in futures, options or other derivatives or make investments in such instruments more expensive.

**Illiquid Investments.** The Fund may invest up to an aggregate amount of 15% of its net assets in illiquid investments. An illiquid investment is any investment that the Fund reasonably expects cannot be sold or disposed of in current market conditions in seven calendar days or less without the sale or disposition significantly changing the market value of the investment. The liquidity of an investment will be determined based on relevant market, trading and investment specific considerations as set out in the Fund's liquidity risk management program (the "Liquidity Program") as required by Rule 22e-4 under the 1940 Act (the "Liquidity Rule"). Illiquid investments may trade at a discount to comparable, more liquid investments and the Fund may not be able to dispose of illiquid investments in a timely fashion or at their expected prices. If illiquid investments exceed 15% of the Fund's net assets, the Liquidity Rule and the Liquidity Program will require that certain remedial actions be taken.

**Lending Portfolio Securities.** The Fund may lend portfolio securities to certain borrowers that BFA determines to be creditworthy, including borrowers affiliated with BFA. The borrowers provide collateral that is maintained in an amount at least equal to the current market value of the securities loaned. No securities loan shall be made on behalf of the Fund if, as a result, the aggregate value of all securities loaned by the Fund exceeds one-third of the value of the Fund's total assets (including the value of the collateral received). The Fund may terminate a loan at any time and obtain the return of the securities loaned. The Fund receives, by way of substitute payment, the value of any interest or cash or non-cash distributions paid on the loaned securities that it would have received if the securities were not on loan.

With respect to loans that are collateralized by cash, the borrower may be entitled to receive a fee based on the amount of cash collateral. The Fund is typically compensated by the difference between the amount earned on the reinvestment of cash collateral and the fee paid to the borrower. In the case of collateral other than cash, the Fund is typically compensated by a fee paid by the borrower equal to a percentage of the market value of the loaned securities. Any cash collateral may be reinvested in certain short-term instruments either directly on behalf of the Fund or through one or more joint accounts or money market funds, including those affiliated with BFA; such investments are subject to investment risk.

The Fund conducts its securities lending pursuant to an exemptive order from the SEC permitting it to lend portfolio securities to borrowers affiliated with the Fund and to retain an affiliate of the Fund to act as securities lending agent. To the extent that the Fund engages in securities lending, BlackRock Institutional Trust Company, N.A. (“BTC”) acts as securities lending agent for the Fund, subject to the overall supervision of BFA. BTC administers the lending program in accordance with guidelines approved by the Trust’s Board of Trustees (the “Board,” the trustees of which are the “Trustees”).

Securities lending involves exposure to certain risks, including operational risk (*i.e.*, the risk of losses resulting from problems in the settlement and accounting process), “gap” risk (*i.e.*, the risk of a mismatch between the return on cash collateral reinvestments and the fees the Fund has agreed to pay a borrower), and credit, legal, counterparty and market risk. If a securities lending counterparty were to default, the Fund would be subject to the risk of a possible delay in receiving collateral or in recovering the loaned securities, or to a possible loss of rights in the collateral. In the event a borrower does not return the Fund’s securities as agreed, the Fund may experience losses if the proceeds received from liquidating the collateral do not at least equal the value of the loaned security at the time the collateral is liquidated, plus the transaction costs incurred in purchasing replacement securities. This event could trigger adverse tax consequences for the Fund. The Fund could lose money if its short-term investment of the collateral declines in value over the period of the loan. Substitute payments received by the Fund representing dividends paid on securities loaned out by the Fund will not be considered qualified dividend income. BTC will take into account the tax effects on shareholders caused by this difference in connection with the Fund’s securities lending program. Substitute payments received on tax-exempt securities loaned out will not be tax-exempt income.

**Regulation Regarding Derivatives.** The CFTC subjects advisers to registered investment companies to regulation by the CFTC if a fund that is advised by the adviser either (i) invests, directly or indirectly, more than a prescribed level of its liquidation value in CFTC-regulated futures, options and swaps (“CFTC Derivatives”), or (ii) markets itself as providing investment exposure to such instruments. The CFTC also subjects advisers to registered investment companies to regulation by the CFTC if the registered investment company invests in one or more commodity pools. To the extent the Fund uses CFTC Derivatives, it intends to do so below such prescribed levels and intends not to market itself as a “commodity pool” or a vehicle for trading such instruments.

BFA has claimed an exclusion from the definition of the term “commodity pool operator” under the CEA pursuant to Rule 4.5 under the CEA with respect to the Fund. BFA is not, therefore, subject to registration or regulation as a “commodity pool operator” under the CEA with respect to the Fund.

Derivative contracts, including, without limitation, swaps, currency forwards, and non-deliverable forwards, are subject to regulation under the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (the “Dodd-Frank Act”) in the U.S. and under comparable regimes in Europe, Asia and other non-U.S. jurisdictions. Swaps, non-deliverable forwards and certain other derivatives traded in the OTC market are subject to variation margin requirements and initial margining requirements will be phased in through at least 2021. Implementation of the margining and other provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act regarding clearing, mandatory trading, reporting and documentation of swaps and other derivatives have impacted and may continue to impact the costs to the Fund of trading these instruments and, as a result, may affect returns to investors in the Fund.

In November 2019, the SEC proposed new regulations governing the use of derivatives by registered investment companies. If adopted as proposed, new Rule 18f-4 would impose limits on the amount of derivatives a fund could enter into, eliminate the asset segregation framework currently used by funds to comply with Section 18 of the 1940 Act, treat derivatives as senior securities so that a failure to comply with the proposed limits would result in a statutory violation and require funds whose use of derivatives is more than a limited specified exposure amount to establish and maintain a comprehensive derivatives risk management program and appoint a derivatives risk manager.

As a result of regulatory requirements under the 1940 Act, the Fund is required to maintain an amount of liquid assets, accrued on a daily basis, having an aggregate value at least equal to the value of the Fund's obligations under the applicable derivatives contract. To the extent that derivatives contracts are settled on a physical basis, the Fund will generally be required to maintain an amount of liquid assets equal to the notional value of the contract. On the other hand, in connection with derivatives contracts that are performed on a net basis, the Fund will generally be required to maintain liquid assets, accrued daily, equal only to the accrued excess, if any, of the Fund's obligations over those of its counterparty under the contract. Accordingly, reliance by the Fund on physically-settled derivatives contracts may adversely impact investors by requiring the Fund to set aside a greater amount of liquid assets than would generally be required if the Fund were relying on cash-settled derivatives contracts.

**Securities of Investment Companies.** The Fund may invest in the securities of other investment companies (including money market funds and business development companies) to the extent permitted by law. Pursuant to the 1940 Act, the Fund's investment in registered investment companies is generally limited to, subject to certain exceptions: (i) 3% of the total outstanding voting stock of any one investment company; (ii) 5% of the Fund's total assets with respect to any one investment company; and (iii) 10% of the Fund's total assets with respect to investment companies in the aggregate. To the extent allowed by law or regulation, the Fund intends from time to time to invest its assets in the securities of investment companies, including, but not limited to, money market funds, including those advised by or otherwise affiliated with BFA, in excess of the general limits discussed above. Other investment companies in which the Fund may invest can be expected to incur fees and expenses for operations, such as investment advisory and administration fees, which would be in addition to those incurred by the Fund. Pursuant to guidance issued by the SEC staff, fees and expenses of money market funds used for cash collateral received in connection with loans of securities are not treated as Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses, which reflect the Fund's *pro rata* share of the fees and expenses incurred by investing in other investment companies (as disclosed in the Prospectus, as applicable).

**Short-Term Instruments and Temporary Investments.** The Fund may invest in short-term instruments, including money market instruments, on an ongoing basis to provide liquidity or for other reasons, and during temporary defensive periods. Money market instruments are generally short-term investments that may include, but are not limited to: (i) shares of money market funds (including those advised by BFA or otherwise affiliated with BFA); (ii) obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government, its agencies or instrumentalities (including government-sponsored enterprises); (iii) negotiable certificates of deposit ("CDs"), bankers' acceptances, fixed-time deposits and other obligations of U.S. and non-U.S. banks (including non-U.S. branches) and similar institutions; (iv) commercial paper rated, at the date of purchase, "Prime-1" by Moody's® Investors Service, Inc., "F-1" by Fitch Ratings, Inc., or "A-1" by Standard & Poor's® Financial Services LLC, a subsidiary of S&P Global, Inc. ("S&P Global Ratings"), or if unrated, of comparable quality as determined by BFA; (v) non-convertible corporate debt securities (e.g., bonds and debentures) with remaining maturities at the date of purchase of not more than 397 days and that have been determined to present minimal credit risks, in accordance with the requirements set forth in Rule 2a-7 under the 1940 Act; (vi) repurchase agreements; and (vii) short-term U.S. dollar-denominated obligations of non-U.S. banks (including U.S. branches) that, in the opinion of BFA, are of comparable quality to obligations of U.S. banks that may be purchased by the Fund. Any of these instruments may be purchased on a current or forward-settled basis. Time deposits are non-negotiable deposits maintained in banking institutions for specified periods of time at stated interest rates. Bankers' acceptances are time drafts drawn on commercial banks by borrowers, usually in connection with international transactions.

**Swap Agreements.** Swap agreements are contracts between parties in which one party agrees to make periodic payments to the other party based on a pre-determined underlying investment or notional amount. In return, the other party agrees to make periodic payments to the first party based on

the return (or a differential in rate of return) earned or realized on the underlying investment or notional amount. Swap agreements will usually be performed on a net basis, with the Fund receiving or paying only the net amount of the two payments. The net amount of the excess, if any, of the Fund's obligations over its entitlements with respect to each swap is accrued on a daily basis, and an amount of liquid assets having an aggregate value at least equal to the accrued excess will be maintained by the Fund.

The Fund may enter into swap agreements, including currency swaps, interest rate swaps and index swaps. The use of currency, interest rate and index swaps is a highly specialized activity that involves investment techniques and risks different from those associated with ordinary portfolio security transactions. These transactions generally do not involve the delivery of securities or other underlying assets.

**Future Developments.** The Board may, in the future, authorize the Fund to invest in securities contracts and investments, other than those listed in this SAI and in the Prospectus, provided they are consistent with the Fund's investment objective and do not violate any of its investment restrictions or policies.

## General Considerations and Risks

A discussion of some of the principal risks associated with an investment in the Fund is contained in the Prospectus.

An investment in the Fund should be made with an understanding that the value of the Fund's portfolio securities may fluctuate in accordance with changes in the financial condition of the issuers of the portfolio securities, the value of stocks in general, and other factors that affect the market. The order of the below risk factors does not indicate the significance of any particular risk factor.

Set forth below is more detailed information regarding the types of instruments in which the Fund may invest, strategies BFA may employ in pursuit of the Fund's investment objective and related risks.

**Borrowing Risk.** Borrowing may exaggerate changes in the NAV of Fund shares and in the return on the Fund's portfolio. Borrowing will cause the Fund to incur interest expense and other fees. The costs of borrowing may reduce the Fund's return. Borrowing may cause the Fund to liquidate positions when it may not be advantageous to do so to satisfy its obligations.

**Environmental, Social and Governance ("ESG") Integration.** Although the Fund does not seek to implement a specific ESG, impact or sustainability strategy, Fund management will consider ESG characteristics as part of the investment process. These considerations may include consideration of third-party research as well as consideration of proprietary BFA research across the ESG risks and opportunities regarding an issuer. Fund management will consider those ESG characteristics it deems relevant or additive when making investment decisions for the Fund. The ESG characteristics utilized in the Fund's investment process are anticipated to evolve over time and one or more characteristics may not be relevant with respect to all issuers that are eligible for investment.

ESG characteristics are not the sole considerations when making investment decisions for the Fund. Further, investors can differ in their views of what constitutes positive or negative ESG characteristics. As a result, the Fund may invest in issuers that do not reflect the beliefs and values with respect to ESG of any particular investor. ESG considerations may affect the Fund's exposure to certain



companies or industries and the Fund may forego certain investment opportunities. While Fund management views ESG considerations as having the potential to contribute to the Fund's long-term performance, there is no guarantee that such results will be achieved.

**Custody Risk.** Custody risk refers to the risks inherent in the process of clearing and settling trades and to the holding of securities, cash and other assets by local banks, agents and depositories. Low trading volumes and volatile prices in less developed markets make trades harder to complete and settle, and governments or trade groups may compel local agents to hold securities in designated depositories that may not be subject to independent evaluation. Local agents are held only to the standards of care of their local markets, and thus may be subject to limited or no government oversight. Communications between the U.S. and emerging market countries may be unreliable, increasing the risk of delayed settlements or losses of security certificates. In general, the less developed a country's securities market is, the greater the likelihood of custody problems. Practices in relation to the settlement of securities transactions in emerging markets involve higher risks than those in developed markets, in part because of the use of brokers and counterparties that are often less well capitalized, and custody and registration of assets in some countries may be unreliable. The possibility of fraud, negligence or undue influence being exerted by the issuer or refusal to recognize ownership exists in some emerging markets, and, along with other factors, could result in ownership registration being lost. In addition, the laws of certain countries may put limits on the Fund's ability to recover its assets if a foreign bank or depository or issuer of a security or an agent of any of the foregoing goes bankrupt. The Fund would absorb any loss resulting from such custody problems and may have no successful claim for compensation.

**Infectious Illness Risk.** An outbreak of an infectious respiratory illness, COVID-19, caused by a novel coronavirus that was first detected in December 2019 has spread globally. The impact of this outbreak has adversely affected the economies of many nations and the global economy, and may impact individual issuers and capital markets in ways that cannot be foreseen. The duration of the outbreak and its effects cannot be predicted with certainty. Any market or economic disruption can be expected to result in increased premiums or discounts to the Fund's NAV.

- *General Impact.* This outbreak has resulted in travel restrictions, closed international borders, enhanced health screenings at ports of entry and elsewhere, disruption of and delays in healthcare service preparation and delivery, prolonged quarantines, cancellations, supply chain disruptions, lower consumer demand, temporary closures of stores, restaurants and other commercial establishments, layoffs, defaults and other significant economic impacts, as well as general concern and uncertainty.
- *Market Volatility.* The outbreak has also resulted in extreme volatility, severe losses, and disruptions in markets which can adversely impact the Fund and its investments, including impairing hedging activity to the extent the Fund engages in such activity, as expected correlations between related markets or instruments may no longer apply. In addition, to the extent the Fund invests in short-term instruments that have negative yields, the Fund's value may be impaired as a result. Certain issuers of equity securities have cancelled or announced the suspension of dividends. The outbreak has, and may continue to, negatively affect the credit ratings of some fixed income securities and their issuers.
- *Market Closures.* Certain local markets have been or may be subject to closures, and there can be no assurance that trading will continue in any local markets in which the Fund may invest, when any resumption of trading will occur or, once such markets resume trading, whether they will face further closures. Any suspension of trading in markets in which the Fund invests will have an impact on the Fund and its investments and will impact the Fund's ability to purchase or sell securities in such markets.
- *Operational Risk.* The outbreak could also impair the information technology and other operational systems upon which the Fund's service providers, including BFA, rely, and could otherwise disrupt the ability of employees of the Fund's service providers to perform critical tasks relating to the

Fund, for example, due to the service providers' employees performing tasks in alternate locations than under normal operating conditions or the illness of certain employees of the Fund's service providers.

- *Governmental Interventions.* Governmental and quasi-governmental authorities and regulators throughout the world have responded to the outbreak and the resulting economic disruptions with a variety of fiscal and monetary policy changes, including direct capital infusions into companies and other issuers, new monetary policy tools, and lower interest rates. An unexpected or sudden reversal of these policies, or the ineffectiveness of such policies, is likely to increase market volatility, which could adversely affect the Fund's investments.
- *Pre-Existing Conditions.* Public health crises caused by the outbreak may exacerbate other pre-existing political, social and economic risks in certain countries or globally.

Other infectious illness outbreaks that may arise in the future could have similar or other unforeseen effects.

**LIBOR Risk.** The Fund may be exposed to financial instruments that are tied to the London Interbank Offered Rate ("LIBOR") to determine payment obligations, financing terms, hedging strategies or investment value. The Fund's investments may pay interest at floating rates based on LIBOR or may be subject to interest caps or floors based on LIBOR. The Fund may also obtain financing at floating rates based on LIBOR. Derivative instruments utilized by the Fund may also reference LIBOR.

In 2017, the head of the United Kingdom's Financial Conduct Authority announced a desire to phase out the use of LIBOR by the end of 2021, and it is expected that LIBOR will cease to be published after that time. The Fund may have investments linked to other interbank offered rates, such as the Euro Overnight Index Average ("EONIA"), which may also cease to be published. Various financial industry groups have begun planning for the transition away from LIBOR, but there are challenges to converting certain securities and transactions to a new reference rate (e.g., the Secured Overnight Financing Rate ("SOFR")), which is intended to replace the U.S. dollar LIBOR).

Neither the effect of the LIBOR transition process nor its ultimate success can yet be known. The transition process might lead to increased volatility and illiquidity in markets for, and reduce the effectiveness of new hedges placed against, instruments whose terms currently include LIBOR. While some existing LIBOR-based instruments may contemplate a scenario where LIBOR is no longer available by providing for an alternative rate-setting methodology, there may be significant uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of any such alternative methodologies to replicate LIBOR. Not all existing LIBOR-based instruments may have alternative rate-setting provisions and there remains uncertainty regarding the willingness and ability of issuers to add alternative rate-setting provisions in certain existing instruments. In addition, a liquid market for newly-issued instruments that use a reference rate other than LIBOR still may be developing. There may also be challenges for the Fund to enter into hedging transactions against such newly-issued instruments until a market for such hedging transactions develops. All of the aforementioned may adversely affect the Fund's performance or NAV.

**Liquidity Risk Management.** The Liquidity Rule requires open-end funds, including exchange-traded funds ("ETFs") such as the Fund, to establish a liquidity risk management program and enhance disclosures regarding fund liquidity. As required by the Liquidity Rule, the Fund has implemented a Liquidity Program, and the Board, including a majority of the Independent Trustees of the Trust, has appointed BFA as the administrator of the Liquidity Program. Under the Liquidity Program, BFA assesses, manages, and periodically reviews the Fund's liquidity risk and classifies each investment held by the Fund as a "highly liquid investment," "moderately liquid investment," "less liquid investment" or "illiquid investment." The Liquidity Rule defines "liquidity risk" as the risk that the Fund could not meet requests to redeem shares issued by the Fund without significant dilution of the remaining investors' interest in the Fund. The liquidity of the Fund's portfolio investments is determined based on relevant market, trading and investment-specific considerations under the Liquidity Program. There are



exclusions from certain portions of the liquidity risk management program requirements for “in-kind” ETFs, as defined in the Liquidity Rule. To the extent that an investment is deemed to be an illiquid investment or a less liquid investment, the Fund can expect to be exposed to greater liquidity risk.

**National Closed Market Trading Risk.** To the extent that the underlying securities held by the Fund trade on foreign exchanges or in foreign markets that are closed when the securities exchange on which the Fund's shares trade is open, there are likely to be deviations between the current price of such an underlying security and the last quoted price for the underlying security (i.e., a Fund's quote from the closed foreign market). These deviations may result in premiums or discounts to the Fund's NAV that may be greater than those experienced by other ETFs.

**Operational Risk.** BFA and the Fund's other service providers may experience disruptions or operating errors such as processing errors or human errors, inadequate or failed internal or external processes, or systems or technology failures, that could negatively impact the Fund. While service providers are required to have appropriate operational risk management policies and procedures, their methods of operational risk management may differ from the Fund's in the setting of priorities, the personnel and resources available or the effectiveness of relevant controls. BFA, through its monitoring and oversight of service providers, seeks to ensure that service providers take appropriate precautions to avoid and mitigate risks that could lead to disruptions and operating errors. However, it is not possible for BFA or the other Fund service providers to identify all of the operational risks that may affect the Fund, or to develop processes and controls to completely eliminate or mitigate their occurrence or effects.

**Recent Market Events.** Stresses associated with the 2008 financial crisis in the United States and global economies peaked approximately a decade ago, but periods of unusually high volatility in the financial markets and restrictive credit conditions, sometimes limited to a particular sector or a geography, continue to recur. Some countries, including the United States, have adopted and/or are considering the adoption of more protectionist trade policies, a move away from the tighter financial industry regulations that followed the financial crisis, and/or substantially reducing corporate taxes. The exact shape of these policies is still being considered, but the equity and debt markets may react strongly to expectations of change, which could increase volatility, especially if the market's expectations are not borne out. A rise in protectionist trade policies, and the possibility of changes to some international trade agreements, could affect the economies of many nations in ways that cannot necessarily be foreseen at the present time. In addition, geopolitical and other risks, including environmental and public health, may add to instability in world economies and markets generally. Economies and financial markets throughout the world are becoming increasingly interconnected. As a result, whether or not the Fund invests in securities of issuers located in or with significant exposure to countries experiencing economic, political and/or financial difficulties, the value and liquidity of the Fund's investments may be negatively affected by such events.

**Risk of Derivatives.** A derivative is a financial contract, the value of which depends on, or is derived from, the value of an underlying asset, such as a security, a commodity (such as gold or silver), a currency or an index (a measure of value or rates, such as the S&P 500 or the prime lending rate). The Fund may invest in currency forwards, swaps, NDFs, variable rate demand notes and obligations, and tender option bonds and other financial instruments, which may be considered derivatives. Compared to securities, derivatives can be more sensitive to changes in interest rates or to sudden fluctuations in market prices and thus the Fund's losses may be greater if it invests in derivatives than if it invests only in conventional securities. Derivatives are also subject to counterparty risk, which is the risk that the other party in the transaction will not fulfill its contractual obligations. Derivatives generally involve the incurrence of leverage. To address such leverage and to prevent the Fund from being deemed to have issued senior securities as a result of an investment in derivatives, the Fund will segregate liquid assets equal to its obligations under the derivatives throughout the life of the investment.

When a derivative is used as a hedge against a position that the Fund holds or is committed to purchase, any loss generated by the derivative generally should be substantially offset by gains on the

hedged investment, and vice versa. While hedging can reduce or eliminate losses, it can also reduce or eliminate gains, and in some cases, hedging can cause losses that are not offset by gains, and the Fund will recognize losses on both the investment and the hedge. Hedges are sometimes subject to imperfect matching between the derivative and the underlying security, and there can be no assurance that the Fund's hedging transactions, which entail additional transaction costs, will be effective.

**Risk of Equity Securities.** An investment in the Fund should be made with an understanding of the risks inherent in an investment in equity securities, including the risk that the financial condition of issuers may become impaired or that the general condition of stock markets may deteriorate (either of which may cause a decrease in the value of the portfolio securities and thus in the value of shares of the Fund). Common and preferred stocks are susceptible to general stock market fluctuations and to increases and decreases in value as market confidence and perceptions of their issuers change. These investor perceptions are based on various and unpredictable factors, including expectations regarding government, economic, monetary and fiscal policies, inflation and interest rates, economic expansion or contraction, and global or regional political, economic or banking crises. Holders of common stocks incur more risks than holders of preferred stocks and debt obligations because common stockholders generally have rights to receive payments from stock issuers that are inferior to the rights of creditors, or holders of debt obligations or preferred stocks. Further, unlike debt securities, which typically have a stated principal amount payable at maturity (the value of which, however, is subject to market fluctuations prior to maturity), or preferred stocks, which typically have a liquidation preference and which may have stated optional or mandatory redemption provisions, common stocks have neither a fixed principal amount nor a maturity date. In addition, issuers may, in times of distress or at their own discretion, decide to reduce or eliminate dividends, which may also cause their stock price to decline.

Although most of the securities in the Fund's portfolio are listed on a securities exchange, the principal trading market for some of the securities may be in the OTC market. The existence of a liquid trading market for certain securities may depend on whether dealers will make a market in such securities. There can be no assurance that a market will be made or maintained or that any such market will be or remain liquid. The price at which securities may be sold and the value of the Fund's shares will be adversely affected if trading markets for the Fund's portfolio securities are limited or absent, or if bid/ask spreads are wide.

**Risk of Futures and Options on Futures Transactions.** There are several risks accompanying the utilization of futures contracts and options on futures contracts. A position in futures contracts and options on futures contracts may be closed only on the exchange on which the contract was made (or a linked exchange). While the Fund plans to utilize futures contracts only if an active market exists for such contracts, there is no guarantee that a liquid market will exist for the contract at a specified time. In the event of adverse price movements, the Fund would continue to be required to make daily cash payments to maintain its required margin. In such situations, if the Fund has insufficient cash, it may have to sell portfolio securities to meet daily margin requirements at a time when it may be disadvantageous to do so. In addition, the Fund may be required to deliver the instruments underlying the futures contracts it has sold.

The risk of loss in trading futures contracts or uncovered call options in some strategies (e.g., selling uncovered bond index futures contracts) is potentially unlimited. The Fund does not plan to use futures and options contracts in this way. The risk of a futures position may still be large as traditionally measured due to the low margin deposits required. In many cases, a relatively small price movement in a futures contract may result in immediate and substantial loss or gain to the investor relative to the size of a required margin deposit. The Fund, however, intends to utilize futures and options contracts in a manner designed to limit its risk exposure to levels comparable to a direct investment in the types of bonds in which it invests.

There is the risk of loss by the Fund of margin deposits in the event of bankruptcy of a broker with whom the Fund has an open position in the futures contract or option. The purchase of put or call options will be based upon predictions by BFA as to anticipated trends, which predictions could prove to be incorrect.

Because the futures market generally imposes less burdensome margin requirements than the securities market, an increased amount of participation by speculators in the futures market could result in price fluctuations. Certain financial futures exchanges limit the amount of fluctuation permitted in futures contract prices during a single trading day. The daily limit establishes the maximum amount by which the price of a futures contract may vary either up or down from the previous day's settlement price at the end of a trading session. Once the daily limit has been reached in a particular type of contract, no trades may be made on that day at a price beyond that limit. It is possible that futures contract prices could move to the daily limit for several consecutive trading days with little or no trading, thereby preventing prompt liquidation of futures positions and subjecting the Fund to substantial losses. In the event of adverse price movements, the Fund would be required to make daily cash payments of variation margin.

**Risk of Investing in Large-Capitalization Companies.** Large-capitalization companies may be less able than smaller capitalization companies to adapt to changing market conditions. Large-capitalization companies may be more mature and subject to more limited growth potential compared to smaller capitalization companies. During different market cycles, the performance of large-capitalization companies has trailed the overall performance of the broader securities markets.

**Risk of Investing in Mid-Capitalization Companies.** Stock prices of mid-capitalization companies may be more volatile than those of large-capitalization companies, and, therefore, the Fund's share price may be more volatile than that of funds that invest a larger percentage of their assets in stocks issued by large-capitalization companies. Stock prices of mid-capitalization companies are also more vulnerable than those of large-capitalization companies to adverse business or economic developments, and the stocks of mid-capitalization companies may be less liquid than those of large-capitalization companies, making it more difficult for the Fund to buy and sell shares of mid-capitalization companies. In addition, mid-capitalization companies generally have less diverse product lines than large-capitalization companies and are more susceptible to adverse developments related to their products.

**Risk of Investing in Small-Capitalization Companies.** Stock prices of small-capitalization companies may be more volatile than those of larger companies, and, therefore, the Fund's share price may be more volatile than that of funds that invest a larger percentage of their assets in stocks issued by large-capitalization or mid-capitalization companies. Stock prices of small-capitalization companies are generally more vulnerable than those of large-capitalization or mid-capitalization companies to adverse business and economic developments. The stocks of small-capitalization companies may be thinly traded, making it difficult for the Fund to buy and sell them. In addition, small-capitalization companies are typically less financially stable than larger, more established companies and may depend on a small number of essential personnel, making them more vulnerable to loss of personnel. Small-capitalization companies also normally have less diverse product lines than large-capitalization companies and are more susceptible to adverse developments concerning their products.

**Non-U.S. Securities.** Investing in the securities of non-U.S. issuers involves special risks and considerations not typically associated with investing in U.S. issuers. These include differences in accounting, auditing and financial reporting standards, the possibility of expropriation or potentially confiscatory taxation, adverse changes in investment or exchange control regulations, political instability which could affect U.S. investments in non-U.S. countries, potential restrictions of the flow of international capital, generally less liquid and less efficient securities markets, generally greater price volatility, less publicly available information about issuers, higher transaction and custody costs, delays and risks attendant in settlement procedures, difficulties in enforcing contractual obligations, less developed judicial systems to settle disputes, lesser liquidity and significantly smaller market capitalization of most non-U.S. securities markets, substantial government interference with the economy and transaction costs of foreign currency conversions. The Fund may have difficulty valuing such securities due to these or other considerations. Non-U.S. issuers may be subject to less governmental regulation than U.S. issuers. Moreover, individual foreign economies may differ favorably or unfavorably from the U.S. economy with respect to growth of gross domestic product ("GDP"), rate of inflation, capital reinvestment, resource self-sufficiency and balance of payment positions. In addition, changes in foreign exchange rates also will affect the value of securities denominated or

quoted in currencies other than the U.S. dollar. Certain foreign markets have specific geographical risks such as a heightened likelihood of earthquakes, tsunamis, or volcanoes. Certain foreign markets also experience acts of terrorism, territorial disputes or other defense concerns. These situations may have a significant impact on the economies of, and investments in, these geographic areas.

To the extent the Fund invests in publicly-traded common stocks of non-U.S. issuers, certain of the Fund's investments in such stocks may be in the form of American Depositary Receipts ("ADRs"), Global Depositary Receipts ("GDRs") and European Depositary Receipts ("EDRs") (collectively, "depositary receipts"). Depositary receipts are receipts, typically issued by a bank or trust issuer, which evidence ownership of underlying securities issued by a non-U.S. issuer. Depositary receipts may not necessarily be denominated in the same currency as their underlying securities. ADRs typically are issued by an American bank or trust company and evidence ownership of underlying securities issued by a foreign corporation. EDRs, which are sometimes referred to as Continental depositary receipts, are receipts issued in Europe, typically by foreign banks and trust companies, that evidence ownership of either foreign or domestic underlying securities. GDRs are depositary receipts structured like global debt issues to facilitate trading on an international basis. Generally, ADRs, issued in registered form, are designed for use in the U.S. securities markets, and EDRs, in bearer form, are designed for use in European securities markets. GDRs are tradable both in the U.S. and in Europe and are designed for use throughout the world. The Fund may invest in Depositary Receipts through "sponsored" or "unsponsored" facilities. A sponsored facility is established jointly by the issuer of the underlying security and a depositary, whereas a depositary may establish an unsponsored facility without participation by the issuer of the deposited security. Holders of unsponsored Depositary Receipts generally bear all the costs of such facilities and the depositary of an unsponsored facility frequently is under no obligation to distribute interest holder communications received from the issuer of the deposited security or to pass through voting rights to the holders of such receipts in respect of the deposited securities. The issuers of unsponsored Depositary Receipts are not obligated to disclose material information in the U.S. and, therefore, there may be less information available regarding such issuers and there may not be a correlation between such information and the market value of the Depositary Receipts.

Depositary receipts are generally subject to the same risks as the foreign securities that they evidence or into which they may be converted. In addition to investment risks associated with the underlying issuer, depositary receipts expose the Fund to additional risks associated with the non-uniform terms that apply to depositary receipt programs, credit exposure to the depositary bank and to the sponsors and other parties with whom the depositary bank establishes the programs, currency risk and liquidity risk. Unsponsored programs, which are not sanctioned by the issuer of the underlying common stock, generally expose investors to greater risks than sponsored programs and do not provide holders with many of the shareholder benefits that come from investing in sponsored depositary receipts.

*Obligations of Foreign Governments, Supranational Entities and Banks.* The Fund may invest in U.S. dollar-denominated short-term obligations issued or guaranteed by one or more foreign governments or any of their political subdivisions, agencies or instrumentalities that are determined by BFA to be of comparable quality to the other obligations in which the Fund may invest. Certain foreign governments, specifically foreign governments in emerging markets, historically have encountered difficulties in servicing their debt obligations, withheld payments of principal and interest, and declared moratoria on the payment of principal and interest on their sovereign debts. The Fund may also invest in debt obligations of supranational entities. Supranational entities include international organizations designated or supported by governmental entities to promote economic reconstruction or development and international banking institutions and related government agencies. Examples include the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank), the Asian Development Bank and the InterAmerican Development Bank. The percentage of the Fund's assets invested in obligations of foreign governments and supranational entities will vary depending on the relative yields of such securities, the economic and financial markets of the countries in which the investments are made and the interest rate climate of such countries. The Fund may invest a portion of its total assets in high-quality, short-term (one year or less) debt obligations of foreign branches of U.S. banks or U.S. branches of foreign banks that are denominated in and pay interest in U.S. dollars.



**Risk of Investing in Emerging Markets.** The Fund may invest in securities of issuers domiciled in emerging market countries. Investments in emerging market countries may be subject to greater risks than investments in developed countries. These risks include: (i) less social, political, and economic stability; (ii) greater illiquidity and price volatility due to smaller or limited local capital markets for such securities, or low or non-existent trading volumes; (iii) companies, custodians, clearinghouses, foreign exchanges and broker-dealers may be subject to less scrutiny and regulation by local authorities; (iv) local governments may decide to seize or confiscate securities held by foreign investors and/or local governments may decide to suspend or limit an issuer's ability to make dividend or interest payments; (v) local governments may limit or entirely restrict repatriation of invested capital, profits, and dividends; (vi) capital gains may be subject to local taxation, including on a retroactive basis; (vii) issuers facing restrictions on dollar payments imposed by local governments may attempt to make dividend or interest payments to foreign investors in the local currency; (viii) there may be significant obstacles to obtaining information necessary for investigations into or litigation against companies and investors may experience difficulty in enforcing legal claims related to the securities and/or local judges may favor the interests of the issuer over those of foreign parties; (ix) bankruptcy judgments may only be permitted to be paid in the local currency; (x) limited public information regarding the issuer may result in greater difficulty in determining market valuations of the securities; and (xi) lack of financial reporting on a regular basis, substandard disclosure and differences in accounting standards may make it difficult to ascertain the financial health of an issuer.

Emerging market securities markets are typically marked by a high concentration of market capitalization and trading volume in a small number of issuers representing a limited number of industries, as well as a high concentration of ownership of such securities by a limited number of investors. In addition, brokerage and other costs associated with transactions in emerging market securities can be higher, sometimes significantly, than similar costs incurred in securities markets in developed countries. Although some emerging markets have become more established and tend to issue securities of higher credit quality, the markets for securities in other emerging market countries are in the earliest stages of their development, and these countries issue securities across the credit spectrum. Even the markets for relatively widely traded securities in emerging market countries may not be able to absorb, without price disruptions, a significant increase in trading volume or trades of a size customarily undertaken by institutional investors in the securities markets of developed countries. The limited size of many of these securities markets can cause prices to be erratic for reasons apart from factors that affect the soundness and competitiveness of the securities issuers. For example, prices may be unduly influenced by traders who control large positions in these markets. Additionally, market making and arbitrage activities are generally less extensive in such markets, which may contribute to increased volatility and reduced liquidity of such markets. The limited liquidity of emerging market country securities may also affect the Fund's ability to accurately value its portfolio securities or to acquire or dispose of securities at the price and time it wishes to do so or in order to meet redemption requests.

Many emerging market countries suffer from uncertainty and corruption in their legal frameworks. Legislation may be difficult to interpret and laws may be too new to provide any precedential value. Laws regarding foreign investment and private property may be weak or non-existent. Sudden changes in governments may result in policies which are less favorable to investors such as policies designed to expropriate or nationalize "sovereign" assets. Certain emerging market countries in the past have expropriated large amounts of private property, in many cases with little or no compensation, and there can be no assurance that such expropriation will not occur in the future.

Investment in the securities markets of certain emerging market countries is restricted or controlled to varying degrees. These restrictions may limit the Fund's investment in certain emerging market countries and may increase the expenses of the Fund. Certain emerging market countries require governmental approval prior to investments by foreign persons or limit investment by foreign persons to only a specified percentage of an issuer's outstanding securities or a specific class of securities which may have less advantageous terms (including price) than securities of the company available for purchase by nationals.

Many emerging market countries lack the social, political, and economic stability characteristic of the U.S. Political instability among emerging market countries can be common and may be caused by an uneven distribution of wealth, social unrest, labor strikes, civil wars, and religious oppression. Economic instability in emerging market countries may take the form of: (i) high interest rates; (ii) high levels of inflation, including hyperinflation; (iii) high levels of unemployment or underemployment; (iv) changes in government economic and tax policies, including confiscatory taxation; and (v) imposition of trade barriers.

The Fund's income and, in some cases, capital gains from foreign securities will be subject to applicable taxation in certain of the emerging market countries in which it invests, and treaties between the U.S. and such countries may not be available in some cases to reduce the otherwise applicable tax rates.

Emerging markets also have different clearance and settlement procedures, and in certain of these emerging markets there have been times when settlements have been unable to keep pace with the volume of securities transactions, making it difficult to conduct such transactions.

In the past, certain governments in emerging market countries have become overly reliant on the international capital markets and other forms of foreign credit to finance large public spending programs, which in the past have caused huge budget deficits. Often, interest payments have become too overwhelming for a government to meet, representing a large percentage of total GDP. These foreign obligations have become the subject of political debate and served as fuel for political parties of the opposition, which pressure the government not to make payments to foreign creditors, but instead to use these funds for, among other things, social programs. Either due to an inability to pay or submission to political pressure, foreign governments have been forced to seek a restructuring of their loan and/or bond obligations, have declared a temporary suspension of interest payments or have defaulted. These events have adversely affected the values of securities issued by foreign governments and corporations domiciled in those countries and have negatively affected not only their cost of borrowing, but their ability to borrow in the future as well.

**Risk of Investing in Europe.** Investing in European countries may expose the Fund to the economic and political risks associated with Europe in general and the specific European countries in which it invests. The economies and markets of European countries are often closely connected and interdependent, and events in one European country can have an adverse impact on other European countries. The Fund may make investments in securities of issuers that are domiciled in, have significant operations in, or that are listed on at least one securities exchange within member states of the European Union (the "EU"). A number of countries within the EU are also members of the Economic and Monetary Union (the "EMU") (the "eurozone") and have adopted the euro as their currency. Eurozone membership requires member states to comply with restrictions on inflation rates, deficits, interest rates, debt levels and fiscal and monetary controls, each of which may significantly affect every country in Europe. Changes in import or export tariffs, changes in governmental or EU regulations on trade, changes in the exchange rate of the euro and other currencies of certain EU countries which are not in the eurozone, the default or threat of default by an EU member state on its sovereign debt, and/or an economic recession in an EU member state may have a significant adverse effect on the economies of other EU member states and major trading partners outside Europe. Although certain European countries are not in the eurozone, many of these countries are obliged to meet the criteria for joining the eurozone. Consequently, these countries must comply with many of the restrictions noted above. The European financial markets have experienced volatility and adverse trends due to concerns about economic downturns, rising government debt levels and the possible default of government debt in several European countries, including, but not limited to, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Ukraine. In order to prevent further economic deterioration, certain countries, without prior warning, can institute "capital controls." Countries may use these controls to restrict volatile movements of capital entering and exiting their country. Such controls may negatively affect the Fund and the Fund's investments. A default or debt restructuring by any European country would adversely impact holders of that country's debt and

sellers of credit default swaps linked to that country's creditworthiness, which may be located in countries other than those listed above. In addition, the credit ratings of certain European countries were downgraded in the past. These events have adversely affected the value and exchange rate of the euro and may continue to significantly affect the economies of every country in Europe, including countries that do not use the euro and non-EU member states. Responses to the financial problems by European governments, central banks and others, including austerity measures and reforms, may not produce the desired results, may result in social unrest and may limit future growth and economic recovery or have other unintended consequences. Further defaults or restructurings by governments and other entities of their debt could have additional adverse effects on economies, financial markets and asset valuations around the world. In addition, one or more countries may abandon the euro and/or withdraw from the EU. The impact of these actions, especially if they occur in a disorderly fashion, is not clear but could be significant and far-reaching and could adversely impact the value of the Fund's investments in the region. The United Kingdom (the "U.K.") left the EU ("Brexit") on January 31, 2020, subject to a transitional period ending December 31, 2020. During the transitional period, although the U.K. is no longer a member state of the EU, it remains subject to EU law and regulations as if it were still a member state. The U.K. and the EU are to negotiate the terms of their future trading relationship during the transitional period. Accordingly, the terms of such trading relationship remain uncertain. The outcome of such negotiations may give rise to significant uncertainties and instability in the financial markets as the U.K. negotiates the terms of its future relationship with the EU. The Fund will face risks associated with the potential uncertainty and consequences leading up to and that may follow Brexit, including with respect to volatility in exchange rates and interest rates. Brexit could adversely affect European or worldwide political, regulatory, economic or market conditions and could contribute to instability in global political institutions, regulatory agencies and financial markets. Brexit has also led to legal uncertainty and could lead to politically divergent national laws and regulations as a new relationship between the U.K. and EU is defined and the U.K. determines which EU laws to replace or replicate. Any of these effects of Brexit could adversely affect any of the companies to which the Fund has exposure and any other assets in which the Fund invests. The political, economic and legal consequences of Brexit are not yet fully known. In the short term, financial markets may experience heightened volatility, particularly those in the U.K. and Europe, but possibly worldwide. The U.K. and Europe may be less stable than they have been in recent years, and investments in the U.K. and the EU may be difficult to value, or subject to greater or more frequent volatility. In the longer term, there is likely to be a period of significant political, regulatory and commercial uncertainty as the U.K. seeks to negotiate its long-term exit from the EU and the terms of its future trading relationships.

Certain European countries have also developed increasingly strained relationships with the U.S., and if these relations were to worsen, they could adversely affect European issuers that rely on the U.S. for trade. Secessionist movements, such as the Catalan movement in Spain and the independence movement in Scotland, as well as governmental or other responses to such movements, may also create instability and uncertainty in the region. In addition, the national politics of countries in the EU have been unpredictable and subject to influence by disruptive political groups and ideologies. The governments of EU countries may be subject to change and such countries may experience social and political unrest. Unanticipated or sudden political or social developments may result in sudden and significant investment losses. The occurrence of terrorist incidents throughout Europe also could impact financial markets. The impact of these events is not clear but could be significant and far-reaching and could adversely affect the value (and liquidity) of the Fund's investments.

**Risk of Investing in Israel.** Investment in securities of Israeli issuers involves risks that may negatively affect the value of your investment in the Fund. Among other things, Israel's economy depends on imports of certain key items, such as crude oil, natural gas, coal, grains, raw materials, and military equipment. The economy is also dependent upon external trade with other economies, notably the U.S., China, Japan, Canada and EU countries. The government of Israel may change the way in which Israeli companies are taxed, or may impose taxes on foreign investment. Such actions could have a negative impact on the overall market for Israeli securities and on the Fund.



Israel's relations with the Palestinian Authority and certain neighboring countries such as Lebanon, Syria and Iran, among others, have at times been strained due to territorial disputes, historical animosities or security concerns, which may cause uncertainty in the Israeli markets and adversely affect the overall economy. Furthermore, Israel's economy is heavily dependent upon trade relationships with key counterparties around the world. Any reduction in these trade flows may have an adverse impact on the Fund's investments.

Terrorist groups, such as Hezbollah and Hamas, operate in close proximity to Israel's borders and frequently threaten Israel with attack. Since 2013, the region has seen the growth of the "Islamic State" and increased internal hostilities in Iraq. The establishment of fundamentalist Islamic regimes or governments that are hostile to Israel could have serious consequences for the peace and stability of the region, place additional political, economic and military confines upon Israel, materially adversely affect the operations of Israeli issuers and limit such issuers' ability to sell products abroad. Actual hostilities or the threat of future hostilities may cause significant volatility in the share price of companies based in or having significant operations in Israel.

**Risk of Investing in New Zealand.** Investment in the New Zealand market involves special considerations not typically associated with investing in the U.S. market. Although New Zealand encourages foreign investment, its Overseas Investment Office must give consent to certain foreign investments based on a national interest determination. A delay in obtaining such approval can delay investments in New Zealand and, as a result, a Fund may not be able to invest in certain securities while approval is pending. Furthermore, approval could be rejected or a Fund's investments may be affected by a limitation in the number of investors interested in a particular industry and/or issuer, and any one of these factors could cause a decline in the value of the Fund.

New Zealand's economy historically has been based on a foundation of agricultural exports. Accordingly, natural disasters, particularly earthquakes which occur regularly in New Zealand, can have a significant adverse impact on the economy. New Zealand is heavily dependent upon international trade and, consequently, has been and may continue to be adversely affected by economic conditions in the countries with which it trades. Reduction in spending, particularly by key trading partners, on New Zealand products and services may cause an adverse impact on the New Zealand economy. New Zealand's economy may be negatively affected if trade barriers, exchange controls, managed adjustments in relative currency values or other protectionist measures are imposed or negotiated by the countries with which it trades.

**Risk of Investing in the U.S.** The Fund has significant exposure to United States issuers. A decrease in imports or exports, changes in trade regulations and/or an economic recession in the United States may have a material adverse effect on the U.S. economy and the securities listed on U.S. exchanges. Proposed and approved policy and legislative changes in the U.S. are changing many aspects of financial and other regulation and may have a significant effect on the U.S. markets generally, as well as on the value of certain securities. In addition, a continued rise in the U.S. public debt level or U.S. austerity measures may adversely affect U.S. economic growth and the securities to which the Fund has exposure.

The U.S. has developed increasingly strained relations with a number of foreign countries. If these relations were to worsen, it could adversely affect U.S. issuers as well as non-U.S. issuers that rely on the U.S. for trade. The U.S. has also experienced increased internal unrest and discord. If this trend were to continue, it may have an adverse impact on the U.S. economy and the issuers in which the Fund invests.

**Risk of Investing in the Communication Services Sector.** The communication services sector consists of both companies in the telecommunication services industry as well as those in the media and entertainment industry. Examples of companies in the telecommunication services industry group include providers of fiber-optic, fixed-line, cellular and wireless telecommunications networks. Companies in the media and entertainment industry group encompass a variety of services and products including

television broadcasting, gaming products, social media, networking platforms, online classifieds, online review websites, and Internet search engines. Companies in the communication services sector may be affected by industry competition, substantial capital requirements, government regulation, and obsolescence of communications products and services due to technological advancement. Fluctuating domestic and international demand, shifting demographics and often unpredictable changes in consumer tastes can drastically affect a communication services company's profitability. In addition, while all companies may be susceptible to network security breaches, certain companies in the communication services sector may be particular targets of hacking and potential theft of proprietary or consumer information or disruptions in service, which could have a material adverse effect on their businesses.

The communication services sector of a country's economy is often subject to extensive government regulation. The costs of complying with governmental regulations, delays or failure to receive required regulatory approvals, or the enactment of new regulatory requirements may negatively affect the business of communications companies. Government actions around the world, specifically in the area of pre-marketing clearance of products and prices, can be arbitrary and unpredictable. The communications services industry can also be significantly affected by intense competition for market share, including competition with alternative technologies such as wireless communications, product compatibility and standardization, consumer preferences, rapid product obsolescence, research and development of new products, lack of standardization or compatibility with existing technologies, and a dependency on patent and copyright protections. Companies in the communication services sector may encounter distressed cash flows due to the need to commit substantial capital to meet increasing competition, particularly in developing new products and services using new technology. Technological innovations may make the products and services of certain communications companies obsolete.

Telecommunications providers with exposure to the U.S. are generally required to obtain franchises or licenses in order to provide services in a given location. Licensing and franchise rights in the telecommunications sector are limited, which may provide an advantage to certain participants. Limited availability of such rights, high barriers to market entry and regulatory oversight, among other factors, have led to consolidation of companies within the sector, which could lead to further regulation or other negative effects in the future. Telecommunication providers investing in non-U.S. countries may be subject to similar risks. Additional risks include those related to competitive challenges in the U.S. from non-U.S. competitors engaged in strategic joint ventures with U.S. companies and in non-U.S. markets from both U.S. and non-U.S. competitors.

Companies in the media and entertainment industries can be significantly affected by several factors, including competition, particularly in formulation of products and services using new technologies, cyclicity of revenues and earnings, a potential decrease in the discretionary income of targeted individuals, changing consumer tastes and interests, and the potential increase in government regulation. Companies in the media and entertainment industries may become obsolete quickly.

Advertising spending can be an important revenue source for media and entertainment companies. During economic downturns advertising spending typically decreases and, as a result, media and entertainment companies tend to generate less revenue.

**Risk of Investing in the Consumer Discretionary Sector.** Companies engaged in the design, production or distribution of products or services for the consumer discretionary sector (including, without limitation, television and radio broadcasting, manufacturing, publishing, recording and musical instruments, motion pictures, photography, amusement and theme parks, gaming casinos, sporting goods and sports arenas, camping and recreational equipment, toys and games, apparel, travel-related services, automobiles, hotels and motels, and fast food and other restaurants) are subject to the risk that their products or services may become obsolete quickly. The success of these companies can depend heavily on disposable household income and consumer spending. During periods of an expanding economy, the consumer discretionary sector may outperform the consumer staples sector, but may underperform when economic conditions worsen. Moreover, the consumer discretionary sector can be significantly affected by several factors, including, without limitation, the performance of

domestic and international economies, exchange rates, changing consumer preferences, demographics, marketing campaigns, cyclical revenue generation, consumer confidence, commodity price volatility, labor relations, interest rates, import and export controls, intense competition, technological developments and government regulation.

**Risk of Investing in the Consumer Staples Sector.** Companies in the consumer staples sector may be adversely affected by changes in the global economy, consumer spending, competition, demographics and consumer preferences, and production spending. Companies in the consumer staples sector may also be affected by changes in global economic, environmental and political events, economic conditions, the depletion of resources, and government regulation. For instance, government regulations may affect the permissibility of using various food additives and production methods of companies that make food products, which could affect company profitability. In addition, tobacco companies may be adversely affected by the adoption of proposed legislation and/or by litigation. Companies in the consumer staples sector also may be subject to risks pertaining to the supply of, demand for and prices of raw materials. The prices of raw materials fluctuate in response to a number of factors, including, without limitation, changes in government agricultural support programs, exchange rates, import and export controls, changes in international agricultural and trading policies, and seasonal and weather conditions. Companies in the consumer staples sector may be subject to severe competition, which may also have an adverse impact on their profitability.

**Risk of Investing in the Financials Sector.** Companies in the financials sector, as traditionally defined, include regional and money center banks, securities brokerage firms, asset management companies, savings banks and thrift institutions, specialty finance companies (e.g., credit card, mortgage providers), insurance and insurance brokerage firms, consumer finance firms, financial conglomerates and foreign banking and financial companies. The global financial markets have experienced very difficult conditions and volatility as well as significant adverse trends. The conditions in these markets have resulted in a decrease in availability of corporate credit, capital and liquidity and have led indirectly to the insolvency, closure or acquisition of a number of financial institutions. These conditions have also contributed to consolidation within the financial industry. In addition, the global financial industry has been materially and adversely affected by a significant decline in the value of mortgage-backed and asset-backed securities, and by the sovereign debt crisis. The prospects of many financial companies are questionable and continue to evolve as financial companies revise their outlooks and write down assets that they hold.

Most financial companies are subject to extensive governmental regulation, which limits their activities and may affect their ability to earn a profit from a given line of business. Government regulation may change frequently and may have significant adverse consequences for companies in the financials sector, including effects not intended by the regulation. Direct governmental intervention in the operations of financial companies and financial markets may materially and adversely affect the companies in which the Fund invests, including legislation in many countries that may increase government regulation, repatriation and other intervention. The impact of governmental intervention and legislative changes on any individual financial company or on the financials sector as a whole cannot be predicted. The valuation of financial companies has been and continues to be subject to unprecedented volatility and may be influenced by unpredictable factors, including interest rate risk and sovereign debt default. Certain financial businesses are subject to intense competitive pressures, including market share and price competition. Financial companies in foreign countries are subject to market specific and general regulatory and interest rate concerns. In particular, government regulation in certain foreign countries may include taxes and controls on interest rates, credit availability, minimum capital requirements, bans on short sales, limits on prices and restrictions on currency transfers. In addition, companies in the financials sector may be the targets of hacking and potential theft of proprietary or customer information or disruptions in service, which could have a material adverse effect on their businesses.

The profitability of banks, savings and loan associations and financial companies is largely dependent on the availability and cost of capital funds and can fluctuate significantly when interest rates change; for instance, when interest rates go up, the value of securities issued by many types of companies in the financials sector generally goes down. In other words, financial companies may be adversely affected in certain market cycles, including, without limitation, during periods of rising interest rates, which may restrict the availability and increase the cost of capital, and during periods of declining economic conditions, which may cause, among other things, credit losses due to financial difficulties of borrowers.

In addition, general economic conditions are important to the operations of these companies, and financial difficulties of borrowers may have an adverse effect on the profitability of financial companies. Financial companies can be highly dependent upon access to capital markets, and any impediments to such access, such as adverse overall economic conditions or a negative perception in the capital markets of a financial company's financial condition or prospects, could adversely affect its business. Deterioration of credit markets can have an adverse impact on a broad range of financial markets, causing certain financial companies to incur large losses. In these conditions, companies in the financials sector may experience significant declines in the valuation of their assets, take actions to raise capital and even cease operations. Some financial companies may also be required to accept or borrow significant amounts of capital from government sources and may face future government-imposed restrictions on their businesses or increased government intervention. In addition, there is no guarantee that governments will provide any such relief in the future. These actions may cause the securities of many companies in the financials sector to decline in value.

**Risk of Investing in the Healthcare Sector.** Companies in the healthcare sector, including healthcare equipment and services companies, are often issuers whose profitability may be affected by extensive government regulation, restrictions on government reimbursement for medical expenses, rising or falling costs of medical products and services, pricing pressure, an increased emphasis on outpatient services, a limited number of products, industry innovation, changes in technologies and other market developments. Many healthcare companies are heavily dependent on patent protection and the actual or perceived safety and efficiency of their products.

Patents have a limited duration, and, upon expiration, other companies may market substantially similar "generic" products that are typically sold at a lower price than the patented product, which can cause the original developer of the product to lose market share and/or reduce the price charged for the product, resulting in lower profits for the original developer. As a result, the expiration of patents may adversely affect the profitability of these companies.

In addition, because the products and services of many companies in the healthcare sector affect the health and well-being of many individuals, these companies are especially susceptible to extensive litigation based on product liability and similar claims. Healthcare companies are subject to competitive forces that may make it difficult to raise prices and, in fact, may result in price discounting. Many new products in the healthcare sector may be subject to regulatory approvals. The process of obtaining such approvals may be long and costly, which can result in increased development costs, delayed cost recovery and loss of competitive advantage to the extent that rival companies have developed competing products or procedures, adversely affecting the company's revenues and profitability. In other words, delays in the regulatory approval process may diminish the opportunity for a company to profit from a new product or to bring a new product to market, which could have a material adverse effect on a company's business. Healthcare companies may also be strongly affected by scientific biotechnology or technological developments, and their products may quickly become obsolete. Also, many healthcare companies offer products and services that are subject to governmental regulation and may be adversely affected by changes in governmental policies or laws. Changes in governmental policies or laws may span a wide range of topics, including cost control, national health insurance,

incentives for compensation in the provision of healthcare services, tax incentives and penalties related to healthcare insurance premiums, and promotion of prepaid healthcare plans. In addition, a number of legislative proposals concerning healthcare have been considered by the U.S. Congress in recent years. It is unclear what proposals will ultimately be enacted, if any, and what effect they may have on companies in the healthcare sector.

Additionally, the expansion of facilities by healthcare-related providers may be subject to “determinations of need” by certain government authorities. This process not only generally increases the time and costs involved in these expansions, but also makes expansion plans uncertain, limiting the revenue and profitability growth potential of healthcare-related facilities operators and negatively affecting the prices of their securities. Moreover, in recent years, both local and national governmental budgets have come under pressure to reduce spending and control healthcare costs, which could both adversely affect regulatory processes and public funding available for healthcare products, services and facilities.

**Risk of Investing in the Industrials Sector.** The value of securities issued by companies in the industrials sector, as traditionally defined, may be adversely affected by supply of and demand for both their specific products or services and for industrials sector products in general. The products of manufacturing companies may face obsolescence due to rapid technological developments and frequent new product introduction. Government regulations, trade disputes, world events and economic conditions may affect the performance of companies in the industrials sector. The industrials sector may also be adversely affected by changes or trends in commodity prices, which may be influenced by unpredictable factors or liability for environmental damage and product liability claims. Aerospace and defense companies, a component of the industrials sector, can be significantly affected by government spending policies because companies involved in this industry rely, to a significant extent, on government demand for their products and services. Thus, the financial condition of, and investor interest in, aerospace and defense companies are heavily influenced by governmental defense spending policies, which are typically under pressure from efforts to control government budgets. Transportation stocks, a component of the industrials sector, are cyclical and can be significantly affected by economic changes, fuel prices, labor relations and insurance costs. Transportation companies in certain countries may also be subject to significant government regulation and oversight, which may adversely affect their businesses. For example, commodity price declines and unit volume reductions resulting from an over-supply of materials used in the industrials sector can adversely affect the sector. Furthermore, companies in the industrials sector may be subject to liability for environmental damage, product liability claims, depletion of resources, and mandated expenditures for safety and pollution control.

**Risk of Investing in the Information Technology Sector.** Information technology companies face intense competition, both domestically and internationally, which may have an adverse effect on profit margins. Like other technology companies, information technology companies may have limited product lines, markets, financial resources or personnel. The products of information technology companies may face product obsolescence due to rapid technological developments and frequent new product introduction, unpredictable changes in growth rates and competition for the services of qualified personnel. Technology companies and companies that rely heavily on technology, especially those of smaller, less-seasoned companies, tend to be more volatile than the overall market. Companies in the information technology sector are heavily dependent on patent and intellectual property rights. The loss or impairment of these rights may adversely affect the profitability of these companies. Information technology companies are facing increased government and regulatory scrutiny and may be subject to adverse government or regulatory action. Finally, while all companies may be susceptible to network security breaches, certain companies in the information technology sector may be particular targets of hacking and potential theft of proprietary or consumer information or disruptions in service, which could have a material adverse effect on their businesses. These risks are heightened for information technology companies in foreign markets.



# Proxy Voting Policy

For the Fund, the Board has delegated the voting of proxies for the Fund's securities to BFA pursuant to the Fund's Proxy Voting Policy (the "Proxy Voting Policy"), and BFA has adopted policies and procedures (the "BlackRock Proxy Voting Policies") governing proxy voting by accounts managed by BFA, including the Fund.

Under the BlackRock Proxy Voting Policies, BFA will vote proxies related to Fund securities in the best interests of the Fund and its shareholders. From time to time, a vote may present a conflict between the interests of the Fund's shareholders, on the one hand, and those of BFA, or any affiliated person of the Fund or BFA, on the other. BFA maintains policies and procedures that are designed to prevent undue influence on BFA's proxy voting activity that might stem from any relationship between the issuer of a proxy (or any dissident shareholder) and BFA, BFA's affiliates, the Fund or the Fund's affiliates. Most conflicts are managed through a structural separation of BFA's Corporate Governance Group from BFA's employees with sales and client responsibilities. In addition, BFA maintains procedures to ensure that all engagements with corporate issuers or dissident shareholders are managed consistently and without regard to BFA's relationship with the issuer of the proxy or the dissident shareholder. In certain instances, BFA may determine to engage an independent fiduciary to vote proxies as a further safeguard to avoid potential conflicts of interest or as otherwise required by applicable law.

Copies of the Fund's Proxy Voting Policy, BlackRock's Global Corporate Governance & Engagement Principals and BlackRock's Corporate Governance and Proxy Voting Guidelines for U.S. Securities are attached as Appendices A1, A2 and A3, respectively.

Information with respect to how proxies relating to the Fund's portfolio securities were voted during the 12-month period ending June 30 will be available without charge, (i) at [www.blackrock.com](http://www.blackrock.com) and (ii) on the SEC's website at [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov).

# Portfolio Holdings Information

On each Business Day (as defined in the *Creation and Redemption of Creation Units* section of this SAI), prior to the opening of regular trading on the Fund's primary listing exchange, the Fund discloses on its website ([www.blackrock.com](http://www.blackrock.com)) certain information relating to the portfolio holdings that will form the basis of the Fund's next net asset value per share calculation.

In addition, certain information may also be made available to certain parties:

- **Communications of Data Files:** The Fund may make available through the facilities of the National Securities Clearing Corporation ("NSCC") or through posting on the [www.blackrock.com](http://www.blackrock.com), prior to the opening of trading on each business day, a list of the Fund's holdings (generally pro-rata) that Authorized Participants could deliver to the Fund to settle purchases of the Fund (i.e. Deposit Securities) or that Authorized Participants would receive from the Fund to settle redemptions of the Fund (i.e. Fund Securities (as defined below)). These files are known as the Portfolio Composition File and the Fund Data File (collectively, "Files"). The Files are applicable for the next trading day and are provided to the NSCC and/or posted on [www.blackrock.com](http://www.blackrock.com) after the close of markets in the U.S.

- **Communications with Authorized Participants and Liquidity Providers:** Certain employees of BFA are responsible for interacting with Authorized Participants and liquidity providers with respect to discussing custom basket proposals as described in the *Custom Baskets* section of this SAI. As part of these discussions, these employees may discuss with an Authorized Participant or liquidity provider the securities the Fund is willing to accept for a creation, and securities that the Fund will provide on a redemption.

BFA employees may also discuss portfolio holdings-related information with broker/dealers, in connection with settling the Fund's transactions, as may be necessary to conduct business in the ordinary course in a manner consistent with the disclosure in the Fund's current registration statement.

- **Communications with Listing Exchanges:** From time to time, employees of BFA may discuss portfolio holdings information with the applicable primary listing exchange for the Fund as needed to meet the exchange listing standards.
- **Communications with Other Portfolio Managers:** Certain information may be provided to employees of BFA who manage funds that invest a significant percentage of their assets in shares of an underlying fund as necessary to manage to the fund's investment objective and strategy.
- **Communication of Other Information:** Certain explanatory information regarding the Files is released to Authorized Participants and liquidity providers on a daily basis, but is only done so after the Files are posted to [www.blackrock.com](http://www.blackrock.com).
- **Third-Party Service Providers.** Certain portfolio holdings information may be disclosed to Fund Trustees and their counsel, outside counsel for the Fund, auditors and to certain third party service providers (i.e., fund administrator, custodian, proxy voting service) for which a non-disclosure, confidentiality agreement or other obligation is in place with such service providers, as may be necessary to conduct business in the ordinary course in a manner consistent with applicable policies, agreements with the Fund, the terms of the current registration statement and federal securities laws and regulations thereunder.

The Trust's Chief Compliance Officer or his delegate may authorize disclosure of portfolio holdings information pursuant to the above policy and procedures, subject to restrictions on selective disclosure imposed by applicable law. The Board reviews the policy and procedures for disclosure of portfolio holdings information at least annually.

## Investment Policies

The Board has adopted as fundamental policies the following numbered investment policies, which cannot be changed without the approval of the holders of a majority of the Fund's outstanding voting securities. A vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund is defined in the Investment Company Act as the lesser of (i) 67% or more of the voting securities present at a shareholder meeting, if the holders of more than 50% of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund are present or represented by proxy, or (ii) more than 50% of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund. The Fund has also adopted certain non-fundamental investment policies, including its investment objective. Non-fundamental investment policies may be changed by the Board without shareholder approval. Therefore, the Fund may change its investment objective without shareholder approval.



## **Fundamental Investment Policies**

The Fund may not:

1. Concentrate its investments in a particular industry, as that term is used in the Investment Company Act.
2. Borrow money, except as permitted under the Investment Company Act.
3. Issue senior securities to the extent such issuance would violate the Investment Company Act.
4. Purchase or hold real estate, except the Fund may purchase and hold securities or other instruments that are secured by, or linked to, real estate or interests therein, securities of real estate investment trusts ("REITs"), mortgage-related securities and securities of issuers engaged in the real estate business, and the Fund may purchase and hold real estate as a result of the ownership of securities or other instruments.
5. Underwrite securities issued by others, except to the extent that the sale of portfolio securities by the Fund may be deemed to be an underwriting or as otherwise permitted by applicable law.
6. Purchase or sell commodities or commodity contracts, except as permitted by the Investment Company Act.
7. Make loans to the extent prohibited by the Investment Company Act.

### ***Notations Regarding the Fund's Fundamental Investment Policies***

The following notations are not considered to be part of the Fund's fundamental investment policies and are subject to change without shareholder approval.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to concentration set forth in (1) above, the Investment Company Act does not define what constitutes "concentration" in an industry. The SEC staff has taken the position that investment of 25% or more of a fund's total assets in one or more issuers conducting their principal activities in the same industry or group of industries constitutes concentration. It is possible that interpretations of concentration could change in the future. The policy in (1) above will be interpreted to refer to concentration as that term may be interpreted from time to time. The policy also will be interpreted to permit investment without limit in the following: securities of the U.S. government and its agencies or instrumentalities; securities of state, territory, possession or municipal governments and their authorities, agencies, instrumentalities or political subdivisions; and repurchase agreements collateralized by any such obligations. Accordingly, issuers of the foregoing securities will not be considered to be members of any industry. There also will be no limit on investment in issuers domiciled in a single jurisdiction or country. Finance companies will be considered to be in the industries of their parents if their activities are primarily related to financing the activities of the parents. Each foreign government will be considered to be a member of a separate industry. With respect to the Fund's industry classifications, the Fund currently utilizes any one or more of the industry sub-classifications used by one or more widely recognized market indexes or rating group indexes, and/or as defined by Fund management. The policy also will be interpreted to give broad authority to the Fund as to how to classify issuers within or among industries.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to borrowing money set forth in (2) above, the Investment Company Act permits the Fund to borrow money in amounts of up to one-third of the Fund's total assets from banks for any purpose, and to borrow up to 5% of the Fund's total assets from banks or other lenders for temporary purposes. (The Fund's total assets include the amounts being borrowed.) To limit the risks attendant to borrowing, the Investment Company Act requires the Fund to maintain at all times an "asset coverage" of at least 300% of the amount of its borrowings. Asset coverage means the ratio that the value of the Fund's total assets (including amounts borrowed),

minus liabilities other than borrowings, bears to the aggregate amount of all borrowings. Borrowing money to increase portfolio holdings is known as “leveraging.” Certain trading practices and investments, such as reverse repurchase agreements, may be considered to be borrowings or involve leverage and thus are subject to the Investment Company Act restrictions. In accordance with SEC staff guidance and interpretations, when the Fund engages in such transactions, the Fund instead of maintaining asset coverage of at least 300%, may segregate or earmark liquid assets, or enter into an offsetting position, in an amount at least equal to the Fund’s exposure, on a mark-to-market basis, to the transaction (as calculated pursuant to requirements of the SEC). The policy in (2) above will be interpreted to permit the Fund to engage in trading practices and investments that may be considered to be borrowing or to involve leverage to the extent permitted by the Investment Company Act and to permit the Fund to segregate or earmark liquid assets or enter into offsetting positions in accordance with the Investment Company Act. Short-term credits necessary for the settlement of securities transactions and arrangements with respect to securities lending will not be considered to be borrowings under the policy. Practices and investments that may involve leverage but are not considered to be borrowings are not subject to the policy.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to underwriting set forth in (5) above, the Investment Company Act does not prohibit the Fund from engaging in the underwriting business or from underwriting the securities of other issuers; in fact, in the case of diversified funds, the Investment Company Act permits the Fund to have underwriting commitments of up to 25% of its assets under certain circumstances. Those circumstances currently are that the amount of the Fund’s underwriting commitments, when added to the value of the Fund’s investments in issuers where the Fund owns more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of those issuers, cannot exceed the 25% cap. A fund engaging in transactions involving the acquisition or disposition of portfolio securities may be considered to be an underwriter under the 1933 Act. Although it is not believed that the application of the 1933 Act provisions described above would cause the Fund to be engaged in the business of underwriting, the policy in (5) above will be interpreted not to prevent the Fund from engaging in transactions involving the acquisition or disposition of portfolio securities, regardless of whether the Fund may be considered to be an underwriter under the 1933 Act or is otherwise engaged in the underwriting business to the extent permitted by applicable law.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to lending set forth in (7) above, the Investment Company Act does not prohibit the Fund from making loans (including lending its securities); however, SEC staff interpretations currently prohibit funds from lending more than one-third of their total assets (including lending its securities), except through the purchase of debt obligations or the use of repurchase agreements. In addition, collateral arrangements with respect to options, forward currency and futures transactions and other derivative instruments (as applicable), as well as delays in the settlement of securities transactions, will not be considered loans.

### **Non-Fundamental Investment Policies**

The Fund has adopted a non-fundamental investment policy, in accordance with Rule 35d-1 under the 1940 Act, to invest, under normal circumstances, at least 80% of its net assets plus any borrowings for investment purposes in equity securities issued by mid- and small-capitalization companies that BFA believes have above-average earnings growth potential. The Fund also has adopted a policy to provide its shareholders with at least 60 days’ notice of any change in such policy. If, subsequent to an investment, the 80% requirement is no longer met, the Fund’s future investments will be made in a manner that will bring the Fund into compliance with this policy.

Under its non-fundamental investment restrictions, which may be changed by the Board without shareholder approval, the Fund may not:

- a. Purchase securities of other investment companies, except to the extent permitted by the Investment Company Act. As a matter of policy, however, the Fund will not purchase shares of any registered open-end investment company or registered unit investment trust, in reliance on Section 12(d)(1)(F) or (G) (the “fund of funds” provisions) of the Investment Company Act, at any time the Fund has knowledge that its shares are purchased by another investment company investor in reliance on the provisions of subparagraph (G) of Section 12(d)(1).
- b. Make short sales of securities or maintain a short position, except to the extent permitted by the Fund’s Prospectus and SAI, as amended from time to time, and applicable law.

Unless otherwise indicated, all limitations under the Fund’s fundamental or non-fundamental investment policies apply only at the time that a transaction is undertaken. Any change in the percentage of the Fund’s assets invested in certain securities or other instruments resulting from market fluctuations or other changes in the Fund’s total assets will not require the Fund to dispose of an investment until BFA determines that it is practicable to sell or close out the investment without undue market or tax consequences.

## Continuous Offering

The method by which Creation Units are created and traded may raise certain issues under applicable securities laws. Because new Creation Units are issued and sold by the Fund on an ongoing basis, at any point a “distribution,” as such term is used in the 1933 Act, may occur. Broker-dealers and other persons are cautioned that some activities on their part may, depending on the circumstances, result in their being deemed participants in a distribution in a manner that could render them statutory underwriters and subject them to the prospectus delivery requirement and liability provisions of the 1933 Act.

For example, a broker-dealer firm or its client may be deemed a statutory underwriter if it takes Creation Units after placing an order with the Distributor, breaks them down into constituent shares and sells such shares directly to customers or if it chooses to couple the creation of new shares with an active selling effort involving solicitation of secondary market demand for shares. A determination of whether one is an underwriter for purposes of the 1933 Act must take into account all of the facts and circumstances pertaining to the activities of the broker-dealer or its client in the particular case and the examples mentioned above should not be considered a complete description of all the activities that could lead to a categorization as an underwriter. Broker-dealer firms should also note that dealers who are not “underwriters” but are effecting transactions in shares, whether or not participating in the distribution of shares, generally are required to deliver a prospectus. This is because the prospectus delivery exemption in Section 4(a)(3) of the 1933 Act is not available in respect of such transactions as a result of Section 24(d) of the 1940 Act. Firms that incur a prospectus delivery obligation with respect to shares of the Fund are reminded that, pursuant to Rule 153 under the 1933 Act, a prospectus delivery obligation under Section 5(b)(2) of the 1933 Act owed to an exchange member in connection with a sale on the Listing Exchange generally is satisfied by the fact that the prospectus is available at the Listing Exchange upon request. The prospectus delivery mechanism provided in Rule 153 is available only with respect to transactions on an exchange.

# Management

**Trustees and Officers.** The Board of the Trust consists of fourteen Trustees, twelve of whom are not “interested persons” of the Trust as defined in the 1940 Act (the “Independent Trustees”). The registered investment companies advised by the Investment Adviser or its affiliates (the “BlackRock-advised Funds”) are organized into one complex of open-end equity, multi-asset, index and money market funds (the “BlackRock Multi-Asset Complex”), one complex of closed-end funds and open-end non-index fixed-income funds (the “BlackRock Fixed-Income Complex”) and one complex of exchange-traded funds (each, a “BlackRock Fund Complex”). The Trust is included in the BlackRock Fund Complex referred to as the BlackRock Multi-Asset Complex. The Trustees also oversee as board members the operations of the other open-end registered investment companies included in the BlackRock Multi-Asset Complex.

## Interested Trustees

Name and Year of Birth <sup>1,2</sup>	Position(s) Held (Length of Service)	Principal Occupation(s) During Past Five Years	Number of BlackRock-Advised Registered Investment Companies (“RICs”) Consisting of Investment Portfolios (“Portfolios”) Overseen	Public Company and Other Investment Company Directorships Held During Past Five Years
Robert Fairbairn 1965	Trustee (Since 2019)	Vice Chairman of BlackRock, Inc. since 2019; Member of BlackRock’s Global Executive and Global Operating Committees; Co-Chair of BlackRock’s Human Capital Committee; Senior Managing Director of BlackRock, Inc. from 2010 to 2019; oversaw BlackRock’s Strategic Partner Program and Strategic Product Management Group from 2012 to 2019; Member of the Board of Managers of BlackRock Investments, LLC from 2011 to 2018; Global Head of BlackRock’s Retail and iShares® businesses from 2012 to 2016.	121 RICs consisting of 268 Portfolios	None
John M. Perlowski <sup>3</sup> 1964	Trustee, President and Chief Executive Officer (Since 2019)	Managing Director of BlackRock, Inc. since 2009; Head of BlackRock Global Accounting and Product Services since 2009; Advisory Director of Family Resource Network (charitable foundation) since 2009.	122 RICs consisting of 269 Portfolios	None

<sup>1</sup> The address of each Trustee is c/o BlackRock, Inc., 55 East 52nd Street, New York, New York 10055.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Fairbairn and Mr. Perlowski are both “interested persons,” as defined in the 1940 Act, of the Trust based on their positions with BlackRock, Inc. and its affiliates. Mr. Fairbairn and Mr. Perlowski are also board members of the BlackRock Fixed-Income Complex.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Perlowski is also a trustee of the BlackRock Credit Strategies Fund.

## Independent Trustees

Name and Year of Birth <sup>1,2</sup>	Position(s) Held (Length of Service)	Principal Occupation(s) During Past Five Years	Number of BlackRock-Advised Registered Investment Companies (“RICs”) Consisting of Investment Portfolios (“Portfolios”) Overseen	Public Company and Other Investment Company Directorships Held During Past Five Years
Mark Stalnecker 1951	Chair of the Board and Trustee (Since 2019)	Chief Investment Officer, University of Delaware from 1999 to 2013; Trustee and Chair of the Finance and Investment Committees, Winterthur Museum and Country Estate from 2005 to 2016; Member of the Investment Committee, Delaware Public Employees’ Retirement System since 2002; Member of the Investment Committee, Christiana Care Health System from 2009 to 2017; Member of the Investment Committee, Delaware Community Foundation from 2013 to 2014; Director and Chair of the Audit Committee, SEI Private Trust Co. from 2001 to 2014.	35 RICs consisting of 158 Portfolios	None
Bruce R. Bond 1946	Trustee (Since 2019)	Board Member, Amsphere Limited (software) since 2018; Trustee and Member of the Governance Committee, State Street Research Mutual Funds from 1997 to 2005; Board Member of Governance, Audit and Finance Committee, Avaya Inc. (computer equipment) from 2003 to 2007.	35 RICs consisting of 158 Portfolios	None

<b>Name and Year of Birth<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>Position(s) Held (Length of Service)</b>	<b>Principal Occupation(s) During Past Five Years</b>	<b>Number of BlackRock- Advised Registered Investment Companies ("RICs") Consisting of Investment Portfolios ("Portfolios") Overseen</b>	<b>Public Company and Other Investment Company Directorships Held During Past Five Years</b>
Susan J. Carter 1956	Trustee (Since 2019)	Director, Pacific Pension Institute from 2014 to 2018; Advisory Board Member, Center for Private Equity and Entrepreneurship at Tuck School of Business since 1997; Senior Advisor, Commonfund Capital, Inc. ("CCI") (investment adviser) in 2015; Chief Executive Officer, CCI from 2013 to 2014; President & Chief Executive Officer, CCI from 1997 to 2013; Advisory Board Member, Girls Who Invest from 2015 to 2018 and Board Member thereof since 2018; Advisory Board Member, Bridges Fund Management since 2016; Trustee, Financial Accounting Foundation since 2017; Practitioner Advisory Board Member, Private Capital Research Institute ("PCRI") since 2017; Lecturer in the Practice of Management, Yale School of Management since 2019.	35 RICs consisting of 158 Portfolios	None
Collette Chilton 1958	Trustee (Since 2019)	Chief Investment Officer, Williams College since 2006; Chief Investment Officer, Lucent Asset Management Corporation from 1998 to 2006.	35 RICs consisting of 158 Portfolios	None

<b>Name and Year of Birth<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>Position(s) Held (Length of Service)</b>	<b>Principal Occupation(s) During Past Five Years</b>	<b>Number of BlackRock- Advised Registered Investment Companies ("RICs") Consisting of Investment Portfolios ("Portfolios") Overseen</b>	<b>Public Company and Other Investment Company Directorships Held During Past Five Years</b>
Neil A. Cotty 1954	Trustee (Since 2019)	Bank of America Corporation from 1996 to 2015, serving in various senior finance leadership roles, including Chief Accounting Officer from 2009 to 2015, Chief Financial Officer of Global Banking, Markets and Wealth Management from 2008 to 2009, Chief Accounting Officer from 2004 to 2008, Chief Financial Officer of Consumer Bank from 2003 to 2004, Chief Financial Officer of Global Corporate Investment Bank from 1999 to 2002.	35 RICs consisting of 158 Portfolios	None
Lena G. Goldberg 1949	Trustee (Since 2019)	Senior Lecturer, Harvard Business School, since 2008; Director, Charles Stark Draper Laboratory, Inc. since 2013; FMR LLC/Fidelity Investments (financial services) from 1996 to 2008, serving in various senior roles including Executive Vice President – Strategic Corporate Initiatives and Executive Vice President and General Counsel; Partner, Sullivan & Worcester LLP from 1985 to 1996 and Associate thereof from 1979 to 1985.	35 RICs consisting of 158 Portfolios	None



<b>Name and Year of Birth<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>Position(s) Held (Length of Service)</b>	<b>Principal Occupation(s) During Past Five Years</b>	<b>Number of BlackRock- Advised Registered Investment Companies ("RICs") Consisting of Investment Portfolios ("Portfolios") Overseen</b>	<b>Public Company and Other Investment Company Directorships Held During Past Five Years</b>
Henry R. Keizer 1956	Trustee (Since 2019)	Director, Park Indemnity Ltd. (captive insurer) since 2010; Director, MUFG Americas Holdings Corporation and MUFG Union Bank, N.A. (financial and bank holding company) from 2014 to 2016; Director, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants from 2009 to 2011; Director, KPMG LLP (audit, tax and advisory services) from 2004 to 2005 and 2010 to 2012; Director, KPMG International in 2012, Deputy Chairman and Chief Operating Officer thereof from 2010 to 2012 and U.S. Vice Chairman of Audit thereof from 2005 to 2010; Global Head of Audit, KPMGI (consortium of KPMG firms) from 2006 to 2010; Director, YMCA of Greater New York from 2006 to 2010.	35 RICs consisting of 158 Portfolios	Hertz Global Holdings (car rental); Montpelier Re Holdings, Ltd. (publicly held property and casualty reinsurance) from 2013 until 2015; WABCO (commercial vehicle safety systems); Sealed Air Corp. (packaging)
Cynthia A. Montgomery 1952	Trustee (Since 2019)	Professor, Harvard Business School since 1989.	35 RICs consisting of 158 Portfolios	Newell Rubbermaid, Inc. (manufacturing)

<b>Name and Year of Birth<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>Position(s) Held (Length of Service)</b>	<b>Principal Occupation(s) During Past Five Years</b>	<b>Number of BlackRock- Advised Registered Investment Companies ("RICs") Consisting of Investment Portfolios ("Portfolios") Overseen</b>	<b>Public Company and Other Investment Company Directorships Held During Past Five Years</b>
Donald C. Opatrny 1952	Trustee (Since 2019)	Trustee, Vice Chair, Member of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Investment Committee, Cornell University since 2004; President, Trustee and Member of the Investment Committee, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum from 2007 to 2014; Member of the Board and Investment Committee, University School from 2007 to 2018; Member of the Investment Committee, Mellon Foundation from 2009 to 2015; Trustee, Artstor (a Mellon Foundation affiliate) from 2010 to 2015; President and Trustee, the Center for the Arts, Jackson Hole from 2011 to 2018; Director, Athena Capital Advisors LLC (investment management firm) since 2013; Trustee and Chair of the Investment Committee, Community Foundation of Jackson Hole since 2014; Member of Affordable Housing Supply Board of Jackson, Wyoming since 2018; Member, Investment Funds Committee, State of Wyoming since 2017; Trustee, Phoenix Art Museum since 2018; Trustee, Arizona Community Foundation and Member of Investment Committee since 2020.	35 RICs consisting of 158 Portfolios	None
Joseph P. Platt 1947	Trustee (Since 2019)	General Partner, Thorn Partners, LP (private investments) since 1998; Director, WQED Multi-Media (public broadcasting not-for-profit) since 2001; Chair, Basic Health International (non-profit) since 2015.	35 RICs consisting of 158 Portfolios	Greenlight Capital Re, Ltd. (reinsurance company); Consol Energy Inc.

<b>Name and Year of Birth<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>Position(s) Held (Length of Service)</b>	<b>Principal Occupation(s) During Past Five Years</b>	<b>Number of BlackRock- Advised Registered Investment Companies ("RICs") Consisting of Investment Portfolios ("Portfolios") Overseen</b>	<b>Public Company and Other Investment Company Directorships Held During Past Five Years</b>
Kenneth L. Urish 1951	Trustee (Since 2019)	Managing Partner, Urish Popeck & Co., LLC (certified public accountants and consultants) since 1976; Past-Chairman of the Professional Ethics Committee of the Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants and Committee Member thereof since 2007; Member of External Advisory Board, The Pennsylvania State University Accounting Department since founding in 2001; Principal, UP Strategic Wealth Investment Advisors, LLC since 2013; Trustee, The Holy Family Institute from 2001 to 2010; President and Trustee, Pittsburgh Catholic Publishing Associates from 2003 to 2008; Director, Inter-Tel from 2006 to 2007.	35 RICs consisting of 158 Portfolios	None
Claire A. Walton 1957	Trustee (Since 2019)	Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer of Liberty Square Asset Management, LP from 1998 to 2015; General Partner of Neon Liberty Capital Management, LLC since 2003; Director, Boston Hedge Fund Group from 2009 to 2018; Director, Woodstock Ski Runners since 2013; Director, Massachusetts Council on Economic Education from 2013 to 2015.	35 RICs consisting of 158 Portfolios	None

<sup>1</sup> The address of each Trustee is c/o BlackRock, Inc., 55 East 52nd Street, New York, New York 10055.

<sup>2</sup> Independent Trustees serve until their resignation, retirement, removal or death, or until December 31 of the year in which they turn 75. The Board may determine to extend the terms of Independent Trustees on a case-by-case basis, as appropriate.

## Officers Who Are Not Trustees

Name and Year of Birth <sup>1,2</sup>	Position(s) Held (Length of Service)	Principal Occupation(s) During Past Five Years
<i>Officers Who Are Not Trustees</i>		
Jennifer McGovern 1977	Vice President (Since 2019)	Managing Director of BlackRock, Inc. since 2016; Director of BlackRock, Inc. from 2011 to 2015; Head of Americas Product Development and Governance for BlackRock's Global Product Group since 2019; Head of Product Structure and Oversight for BlackRock's U.S. Wealth Advisory Group from 2013 to 2019.
Neal J. Andrews 1966	Chief Financial Officer (Since 2019)	Chief Financial Officer of the iShares® exchange traded funds from 2019 to 2020; Managing Director of BlackRock, Inc. since 2006.
Jay M. Fife 1970	Treasurer (Since 2019)	Managing Director of BlackRock, Inc. since 2007.
Charles Park 1967	Chief Compliance Officer (Since 2019)	Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer for certain BlackRock-advised Funds from 2014 to 2015; Chief Compliance Officer of BlackRock Advisors, LLC and the BlackRock-advised Funds in the BlackRock Multi-Asset Complex and the BlackRock Fixed-Income Complex since 2014; Principal of and Chief Compliance Officer for iShares® Delaware Trust Sponsor LLC since 2012 and BlackRock Fund Advisors ("BFA") since 2006; Chief Compliance Officer for the BFA-advised iShares® exchange traded funds since 2006; Chief Compliance Officer for BlackRock Asset Management International Inc. since 2012.
Lisa Belle 1968	Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer (Since 2019)	Managing Director of BlackRock, Inc. since 2019; Global Financial Crime Head for Asset and Wealth Management of JP Morgan from 2013 to 2019; Managing Director of RBS Securities from 2012 to 2013; Head of Financial Crimes for Barclays Wealth Americas from 2010 to 2012.
Janey Ahn 1975	Secretary (Since 2019)	Managing Director of BlackRock, Inc. since 2018; Director of BlackRock, Inc. from 2009 to 2017.

<sup>1</sup> The address of each Officer is c/o BlackRock, Inc., 55 East 52nd Street, New York, New York 10055.

<sup>2</sup> Officers of the Trust serve at the pleasure of the Board.

Each Trustee's ability to perform his or her duties effectively is evidenced by his or her educational background or professional training; business, consulting, public service or academic positions; experience from service as a board member of the Trust and the other funds in the BlackRock Fund Complexes (and any predecessor funds), other investment funds, public companies, non-profit entities or other organizations; ongoing commitment to and participation in Board and Board committee (each, a "Committee") meetings, as well as his or her leadership of standing and ad hoc committees throughout the years; or other relevant life experiences.

Set forth below is a discussion of some of the experiences, qualifications and skills of each of the Trustees that support the conclusion that each Trustee should serve on the Board.

### **Interested Trustees**

Robert Fairbairn has more than 25 years of experience with BlackRock, Inc. and over 30 years of experience in finance and asset management. In particular, Mr. Fairbairn's positions as Vice Chairman of BlackRock, Inc., Member of BlackRock's Global Executive and Global Operating Committees and Co-Chair of BlackRock's Human Capital Committee provide the Board with a wealth of practical business knowledge and leadership. In addition, Mr. Fairbairn has global investment management and oversight experience through his former positions as Global Head of BlackRock's Retail and iShares® businesses, Head of BlackRock's Global Client Group, Chairman of BlackRock's international businesses and his previous oversight over BlackRock's Strategic Partner Program and Strategic Product Management Group. Mr. Fairbairn also serves as a board member for the funds in the BlackRock Fixed-Income Complex.

John M. Perlowski's experience as Managing Director of BlackRock, Inc. since 2009, as the Head of BlackRock Global Accounting and Product Services since 2009, and as President and Chief Executive Officer of the BlackRock-advised Funds provides him with a strong understanding of the BlackRock-advised Funds, their operations, and the business and regulatory issues facing the BlackRock-advised Funds. Mr. Perlowski's prior position as Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer of the Global Product Group at Goldman Sachs Asset Management, and his former service as Treasurer and Senior Vice President of the Goldman Sachs Mutual Funds and as Director of the Goldman Sachs Offshore Funds provides the Board with the benefit of his experience with the management practices of other financial companies. Mr. Perlowski also serves as a board member for the funds in the BlackRock Fixed-Income Complex.

### **Independent Trustees**

Bruce R. Bond has served for approximately 20 years on the board of registered investment companies, having served as a member of the boards of certain BlackRock-advised Funds and predecessor funds, including the legacy-BlackRock funds and the State Street Research Mutual Funds. He also has executive management and business experience, having served as president and chief executive officer of several communications networking companies. Mr. Bond also has corporate governance experience from his service as a director of a computer equipment company.

Susan J. Carter has over 35 years of experience in investment management. She has served as President & Chief Executive Officer of CCI, a registered investment adviser focused on non-profit investors, from 1997 to 2013, Chief Executive Officer of CCI from 2013 to 2014 and Senior Advisor to CCI in 2015. Ms. Carter also served as trustee to the Pacific Pension Institute from 2014 to 2018. She currently serves as trustee to the Financial Accounting Foundation, Advisory Board Member for the Center for Private Equity and Entrepreneurship at Tuck School of Business, Board Member for Girls Who Invest, Advisory Board Member for Bridges Fund Management and Practitioner Advisory Board Member for PCRI. These positions have provided her with insight and perspective on the markets and the economy.

Collette Chilton has over 20 years of experience in investment management. She has held the position of Chief Investment Officer of Williams College since October 2006. Prior to that she was President and Chief Investment Officer of Lucent Asset Management Corporation, where she oversaw approximately \$40 billion in pension and retirement savings assets for the company. These positions have provided her with insight and perspective on the markets and the economy.

Neil A. Cotty has more than 30 years of experience in the financial services industry, including 19 years at Bank of America Corporation and its affiliates, where he served, at different times, as the

Chief Financial Officer of various businesses including Investment Banking, Global Markets, Wealth Management and Consumer and also served ten years as the Chief Accounting Officer for Bank of America Corporation. Mr. Cotty has been determined by the Audit Committee to be an audit committee financial expert, as such term is defined in the applicable Commission rules.

Lena G. Goldberg has more than 20 years of business and oversight experience, most recently through her service as a senior lecturer at Harvard Business School. Prior thereto, she held legal and management positions at FMR LLC/Fidelity Investments as well as positions on the boards of various Fidelity subsidiaries over a 12-year period. She has additional corporate governance experience as a member of board and advisory committees for privately held corporations and non-profit organizations. Ms. Goldberg also has more than 17 years of legal experience as an attorney in private practice, including as a partner in a law firm.

Henry R. Keizer brings over 40 years of executive, financial, operational, strategic and global expertise gained through his 35 year career at KPMG, a global professional services organization and by his service as a director to both publicly and privately held organizations. He has extensive experience with issues facing complex, global companies and expertise in financial reporting, accounting, auditing, risk management, and regulatory affairs for such companies. Mr. Keizer's experience also includes service as an audit committee chair to both publicly and privately held organizations across numerous industries including professional services, property and casualty reinsurance, insurance, diversified financial services, banking, direct to consumer, business to business and technology. Mr. Keizer is a certified public accountant and also served on the board of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Mr. Keizer has been determined by the Audit Committee to be an audit committee financial expert, as such term is defined in the applicable Commission rules.

Cynthia A. Montgomery has served for over 20 years on the boards of registered investment companies, most recently as a member of the boards of certain BlackRock-advised Funds and predecessor funds, including the legacy Merrill Lynch Investment Managers, L.P. ("MLIM") funds. The Board benefits from Ms. Montgomery's more than 20 years of academic experience as a professor at Harvard Business School where she taught courses on corporate strategy and corporate governance. Ms. Montgomery also has business management and corporate governance experience through her service on the corporate boards of a variety of public companies. She has also authored numerous articles and books on these topics.

Donald C. Opatrny has more than 39 years of business, oversight and executive experience, including through his service as president, director and investment committee chair for academic and not-for-profit organizations, and his experience as a partner, managing director and advisory director at Goldman Sachs for 32 years. He also has investment management experience as a board member of Athena Capital Advisors LLC.

Joseph P. Platt has served for over 15 years on the boards of registered investment companies, most recently as a member of the boards of certain BlackRock-advised Funds and predecessor funds, including the legacy BlackRock funds. Mr. Platt currently serves as general partner at Thorn Partners, LP, a private investment company. Prior to his joining Thorn Partners, LP, he was an owner, director and executive vice president with Johnson and Higgins, an insurance broker and employee benefits consultant. He has over 25 years of experience in the areas of insurance, compensation and benefits. Mr. Platt also serves on the boards of public, private and non-profit companies.

Mark Stalnecker has gained a wealth of experience in investing and asset management from his over 13 years of service as the Chief Investment Officer of the University of Delaware as well as from his various positions with First Union Corporation, including Senior Vice President and State Investment Director of First Investment Advisors. The Board benefits from his experience and perspective as the



Chief Investment Officer of a university endowment and from the oversight experience he gained from service on various private and non-profit boards.

Kenneth L. Urish has served for over 15 years on the boards of registered investment companies, most recently as a member of the boards of certain BlackRock-advised Funds and predecessor funds, including the legacy BlackRock funds. He has over 30 years of experience in public accounting. Mr. Urish has served as a managing member of an accounting and consulting firm. Mr. Urish has been determined by the Audit Committee to be an audit committee financial expert, as such term is defined in the applicable Commission rules.

Claire A. Walton has over 25 years of experience in investment management. She has served as the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer of Liberty Square Asset Management, LP from 1998 to 2015, an investment manager that specialized in long/short non-U.S. equity investments, and has been an owner and General Partner of Neon Liberty Capital Management, LLC since 2003, a firm focusing on long/short equities in global emerging and frontier markets. These positions have provided her with insight and perspective on the markets and the economy.

#### Board – Leadership Structure and Oversight Responsibilities

The Board has overall responsibility for the oversight of the Trust and the Fund. The Chair of the Board is an Independent Trustee, and the Chair of each Committee is an Independent Trustee. The Board has five standing Committees: an Audit Committee, a Governance and Nominating Committee, a Compliance Committee, a Performance Oversight Committee and an Ad Hoc Topics Committee. The role of the Chair of the Board is to preside at all meetings of the Board and to act as a liaison with service providers, officers, attorneys and other Trustees generally between meetings. The Chair of each Committee performs a similar role with respect to the Committee. The Chair of the Board or the Chair of a Committee may also perform such other functions as may be delegated by the Board or the Committee from time to time. The Independent Trustees meet regularly outside the presence of Fund management, in executive session or with other service providers to the Fund. The Board has regular meetings five times a year, and may hold special meetings if required before its next regular meeting. Each Committee meets regularly to conduct the oversight functions delegated to that Committee by the Board and reports its findings to the Board. The Board and each standing Committee conduct annual assessments of their oversight function and structure. The Board has determined that the Board's leadership structure is appropriate because it allows the Board to exercise independent judgment over management and to allocate areas of responsibility among Committees and the full Board to enhance effective oversight.

The Board has engaged the Investment Adviser to manage the Fund on a day-to-day basis. The Board is responsible for overseeing the Investment Adviser, other service providers, the operations of the Fund and associated risks in accordance with the provisions of the 1940 Act, state law, other applicable laws, the Trust's charter, and the Fund's investment objective and strategies. The Board reviews, on an ongoing basis, the Fund's performance, operations and investment strategies and techniques. The Board also conducts reviews of the Investment Adviser and its role in running the operations of the Fund.

Day-to-day risk management with respect to the Fund is the responsibility of the Investment Adviser or of sub-advisers or other service providers (depending on the nature of the risk), subject to the supervision of the Investment Adviser. The Fund is subject to a number of risks, including investment, compliance, operational and valuation risks, among others. While there are a number of risk management functions performed by the Investment Adviser and the sub-advisers or other service providers, as applicable, it is not possible to eliminate all of the risks applicable to the Fund. Risk oversight forms part of the Board's general oversight of the Fund and is addressed as part of various

Board and Committee activities. The Board, directly or through a Committee, also reviews reports from, among others, management, the independent registered public accounting firm for the Fund, sub-advisers and internal auditors for the investment adviser or its affiliates, as appropriate, regarding risks faced by the Fund and management's or the service provider's risk functions. The Committee system facilitates the timely and efficient consideration of matters by the Trustees, and facilitates effective oversight of compliance with legal and regulatory requirements and of the Fund's activities and associated risks. The Board has appointed a Chief Compliance Officer, who oversees the implementation and testing of the Trust's compliance program and reports to the Board regarding compliance matters for the Fund and its service providers. The Board has retained two former independent directors of certain BlackRock-advised Funds to serve as consultants to the Independent Trustees in the performance of their duties to the Fund. The Independent Trustees have engaged independent legal counsel to assist them in performing their oversight responsibilities.

**Committees of the Board of Trustees.** The members of the Audit Committee (the "Audit Committee") are Henry R. Keizer (Chair), Neil A. Cotty and Kenneth L. Urish,, all of whom are Independent Trustees. The principal responsibilities of the Audit Committee are to approve, and recommend to the full Board for approval, the selection, retention, termination and compensation of the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm (the "Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm") and to oversee the Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm's work. The Audit Committee's responsibilities include, without limitation, to (1) evaluate the qualifications and independence of the Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm; (2) approve all audit engagement terms and fees for the Fund ; (3) review the conduct and results of each independent audit of the Fund's annual financial statements; (4) review any issues raised by the Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm or Fund management regarding the accounting or financial reporting policies and practices of the Fund and the internal controls of the Fund and certain service providers; (5) oversee the performance of the Fund's Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm; (6) review and discuss with management and the Fund's Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm the performance and findings of the Fund's internal auditors; (7) discuss with Fund management its policies regarding risk assessment and risk management as such matters relate to the Fund's financial reporting and controls; (8) resolve any disagreements between Fund management and the Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm regarding financial reporting; and (9) undertake such other duties and responsibilities as may from time to time be delegated by the Board to the Audit Committee. The Board has adopted a written charter for the Audit Committee. During the twelve months ended July 31, 2020, the Audit Committee met four times.

The members of the Governance and Nominating Committee (the "Governance Committee") are Cynthia A. Montgomery (Chair), Bruce R. Bond, Susan J. Carter, Collette Chilton and Joseph P. Platt, all of whom are Independent Trustees. The principal responsibilities of the Governance Committee are to (1) identify individuals qualified to serve as Independent Trustees of the Trust and recommend Independent Trustee nominees for election by shareholders or appointment by the Board; (2) advise the Board with respect to Board composition, procedures and committees (other than the Audit Committee); (3) oversee periodic self-assessments of the Board and committees of the Board (other than the Audit Committee); (4) review and make recommendations regarding Independent Trustee compensation; (5) monitor corporate governance matters and develop appropriate recommendations to the Board; (6) act as the administrative committee with respect to Board policies and procedures, committee policies and procedures (other than the Audit Committee) and codes of ethics as they relate to Independent Trustees; and (7) undertake such other duties and responsibilities as may from time to time be delegated by the Board to the Governance Committee. The Governance Committee may consider nominations for the office of Trustee made by Fund shareholders as it deems appropriate. Fund shareholders who wish to recommend a nominee should send nominations to the Secretary of the Trust that include biographical information and set forth the qualifications of the proposed nominee. The Board has adopted a written charter for the Governance Committee. During the twelve months ended July 31, 2020, the Governance Committee met four times.

The members of the Compliance Committee (the “Compliance Committee”) are Lena G. Goldberg (Chair), Bruce R. Bond, Joseph P. Platt, Kenneth L. Urish and Claire A. Walton, all of whom are Independent Trustees. The Compliance Committee’s purpose is to assist the Board in fulfilling its responsibility to oversee regulatory and fiduciary compliance matters involving the Trust, the fund-related activities of BFA and any sub-adviser and the Trust’s third-party service providers. The Compliance Committee’s responsibilities include, without limitation, to (1) oversee the compliance policies and procedures of the Trust and its service providers and recommend changes or additions to such policies and procedures; (2) review information on and, where appropriate, recommend policies concerning the Trust’s compliance with applicable law; (3) review reports from, oversee the annual performance review of, and make certain recommendations and determinations regarding the Trust’s Chief Compliance Officer (the “CCO”), including determining the amount and structure of the CCO’s compensation and recommending such amount and structure to the full Board for approval and ratification; and (4) undertake such other duties and responsibilities as may from time to time be delegated by the Board to the Compliance Committee. The Board has adopted a written charter for the Compliance Committee. During the twelve months ended July 31, 2020, the Compliance Committee met four times.

The members of the Performance Oversight Committee (the “Performance Oversight Committee”) are Donald C. Opatrny (Chair), Susan J. Carter, Collette Chilton, Neil A. Cotty and Claire A. Walton, all of whom are Independent Trustees. The Performance Oversight Committee’s purpose is to assist the Board in fulfilling its responsibility to oversee the Fund’s investment performance relative to its agreed-upon performance objectives and to assist the Independent Trustees in their consideration of investment advisory agreements. The Performance Oversight Committee’s responsibilities include, without limitation, to (1) review information on, and make recommendations to the full Board in respect of, the Fund’s investment objective, policies and practices; (2) review information on the Fund’s investment performance; (3) review information on appropriate benchmarks and competitive universes and unusual or exceptional investment matters; (4) review personnel and other resources devoted to management of the Fund and evaluate the nature and quality of information furnished to the Performance Oversight Committee; (5) recommend any required action regarding changes in fundamental and non-fundamental investment policies and restrictions, fund mergers or liquidations; (6) request and review information on the nature, extent and quality of services provided to the shareholders; (7) make recommendations to the Board concerning the approval or renewal of investment advisory agreements; and (8) undertake such other duties and responsibilities as may from time to time be delegated by the Board to the Performance Oversight Committee. The Board has adopted a written charter for the Performance Oversight Committee. During the twelve months ended July 31, 2020, the Performance Oversight Committee met four times.

The members of the Ad Hoc Topics Committee (the “Ad Hoc Topics Committee”) are Mark Stalnecker (Chair) and Lena G. Goldberg, both of whom are Independent Trustees, and John M. Perlowski, who serves as an interested Trustee. The principal responsibilities of the Ad Hoc Topics Committee are to (1) act on routine matters between meetings of the Board; (2) act on such matters as may require urgent action between meetings of the Board; and (3) exercise such other authority as may from time to time be delegated to the Ad Hoc Topics Committee by the Board. The Board has adopted a written charter for the Ad Hoc Topics Committee. During the twelve months ended July 31, 2020, the Ad Hoc Topics Committee did not meet.

The Governance Committee has adopted a statement of policy that describes the experience, qualifications, skills and attributes that are necessary and desirable for potential Independent Trustee candidates (the “Statement of Policy”). The Board believes that each Independent Trustee satisfied, at the time he or she was initially elected or appointed a Trustee, and continues to satisfy, the standards contemplated by the Statement of Policy. Furthermore, in determining that a particular Independent Trustee was and continues to be qualified to serve as a Trustee, the Board has considered a variety of

criteria, none of which, in isolation, was controlling. The Board believes that, collectively, the Independent Trustees have balanced and diverse experience, skills, attributes and qualifications, which allow the Board to operate effectively in governing the Trust and protecting the interests of shareholders. Among the attributes common to all Independent Trustees are their ability to review critically, evaluate, question and discuss information provided to them, to interact effectively with the Fund's investment adviser, sub-advisers, other service providers, counsel and the Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm, and to exercise effective business judgment in the performance of their duties as Trustees.

Information relating to each Trustee's share ownership in all BlackRock-advised Funds that are currently overseen by the respective Trustee ("Supervised Funds") as of December 31, 2019 is set forth in the chart below.

Name	Aggregate Dollar Range of Equity Securities in Supervised Funds
<i>Interested Trustees:</i>	
Robert Fairbairn	Over \$100,000
John M. Perlowski	Over \$100,000
<i>Independent Trustees:</i>	
Bruce R. Bond	Over \$100,000
Susan J. Carter	Over \$100,000
Collette Chilton	Over \$100,000
Neil A. Cotty	Over \$100,000
Lena G. Goldberg	Over \$100,000
Henry R. Keizer	Over \$100,000
Cynthia A. Montgomery	Over \$100,000
Donald C. Opatrny	Over \$100,000
Joseph P. Platt	Over \$100,000
Mark Stalnecker	Over \$100,000
Kenneth L. Urish	Over \$100,000
Claire A. Walton	Over \$100,000

As of December 31, 2019, none of the Independent Trustees of the Trust or their immediate family members owned beneficially or of record any securities of the Fund's investment adviser, principal underwriter, or any person directly or indirectly controlling, controlled by, or under common control with such entities.

**Remuneration of Trustees.** Each Trustee who is an Independent Trustee is paid as compensation an annual retainer of \$300,000 per year for his or her services as a board member of the BlackRock-advised Funds in the BlackRock Multi-Asset Complex, including the Trust, and a \$20,000 board meeting fee to be paid for each in-person board meeting attended (and may receive a board meeting fee for telephonic attendance at board meetings), for up to five board meetings held in a calendar year (compensation for meetings in excess of this number to be determined on a case-by-case basis), together with out-of-pocket expenses in accordance with a board policy on travel and other business expenses relating to attendance at meetings. The Chairs of the Audit Committee, Compliance Committee, Governance Committee and Performance Committee are paid as compensation an additional annual retainer of \$30,000, respectively. The Chair of the Boards is paid an additional annual retainer of \$120,000.

The following table sets forth the estimated compensation the Trust expects to pay the Trustees, on behalf of the Fund, for the fiscal year ending July 31, 2021 and the aggregate compensation paid to them by all BlackRock-advised Funds for the calendar year ended December 31, 2019.

Name	Estimated Compensation from the Fund	Estimated Annual Benefits Upon Retirement	Aggregate Compensation from the Fund and Other BlackRock-Advised Funds <sup>1</sup>
<i>Interested Trustees:</i>			
Robert Fairbairn	None	None	None
John M. Perlowski	None	None	None
<i>Independent Trustees:</i>			
Bruce R. Bond	\$699	None	\$400,000
Susan J. Carter	\$699	None	\$400,000
Collette Chilton	\$699	None	\$400,000
Neil A. Cotty	\$699	None	\$400,000
Lena G. Goldberg <sup>2</sup>	\$704	None	\$430,000
Robert M. Hernandez <sup>3</sup>	N/A	None	\$400,000
Henry R. Keizer <sup>4</sup>	\$704	None	\$430,000
Cynthia A. Montgomery <sup>5</sup>	\$704	None	\$430,000
Donald C. Opatrny <sup>6</sup>	\$704	None	\$430,000
Joseph P. Platt	\$699	None	\$400,000
Mark Stalnecker <sup>7</sup>	\$719	None	\$520,000
Kenneth L. Urish	\$699	None	\$400,000
Claire A. Walton	\$699	None	\$400,000

<sup>1</sup> For the number of BlackRock-advised Funds from which each Trustee receives compensation, see the biographical information chart beginning on page 29.

<sup>2</sup> Chair of the Compliance Committee.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Hernandez retired as Trustee of the Trust effective December 31, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Chair of the Audit Committee.

<sup>5</sup> Chair of the Governance Committee.

<sup>6</sup> Chair of the Performance Oversight Committee.

<sup>7</sup> Chair of the Board and Chair of the Ad Hoc Topics Committee.

**Control Persons and Principal Holders of Securities.** Ownership information is not provided for the Fund, as it has not commenced operations as of the date of this SAI.

**Potential Conflicts of Interest.** Certain activities of BFA, BlackRock, Inc. and the other subsidiaries of BlackRock, Inc. (collectively referred to in this section as “BlackRock”) and their respective directors, officers or employees, with respect to the Fund and/or other accounts managed by BlackRock, may give rise to actual or perceived conflicts of interest such as those described below.

BlackRock is one of the world’s largest asset management firms. BlackRock, its subsidiaries and their respective directors, officers and employees, including the business units or entities and personnel who may be involved in the investment activities and business operations of the Fund, are engaged worldwide in businesses, including managing equities, fixed income securities, cash and alternative investments, and other financial services, and have interests other than that of managing the Fund. These are considerations of which investors in the Fund should be aware, and which may cause conflicts of interest that could disadvantage the Fund and its shareholders. These businesses and interests include potential multiple advisory, transactional, financial and other relationships with, or interests in companies and interests in securities or other instruments that may be purchased or sold by the Fund.



BlackRock has proprietary interests in, and may manage or advise with respect to, accounts or funds (including separate accounts and other funds and collective investment vehicles) that have investment objectives similar to those of the Fund and/or that engage in transactions in the same types of securities, currencies and instruments as the Fund. BlackRock is also a major participant in the global currency, equities, swap and fixed income markets, in each case, for the accounts of clients and, in some cases, on a proprietary basis. As such, BlackRock is or may be actively engaged in transactions in the same securities, currencies, and instruments in which the Fund invests. Such activities could affect the prices and availability of the securities, currencies, and instruments in which the Fund invests, which could have an adverse impact on the Fund's performance. Such transactions, particularly in respect of most proprietary accounts or client accounts, will be executed independently of the Fund's transactions and thus at prices or rates that may be more or less favorable than those obtained by the Fund.

When BlackRock seeks to purchase or sell the same assets for managed accounts, including the Fund, the assets actually purchased or sold may be allocated among the accounts on a basis determined in its good faith discretion to be equitable. In some cases, this system may adversely affect the size or price of the assets purchased or sold for the Fund. In addition, transactions in investments by one or more other accounts managed by BlackRock may have the effect of diluting or otherwise disadvantaging the values, prices or investment strategies of the Fund, particularly, but not limited to, with respect to small-capitalization, emerging market or less liquid strategies. This may occur with respect to BlackRock-advised accounts when investment decisions regarding the Fund are based on research or other information that is also used to support decisions for other accounts. When BlackRock implements a portfolio decision or strategy on behalf of another account ahead of, or contemporaneously with, similar decisions or strategies for the Fund, market impact, liquidity constraints, or other factors could result in the Fund receiving less favorable trading results and the costs of implementing such decisions or strategies could be increased or the Fund could otherwise be disadvantaged. BlackRock may, in certain cases, elect to implement internal policies and procedures designed to limit such consequences, which may cause the Fund to be unable to engage in certain activities, including purchasing or disposing of securities, when it might otherwise be desirable for it to do so. Conflicts may also arise because portfolio decisions regarding the Fund may benefit other accounts managed by BlackRock. For example, the sale of a long position or establishment of a short position by the Fund may impair the price of the same security sold short by (and therefore benefit) BlackRock or its other accounts or funds, and the purchase of a security or covering of a short position in a security by the Fund may increase the price of the same security held by (and therefore benefit) BlackRock or its other accounts or funds. In addition, to the extent permitted by applicable law, the Fund may invest its assets in other funds advised by BlackRock, including funds that are managed by one or more of the same portfolio managers, which could result in conflicts of interest relating to asset allocation, timing of Fund purchases and redemptions, and increased remuneration and profitability for BlackRock and/or its personnel, including portfolio managers.

In certain circumstances, BlackRock, on behalf of the Fund, may seek to buy from or sell securities to another fund or account advised by BlackRock. BlackRock may (but is not required to) effect purchases and sales between BlackRock clients ("cross trades"), including the Fund, if BlackRock believes such transactions are appropriate based on each party's investment objectives and guidelines, subject to applicable law and regulation. There may be potential conflicts of interest or regulatory issues relating to these transactions which could limit BlackRock's decision to engage in these transactions for the Fund. On any occasion when the Fund participates in a cross trade, BlackRock will comply with procedures adopted under applicable rules and SEC guidance. BlackRock may have a potentially conflicting division of loyalties and responsibilities to the parties in such transactions.



BlackRock and its clients may pursue or enforce rights with respect to an issuer in which the Fund has invested, and those activities may have an adverse effect on the Fund. As a result, prices, availability, liquidity and terms of the Fund's investments may be negatively impacted by the activities of BlackRock or its clients, and transactions for the Fund may be impaired or effected at prices or terms that may be less favorable than would otherwise have been the case.

The results of the Fund's investment activities may differ significantly from the results achieved by BlackRock for its proprietary accounts or other accounts (including investment companies or collective investment vehicles) which it manages or advises. It is possible that one or more accounts managed or advised by BlackRock and such other accounts will achieve investment results that are substantially more or less favorable than the results achieved by the Fund. Moreover, it is possible that the Fund will sustain losses during periods in which one or more proprietary or other accounts managed or advised by BlackRock achieve significant profits. The opposite result is also possible.

From time to time, the Fund may be restricted from purchasing or selling securities, or from engaging in other investment activities because of regulatory, legal or contractual requirements applicable to BlackRock or other accounts managed or advised by BlackRock, and/or the internal policies of BlackRock designed to comply with such requirements. As a result, there may be periods, for example, when BlackRock will not initiate or recommend certain types of transactions in certain securities or instruments with respect to which BlackRock is performing services or when position limits have been reached. For example, the investment activities of BlackRock for its proprietary accounts and accounts under its management may limit the investment opportunities for the Fund in certain emerging and other markets in which limitations are imposed upon the amount of investment, in the aggregate or in individual issuers, by affiliated foreign investors.

In connection with its management of the Fund, BlackRock may have access to certain fundamental analysis and proprietary technical models developed by BlackRock. BlackRock will not be under any obligation, however, to effect transactions on behalf of the Fund in accordance with such analysis and models. In addition, BlackRock will not have any obligation to make available any information regarding its proprietary activities or strategies, or the activities or strategies used for other accounts managed by them, for the benefit of the management of the Fund and it is not anticipated that BlackRock will have access to such information for the purpose of managing the Fund. The proprietary activities or portfolio strategies of BlackRock, or the activities or strategies used for accounts managed by BlackRock or other client accounts could conflict with the transactions and strategies employed by BlackRock in managing the Fund.

The Fund may be included in investment models developed by BlackRock for use by clients and financial advisors. To the extent clients invest in these investment models and increase the assets under management of the Fund, the investment management fee amounts paid by the Fund to BlackRock may also increase. The liquidity of the Fund may be impacted by purchases and redemptions of the Fund by model-driven investment portfolios.

In addition, certain principals and certain employees of the Fund's investment adviser are also principals or employees of other business units or entities within BlackRock. As a result, these principals and employees may have obligations to such other business units or entities or their clients and such obligations to other business units or entities or their clients may be a consideration of which investors in the Fund should be aware.

BlackRock may enter into transactions and invest in securities, instruments and currencies on behalf of the Fund in which clients of BlackRock, or, to the extent permitted by the SEC and applicable law, BlackRock, serves as the counterparty, principal or issuer. In such cases, such party's interests in the transaction will be adverse to the interests of the Fund, and such party may have no incentive to

assure that the Fund obtains the best possible prices or terms in connection with the transactions. In addition, the purchase, holding and sale of such investments by the Fund may enhance the profitability of BlackRock.

BlackRock may also create, write or issue derivatives for clients, the underlying securities, currencies or instruments of which may be those in which the Fund invests or which may be based on the performance of the Fund.

The Fund may, subject to applicable law, purchase investments that are the subject of an underwriting or other distribution by BlackRock and may also enter into transactions with other clients of BlackRock where such other clients have interests adverse to those of the Fund. At times, these activities may cause business units or entities within BlackRock to give advice to clients that may cause these clients to take actions adverse to the interests of the Fund. To the extent such transactions are permitted, the Fund will deal with BlackRock on an arms-length basis.

To the extent authorized by applicable law, BlackRock may act as broker, dealer, agent, lender or adviser or in other commercial capacities for the Fund. It is anticipated that the commissions, mark-ups, mark-downs, financial advisory fees, underwriting and placement fees, sales fees, financing and commitment fees, brokerage fees, other fees, compensation or profits, rates, terms and conditions charged by BlackRock will be in its view commercially reasonable, although BlackRock, including its sales personnel, will have an interest in obtaining fees and other amounts that are favorable to BlackRock and such sales personnel, which may have an adverse effect on the Fund. Index based funds may use an index provider that is affiliated with another service provider of the Fund or BlackRock that acts as a broker, dealer, agent, lender or in other commercial capacities for the Fund or BlackRock.

Subject to applicable law, BlackRock (and its personnel and other distributors) will be entitled to retain fees and other amounts that they receive in connection with their service to the Fund as broker, dealer, agent, lender, adviser or in other commercial capacities. No accounting to the Fund or its shareholders will be required, and no fees or other compensation payable by the Fund or its shareholders will be reduced by reason of receipt by BlackRock of any such fees or other amounts.

When BlackRock acts as broker, dealer, agent, adviser or in other commercial capacities in relation to the Fund, BlackRock may take commercial steps in its own interests, which may have an adverse effect on the Fund.

The Fund will be required to establish business relationships with its counterparties based on the Fund's own credit standing. BlackRock will not have any obligation to allow its credit to be used in connection with the Fund's establishment of its business relationships, nor is it expected that the Fund's counterparties will rely on the credit of BlackRock in evaluating the Fund's creditworthiness.

BTC, an affiliate of BFA, pursuant to SEC exemptive relief, acts as securities lending agent to, and receives a share of securities lending revenues from, the Fund. BlackRock may receive compensation for managing the reinvestment of the cash collateral from securities lending. There are potential conflicts of interests in managing a securities lending program, including but not limited to: (i) BlackRock as securities lending agent may have an incentive to increase or decrease the amount of securities on loan or to lend particular securities in order to generate additional risk-adjusted revenue for BlackRock and its affiliates; and (ii) BlackRock as securities lending agent may have an incentive to allocate loans to clients that would provide more revenue to BlackRock. As described further below, BlackRock seeks to mitigate this conflict by providing its securities lending clients with equal lending opportunities over time in order to approximate pro rata allocation.

As part of its securities lending program, BlackRock indemnifies certain clients and/or funds against a shortfall in collateral in the event of borrower default. BlackRock's Risk and Quantitative Analysis Group ("RQA") calculates, on a regular basis, BlackRock's potential dollar exposure to the risk of collateral shortfall upon counterparty default ("shortfall risk") under the securities lending program for both indemnified and non-indemnified clients. On a periodic basis, RQA also determines the maximum amount of potential indemnified shortfall risk arising from securities lending activities ("indemnification exposure limit") and the maximum amount of counterparty-specific credit exposure ("credit limits") BlackRock is willing to assume as well as the program's operational complexity. RQA oversees the risk model that calculates projected shortfall values using loan-level factors such as loan and collateral type and market value as well as specific borrower counterparty credit characteristics. When necessary, RQA may further adjust other securities lending program attributes by restricting eligible collateral or reducing counterparty credit limits. As a result, the management of the indemnification exposure limit may affect the amount of securities lending activity BlackRock may conduct at any given point in time and impact indemnified and non-indemnified clients by reducing the volume of lending opportunities for certain loans (including by asset type, collateral type and/or revenue profile).

BlackRock uses a predetermined systematic process in order to approximate pro rata allocation over time. In order to allocate a loan to a portfolio: (i) BlackRock as a whole must have sufficient lending capacity pursuant to the various program limits (i.e. indemnification exposure limit and counterparty credit limits); (ii) the lending portfolio must hold the asset at the time a loan opportunity arrives; and (iii) the lending portfolio must also have enough inventory, either on its own or when aggregated with other portfolios into one single market delivery, to satisfy the loan request. In doing so, BlackRock seeks to provide equal lending opportunities for all portfolios, independent of whether BlackRock indemnifies the portfolio. Equal opportunities for lending portfolios does not guarantee equal outcomes. Specifically, short and long-term outcomes for individual clients may vary due to asset mix, asset/liability spreads on different securities, and the overall limits imposed by the firm.

Purchases and sales of securities and other assets for the Fund may be bunched or aggregated with orders for other BlackRock client accounts, including with accounts that pay different transaction costs solely due to the fact that they have different research payment arrangements. BlackRock, however, is not required to bunch or aggregate orders if portfolio management decisions for different accounts are made separately, or if they determine that bunching or aggregating is not practicable or required, or in cases involving client direction.

Prevailing trading activity frequently may make impossible the receipt of the same price or execution on the entire volume of securities purchased or sold. When this occurs, the various prices may be averaged, and the Fund will be charged or credited with the average price. Thus, the effect of the aggregation may operate on some occasions to the disadvantage of the Fund. In addition, under certain circumstances, the Fund will not be charged the same commission or commission equivalent rates in connection with a bunched or aggregated order.

BlackRock, unless prohibited by applicable law, may cause the Fund or account to pay a broker or dealer a commission for effecting a transaction that exceeds the amount another broker or dealer would have charged for effecting the same transaction in recognition of the value of brokerage and research services provided by that broker or dealer.

Subject to applicable law, BlackRock may select brokers that furnish BlackRock, the Fund, other BlackRock client accounts or personnel, directly or through correspondent relationships, with research or other appropriate services which provide, in BlackRock's view, appropriate assistance to BlackRock in the investment decision-making process (including with respect to futures, fixed-price offerings and OTC transactions). Such research or other services may include, to the extent permitted by law, research reports on companies, industries and securities; economic and financial data; financial publications; proxy analysis; trade industry seminars; computer data bases; research-oriented software and other services and products.

Research or other services obtained in this manner may be used in servicing any or all of the Fund and other BlackRock client accounts, including in connection with BlackRock client accounts other than those that pay commissions to the broker relating to the research or other service arrangements. Such products and services may disproportionately benefit other BlackRock client accounts relative to the Fund based on the amount of brokerage commissions paid by the Fund and such other BlackRock client accounts. For example, research or other services that are paid for through one client's commissions may not be used in managing that client's account. In addition, other BlackRock client accounts may receive the benefit, including disproportionate benefits, of economies of scale or price discounts in connection with products and services that may be provided to the Fund and to such other BlackRock client accounts. To the extent that BlackRock uses soft dollars, it will not have to pay for those products and services itself.

BlackRock, unless prohibited by applicable law, may endeavor to execute trades through brokers who, pursuant to such arrangements, provide research or other services in order to ensure the continued receipt of research or other services BlackRock believes are useful in its investment decision-making process. BlackRock may from time to time choose not to engage in the above described arrangements to varying degrees. BlackRock, unless prohibited by applicable law, may also enter into commission sharing arrangements under which BlackRock may execute transactions through a broker-dealer and request that the broker-dealer allocate a portion of the commissions or commission credits to another firm that provides research to BlackRock. To the extent that BlackRock engages in commission sharing arrangements, many of the same conflicts related to traditional soft dollars may exist.

BlackRock may utilize certain electronic crossing networks ("ECNs") (including, without limitation, ECNs in which BlackRock has an investment or other interest, to the extent permitted by applicable law) in executing client securities transactions for certain types of securities. These ECNs may charge fees for their services, including access fees and transaction fees. The transaction fees, which are similar to commissions or markups/markdowns, will generally be charged to clients and, like commissions and markups/markdowns, would generally be included in the cost of the securities purchased. Access fees may be paid by BlackRock even though incurred in connection with executing transactions on behalf of clients, including the Fund. In certain circumstances, ECNs may offer volume discounts that will reduce the access fees typically paid by BlackRock. BlackRock will only utilize ECNs consistent with its obligation to seek to obtain best execution in client transactions.

BlackRock has adopted policies and procedures designed to prevent conflicts of interest from influencing proxy voting decisions that it makes on behalf of advisory clients, including the Fund, and to help ensure that such decisions are made in accordance with BlackRock's fiduciary obligations to its clients. Nevertheless, notwithstanding such proxy voting policies and procedures, actual proxy voting decisions of BlackRock may have the effect of favoring the interests of other clients or businesses of other divisions or units of BlackRock, provided that BlackRock believes such voting decisions to be in accordance with its fiduciary obligations. For a more detailed discussion of these policies and procedures, see the *Proxy Voting Policy* section in this SAI.

It is also possible that, from time to time, BlackRock may, subject to compliance with applicable law, purchase and hold shares of the Fund. Increasing the Fund's assets may enhance liquidity, investment flexibility and diversification and may contribute to economies of scale that tend to reduce the Fund's expense ratio. BlackRock reserves the right, subject to compliance with applicable law, to sell into the market or redeem in Creation Units through an Authorized Participant at any time some or all of the shares of the Fund acquired for its own accounts. A large sale or redemption of shares of the Fund by BlackRock could significantly reduce the asset size of the Fund, which might have an adverse effect on the Fund's liquidity, investment flexibility, portfolio diversification, expense ratio or ability to comply with the listing requirements for the Fund. BlackRock seeks to consider the effect of redemptions on the Fund and other shareholders in deciding whether to redeem its shares but is not obligated to do so and may elect not to do so.

It is possible that the Fund may invest in securities of, or engage in transactions with, companies in which BlackRock has significant debt or equity investments or other interests. The Fund may also invest in issuances (such as structured notes) by entities for which BlackRock provides and is compensated for cash management services relating to the proceeds from the sale of such issuances. In making investment decisions for the Fund, BlackRock is not permitted to obtain or use material non-public information acquired by any unit of BlackRock, in the course of these activities. In addition, from time to time, the activities of BlackRock may limit the Fund's flexibility in purchases and sales of securities. As indicated below, BlackRock may engage in transactions with companies in which BlackRock-advised funds or other clients of BlackRock have an investment.

BlackRock and Chubb Limited ("Chubb"), a public company whose securities are held by BlackRock-advised funds and other accounts, partially funded the creation of a re-insurance company ("Re Co") pursuant to which each has approximately a 9.9% ownership interest and each has representation on the board of directors. Certain employees and executives of BlackRock have a less than 1/2 of 1% ownership interest in Re Co. BlackRock manages the investment portfolio of Re Co, which is held in a wholly-owned subsidiary. Re Co participates as a reinsurer with reinsurance contracts underwritten by subsidiaries of Chubb.

BlackRock and its personnel and other financial service providers may have interests in promoting sales of the Fund. With respect to BlackRock and its personnel, the remuneration and profitability relating to services to and sales of the Fund or other products may be greater than remuneration and profitability relating to services to and sales of certain funds or other products that might be provided or offered. BlackRock and its sales personnel may directly or indirectly receive a portion of the fees and commissions charged to the Fund or its shareholders. BlackRock and its advisory or other personnel may also benefit from increased amounts of assets under management. Fees and commissions may also be higher than for other products or services, and the remuneration and profitability to BlackRock and such personnel resulting from transactions on behalf of or management of the Fund may be greater than the remuneration and profitability resulting from other funds or products.

Third parties, including service providers to BlackRock or the Fund, may sponsor events (including, but not limited to, marketing and promotional activities and presentations, educational training programs and conferences) for registered representatives, other professionals and individual investors. There is a potential conflict of interest as such sponsorships may defray the costs of such activities to BlackRock, and may provide an incentive to BlackRock to retain such third parties to provide services to the Fund.

BlackRock may provide valuation assistance to certain clients with respect to certain securities or other investments and the valuation recommendations made for such clients' accounts may differ from the valuations for the same securities or investments assigned by the Fund's pricing vendors, especially if such valuations are based on broker-dealer quotes or other data sources unavailable to the Fund's pricing vendors. While BlackRock will generally communicate its valuation information or determinations to the Fund's pricing vendors and/or fund accountants, there may be instances where the Fund's pricing vendors or fund accountants assign a different valuation to a security or other investment than the valuation for such security or investment determined or recommended by BlackRock.

As disclosed in more detail in the *Determination of Net Asset Value* section in the Fund's Prospectus and in this SAI, when market quotations are not readily available or are believed by BlackRock to be unreliable, the Fund's investments are valued at fair value by BlackRock, in accordance with procedures adopted by the Board. When determining a "fair value price," BlackRock seeks to determine the price that the Fund might reasonably expect to receive from the current sale of that asset or liability in an arm's-length transaction. The price generally may not be determined based on



what the Fund might reasonably expect to receive for selling an asset or liability at a later time or if it holds the asset or liability to maturity. While fair value determinations will be based upon all available factors that BlackRock deems relevant at the time of the determination, and may be based on analytical values determined by BlackRock using proprietary or third-party valuation models, fair value represents only a good faith approximation of the value of an asset or liability. The fair value of one or more assets or liabilities may not, in retrospect, be the price at which those assets or liabilities could have been sold during the period in which the particular fair values were used in determining the Fund's net asset value. As a result, the Fund's sale or redemption of its shares at net asset value, at a time when a holding or holdings are valued by BlackRock (pursuant to Board-adopted procedures) at fair value, may have the effect of diluting or increasing the economic interest of existing shareholders and may affect the amount of revenue received by BlackRock with respect to services for which it receives an asset-based fee.

To the extent permitted by applicable law, the Fund may invest all or some of its short-term cash investments in any money market fund or similarly-managed private fund advised or managed by BlackRock. In connection with any such investments, the Fund, to the extent permitted by the 1940 Act, may pay its share of expenses of a money market fund or other similarly-managed private fund in which it invests, which may result in the Fund bearing some additional expenses.

BlackRock and its directors, officers and employees, may buy and sell securities or other investments for their own accounts and may have conflicts of interest with respect to investments made on behalf of the Fund. As a result of differing trading and investment strategies or constraints, positions may be taken by directors, officers and employees of BlackRock that are the same, different from or made at different times than positions taken for the Fund. To lessen the possibility that the Fund will be adversely affected by this personal trading, the Fund, BRIL and BlackRock each have adopted a Code of Ethics in compliance with Section 17(j) of the 1940 Act that restricts securities trading in the personal accounts of investment professionals and others who normally come into possession of information regarding the Fund's portfolio transactions. Each Code of Ethics is also available on the EDGAR Database on the SEC's Internet site at <http://www.sec.gov>, and copies may be obtained, after paying a duplicating fee, by e-mail at [publicinfo@sec.gov](mailto:publicinfo@sec.gov).

BlackRock will not purchase securities or other property from, or sell securities or other property to, the Fund, except that the Fund may in accordance with rules or guidance adopted under the 1940 Act engage in transactions with accounts that are affiliated with the Fund as a result of common officers, directors, or investment advisers or pursuant to exemptive orders granted to the Fund and/or BlackRock by the SEC. These transactions would be effected in circumstances in which BlackRock determined that it would be appropriate for the Fund to purchase and another client of BlackRock to sell, or the Fund to sell and another client of BlackRock to purchase, the same security or instrument on the same day. From time to time, the activities of the Fund may be restricted because of regulatory requirements applicable to BlackRock and/or BlackRock's internal policies designed to comply with, limit the applicability of, or otherwise relate to such requirements. A client not advised by BlackRock would not be subject to some of those considerations. There may be periods when BlackRock may not initiate or recommend certain types of transactions, or may otherwise restrict or limit its advice in certain securities or instruments issued by or related to companies for which BlackRock is performing advisory or other services or has proprietary positions. For example, when BlackRock is engaged to provide advisory or risk management services for a company, BlackRock may be prohibited from or limited in purchasing or selling securities of that company on behalf of the Fund, particularly where such services result in BlackRock obtaining material non-public information about the company (e.g., in connection with participation in a creditors' committee). Similar situations could arise if personnel of BlackRock serve as directors of companies the securities of which the Fund wishes to purchase or sell. However, if permitted by applicable law, and where consistent with BlackRock's policies and procedures (including the necessary implementation of appropriate information barriers), the Fund may



purchase securities or instruments that are issued by such companies, are the subject of an advisory or risk management assignment by BlackRock, or where personnel of BlackRock are directors or officers of the issuer.

The investment activities of BlackRock for its proprietary accounts and for client accounts may also limit the investment strategies and rights of the Fund. For example, in certain circumstances where the Fund invests in securities issued by companies that operate in certain regulated industries, in certain emerging or international markets, or is subject to corporate or regulatory ownership restrictions, or invests in certain futures and derivative transactions, there may be limits on the aggregate amount invested by BlackRock for its proprietary accounts and for client accounts (including the Fund) that may not be exceeded without the grant of a license or other regulatory or corporate consent, or, if exceeded, may cause BlackRock, the Fund or other client accounts to suffer disadvantages or business restrictions. If certain aggregate ownership thresholds are reached either through the actions of BlackRock or the Fund or as a result of third-party transactions, the ability of BlackRock on behalf of clients (including the Fund) to purchase or dispose of investments, or exercise rights or undertake business transactions, may be restricted by regulation or otherwise impaired. As a result, BlackRock on behalf of its clients (including the Fund) may limit purchases, sell existing investments, or otherwise restrict, forgo or limit the exercise of rights (including transferring, outsourcing or limiting voting rights or forgoing the right to receive dividends) when BlackRock, in its sole discretion, deems it appropriate in light of potential regulatory or other restrictions on ownership or other consequences resulting from reaching investment thresholds.

In those circumstances where ownership thresholds or limitations must be observed, BlackRock seeks to allocate limited investment opportunities equitably among clients (including the Fund), taking into consideration benchmark weight and investment strategy. BlackRock has adopted certain controls designed to prevent the occurrence of a breach of any applicable ownership threshold or limits, including, for example, when ownership in certain securities nears an applicable threshold, BlackRock may remove such securities from the list of Deposit Securities to be delivered to the Fund in connection with purchases of Creation Units of the Fund and may limit purchases in such securities to the issuer's weighting in the applicable benchmark used by BlackRock to manage the Fund. If client (including Fund) holdings of an issuer exceed an applicable threshold and BlackRock is unable to obtain relief to enable the continued holding of such investments, it may be necessary to sell down these positions to meet the applicable limitations. In these cases, benchmark overweight positions will be sold prior to benchmark positions being reduced to meet applicable limitations.

In addition to the foregoing, other ownership thresholds may trigger reporting requirements to governmental and regulatory authorities, and such reports may entail the disclosure of the identity of a client or BlackRock's intended strategy with respect to such security or asset.

BlackRock may maintain securities indices. To the extent permitted by applicable laws, the Fund may seek to license and use such indices as part of its investment strategy. Index based funds that seek to track the performance of securities indices also may use the name of the index or index provider in the fund name. Index providers, including BlackRock (to the extent permitted by applicable law), may be paid licensing fees for use of their index or index name. BlackRock may benefit from the Funds using BlackRock indices by creating increasing acceptance in the marketplace for such indices. BlackRock is not obligated to license its indices to the Fund and the Fund is under no obligation to use BlackRock indices. Any Fund that enters into a license for a BlackRock index cannot be assured that the terms of any index licensing agreement with BlackRock will be as favorable as those terms offered to other licensees.

BlackRock may not serve as an Authorized Participant in the creation and redemption of the Fund and other BFA-advised ETFs.

The custody arrangement described in the *Investment Advisory, Administrative and Distribution Services* section of this SAI may lead to potential conflicts of interest with BlackRock where BlackRock has agreed to waive fees and/or reimburse ordinary operating expenses in order to cap expenses of the Fund or where BlackRock charges a unitary management fee. This is because the custody arrangements with certain funds' custodian may have the effect of reducing custody fees when a fund leaves cash balances uninvested. This could be viewed as having the potential to provide BlackRock an incentive to keep high positive cash balances for such fund in order to offset fund custody fees that BlackRock might otherwise reimburse or pay. However, BlackRock's portfolio managers do not intentionally keep uninvested balances high, but rather make investment decisions that they anticipate will be beneficial to fund performance. For funds without a unitary management fee, when a fund's actual operating expense ratio exceeds a stated cap, a reduction in custody fees reduces the amount of waivers and/or reimbursements BlackRock would be required to make to the fund.

BlackRock may enter into contractual arrangements with third-party service providers to the Fund (e.g., custodians, administrators and index providers) pursuant to which BlackRock receives fee discounts or concessions in recognition of BlackRock's overall relationship with such service providers. To the extent that BlackRock is responsible for paying these service providers out of its management fee, the benefits of any such fee discounts or concessions may accrue, in whole or in part, to BlackRock.

BlackRock owns or has an ownership interest in certain trading, portfolio management, operations and/or information systems used by Fund service providers. These systems are, or will be, used by the Fund service provider in connection with the provision of services to accounts managed by BlackRock and funds managed and sponsored by BlackRock, including the Fund, that engage the service provider (typically the custodian). The Fund's service provider remunerates BlackRock for the use of the systems. The Fund service provider's payments to BlackRock for the use of these systems may enhance the profitability of BlackRock.

BlackRock has entered into an arrangement with Intercontinental Exchange, Inc. ("ICE") to be one of ICE's development partners in connection with ICE's open-architecture, centralized industry platform to facilitate creation and redemption orders for ETFs (the "ICE Platform"). As a development partner, BlackRock has licensed certain of its intellectual property to ICE. BlackRock uses the ICE Platform to facilitate creations and redemptions in the Fund and certain other services provided by the ICE Platform. BlackRock may have an incentive to promote the broad adoption of the ICE Platform by the ETF marketplace because BlackRock will earn a fee, based on the total revenues earned by the ICE Platform, for licensing BlackRock's intellectual property to ICE and for BlackRock's role as development partner. ICE Data Indices, LLC, the underlying index provider for certain BFA-managed funds, is a wholly owned subsidiary of ICE.

BlackRock's receipt of fees from a service provider in connection with the use of systems provided by BlackRock may create an incentive for BlackRock to recommend that the Fund enter into or renew an arrangement with the service provider.

In recognition of a BlackRock client's overall relationship with BlackRock, BlackRock may offer special pricing arrangements for certain services provided by BlackRock. Any such special pricing arrangements will not apply to the client's investment in the Fund.

Present and future activities of BlackRock (including BFA) and its directors, officers and employees, in addition to those described in this section, may give rise to additional conflicts of interest.

# Investment Advisory, Administrative and Distribution Services

**Investment Adviser.** BFA serves as investment adviser to the Fund pursuant to an investment advisory agreement between the Trust, on behalf of the Fund, and BFA. BFA is a California corporation indirectly owned by BlackRock, Inc. and is registered as an investment adviser under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, as amended. Under the investment advisory agreement, BFA, subject to the supervision of the Board and in conformity with the stated investment policies of the Fund, manages and administers the Trust and the investment of the Fund's assets. BFA is responsible for making investment decisions for the Fund.

Pursuant to the investment advisory agreement, BFA may, from time to time, in its sole discretion and to the extent permitted by applicable law, appoint one or more sub-advisers, including, without limitation, affiliates of BFA, to perform investment advisory or other services with respect to the Fund. In addition, BFA may delegate certain of its investment advisory functions under the investment advisory agreement to one or more of its affiliates to the extent permitted by applicable law. BFA may terminate any or all sub-advisers or such delegation arrangements in its sole discretion upon appropriate notice at any time to the extent permitted by applicable law.

BFA is responsible, under the investment advisory agreement, for substantially all expenses of the Fund, including the cost of transfer agency, custody, fund administration, legal, audit and other services. BFA is not responsible for, and the Fund will bear the cost of, the management fees, interest expenses, taxes, expenses incurred with respect to the acquisition and disposition of portfolio securities and the execution of portfolio transactions, including brokerage commissions, distribution fees or expenses, litigation expenses and any extraordinary expenses (as determined by a majority of the Independent Trustees).

For its investment advisory services to the Fund, BFA will be paid a management fee by the Fund, based on a percentage of the Fund's average daily net assets, at an annual rate as follows: 0.80% of the average daily net assets of the Fund less than or equal to \$1.0 billion; 0.75% of the average daily net assets of the Fund in excess of \$1.0 billion but not exceeding \$3.0 billion; 0.72% of the average daily net assets of the Fund in excess of \$3.0 billion but not exceeding \$5.0 billion; 0.70% of the average daily net assets of the Fund in excess of \$5.0 billion but not exceeding \$10.0 billion; and 0.68% of the average daily net assets of the Fund in excess of \$10 billion.

BFA has contractually agreed to waive its management fees by the amount of investment advisory fees the Fund pays to BFA indirectly through its investment in money market funds managed by BFA or its affiliates, through November 30, 2021.

BFA may also from time to time voluntarily waive and/or reimburse fees or expenses in order to limit total annual fund operating expenses (excluding acquired fund fees and expenses, if any). Any such voluntary waiver or reimbursement may be eliminated by BFA at any time.

As of the date of this SAI, the Fund has not made any payments to BFA for investment advisory services because the Fund has not yet commenced operations.

The investment advisory agreement with respect to the Fund continues in effect for two years from its effective date, and thereafter is subject to annual approval by (i) the Board, or (ii) the vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities (as defined in the 1940 Act) of the Fund, provided that in either

event such continuance also is approved by a majority of the Board members who are not interested persons (as defined in the 1940 Act) of the Fund, by a vote cast in person at a meeting called for the purpose of voting on such approval.

The investment advisory agreement with respect to the Fund is terminable without penalty, on 60 days' notice, by the Board or by a vote of the holders of a majority of the Fund's outstanding voting securities (as defined in the 1940 Act). The investment advisory agreement is also terminable upon 60 days' notice by BFA and will terminate automatically in the event of its assignment (as defined in the 1940 Act).

BFA also serves as the investment adviser for a large number of index-based exchange-traded funds which operate under the iShares brand. The Fund differs from iShares products as it is actively managed and seeks to outperform the investment results of an identified segment of the securities markets rather than to track the performance of a benchmark. BFA expects to continue to advise existing and newly-formed iShares products, as well as actively-managed ETFs to the extent new actively-managed ETFs are introduced.

**Portfolio Managers.** As of July 31, 2020, the individuals named as Portfolio Managers in the Fund's Prospectus were also primarily responsible for the day-to-day management of other BlackRock funds and certain other types of portfolios and/or accounts as follows:

**Phil Ruvinsky, CFA**

<u>Types of Accounts</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total Assets</u>
Registered Investment Companies	13	\$27.84 Billion
Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	3	\$ 2.52 Billion
Other Accounts	0	\$ 0

**William Broadbent**

<u>Types of Accounts</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total Assets</u>
Registered Investment Companies	0	\$0
Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	0	\$0
Other Accounts	0	\$0

Pursuant to BFA's policy, investment opportunities are allocated equitably among the Fund and other portfolios and accounts. For example, under certain circumstances, an investment opportunity may be restricted due to limited supply in the market, legal constraints or other factors, in which event the investment opportunity will be allocated equitably among those portfolios and accounts, including the Fund, seeking such investment opportunity. As a consequence, from time to time the Fund may receive a smaller allocation of an investment opportunity than it would have if the Portfolio Managers and BFA and its affiliates did not manage other portfolios or accounts.

Like the Fund, the other portfolios or accounts for which the Portfolio Managers are primarily responsible for the day-to-day portfolio management generally pay an asset-based fee to BFA or its affiliates, as applicable, for its advisory services. One or more of those other portfolios or accounts, however, may pay BFA or its affiliates a performance-based fee in lieu of, or in addition to, an asset-based fee for its advisory services. A portfolio or account with a performance-based fee would pay BFA or its affiliates a portion of that portfolio's or account's gains, or would pay BFA or its affiliates more for its services than would otherwise be the case if BFA or any of its affiliates meets or exceeds specified performance targets. Performance-based fee arrangements could present an incentive for BFA or its affiliates to devote greater resources, and allocate more investment opportunities, to the portfolios or

accounts that have those fee arrangements, relative to other portfolios or accounts, in order to earn larger fees. Although BFA and each of its affiliates have an obligation to allocate resources and opportunities equitably among portfolios and accounts and intend to do so, shareholders of the Fund should be aware that, as with any group of portfolios and accounts managed by an investment adviser and/or its affiliates pursuant to varying fee arrangements, including performance-based fee arrangements, there is the potential for a conflict of interest, which may result in the Portfolio Managers favoring those portfolios or accounts with performance-based fee arrangements.

The tables below show, for each Portfolio Manager, the number of portfolios or accounts of the types set forth in the above tables and the aggregate of total assets in those portfolios or accounts with respect to which the investment management fees are based on the performance of those portfolios or accounts as of July 31, 2020:

#### **Phil Ruvinsky, CFA**

<b>Types of Accounts</b>	<b>Number of Other Accounts with Performance Fees Managed by Portfolio Manager</b>	<b>Aggregate of Total Assets</b>
Registered Investment Companies	0	\$0
Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	0	\$0
Other Accounts	0	\$0

#### **William Broadbent**

<b>Types of Accounts</b>	<b>Number of Other Accounts with Performance Fees Managed by Portfolio Manager</b>	<b>Aggregate of Total Assets</b>
Registered Investment Companies	0	\$0
Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	0	\$0
Other Accounts	0	\$0

The discussion below describes the Portfolio Managers' compensation as of July 31, 2020.

#### **Portfolio Manager Compensation Overview**

BlackRock, Inc.'s financial arrangements with its portfolio managers, its competitive compensation and its career path emphasis at all levels reflect the value senior management places on key resources. Compensation may include a variety of components and may vary from year to year based on a number of factors. The principal components of compensation include a base salary, a performance-based discretionary bonus, participation in various benefits programs and one or more of the incentive compensation programs established by BlackRock, Inc.

**Base compensation.** Generally, portfolio managers receive base compensation based on their position with the firm.

**Discretionary Incentive Compensation.** Generally, discretionary incentive compensation for Fundamental Equities portfolio managers is based on a formulaic compensation program. BlackRock's formulaic portfolio manager compensation program is based on team revenue and pre-tax investment performance relative to appropriate competitors or benchmarks over 1-, 3- and 5-year performance periods, as applicable. In most cases, these benchmarks are the same as the benchmark or

benchmarks against which the performance of the Fund or other accounts managed by the portfolio managers are measured. BlackRock's Chief Investment Officers determine the benchmarks or rankings against which the performance of the Fund and other accounts managed by the portfolio management team is compared and the period of time over which performance is evaluated. With respect to these portfolio managers, such benchmarks for the Fund and other accounts are: Russell 1000 Growth Custom Index; Russell 1000 Growth Index; Russell MidCap Growth Index; and S&P 500 Index.

A smaller element of portfolio manager discretionary compensation may include consideration of: financial results, expense control, profit margins, strategic planning and implementation, quality of client service, market share, corporate reputation, capital allocation, compliance and risk control, leadership, technology and innovation. These factors are considered collectively by BlackRock management and the relevant Chief Investment Officers.

**Distribution of Discretionary Incentive Compensation.** Discretionary incentive compensation is distributed to portfolio managers in a combination of cash, deferred BlackRock, Inc. stock awards, and/or deferred cash awards that notionally track the return of certain BlackRock investment products.

Portfolio managers receive their annual discretionary incentive compensation in the form of cash. Portfolio managers whose total compensation is above a specified threshold also receive deferred BlackRock, Inc. stock awards annually as part of their discretionary incentive compensation. Paying a portion of discretionary incentive compensation in the form of deferred BlackRock, Inc. stock puts compensation earned by a portfolio manager for a given year "at risk" based on BlackRock's ability to sustain and improve its performance over future periods. In some cases, additional deferred BlackRock, Inc. stock may be granted to certain key employees as part of a long-term incentive award to aid in retention, align interests with long-term shareholders and motivate performance. Deferred BlackRock, Inc. stock awards are generally granted in the form of BlackRock, Inc. restricted stock units that vest pursuant to the terms of the applicable plan and, once vested, settle in BlackRock, Inc. common stock. The portfolio managers of this Fund have deferred BlackRock, Inc. stock awards.

For certain portfolio managers, a portion of the discretionary incentive compensation is also distributed in the form of deferred cash awards that notionally track the returns of select BlackRock investment products they manage, which provides direct alignment of portfolio manager discretionary incentive compensation with investment product results. Deferred cash awards vest ratably over a number of years and, once vested, settle in the form of cash. Only portfolio managers who manage specified products and whose total compensation is above a specified threshold are eligible to participate in the deferred cash award program.

**Other Compensation Benefits.** In addition to base compensation and discretionary incentive compensation, portfolio managers may be eligible to receive or participate in one or more of the following:

*Incentive Savings Plans* — BlackRock, Inc. has created a variety of incentive savings plans in which BlackRock employees are eligible to participate, including a 401(k) plan, the BlackRock Retirement Savings Plan (RSP), and the BlackRock Employee Stock Purchase Plan (ESPP). The employer contribution components of the RSP include a company match equal to 50% of the first 8% of eligible pay contributed to the plan capped at \$5,000 per year, and a company retirement contribution equal to 3-5% of eligible compensation up to the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") limit (\$285,000 for 2020). The RSP offers a range of investment options, including registered investment companies and collective investment funds managed by the firm. BlackRock contributions follow the investment direction set by participants for their own contributions or, absent participant investment direction, are invested into a target date fund that corresponds to, or is closest to, the year in which the participant



attains age 65. The ESPP allows for investment in BlackRock common stock at a 5% discount on the fair market value of the stock on the purchase date. Annual participation in the ESPP is limited to the purchase of 1,000 shares of common stock or a dollar value of \$25,000 based on its fair market value on the purchase date. All of the eligible portfolio managers are eligible to participate in these plans.

As of the date of this SAI, the Portfolio Managers do not beneficially own shares of the Fund.

**Code of Ethics.** The Trust, BFA and the Distributor have adopted a code of ethics pursuant to Rule 17j-1 under the 1940 Act. The code of ethics permits personnel subject to the code of ethics to invest in securities, subject to certain limitations, including securities that may be purchased or held by the Fund. The code of ethics is on public file with, and is available from, the SEC.

**Anti-Money Laundering Requirements.** The Fund is subject to the USA PATRIOT Act (the “Patriot Act”). The Patriot Act is intended to prevent the use of the U.S. financial system in furtherance of money laundering, terrorism or other illicit activities. Pursuant to requirements under the Patriot Act, the Fund may request information from Authorized Participants to enable it to form a reasonable belief that it knows the true identity of its Authorized Participants. This information will be used to verify the identity of Authorized Participants or, in some cases, the status of financial professionals; it will be used only for compliance with the requirements of the Patriot Act.

The Fund reserves the right to reject purchase orders from persons who have not submitted information sufficient to allow the Fund to verify their identity. The Fund also reserves the right to redeem any amounts in the Fund from persons whose identity it is unable to verify on a timely basis. It is the Fund's policy to cooperate fully with appropriate regulators in any investigations conducted with respect to potential money laundering, terrorism or other illicit activities.

**Administrator, Custodian and Transfer Agent.** State Street Bank and Trust Company (“State Street”) serves as administrator, custodian and transfer agent for the Fund. State Street's principal address is 1 Lincoln Street, Boston, MA 02111. Pursuant to the Administration and Fund Accounting Services Agreement with the Trust, State Street provides necessary administrative, legal, tax and accounting and financial reporting services for the maintenance and operations of the Trust and the Fund. In addition, State Street makes available the office space, equipment, personnel and facilities required to provide such services. Pursuant to the Master Custodian Agreement with the Trust, State Street maintains, in separate accounts, cash, securities and other assets of the Trust and the Fund, keeps all necessary accounts and records and provides other services. State Street is required, upon the order of the Trust, to deliver securities held by State Street and to make payments for securities purchased by the Trust for the Fund. State Street is authorized to appoint certain foreign custodians or foreign custody managers for Fund investments outside the U.S. Pursuant to the Transfer Agency and Service Agreement with the Trust, State Street acts as a transfer agent for the Fund's authorized and issued shares of beneficial interest, and as dividend disbursing agent of the Trust. As compensation for these services, State Street receives certain out-of-pocket costs, transaction fees and asset-based fees which are accrued daily and paid monthly by BFA from its management fee.

As of the date of this SAI, the Fund has not made any payments to State Street for its services as administrator, custodian and transfer agent for the Fund because the Fund has not yet commenced operations.

**Distributor.** The Distributor's principal address is 1 University Square Drive, Princeton, NJ 08540. Shares are continuously offered for sale by the Fund through the Distributor or its agent only in Creation Units, as described in the Prospectus and below in the *Creation and Redemption of Creation Units* section of this SAI. Fund shares in amounts less than Creation Units are generally not distributed by the Distributor or its agent. The Distributor or its agent will arrange for the delivery of the Prospectus

and, upon request, this SAI to persons purchasing Creation Units and will maintain records of both orders placed with it or its agents and confirmations of acceptance furnished by it or its agents. The Distributor is a broker-dealer registered under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "1934 Act"), and a member of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. ("FINRA"). The Distributor is also licensed as a broker-dealer in all 50 U.S. states, as well as in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia.

The Distribution Agreement for the Fund provides that it may be terminated at any time, without the payment of any penalty, on at least 60 days' prior written notice to the other party following (i) the vote of a majority of the Independent Trustees, or (ii) the vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities (as defined in the 1940 Act) of the Fund. The Distribution Agreement will terminate automatically in the event of its assignment (as defined in the 1940 Act).

The Distributor may also enter into agreements with securities dealers ("Soliciting Dealers") who will solicit purchases of Creation Units of Fund shares. Such Soliciting Dealers may also be Authorized Participants (as described below), Depository Trust Company ("DTC") participants and/or investor services organizations.

BFA or its affiliates may, from time to time and from its own resources, pay, defray or absorb costs relating to distribution, including payments out of its own resources to the Distributor, or to otherwise promote the sale of shares.

**Securities Lending.** To the extent that the Fund engages in securities lending, the Fund conducts its securities lending pursuant to SEC exemptive relief, and BTC acts as securities lending agent for the Fund, subject to the overall supervision of BFA, pursuant to a written agreement (the "Securities Lending Agency Agreement").

To the extent the Fund engages in securities lending, the Fund retains a portion of securities lending income and remits a remaining portion to BTC as compensation for its services as securities lending agent. Securities lending income is equal to the total of income earned from the reinvestment of cash collateral (and excludes collateral investment fees as defined below), and any fees or other payments to and from borrowers of securities. As securities lending agent, BTC bears all operational costs directly related to securities lending. The Fund is responsible for fees in connection with the investment of cash collateral received for securities on loan in money market funds advised by BFA or its affiliates and such fees will not be subject to any waivers. However, BTC has agreed to reduce the amount of securities lending income it receives in order to effectively limit the collateral investment fees the Fund bears to an annual rate of 0.04% (the "collateral investment fees"). Such money market fund shares will not be subject to a sales load, distribution fee or service fee. If the money market fund's weekly liquid assets fall below 30% of its total assets, the board of directors of the money market fund, including the majority of the non-interested directors of the money market fund, is permitted at any time, if it determines it to be in the best interests of the money market fund, to impose a liquidity fee of up to 2% on all redemptions or impose a redemption gate that temporarily suspends the right of redemption out of the money market fund. In addition, if the money market fund's weekly liquid assets fall below 10% of its total assets at the end of any business day, the board of directors of the money market fund, including the majority of the non-interested directors of the money market fund, will impose a liquidity fee in the default amount of 1% on all redemptions, generally effective as of the next business day, unless the board of directors of the money market fund, including the majority of the non-interested directors of the money market fund, determines that a higher (not to exceed 2%) or lower fee level or not imposing a liquidity fee is in the best interests of the money market fund. The shares of the money market fund purchased by the Fund would be subject to any such liquidity fee or redemption gate imposed.

Under the securities lending program, the Fund is categorized into a specific asset class. The determination of the Fund's asset class category (fixed income, domestic equity, international equity, or fund of funds), each of which may be subject to a different fee arrangement, is based on a methodology agreed to between the Trust and BTC.

Pursuant to the securities lending agreement: (i) the Fund retains 75% of securities lending income (which excludes collateral investment fees), and (ii) this amount can never be less than 70% of the sum of securities lending income plus collateral investment fees.

In addition, commencing the business day following the date that the aggregate securities lending income earned across the BlackRock Multi-Asset Complex in a calendar year exceeds a specified threshold, the Fund, pursuant to the securities lending agreement, will receive for the remainder of that calendar year securities lending income as follows: (i) 80% of securities lending income (which excludes collateral investment fees); and (ii) this amount can never be less than 70% of the sum of securities lending income plus collateral investment fees.

Because the Fund is newly launched, no services have been provided by BTC as the Fund's securities lending agent, and the Fund had no income and fees/compensation related to its securities lending activities as of the date of this SAI.

**Payments by BFA and its Affiliates.** BFA and/or its affiliates ("BFA Entities") may pay certain broker-dealers, registered investment advisers, banks and other financial intermediaries ("Intermediaries") for certain activities related to the Fund, other BFA-advised ETFs or exchange-traded products in general. BFA Entities make these payments from their own assets and not from the assets of the Fund. Although a portion of BFA Entities' revenue comes directly or indirectly in part from fees paid by the Fund, BFA-advised ETFs or exchange-traded products, these payments do not increase the price paid by investors for the purchase of shares of, or the cost of owning, the Fund, other BFA-advised ETFs or exchange-traded products. BFA Entities make payments for Intermediaries' participation in activities that are designed to make registered representatives, other professionals and individual investors more knowledgeable about exchange-traded products, including the Fund and other BFA-advised ETFs, or for other activities, such as participation in marketing activities and presentations, educational training programs, conferences, the development of technology platforms and reporting systems ("Education Costs"). BFA Entities also make payments to Intermediaries for certain printing, publishing and mailing costs or materials relating to the Fund, other BFA-advised ETFs or exchange-traded products ("Publishing Costs"). In addition, BFA Entities make payments to Intermediaries that make shares of the Fund, other BFA-advised ETFs or exchange-traded products available to their clients, develop new products that feature BlackRock or otherwise promote the Fund, other BFA-advised ETFs and exchange-traded products. BFA Entities may also reimburse expenses or make payments from their own assets to Intermediaries or other persons in consideration of services or other activities that the BFA Entities believe may benefit the BlackRock business or facilitate investment in the Fund, other BFA-advised ETFs or exchange-traded products. Payments of the type described above are sometimes referred to as revenue-sharing payments.

Payments to an Intermediary may be significant to the Intermediary, and amounts that Intermediaries pay to your salesperson or other investment professional may also be significant for your salesperson or other investment professional. Because an Intermediary may make decisions about which investment options it will recommend or make available to its clients or what services to provide for various products based on payments it receives or is eligible to receive, such payments may create conflicts of interest between the Intermediary and its clients and these financial incentives may cause the Intermediary to recommend the Fund, other BFA-advised ETFs or exchange-traded products over other investments. The same conflicts of interest and financial incentives exist with respect to your salesperson or other investment professional if he or she receives similar payments from his or her Intermediary firm.

In addition to the payments described above, BFA Entities have developed proprietary tools, calculators and related interactive or digital content that is made available through the [www.blackrock.com](http://www.blackrock.com) website at no additional cost to Intermediaries. BlackRock may configure these tools and calculators and localizes the content for Intermediaries as part of its customary digital marketing support and promotion of the Fund, other BFA-advised ETFs, exchange-traded products and BlackRock mutual funds.

As of March 1, 2013, BFA Entities have contractual arrangements to make payments (in addition to payments for Education Costs or Publishing Costs) to one Intermediary, Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC ("FBS"). Effective June 4, 2016, this relationship was expanded to include National Financial Services, LLC ("NFS"), an affiliate of FBS. Pursuant to this special, long-term and significant arrangement (the "Marketing Program"), FBS, NFS and certain of their affiliates (collectively "Fidelity") have agreed, among other things, to actively promote iShares funds to customers, investment professionals and other intermediaries and in advertising campaigns as the preferred exchange-traded product, to offer certain iShares funds in certain Fidelity platforms and investment programs, in some cases at a waived or reduced commission rate or ticket charge, and to provide marketing data to BFA Entities. BFA Entities have agreed to facilitate the Marketing Program by, among other things, making certain payments to FBS and NFS for marketing and implementing certain brokerage and investment programs. Upon termination of the arrangement, the BFA Entities will make additional payments to FBS and/or NFS based upon a number of criteria, including the overall success of the Marketing Program and the level of services provided by FBS and NFS during the wind-down period.

In addition, BFA Entities may enter into other contractual arrangements with Intermediaries and certain other third parties that the BFA Entities believe may benefit the BlackRock business or facilitate investment in BlackRock funds. Such agreements may include payments by BFA Entities to such Intermediaries and third parties for data collection and provision, technology support, platform enhancement, or co-marketing and cross-promotional efforts. Payments made pursuant to such arrangements may vary in any year and may be different for different Intermediaries and third parties. In certain cases, the payments described in the preceding sentence may be subject to certain minimum payment levels. Such payments will not be asset- or revenue-based. As of the date of this SAI, the Intermediaries and other third parties receiving such contractual payments include: Charles Schwab & Co., Inc., Commonwealth Equity Services, Inc., Dorsey Wright and Associates, LLC, Envestnet Asset Management, Inc., E\*Trade Securities LLC, FDX Advisors, Inc., LPL Financial LLC, Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated, Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC, Orion Advisors Services, LLC, Pershing LLC, Raymond James Financial Services, Inc., Raymond James & Associates, Inc., TD Ameritrade, Inc. and UBS Financial Services Inc. Any additions, modifications, or deletions to Intermediaries and other third parties listed above that have occurred since the date of this SAI are not included in the list.

Further, BFA Entities make Education Costs and Publishing Costs payments to other Intermediaries that are not listed above. BFA Entities may determine to make such payments based on any number of metrics. For example, BFA Entities may make payments at year-end or other intervals in a fixed amount, an amount based upon an Intermediary's services at defined levels or an amount based on the Intermediary's net sales of one or more BFA-advised ETFs in a year or other period, any of which arrangements may include an agreed-upon minimum or maximum payment, or any combination of the foregoing. As of the date of this SAI, BFA anticipates that the payments paid by BFA Entities in connection with the Fund, BFA-advised ETFs and exchange-traded products in general will be immaterial to BFA Entities in the aggregate for the next year. **Please contact your salesperson or other investment professional for more information regarding any such payments or financial incentives his or her Intermediary firm may receive. Any payments made, or financial incentives offered, by the BFA Entities to an Intermediary may create the incentive for the Intermediary to encourage customers to buy shares of the Fund, other BFA-advised ETFs or other exchange-traded products.**

The Fund may participate in certain market maker incentive programs of a national securities exchange in which an affiliate of the Fund would pay a fee to the exchange used for the purpose of incentivizing one or more market makers in the securities of the Fund to enhance the liquidity and quality of the secondary market of securities of the Fund. The fee would then be credited by the exchange to one or more market makers that meet or exceed liquidity and market quality standards with respect to the securities of the Fund. Each market maker incentive program is subject to approval from the SEC. Any such fee payments made to an exchange will be made by an affiliate of the Fund solely for the benefit of the Fund and will not be paid from any Fund assets. Other funds managed by BFA may also participate in such programs.

## Determination of Net Asset Value

**Valuation of Shares.** The NAV for the Fund is generally calculated as of the close of business on the New York Stock Exchange (“NYSE”) (normally 4:00 p.m., Eastern time) on each business day the NYSE is open. Valuation of securities held by the Fund is as follows:

**Equity Investments.** Equity securities traded on a recognized securities exchange (e.g., NYSE), on separate trading boards of a securities exchange or through a market system that provides contemporaneous transaction pricing information (each, an “Exchange”) are valued using information obtained via independent pricing services, generally at the closing price on the Exchange on which the security is primarily traded, or if an Exchange closing price is not available, the last traded price on that Exchange prior to the time as of which the Fund’s assets or liabilities are valued. However, under certain circumstances, other means of determining current market value may be used. If an equity security is traded on more than one Exchange, the current market value of the security where it is primarily traded generally will be used. In the event that there are no sales involving an equity security held by the Fund on a day on which the Fund values such security, the prior day’s price will be used, unless, in accordance with valuation procedures approved by the Board (the “Valuation Procedures”), BlackRock determines in good faith that such prior day’s price no longer reflects the fair value of the security, in which case such asset would be treated as a Fair Value Asset (as defined below).

**Underlying Funds.** Shares of underlying ETFs will be valued at their most recent closing price on an Exchange. Shares of underlying money market funds will be valued at their NAV.

**General Valuation Information.** The price the Fund could receive upon the sale of any particular portfolio investment may differ from the Fund’s valuation of the investment, particularly for securities that trade in thin or volatile markets or that are valued using a fair valuation methodology or a price provided by an independent pricing service. As a result, the price received upon the sale of an investment may be less than the value ascribed by the Fund, and the Fund could realize a greater than expected loss or lesser than expected gain upon the sale of the investment. The Fund’s ability to value its investment may also be impacted by technological issues and/or errors by pricing services or other third-party service providers.

All cash, receivables and current payables are carried on the Fund’s books at their fair value.

Prices obtained from independent third-party pricing services, broker-dealers or market makers to value the Fund’s securities and other assets and liabilities are based on information available at the time the Fund values its assets and liabilities. In the event that a pricing service quotation is revised or updated subsequent to the day on which the Fund valued such security or other asset or liability, the revised pricing service quotation generally will be applied prospectively. Such determination will be made considering pertinent facts and circumstances surrounding the revision.



In the event that application of the methods of valuation discussed above result in a price for a security which is deemed not to be representative of the fair market value of such security, the security will be valued by, under the direction of or in accordance with a method approved by the Board as reflecting fair value. All other assets and liabilities (including securities for which market quotations are not readily available) held by the Fund (including restricted securities) are valued at fair value as determined in good faith by the Board or by BlackRock (its delegate) pursuant to the Valuation Procedures. Any assets and liabilities that are denominated in a foreign currency are converted into U.S. dollars using prevailing market rates on the date of valuation as quoted by one or more data service providers.

Certain of the securities acquired by the Fund may be traded on foreign exchanges or OTC markets on days on which the Fund's NAV is not calculated. In such cases, the NAV of the Fund's shares may be significantly affected on days when Authorized Participants can neither purchase nor redeem shares of the Fund.

Generally, trading in non-U.S. securities, U.S. government securities, money market instruments and certain fixed-income securities is substantially completed each day at various times prior to the close of business on the NYSE. The values of such securities used in computing the NAV of the Fund are determined as of such times.

**Fair Value.** When market quotations are not readily available or are believed in good faith by BlackRock to be unreliable, the Fund's investments are valued at fair value ("Fair Value Assets"). Fair Value Assets are valued by BlackRock in accordance with the Valuation Procedures. BlackRock may reasonably conclude that a market quotation is not readily available or is unreliable if, among other things, a security or other asset or liability does not have a price source due to its complete lack of trading, if BlackRock believes in good faith that a market quotation from a broker-dealer or other source is unreliable (e.g., where it varies significantly from a recent trade, or no longer reflects the fair value of the security or other asset or liability subsequent to the most recent market quotation), or where the security or other asset or liability is only thinly traded or due to the occurrence of a significant event subsequent to the most recent market quotation. For this purpose, a "significant event" is deemed to occur if BlackRock determines, in its reasonable business judgment, that an event has occurred after the close of trading for an asset or liability but prior to or at the time of pricing the Fund's assets or liabilities, and that the event is likely to cause a material change to the closing market price of the assets or liabilities held by the Fund. Non-U.S. securities whose values are affected by volatility that occurs in the markets or in related or highly correlated assets (e.g., American Depositary Receipts, Global Depositary Receipts or ETFs) on a trading day after the close of non-U.S. securities markets may be fair valued. On any day the NYSE is open and a foreign market or the primary exchange on which a foreign asset or liability is traded is closed, such asset or liability will be valued using the prior day's price, provided that BlackRock is not aware of any significant event or other information that would cause such price to no longer reflect the fair value of the asset or liability, in which case such asset or liability would be treated as a Fair Value Asset.

BlackRock, with input from the BlackRock Investment Strategy Group, will submit its recommendations regarding the valuation and/or valuation methodologies for Fair Value Assets to BlackRock's Valuation Committee. The BlackRock Valuation Committee may accept, modify or reject any recommendations. In addition, the Fund's accounting agent periodically endeavors to confirm the prices it receives from all third-party pricing services, index providers and broker-dealers, and, with the assistance of BlackRock, to regularly evaluate the values assigned to the securities and other assets and liabilities of the Fund. The pricing of all Fair Value Assets is subsequently reported to and, where appropriate, ratified by the Board.

When determining the price for a Fair Value Asset, the BlackRock Valuation Committee (or BlackRock's Pricing Group) will seek to determine the price that the Fund might reasonably expect to



receive upon the current sale of that asset or liability in an arm's-length transaction on the date on which the assets or liabilities are being valued, and does not seek to determine the price that the Fund might expect to receive for selling the asset, or the cost of extinguishing a liability, at a later time or if it holds the asset or liability to maturity. Fair value determinations will be based upon all available factors that the BlackRock Valuation Committee (or BlackRock's Pricing Group) deems relevant at the time of the determination, and may be based on analytical values determined by BlackRock using proprietary or third-party valuation models.

Fair value represents a good faith approximation of the value of an asset or liability. When determining the fair value of an asset, one or more of a variety of fair valuation methodologies may be used (depending on certain factors, including the asset type). For example, the asset may be priced on the basis of the original cost of the investment or, alternatively, using proprietary or third-party models (including models that rely upon direct portfolio management pricing inputs and which reflect the significance attributed to the various factors and assumptions being considered). Prices of actual, executed or historical transactions in the relevant asset and/or liability (or related or comparable assets and/or liabilities) or, where appropriate, an appraisal by a third-party experienced in the valuation of similar assets and/or liabilities, may also be used as a basis for establishing the fair value of an asset or liability. The fair value of one or more assets or liabilities may not, in retrospect, be the price at which those assets or liabilities could have been sold during the period in which the particular fair values were used in determining the Fund's NAV. As a result, the Fund's sale or redemption of its shares at NAV, at a time when a holding or holdings are valued at fair value, may have the effect of diluting or increasing the economic interest of existing shareholders.

The Fund's annual audited financial statements, which are prepared in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America ("US GAAP"), follow the requirements for valuation set forth in Financial Accounting Standards Board Accounting Standards Codification Topic 820, "Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures" ("ASC 820"), which defines and establishes a framework for measuring fair value under US GAAP and expands financial statement disclosure requirements relating to fair value measurements. Generally, ASC 820 and other accounting rules applicable to funds and various assets in which they invest are evolving. Such changes may adversely affect the Fund. For example, the evolution of rules governing the determination of the fair market value of assets or liabilities to the extent such rules become more stringent would tend to increase the cost and/or reduce the availability of third-party determinations of fair market value. This may in turn increase the costs associated with selling assets or affect their liquidity due to the Fund's inability to obtain a third-party determination of fair market value.

## Brokerage Transactions

Subject to policies established by the Board, BFA is primarily responsible for the execution of the Fund's portfolio transactions and the allocation of brokerage. BFA does not execute transactions through any particular broker or dealer, but seeks to obtain the best net results for the Fund, taking into account such factors as price (including the applicable brokerage commission or dealer spread), size of order, difficulty of execution, operational facilities of the firm and the firm's risk and skill in positioning blocks of securities. While BFA generally seeks reasonable trade execution costs, the Fund does not necessarily pay the lowest spread or commission available, and payment of the lowest commission or spread is not necessarily consistent with obtaining the best price and execution in particular transactions. Subject to applicable legal requirements, BFA may select a broker based partly upon brokerage or research services provided to BFA and its clients, including the Fund. In return for such services, BFA may cause the Fund to pay a higher commission than other brokers would charge if BFA determines in good faith that the commission is reasonable in relation to the services provided.

In selecting brokers or dealers to execute portfolio transactions, BFA seeks to obtain the best price and most favorable execution for the Fund and may take into account a variety of factors including: (i) the size, nature and character of the security or instrument being traded and the markets in which it is purchased or sold; (ii) the desired timing of the transaction; (iii) BFA's knowledge of the expected commission rates and spreads currently available; (iv) the activity existing and expected in the market for the particular security or instrument, including any anticipated execution difficulties; (v) the full range of brokerage services provided; (vi) the broker's or dealer's capital; (vii) the quality of research and research services provided; (viii) the reasonableness of the commission, dealer spread or its equivalent for the specific transaction; and (ix) BFA's knowledge of any actual or apparent operational problems of a broker or dealer. Brokers may also be selected because of their ability to handle special or difficult executions, such as may be involved in large block trades, thinly traded securities, or other circumstances.

Section 28(e) of the 1934 Act ("Section 28(e)") permits a U.S. investment adviser, under certain circumstances, to cause an account to pay a broker or dealer a commission for effecting a transaction in securities that exceeds the amount another broker or dealer would have charged for effecting the same transaction in recognition of the value of brokerage and research services provided by that broker or dealer. This includes commissions paid on riskless principal transactions in securities under certain conditions.

From time to time, the Fund may purchase new issues of securities in a fixed price offering. In these situations, the broker may be a member of the selling group that will, in addition to selling securities, provide BFA with research services. FINRA has adopted rules expressly permitting these types of arrangements under certain circumstances. Generally, the broker will provide research "credits" in these situations at a rate that is higher than that available for typical secondary market transactions. These arrangements may not fall within the safe harbor of Section 28(e).

The Fund anticipates that brokerage transactions involving foreign equity securities generally will be conducted primarily on the principal stock exchanges of the applicable country. Foreign equity securities may be held by the Fund in the form of depositary receipts, or other securities convertible into foreign equity securities. Depositary receipts may be listed on stock exchanges, or traded in OTC markets in the U.S. or Europe, as the case may be. American Depositary Receipts, like other securities traded in the U.S., will be subject to negotiated commission rates.

OTC issues, including most fixed-income securities such as corporate debt and U.S. Government securities, are normally traded on a "net" basis without a stated commission, through dealers acting for their own account and not as brokers. The Fund will primarily engage in transactions with these dealers or deal directly with the issuer unless a better price or execution could be obtained by using a broker. Prices paid to a dealer with respect to both foreign and domestic securities will generally include a "spread," which is the difference between the prices at which the dealer is willing to purchase and sell the specific security at the time, and includes the dealer's normal profit.

Under the 1940 Act, persons affiliated with the Fund and persons who are affiliated with such affiliated persons are prohibited from dealing with the Fund as principal in the purchase and sale of securities unless a permissive order allowing such transactions is obtained from the SEC. Since transactions in the OTC market usually involve transactions with the dealers acting as principal for their own accounts, the Fund will not deal with affiliated persons and affiliated persons of such affiliated persons in connection with such transactions. The Fund will not purchase securities during the existence of any underwriting or selling group relating to such securities of which BFA, BRIL or any affiliated person (as defined in the 1940 Act) thereof is a member except pursuant to procedures adopted by the Board in accordance with Rule 10f-3 under the 1940 Act.

Purchases of money market instruments by the Fund are made from dealers, underwriters and issuers. The Fund does not currently expect to incur any brokerage commission expense on such transactions

because money market instruments are generally traded on a “net” basis with dealers acting as principal for their own accounts without a stated commission. The price of the security, however, usually includes a profit to the dealer.

BFA may, from time to time, effect trades on behalf of and for the account of the Fund with brokers or dealers that are affiliated with BFA, in conformity with Rule 17e-1 under the 1940 Act and SEC rules and regulations. Under these provisions, any commissions paid to affiliated brokers or dealers must be reasonable and fair compared to the commissions charged by other brokers or dealers in comparable transactions.

Securities purchased in underwritten offerings include a fixed amount of compensation to the underwriter, generally referred to as the underwriter’s concession or discount. When securities are purchased or sold directly from or to an issuer, no commissions or discounts are paid.

Investment decisions for the Fund and for other investment accounts managed by BFA and the other Affiliates are made independently of each other in light of differing conditions. A variety of factors will be considered in making investment allocations. These factors include: (i) investment objectives or strategies for particular accounts, including sector, industry, country or region and capitalization weightings; (ii) tax considerations of an account; (iii) risk or investment concentration parameters for an account; (iv) supply or demand for a security at a given price level; (v) size of available investment; (vi) cash availability and liquidity requirements for accounts; (vii) regulatory restrictions; (viii) minimum investment size of an account; (ix) relative size of account; and (x) such other factors as may be approved by BlackRock’s general counsel. Moreover, investments may not be allocated to one client account over another based on any of the following considerations: (i) to favor one client account at the expense of another; (ii) to generate higher fees paid by one client account over another or to produce greater performance compensation to BlackRock; (iii) to develop or enhance a relationship with a client or prospective client; (iv) to compensate a client for past services or benefits rendered to BlackRock or to induce future services or benefits to be rendered to BlackRock; or (v) to manage or equalize investment performance among different client accounts. BFA and the other Affiliates may deal, trade and invest for their own respective accounts in the types of securities in which the Fund may invest.

IPOs of securities may be over-subscribed and subsequently trade at a premium in the secondary market. When BFA is given an opportunity to invest in such an initial offering or “new” or “hot” issue, the supply of securities available for client accounts is often less than the amount of securities the accounts would otherwise take. In order to allocate these investments fairly and equitably among client accounts over time, each portfolio manager or a member of his or her respective investment team will indicate to BFA’s trading desk their level of interest in a particular offering with respect to eligible clients’ accounts for which that team is responsible. IPOs of U.S. equity securities will be identified as eligible for particular client accounts that are managed by portfolio teams who have indicated interest in the offering based on market capitalization of the issuer of the security and the investment mandate of the client account and in the case of international equity securities, the country where the offering is taking place and the investment mandate of the client account. Generally, shares received during the IPO will be allocated among participating client accounts within each investment mandate on a *pro rata* basis. This *pro rata* allocation may result in the Fund receiving less of a particular security than if pro-rating had not occurred. All allocations of securities will be subject, where relevant, to share minimums established for accounts and compliance constraints. In situations where supply is too limited to be allocated among all accounts for which the investment is eligible, portfolio managers may rotate such investment opportunities among one or more accounts so long as the rotation system provides for fair access for all client accounts over time. Other allocation methodologies that are considered by BFA to be fair and equitable to clients may be used as well.

Because different accounts may have differing investment objectives and policies, BFA may buy and sell the same securities at the same time for different clients based on the particular investment

objective, guidelines and strategies of those accounts. For example, BFA may decide that it may be entirely appropriate for a growth fund to sell a security at the same time a value fund is buying that security. To the extent that transactions on behalf of more than one client of BFA or the other Affiliates during the same period increase the demand for securities being purchased or the supply of securities being sold, there may be an adverse effect on price. For example, sales of a security by BlackRock on behalf of one or more of its clients may decrease the market price of such security, adversely impacting other BlackRock clients that still hold the security. If purchases or sales of securities arise for consideration at or about the same time that would involve the Fund or other clients or funds for which BFA or another Affiliate act as investment manager, transactions in such securities will be made, insofar as feasible, for the respective funds and clients in a manner deemed equitable to all.

In certain instances, BFA may find it efficient for purposes of seeking to obtain best execution, to aggregate or “bunch” certain contemporaneous purchases or sale orders of its advisory accounts and advisory accounts of affiliates. In general, all contemporaneous trades for client accounts under management by the same portfolio manager or investment team will be bunched in a single order if the trader believes the bunched trade would provide each client with an opportunity to achieve a more favorable execution at a potentially lower execution cost. The costs associated with a bunched order will be shared *pro rata* among the clients in the bunched order. Generally, if an order for a particular portfolio manager or management team is filled at several different prices through multiple trades, all accounts participating in the order will receive the average price (except in the case of certain international markets where average pricing is not permitted). While in some cases this practice could have a detrimental effect upon the price or value of the security as far as the Fund is concerned, in other cases it could be beneficial to the Fund. Transactions effected by BFA or the other Affiliates on behalf of more than one of its clients during the same period may increase the demand for securities being purchased or the supply of securities being sold, causing an adverse effect on price. The trader will give the bunched order to the broker-dealer that the trader has identified as being able to provide the best execution of the order. Orders for purchase or sale of securities will be placed within a reasonable amount of time of the order receipt and bunched orders will be kept bunched only long enough to execute the order.

As of the date of this SAI, the Fund has not paid any brokerage commissions because the Fund has not yet commenced operations.

As of the date of this SAI, the Fund has not held any securities of its regular broker-dealers (as defined in Rule 10b-1 under the 1940 Act) or their parent entities because the Fund has not yet commenced operations.

The Fund’s purchase and sale orders for securities may be combined with those of other investment companies, clients or accounts that BlackRock manages or advises. If purchases or sales of portfolio securities of the Fund and one or more other accounts managed or advised by BlackRock are considered at or about the same time, transactions in such securities are allocated among the Fund and the other accounts in a manner deemed equitable to all by BlackRock. In some cases, this procedure could have a detrimental effect on the price or volume of the security as far as the Fund is concerned. However, in other cases, it is possible that the ability to participate in volume transactions and to negotiate lower transaction costs will be beneficial to the Fund. BlackRock may deal, trade and invest for its own account in the types of securities in which the Fund may invest. BlackRock may, from time to time, effect trades on behalf of and for the account of the Fund with brokers or dealers that are affiliated with BFA, in conformity with the 1940 Act and SEC rules and regulations. Under these provisions, any commissions paid to affiliated brokers or dealers must be reasonable and fair compared to the commissions charged by other brokers or dealers in comparable transactions. The Fund will not deal with affiliates in principal transactions unless permitted by applicable SEC rules or regulations, or by SEC exemptive order.

Portfolio turnover may vary from year to year, as well as within a year. High turnover rates may result in comparatively greater brokerage expenses.

## Additional Information Concerning the Trust

**Shares.** The Trust currently consists of 4 investment series or portfolios each called a fund. The Trust issues shares of beneficial interests in the fund with no par value. The Board may establish and designate additional funds.

Each whole share issued by a fund has a *pro rata* interest in the assets of that fund. Shares have no preemptive, exchange, subscription or conversion rights and are freely transferable. Each share is entitled to participate equally in dividends and distributions declared by the Board with respect to the relevant fund, and in the net distributable assets of such fund on liquidation.

Each share has one vote with respect to matters upon which the shareholder is entitled to vote. In any matter submitted to shareholders for a vote, each fund shall hold a separate vote, provided that shareholders of all affected funds will vote together when: (i) required by the 1940 Act, or (ii) the Trustees determine that the matter affects the interests of more than one fund.

Under Delaware law, the Trust is not required to hold an annual meeting of shareholders unless required to do so under the 1940 Act. The policy of the Trust is not to hold an annual meeting of shareholders unless required to do so under the 1940 Act. All shares (regardless of the fund) have noncumulative voting rights in the election of members of the Board. Under Delaware law, Trustees of the Trust may be removed by vote of the shareholders.

Following the creation of the initial Creation Unit(s) of shares of a fund and immediately prior to the commencement of trading in such fund's shares, a holder of shares may be a "control person" of the fund, as defined in Rule 0-1 under the 1940 Act. A fund cannot predict the length of time for which one or more shareholders may remain a control person of the fund.

Shareholders may make inquiries by writing to BlackRock ETF Trust, c/o BlackRock Investments, LLC, 1 University Square Drive, Princeton, NJ 08540.

Absent an applicable exemption or other relief from the SEC or its staff, beneficial owners of more than 5% of the shares of a fund may be subject to the reporting provisions of Section 13 of the 1934 Act and the SEC's rules promulgated thereunder. In addition, absent an applicable exemption or other relief from the SEC or its staff, officers and trustees of a fund and beneficial owners of 10% of the shares of a fund ("Insiders") may be subject to the insider reporting, short-swing profit and short sale provisions of Section 16 of the 1934 Act and the SEC's rules promulgated thereunder. Beneficial owners and Insiders should consult with their own legal counsel concerning their obligations under Sections 13 and 16 of the 1934 Act and existing guidance provided by the SEC staff.

In accordance with the Trust's current Agreement and Declaration of Trust (the "Declaration of Trust"), the Board may, without shareholder approval (unless such shareholder approval is required by applicable law, including the 1940 Act), authorize certain funds to merge, reorganize, consolidate, sell all or substantially all of their assets, or take other similar actions with, to or into another fund. The Trust or a fund may be terminated by a majority vote of the Board. Although the shares are not automatically redeemable upon the occurrence of any specific event, the Declaration of Trust provides that the Board will have the unrestricted power to alter the number of shares in a Creation Unit.



Therefore, in the event of a termination of the Trust or a fund, the Board, in its sole discretion, could determine to permit the shares to be redeemable in aggregations smaller than Creation Units or to be individually redeemable. In such circumstance, the Trust or a fund may make redemptions, for cash or for a combination of cash and securities. Further, in the event of a termination of the Trust or a fund, the Trust or a fund might elect to pay cash redemptions to all shareholders, with an in-kind election for shareholders owning in excess of a certain stated minimum amount.

**DTC as Securities Depository for Shares of the Fund.** Shares of the Fund are represented by securities registered in the name of DTC or its nominee and deposited with, or on behalf of, DTC.

DTC was created in 1973 to enable electronic movement of securities between its participants (“DTC Participants”), and NSCC was established in 1976 to provide a single settlement system for securities clearing and to serve as central counterparty for securities trades among DTC Participants. In 1999, DTC and NSCC were consolidated within The Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation (“DTCC”) and became wholly-owned subsidiaries of DTCC. The common stock of DTCC is owned by the DTC Participants, but NYSE and FINRA, through subsidiaries, hold preferred shares in DTCC that provide them with the right to elect one member each to the DTCC board of directors. Access to the DTC system is available to entities, such as banks, brokers, dealers and trust companies, that clear through or maintain a custodial relationship with a DTC Participant, either directly or indirectly (“Indirect Participants”).

Beneficial ownership of shares is limited to DTC Participants, Indirect Participants and persons holding interests through DTC Participants and Indirect Participants. Ownership of beneficial interests in shares (owners of such beneficial interests are referred to herein as “Beneficial Owners”) is shown on, and the transfer of ownership is effected only through, records maintained by DTC (with respect to DTC Participants) and on the records of DTC Participants (with respect to Indirect Participants and Beneficial Owners that are not DTC Participants). Beneficial Owners will receive from or through the DTC Participant a written confirmation relating to their purchase of shares. The laws of some jurisdictions may require that certain purchasers of securities take physical delivery of such securities in definitive form. Such laws may impair the ability of certain investors to acquire beneficial interests in shares of the Fund.

Conveyance of all notices, statements and other communications to Beneficial Owners is effected as follows. Pursuant to the Depositary Agreement between the Trust and DTC, DTC is required to make available to the Trust upon request and for a fee to be charged to the Trust a listing of the shares of the Fund held by each DTC Participant. The Trust shall inquire of each such DTC Participant as to the number of Beneficial Owners holding shares, directly or indirectly, through such DTC Participant. The Trust shall provide each such DTC Participant with copies of such notice, statement or other communication, in such form, number and at such place as such DTC Participant may reasonably request, in order that such notice, statement or communication may be transmitted by such DTC Participant, directly or indirectly, to such Beneficial Owners. In addition, the Trust shall pay to each such DTC Participant a fair and reasonable amount as reimbursement for the expenses attendant to such transmittal, all subject to applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

Share distributions shall be made to DTC or its nominee, Cede & Co., as the registered holder of all shares of the Trust. DTC or its nominee, upon receipt of any such distributions, shall credit immediately DTC Participants’ accounts with payments in amounts proportionate to their respective beneficial interests in shares of the Fund as shown on the records of DTC or its nominee. Payments by DTC Participants to Indirect Participants and Beneficial Owners of shares held through such DTC Participants will be governed by standing instructions and customary practices, as is now the case with securities held for the accounts of customers in bearer form or registered in a “street name,” and will be the responsibility of such DTC Participants.



The Trust has no responsibility or liability for any aspect of the records relating to or notices to Beneficial Owners, or payments made on account of beneficial ownership interests in such shares, or for maintaining, supervising or reviewing any records relating to such beneficial ownership interests, or for any other aspect of the relationship between DTC and the DTC Participants or the relationship between such DTC Participants and the Indirect Participants and Beneficial Owners owning through such DTC Participants. DTC may decide to discontinue providing its service with respect to shares of the Trust at any time by giving reasonable notice to the Trust and discharging its responsibilities with respect thereto under applicable law. Under such circumstances, the Trust shall take action to find a replacement for DTC to perform its functions at a comparable cost.

**Distribution of Shares.** In connection with the Fund’s launch, the Fund will be seeded through the sale of one or more Creation Units by the Fund to one or more initial investors. Initial investors participating in the seeding may be Authorized Participants, a lead market maker or other third party investor or an affiliate of the Fund or the Fund’s adviser. Each such initial investor may sell some or all of the shares underlying the Creation Unit(s) held by them pursuant to the registration statement for the Fund (each, a “Selling Shareholder”), which shares have been registered to permit the resale from time to time after purchase. The Fund will not receive any of the proceeds from the resale by the Selling Shareholders of these shares.

Selling Shareholders may sell shares owned by them directly or through broker-dealers, in accordance with applicable law, on any national securities exchange on which the shares may be listed or quoted at the time of sale, through trading systems, in the OTC market or in transactions other than on these exchanges or systems at fixed prices, at prevailing market prices at the time of the sale, at varying prices determined at the time of sale, or at negotiated prices. These sales may be effected through brokerage transactions, privately negotiated trades, block sales, entry into options or other derivatives transactions or through any other means authorized by applicable law. Selling Shareholders may redeem the shares held in Creation Unit size by them through an Authorized Participant.

Any Selling Shareholder and any broker-dealer or agents participating in the distribution of shares may be deemed to be “underwriters” within the meaning of Section 2(a)(11) of the 1933 Act, in connection with such sales.

Any Selling Shareholder and any other person participating in such distribution will be subject to applicable provisions of the 1934 Act and the rules and regulations thereunder.

## Creation and Redemption of Creation Units

**General.** The Trust issues and sells shares of the Fund only in Creation Units on a continuous basis through the Distributor or its agent, without a sales load, at a price based on the Fund’s NAV next determined after receipt, on any Business Day (as defined below), of an order received by the Distributor or its agent in proper form. On days when the Listing Exchange closes earlier than normal, the Fund may require orders to be placed earlier in the day. The following table sets forth the number of shares of the Fund that constitute a Creation Unit for the Fund and the approximate value of such Creation Unit as of September 22, 2020:

Shares Per Creation Unit	Approximate Value Per Creation Unit (U.S.\$)
10,000	\$35

In its discretion, the Trust reserves the right to increase or decrease the number of the Fund's shares that constitute a Creation Unit. The Board reserves the right to declare a split or a consolidation in the number of shares outstanding of the Fund, and to make a corresponding change in the number of shares constituting a Creation Unit, in the event that the per share price in the secondary market rises (or declines) to an amount that falls outside the range deemed desirable by the Board.

A "Business Day" with respect to the Fund is any day the Fund is open for business, including any day when it satisfies redemption requests as required by section 22(e) of the 1940 Act. The Fund is open for business any day on which the Listing Exchange on which the Fund is listed for trading is open for business. As of the date of this SAI, the Listing Exchange observes the following holidays, as observed: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

**Fund Deposit.** The consideration for purchase of Creation Units of the Fund generally consists of Deposit Securities and the Cash Component computed as described below. Together, the Deposit Securities and the Cash Component constitute the "Fund Deposit," which will be applicable (subject to possible amendment or correction) to creation requests received in proper form. The Fund Deposit represents the minimum initial and subsequent investment amount for a Creation Unit of the Fund. Such Fund Deposit is applicable, subject to any adjustments as described below, to purchases of Creation Units of shares of the Fund until such time as the next-announced Fund Deposit is made available.

The Cash Component is an amount equal to the difference between the NAV of the shares (per Creation Unit) and the "Deposit Amount," which is an amount equal to the market value of the Deposit Securities, and serves to compensate for any differences between the NAV per Creation Unit and the Deposit Amount. Payment of any stamp duty or other similar fees and expenses payable upon transfer of beneficial ownership of the Deposit Securities are the sole responsibility of the Authorized Participant purchasing the Creation Unit.

The Deposit Securities, in connection with a purchase of a Creation Unit of the Fund, will consist of a *pro rata* basket of the Fund's portfolio except for differences due to minimum trading sizes for bonds, minimum lot sizes or rounding.

The identity and number of shares of the Deposit Securities change pursuant to changes in the composition of the Fund's portfolio and as rebalancing adjustments and corporate action events are reflected from time to time by BFA with a view to the investment objective of the Fund. The composition of the Deposit Securities may also change in response to adjustments to the weighting or composition of the component securities constituting the Fund's portfolio.

The Fund Deposit may also be modified to minimize the Cash Component by redistributing the cash to the Deposit Securities portion of the Fund Deposit through "systematic rounding." The rounding methodology "rounds up" position sizes of securities in the Deposit Securities (which in turn reduces the cash portion). However, the methodology limits the maximum allowed percentage change in weight and share quantity of any given security in the Fund Deposit.

Fund Deposits may also be modified to position a fund towards a forward index rebalance to reflect revisions that account for index additions, deletions, and re-weights.

The Trust may, in its sole discretion, substitute a "cash in lieu" amount to be added to the Cash Component to replace any Deposit Security in certain circumstances, including: (i) when instruments are not available in sufficient quantity for delivery, (ii) when instruments are not eligible for transfer through DTC or the clearing process (as discussed below), (iii) when instruments that the Authorized

Participant (or an investor on whose behalf the Authorized Participant is acting) are not able to be traded due to a trading restriction, (iv) when delivery of the Deposit Security by the Authorized Participant (or by an investor on whose behalf the Authorized Participant is acting) would be restricted under the applicable securities or other local laws, (v) in connection with distribution payments to be made by the Fund, or (vi) in certain other situations.

**Cash Purchase Method.** Although the Trust does not generally permit partial or full cash purchases of Creation Units of its funds, when partial or full cash purchases of Creation Units are available or specified for the Fund, they will be effected in essentially the same manner as in-kind purchases thereof. In the case of a partial or full cash purchase, the Authorized Participant must pay the cash equivalent of the Deposit Securities it would otherwise be required to provide through an in-kind purchase, plus the same Cash Component required to be paid by an in-kind purchaser.

**Procedures for Creation of Creation Units.** To be eligible to place orders with the Distributor and to create a Creation Unit of the Fund, an entity must be: (i) a "Participating Party," *i.e.*, a broker-dealer or other participant in the clearing process through the Continuous Net Settlement System of the NSCC (the "Clearing Process"), a clearing agency that is registered with the SEC, or (ii) a DTC Participant, and must have executed an agreement with the Distributor, with respect to creations and redemptions of Creation Units ("Authorized Participant Agreement") (discussed below). A Participating Party or DTC Participant who has executed an Authorized Participant Agreement is referred to as an "Authorized Participant." All shares of the Fund, however created, will be entered on the records of DTC in the name of Cede & Co. for the account of a DTC Participant.

**Role of the Authorized Participant.** Creation Units may be purchased only by or through a member or participant of a clearing agency registered with the SEC, which has a written agreement with the Fund or one of its service providers that allows such member or participant to place orders for the purchase and redemption of Creation Units (an "Authorized Participant"). Such Authorized Participant will agree, pursuant to the terms of such Authorized Participant Agreement and on behalf of itself or any investor on whose behalf it will act, to certain conditions, including that such Authorized Participant will make available in advance of each purchase of shares an amount of cash sufficient to pay the Cash Component, once the net asset value of a Creation Unit is next determined after receipt of the purchase order in proper form, together with the transaction fees described below. An Authorized Participant, acting on behalf of an investor, may require the investor to enter into an agreement with such Authorized Participant with respect to certain matters, including payment of the Cash Component. Investors who are not Authorized Participants must make appropriate arrangements with an Authorized Participant. Investors should be aware that their particular broker may not be a DTC Participant or may not have executed an Authorized Participant Agreement and that orders to purchase Creation Units may have to be placed by the investor's broker through an Authorized Participant. As a result, purchase orders placed through an Authorized Participant may result in additional charges to such investor. The Trust does not expect to enter into an Authorized Participant Agreement with more than a small number of DTC Participants. A list of current Authorized Participants may be obtained from the Distributor. The Distributor has adopted guidelines regarding Authorized Participants' transactions in Creation Units that are made available to all Authorized Participants. These guidelines set forth the processes and standards for Authorized Participants to transact with the Distributor and its agents in connection with creation and redemption transactions. In addition, the Distributor may be appointed as the proxy of the Authorized Participant and may be granted a power of attorney under its Authorized Participant Agreement.

**Purchase Orders.** To initiate an order for a Creation Unit, an Authorized Participant must submit to the Distributor or its agent an irrevocable order to purchase shares of the Fund, in proper form, generally before 4:00 p.m., Eastern time on any Business Day to receive that day's NAV. The Distributor or its agent will notify BFA and the custodian of such order. The custodian will then provide such information

to any appropriate sub-custodian. Procedures and requirements governing the delivery of the Fund Deposit are set forth in the procedures handbook for Authorized Participants and may change from time to time. Investors, other than Authorized Participants, are responsible for making arrangements for a creation request to be made through an Authorized Participant. The Distributor or its agent will provide a list of current Authorized Participants upon request. Those placing orders to purchase Creation Units through an Authorized Participant should allow sufficient time to permit proper submission of the purchase order to the Distributor or its agent by the Cutoff Time (as defined below) on such Business Day.

The Authorized Participant must also make available on or before the contractual settlement date, by means satisfactory to the Fund, immediately available or same day funds estimated by the Fund to be sufficient to pay the Cash Component next determined after acceptance of the purchase order, together with the applicable purchase transaction fees. Those placing orders should ascertain the deadline for cash transfers by contacting the operations department of the broker or depository institution effectuating the transfer of the Cash Component. This deadline is likely to be significantly earlier than the Cutoff Time of the Fund. Investors should be aware that an Authorized Participant may require orders for purchases of shares placed with it to be in the particular form required by the individual Authorized Participant.

The Authorized Participant is responsible for any and all expenses and costs incurred by the Fund, including any applicable cash amounts, in connection with any purchase order.

**Timing of Submission of Purchase Orders.** An Authorized Participant must submit an irrevocable order to purchase shares of the Fund generally before 4:00 p.m., Eastern time on any Business Day in order to receive that day's NAV. Creation Orders must be transmitted by an Authorized Participant in the form required by the Fund to the Distributor or its agent pursuant to procedures set forth in the Authorized Participant Agreement. Economic or market disruptions or changes, or telephone or other communication failure, may impede the ability to reach the Distributor or its agent or an Authorized Participant. The Fund's deadline specified above for the submission of purchase orders is referred to as the Fund's "Cutoff Time." The Distributor or its agent, in their discretion, may permit the submission of such orders and requests by or through an Authorized Participant at any time (including on days on which the Listing Exchange is not open for business) via communication through the facilities of the Distributor's or its agent's proprietary website maintained for this purpose. Purchase orders and redemption requests, if accepted by the Trust, will be processed based on the NAV next determined after such acceptance in accordance with the Fund's Cutoff Times as provided in the Authorized Participant Agreement and disclosed in this SAI.

**Acceptance of Orders for Creation Units.** Subject to the conditions that (i) an irrevocable purchase order has been submitted by the Authorized Participant (either on its own or another investor's behalf) and (ii) arrangements satisfactory to the Fund are in place for payment of the Cash Component and any other cash amounts which may be due, the Fund will accept the order, subject to the Fund's right (and the right of the Distributor and BFA) to reject any order until acceptance, as set forth below.

Once the Fund has accepted an order, upon the next determination of the net asset value of the shares, the Fund will confirm the issuance of a Creation Unit, against receipt of payment, at such net asset value. The Distributor or its agent will then transmit a confirmation of acceptance to the Authorized Participant that placed the order.

The Fund reserves the absolute right to reject or revoke a creation order transmitted to it by the Distributor or its agent if (i) the order is not in proper form; (ii) the investor(s), upon obtaining the shares ordered, would own 80% or more of the currently outstanding shares of the Fund; (iii) the Deposit Securities delivered do not conform to the identity and number of shares specified, as described

above; (iv) acceptance of the Deposit Securities would have certain adverse tax consequences to the Fund; (v) acceptance of the Fund Deposit would, in the opinion of the Trust, be unlawful; (vi) acceptance of the Fund Deposit would, in the discretion of the Fund or the Distributor, have an adverse effect on the Fund or the rights of beneficial owners; or (vii) circumstances outside the control of the Fund, the Distributor or its agent and BFA make it impracticable to process purchase orders. The Distributor or its agent shall notify a prospective purchaser of a Creation Unit and/or the Authorized Participant acting on behalf of such purchaser of its rejection of such order. The Fund, State Street, the sub-custodian and the Distributor or its agent are under no duty, however, to give notification of any defects or irregularities in the delivery of Fund Deposits nor shall any of them incur any liability for failure to give such notification.

**Issuance of a Creation Unit.** Except as provided herein, a Creation Unit will not be issued until the transfer of good title to the Fund of the Deposit Securities and the payment of the Cash Component have been completed. When the sub-custodian has confirmed to the custodian that the securities included in the Fund Deposit (or the cash value thereof) have been delivered to the account of the relevant sub-custodian or sub-custodians, the Distributor or its agent and BFA shall be notified of such delivery and the Fund will issue and cause the delivery of the Creation Unit. Creation Units are generally issued on a "T+2 basis" (*i.e.*, two Business Days after trade date). However, the Fund reserves the right to settle Creation Unit transactions on a basis other than T+2, including a shorter settlement period, if necessary or appropriate under the circumstances and compliant with applicable law.

To the extent contemplated by an Authorized Participant Agreement with the Distributor, the Fund will issue Creation Units to such Authorized Participant, notwithstanding the fact that the corresponding Fund Deposits have not been received in part or in whole, in reliance on the undertaking of the Authorized Participant to deliver the missing Deposit Securities as soon as possible, which undertaking shall be secured by such Authorized Participant's delivery and maintenance of collateral as set forth in the handbook for Authorized Participants. The Trust may use such collateral at any time to buy Deposit Securities for the Fund. Such collateral must be delivered no later than the time specified by the Fund or its custodian on the contractual settlement date. Information concerning the Fund's current procedures for collateralization of missing Deposit Securities is available from the Distributor or its agent. The Authorized Participant Agreement will permit the Fund to buy the missing Deposit Securities at any time and will subject the Authorized Participant to liability for any shortfall between the cost to the Fund of purchasing such securities and the collateral including, without limitation, liability for related brokerage, borrowings and other charges.

In certain cases, Authorized Participants may create and redeem Creation Units on the same trade date and in these instances, the Fund reserves the right to settle these transactions on a net basis or require a representation from the Authorized Participants that the creation and redemption transactions are for separate beneficial owners. All questions as to the number of shares of each security in the Deposit Securities and the validity, form, eligibility and acceptance for deposit of any securities to be delivered shall be determined by the Fund and the Fund's determination shall be final and binding.

**Costs Associated with Creation Transactions.** A standard creation transaction fee is imposed to offset the transfer and other transaction costs associated with the issuance of Creation Units. The standard creation transaction fee is charged to the Authorized Participant on the day such Authorized Participant creates a Creation Unit, and is the same, regardless of the number of Creation Units purchased by the Authorized Participant on the applicable Business Day. If a purchase consists solely or partially of cash, the Authorized Participant may also be required to cover (up to the maximum amount shown below) certain brokerage, tax, foreign exchange, execution, price movement and other costs and expenses related to the execution of trades resulting from such transaction (which may, in certain instances, be based on a good faith estimate of transaction costs). Authorized Participants will also bear the costs of transferring the Deposit Securities to the Fund. Certain fees/costs associated



with creation transactions may be waived in certain circumstances. Investors who use the services of a broker or other financial intermediary to acquire Fund shares may be charged a fee for such services.

The following table sets forth the Fund's standard creation transaction fees and maximum additional charge (as described above):

Standard Creation Transaction Fee	Maximum Additional Charge*
\$275	7%

\* As a percentage of the net asset value per Creation Unit.

**Redemption of Creation Units.** Shares of the Fund may be redeemed by Authorized Participants only in Creation Units at their NAV next determined after receipt of a redemption request in proper form by the Distributor or its agent and only on a Business Day. The Fund will not redeem shares in amounts less than Creation Units. There can be no assurance, however, that there will be sufficient liquidity in the secondary market at any time to permit assembly of a Creation Unit. Investors should expect to incur brokerage and other costs in connection with assembling a sufficient number of shares to constitute a Creation Unit that could be redeemed by an Authorized Participant. Beneficial owners also may sell shares in the secondary market.

The Fund generally redeems Creation Units for Fund Securities. Please see the *Cash Redemption Method* section below and the following discussion summarizing the in-kind method for further information on redeeming Creation Units of the Fund.

The designated portfolio of securities (including any portion of such securities for which cash may be substituted) that will be applicable (subject to possible amendment or correction) to redemption requests received in proper form (as defined below) on that day ("Fund Securities" or "Redemption Basket"), and an amount of cash (the "Cash Amount," as described below) (each subject to possible amendment or correction) are applicable, in order to effect redemptions of Creation Units of the Fund until such time as the next announced composition of the Fund Securities and Cash Amount is made available. Fund Securities received on redemption may not be identical to Deposit Securities that are applicable to creations of Creation Units. Procedures and requirements governing redemption transactions are set forth in the handbook for Authorized Participants and may change from time to time.

Unless cash redemptions are available or specified for the Fund, the redemption proceeds for a Creation Unit generally consist of Fund Securities, plus the Cash Amount, which is an amount equal to the difference between the net asset value of the shares being redeemed, as next determined after the receipt of a redemption request in proper form, and the value of Fund Securities, less a redemption transaction fee (as described below).

The Fund Securities, in connection with a redemption of a Creation Unit of the Fund, will consist of a *pro rata* basket of the Fund's portfolio except for differences due to minimum trading sizes for bonds, minimum lot sizes or rounding.

The Trust may, in its sole discretion, substitute a "cash in lieu" amount to replace any Fund Security in certain circumstances, including: (i) when the delivery of a Fund Security to the Authorized Participant (or to an investor on whose behalf the Authorized Participant is acting) would be restricted under applicable securities or other local laws or due to a trading restriction; (ii) when the delivery of a Fund Security to the Authorized Participant would result in the disposition of the Fund Security by the



Authorized Participant due to restrictions under applicable securities or other local laws, (iii) when the delivery of a Fund Security to the Authorized Participant would result in unfavorable tax treatment; (iv) when a Fund Security cannot be settled or otherwise delivered in time to facilitate an in-kind redemption, or (v) in certain other situations. The amount of cash paid out in such cases will be equivalent to the value of the substituted security listed as a Fund Security. In the event that the Fund Securities have a value greater than the NAV of the shares, a compensating cash payment equal to the difference is required to be made by or through an Authorized Participant by the redeeming shareholder. The Fund generally redeems Creation Units for Fund Securities, but the Fund reserves the right to utilize a cash option for redemption of Creation Units. The Fund may, in its sole discretion, provide such redeeming Authorized Participant a portfolio of securities that differs from the exact composition of the Fund Securities, but does not differ in NAV. The Redemption Basket may also be modified to minimize the Cash Component by redistributing the cash to the Fund Securities portion of the Redemption Basket through systematically rounding. The rounding methodology allows position sizes of securities in the Fund Securities to be “rounded up,” while limiting the maximum allowed percentage change in weight and share quantity of any given security in the Redemption Basket. Redemption Baskets may also be modified to position a fund towards a forward index rebalance to reflect revisions that account for index additions, deletions, and re-weights.

**Cash Redemption Method.** Although the Trust does not generally permit partial or full cash redemptions of Creation Units of its funds, when partial or full cash redemptions of Creation Units are available or specified for the Fund, they will be effected in essentially the same manner as in-kind redemptions thereof. In the case of partial or full cash redemption, the Authorized Participant receives the cash equivalent of the Fund Securities it would otherwise receive through an in-kind redemption, plus the same Cash Amount to be paid to an in-kind redeemer.

**Costs Associated with Redemption Transactions.** A standard redemption transaction fee is imposed to offset transfer and other transaction costs that may be incurred by the Fund. The standard redemption transaction fee is charged to the Authorized Participant on the day such Authorized Participant redeems a Creation Unit, and is the same regardless of the number of Creation Units redeemed by an Authorized Participant on the applicable Business Day. If a redemption consists solely or partially of cash, the Authorized Participant may also be required to cover (up to the maximum amount shown below) certain brokerage, tax, foreign exchange, execution, price movement and other costs and expenses related to the execution of trades resulting from such transaction (which may, in certain instances, be based on a good faith estimate of transaction costs). Authorized Participants will also bear the costs of transferring the Fund Securities from the Fund to their account on their order. Certain fees/costs associated with redemption transactions may be waived in certain circumstances. Investors who use the services of a broker or other financial intermediary to dispose of Fund shares may be charged a fee for such services.

The following table sets forth the Fund’s standard redemption transaction fees and maximum additional charge (as described above):

Standard Redemption Transaction Fee	Maximum Additional Charge*
\$275	2%

\* As a percentage of the net asset value per Creation Unit, inclusive of the standard redemption transaction fee.

**Placement of Redemption Orders.** Redemption requests for Creation Units of the Fund must be submitted to the Distributor or its agent by or through an Authorized Participant. An Authorized Participant must submit an irrevocable request to redeem shares of the Fund generally before 4:00

p.m., Eastern time on any Business Day in order to receive that day's NAV. On days when the Listing Exchange closes earlier than normal, the Fund may require orders to redeem Creation Units to be placed earlier that day. Investors, other than Authorized Participants, are responsible for making arrangements for a redemption request to be made through an Authorized Participant. The Distributor or its agent will provide a list of current Authorized Participants upon request.

The Authorized Participant must transmit the request for redemption in the form required by the Fund to the Distributor or its agent in accordance with procedures set forth in the Authorized Participant Agreement. Investors should be aware that their particular broker may not have executed an Authorized Participant Agreement and that, therefore, requests to redeem Creation Units may have to be placed by the investor's broker through an Authorized Participant who has executed an Authorized Participant Agreement. At any time, only a limited number of broker-dealers will have an Authorized Participant Agreement in effect. Investors making a redemption request should be aware that such request must be in the form specified by such Authorized Participant. Investors making a request to redeem Creation Units should allow sufficient time to permit proper submission of the request by an Authorized Participant and transfer of the shares to the Fund's transfer agent; such investors should allow for the additional time that may be required to effect redemptions through their banks, brokers or other financial intermediaries if such intermediaries are not Authorized Participants.

A redemption request is considered to be in "proper form" if: (i) an Authorized Participant has transferred or caused to be transferred to the Fund's transfer agent the Creation Unit redeemed through the book-entry system of DTC so as to be effective by the Listing Exchange closing time on any Business Day on which the redemption request is submitted; (ii) a request in form satisfactory to the Fund is received by the Distributor or its agent from the Authorized Participant on behalf of itself or another redeeming investor within the time periods specified above; and (iii) all other procedures set forth in the Authorized Participant Agreement are properly followed.

Upon receiving a redemption request, the Distributor or its agent shall notify the Fund and the Fund's transfer agent of such redemption request. The tender of an investor's shares for redemption and the distribution of the securities and/or cash included in the redemption payment made in respect of Creation Units redeemed will be made through DTC and the relevant Authorized Participant to the Beneficial Owner thereof as recorded on the book-entry system of DTC or the DTC Participant through which such investor holds, as the case may be, or by such other means specified by the Authorized Participant submitting the redemption request.

A redeeming Authorized Participant, whether on its own account or acting on behalf of a Beneficial Owner, must maintain appropriate security arrangements with a qualified broker-dealer, bank or other custody providers in each jurisdiction in which any of the portfolio securities are customarily traded, to which account such portfolio securities will be delivered.

Deliveries of redemption proceeds by the Fund are generally made within two Business Days (*i.e.*, "T+2"). However, the Fund reserves the right to settle redemption transactions on a basis other than T+2, including a shorter settlement period, if necessary or appropriate under the circumstances and compliant with applicable law, but the Trust will make delivery of redemption proceeds within 14 days.

To the extent contemplated by an Authorized Participant's agreement with the Distributor or its agent, in the event an Authorized Participant has submitted a redemption request in proper form but is unable to transfer all or part of the Creation Unit to be redeemed to the Fund, at or prior to the time specified by the Fund or its custodian on the Business Day after the date of submission of such redemption request, the Distributor or its agent will accept the redemption request in reliance on the undertaking by the Authorized Participant to deliver the missing shares as soon as possible. Such undertaking shall be secured by the Authorized Participant's delivery and maintenance of collateral as set forth in the

handbook for Authorized Participants. Such collateral must be delivered no later than the time specified by the Fund or its custodian on the Business Day after the date of submission of such redemption request and shall be held by State Street and marked-to-market daily. The fees of State Street and any sub-custodians in respect of the delivery, maintenance and redelivery of the collateral shall be payable by the Authorized Participant. The Authorized Participant Agreement permits the Fund to acquire shares of the Fund at any time and subjects the Authorized Participant to liability for any shortfall between the aggregate of the cost to the Fund of purchasing such shares, plus the value of the Cash Amount, and the value of the collateral together with liability for related brokerage and other charges.

Because the portfolio securities of a Fund may trade on exchange(s) on days that the Listing Exchange is closed or are otherwise not Business Days for such Fund, shareholders may not be able to redeem their shares of such Fund, or purchase or sell shares of such Fund on the Listing Exchange on days when the NAV of such a Fund could be significantly affected by events in the relevant non-U.S. markets.

The right of redemption may be suspended or the date of payment postponed with respect to the Fund: (i) for any period during which the Listing Exchange is closed (other than customary weekend and holiday closings); (ii) for any period during which trading on the Listing Exchange is suspended or restricted; (iii) for any period during which an emergency exists as a result of which disposal of the shares of the Fund's portfolio securities or determination of its net asset value is not reasonably practicable; or (iv) in such other circumstance as is permitted by the SEC.

**Custom Baskets.** Creation and Redemption baskets may differ and the Fund may accept "custom baskets." A custom basket may include any of the following: (i) a basket that is composed of a non-representative selection of the Fund's portfolio holdings; (ii) a representative basket that is different from the initial basket used in transactions on the same business day; or (iii) a basket that contains bespoke cash substitutions for a single Authorized Participant. The Fund has adopted policies and procedures that govern the construction and acceptance of baskets, including heightened requirements for certain types of custom baskets. Such policies and procedures provide the parameters for the construction and acceptance of custom baskets that are in the best interests of the Fund and its shareholders, establish processes for revisions to, or deviations from, such parameters, and specify the titles and roles of the employees of BFA who are required to review each custom basket for compliance with those parameters. In addition, when constructing custom baskets for redemptions, the tax efficiency of the Fund may be taken into account. The policies and procedures distinguish among different types of custom baskets that may be used and impose different requirements for different types of custom baskets in order to seek to mitigate against potential risks of conflicts and/or overreaching by an Authorized Participant. BlackRock has established a governance process to oversee basket compliance for the Fund, as set forth in the Fund's policies and procedures.

**Taxation on Creations and Redemptions of Creation Units.** An Authorized Participant generally will recognize either gain or loss upon the exchange of Deposit Securities for Creation Units. This gain or loss is calculated by taking the market value of the Creation Units purchased over the Authorized Participant's aggregate basis in the Deposit Securities exchanged therefor. However, the IRS may apply the wash sales rules to determine that any loss realized upon the exchange of Deposit Securities for Creation Units is not currently deductible. Authorized Participants should consult their own tax advisors.

Similarly, an Authorized Participant generally will recognize either gain or loss upon the redemption of the Creation Units. If the Creation Units are held as capital assets, current U.S. federal income tax laws dictate that capital gain or loss realized from the redemption of the Creation Units will generally create long-term capital gain or loss if the Authorized Participant held the Creation Units for more than one year and short-term capital gain or loss if the Authorized Participant held the Creation Units for one year or less.

# Taxes

The following is a summary of certain material U.S. federal income tax considerations regarding the purchase, ownership and disposition of shares of the Fund. This summary does not address all of the potential U.S. federal income tax consequences that may be applicable to the Fund or to all categories of investors, some of which may be subject to special tax rules. Current and prospective shareholders are urged to consult their own tax advisors with respect to the specific U.S. federal, state, local and non-U.S. tax consequences of investing in the Fund. The summary is based on the laws and judicial and administrative interpretations thereof in effect on the date of this SAI, all of which are subject to change, possibly with retroactive effect.

**Regulated Investment Company Qualifications.** The Fund intends to qualify for treatment as a separate RIC under Subchapter M of the Internal Revenue Code. To qualify for treatment as a RIC, the Fund must annually distribute at least 90% of its investment company taxable income (which includes dividends, interest and net short-term capital gains) and meet several other requirements. Among such other requirements are the following: (i) at least 90% of the Fund's annual gross income must be derived from dividends, interest, payments with respect to securities loans, gains from the sale or other disposition of stock or securities or non-U.S. currencies, other income (including, but not limited to, gains from options, futures or forward contracts) derived with respect to its business of investing in such stock, securities or currencies, and net income derived from interests in qualified publicly-traded partnerships (*i.e.*, partnerships that are traded on an established securities market or tradable on a secondary market, other than partnerships that derive at least 90% of their income from interest, dividends, capital gains and other traditionally permitted RIC income); and (ii) at the close of each quarter of the Fund's taxable year, (a) at least 50% of the market value of the Fund's total assets must be represented by cash and cash items, U.S. government securities, securities of other RICs and other securities, with such other securities limited for purposes of this calculation in respect of any one issuer to an amount not greater than 5% of the value of the Fund's assets and not greater than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of such issuer, and (b) not more than 25% of the value of the Fund's total assets may be invested in the securities (other than U.S. government securities or the securities of other RICs) of any one issuer, of two or more issuers of which 20% or more of the voting stock is held by the Fund and that are engaged in the same or similar trades or businesses or related trades or businesses, or the securities of one or more qualified publicly-traded partnerships.

The Fund may be able to cure a failure to derive at least 90% of its income from the sources specified above or a failure to diversify its holdings in the manner described above by paying a tax and/or by disposing of certain assets. If, in any taxable year, the Fund fails one of these tests and does not timely cure the failure, the Fund will be taxed in the same manner as an ordinary corporation and distributions to its shareholders will not be deductible by the Fund in computing its taxable income.

Although, in general, the passive loss rules of the Internal Revenue Code do not apply to RICs, such rules do apply to a RIC with respect to items attributable to interests in qualified publicly-traded partnerships. The Fund's investments in partnerships, including in qualified publicly-traded partnerships, may result in the Fund being subject to state, local, or non-U.S. income, franchise or withholding tax liabilities.

**Taxation of RICs.** As a RIC, the Fund will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax on the portion of its taxable investment income and capital gains that it distributes to its shareholders, provided that it satisfies a minimum distribution requirement. To satisfy the minimum distribution requirement, the Fund must distribute to its shareholders at least the sum of (i) 90% of its "investment company taxable income" (*i.e.*, income other than its net realized long-term capital gain over its net realized short-term

capital loss), plus or minus certain adjustments, and (ii) 90% of its net tax-exempt income for the taxable year. The Fund will be subject to income tax at regular corporate rate on any taxable income or gains that it does not distribute to its shareholders. If the Fund fails to qualify for any taxable year as a RIC or fails to meet the distribution requirement, all of its taxable income will be subject to tax at regular corporate income tax rate without any deduction for distributions to shareholders, and such distributions generally will be taxable to shareholders as ordinary dividends to the extent of the Fund's current and accumulated earnings and profits. In such event, distributions to individuals should be eligible to be treated as qualified dividend income and distributions to corporate shareholders generally should be eligible for the dividends received deduction. Although the Fund intends to distribute substantially all of its net investment income and its capital gains for each taxable year, the Fund will be subject to U.S. federal income taxation to the extent any such income or gains are not distributed. If the Fund fails to qualify as a RIC in any year, it must pay out its earnings and profits accumulated in that year in order to qualify again as a RIC. If the Fund fails to qualify as a RIC for a period greater than two taxable years, the Fund may be required to recognize any net built-in gains with respect to certain of its assets (*i.e.*, the excess of the aggregate gains, including items of income, over aggregate losses that would have been realized with respect to such assets if the Fund had been liquidated) if it qualifies as a RIC in a subsequent year.

**Excise Tax.** The Fund will be subject to a 4% excise tax on certain undistributed income if it does not distribute to its shareholders in each calendar year at least 98% of its ordinary income for the calendar year plus at least 98.2% of its capital gain net income for the 12 months ended October 31 of such year. For this purpose, however, any ordinary income or capital gain net income retained by the Fund that is subject to corporate income tax will be considered to have been distributed by year-end. In addition, the minimum amounts that must be distributed in any year to avoid the excise tax will be increased or decreased to reflect any underdistribution or overdistribution, as the case may be, from the previous year. The Fund intends to declare and distribute dividends and distributions in the amounts and at the times necessary to avoid the application of this 4% excise tax.

**Net Capital Loss Carryforwards.** Net capital loss carryforwards may be applied against any net realized capital gains in each succeeding year, until they have been reduced to zero.

In the event that the Fund were to experience an ownership change as defined under the Internal Revenue Code, the loss carryforwards and other favorable tax attributes of the Fund, if any, may be subject to limitation.

**Taxation of U.S. Shareholders.** Dividends and other distributions by the Fund are generally treated under the Internal Revenue Code as received by the shareholders at the time the dividend or distribution is made. However, any dividend or distribution declared by the Fund in October, November or December of any calendar year and payable to shareholders of record on a specified date in such a month shall be deemed to have been received by each shareholder on December 31 of such calendar year and to have been paid by the Fund not later than such December 31, provided such dividend is actually paid by the Fund during January of the following calendar year.

The Fund intends to distribute annually to its shareholders substantially all of its investment company taxable income and any net realized long-term capital gains in excess of net realized short-term capital losses (including any capital loss carryovers). However, if the Fund retains for investment an amount equal to all or a portion of its net long-term capital gains in excess of its net short-term capital losses (including any capital loss carryovers), it will be subject to a corporate tax (at a flat rate of 21%) on the amount retained. In that event, the Fund will designate such retained amounts as undistributed capital gains in a notice to its shareholders who (a) will be required to include in income for U.S. federal income tax purposes, as long-term capital gains, their proportionate shares of the undistributed amount, (b) will be entitled to credit their proportionate shares of the tax paid by the Fund on the



undistributed amount against their U.S. federal income tax liabilities, if any, and to claim refunds to the extent their credits exceed their liabilities, if any, and (c) will be entitled to increase their tax basis, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, in their shares by an amount equal to the excess of the amount in clause (a) over the amount in clause (b). Organizations or persons not subject to U.S. federal income tax on such capital gains will be entitled to a refund of their *pro rata* share of such taxes paid by the Fund upon filing appropriate returns or claims for refund with the IRS.

Distributions of net long-term capital gains, if any, that the Fund reports as capital gains dividends are taxable as long-term capital gains, whether paid in cash or in shares and regardless of how long a shareholder has held shares of the Fund. All other dividends of the Fund (including dividends from short-term capital gains) from its current and accumulated earnings and profits ("regular dividends") are generally subject to tax as ordinary income, subject to the discussion of qualified dividend income below. Long-term capital gains are eligible for taxation at a maximum rate of 15% or 20% for non-corporate shareholders, depending on whether their income exceeds certain threshold amounts.

If an individual receives a regular dividend qualifying for the long-term capital gains rates and such dividend constitutes an "extraordinary dividend," and the individual subsequently recognizes a loss on the sale or exchange of stock in respect of which the extraordinary dividend was paid, then the loss will be long-term capital loss to the extent of such extraordinary dividend. An "extraordinary dividend" on common stock for this purpose is generally a dividend (i) in an amount greater than or equal to 10% of the taxpayer's tax basis (or trading value) in a share of stock, aggregating dividends with ex-dividend dates within an 85-day period, or (ii) in an amount greater than 20% of the taxpayer's tax basis (or trading value) in a share of stock, aggregating dividends with ex-dividend dates within a 365-day period.

Distributions in excess of the Fund's current and accumulated earnings and profits will, as to each shareholder, be treated as a tax-free return of capital to the extent of a shareholder's basis in shares of the Fund, and as a capital gain thereafter (if the shareholder holds shares of the Fund as capital assets). Distributions in excess of the Fund's minimum distribution requirements, but not in excess of the Fund's current and accumulated earnings and profits, will be taxable to shareholders and will not constitute nontaxable returns of capital. Shareholders receiving dividends or distributions in the form of additional shares should be treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes as receiving a distribution in an amount equal to the amount of money that the shareholders receiving cash dividends or distributions will receive and should have a cost basis in the shares received equal to such amount.

A 3.8% U.S. federal Medicare contribution tax is imposed on net investment income, including, but not limited to, interest, dividends, and net gain from investments, of U.S. individuals with income exceeding \$200,000 (or \$250,000 if married and filing jointly) and of estates and trusts.

Investors considering buying shares just prior to a dividend or capital gain distribution should be aware that, although the price of shares purchased at that time may reflect the amount of the forthcoming distribution, such dividend or distribution may nevertheless be taxable to them. If the Fund is the holder of record of any security on the record date for any dividends payable with respect to such security, such dividends will be included in the Fund's gross income not as of the date received but as of the later of (a) the date such security became ex-dividend with respect to such dividends (*i.e.*, the date on which a buyer of the security would not be entitled to receive the declared, but unpaid, dividends); or (b) the date the Fund acquired such security. Accordingly, in order to satisfy its income distribution requirements, the Fund may be required to pay dividends based on anticipated earnings, and shareholders may receive dividends in an earlier year than would otherwise be the case.

In certain situations, the Fund may, for a taxable year, defer all or a portion of its net capital loss (or if there is no net capital loss, then any net long-term or short-term capital loss) realized after October and



its late-year ordinary loss (defined as the sum of (i) the excess of post-October foreign currency and passive foreign investment company ("PFIC") losses over post-October foreign currency and PFIC gains and (ii) the excess of post-December ordinary losses over post-December ordinary income) until the next taxable year in computing its investment company taxable income and net capital gain, which will defer the recognition of such realized losses. Such deferrals and other rules regarding gains and losses realized after October (or December) may affect the tax character of shareholder distributions.

**Sales of Shares.** Upon the sale or exchange of shares of the Fund, a shareholder will realize a taxable gain or loss equal to the difference between the amount realized and the shareholder's basis in shares of the Fund. A redemption of shares by the Fund will be treated as a sale for this purpose. Such gain or loss will be treated as capital gain or loss if the shares are capital assets in the shareholder's hands and will be long-term capital gain or loss if the shares are held for more than one year and short-term capital gain or loss if the shares are held for one year or less. Any loss realized on a sale or exchange will be disallowed to the extent the shares disposed of are replaced, including replacement through the reinvesting of dividends or capital gains distributions, or by an option or contract to acquire substantially identical shares, within a 61-day period beginning 30 days before and ending 30 days after the disposition of the shares. In such a case, the basis of the shares acquired will be increased to reflect the disallowed loss. Any loss realized by a shareholder on the sale of Fund shares held by the shareholder for six months or less will be treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes as a long-term capital loss to the extent of any distributions or deemed distributions of long-term capital gains received by the shareholder with respect to such share. The Medicare contribution tax described above will apply to the sale of Fund shares.

If a shareholder incurs a sales charge in acquiring shares of the Fund, disposes of those shares within 90 days and then, on or before January 31 of the following calendar year, acquires shares in a mutual fund for which the otherwise applicable sales charge is reduced by reason of a reinvestment right (e.g., an exchange privilege), the original sales charge will not be taken into account in computing gain or loss on the disposition of the original shares to the extent the subsequent sales charge is reduced. Instead, the disregarded portion of the original sales charge will be added to the tax basis of the newly acquired shares. Furthermore, the same rule also applies to a disposition of the newly acquired shares made within 90 days of the second acquisition. This provision prevents shareholders from immediately deducting the sales charge by shifting their investments within a family of mutual funds.

**Backup Withholding.** In certain cases, the Fund will be required to withhold at a 24% rate and remit to the U.S. Treasury such amounts withheld from any distributions paid to a shareholder who: (i) has failed to provide a correct taxpayer identification number; (ii) is subject to backup withholding by the IRS; (iii) has failed to certify to the Fund that such shareholder is not subject to backup withholding; or (iv) has not certified that such shareholder is a U.S. person (including a U.S. resident alien). Backup withholding is not an additional tax and any amount withheld may be credited against a shareholder's U.S. federal income tax liability.

**Sections 351 and 362.** The Trust, on behalf of the Fund, has the right to reject an order to create Creation Units of the Fund if the Authorized Participant (or group of Authorized Participants) would, upon obtaining the Creation Units, own 80% or more of the outstanding shares of the Fund and if, pursuant to Sections 351 and 362 of the Internal Revenue Code, the Fund would have a basis in the Deposit Securities different from the market value of such Deposit Securities on the date of deposit. If the Fund's basis in such Deposit Securities on the date of deposit was less than market value on such date, the Fund, upon disposition of the Deposit Securities, would recognize more taxable gain or less taxable loss than if its basis in the Deposit Securities had been equal to market value. It is not anticipated that the Trust will exercise the right of rejection except in a case where the Trust determines that accepting the order could result in material adverse tax consequences to the Fund or its shareholders. The Trust also has the right to require information necessary to determine beneficial share ownership for purposes of the 80% determination.

**Taxation of Certain Derivatives.** The Fund's transactions in zero coupon securities, non-U.S. currencies, forward contracts, options and futures contracts (including options and futures contracts on non-U.S. currencies), to the extent permitted, will be subject to special provisions of the Internal Revenue Code (including provisions relating to "hedging transactions" and "straddles") that, among other consequences, may affect the character of gains and losses realized by the Fund (*i.e.*, may affect whether gains or losses are ordinary or capital), accelerate recognition of income to the Fund and defer Fund losses. These rules could therefore affect the character, amount and timing of distributions to shareholders. These provisions also (a) may require the Fund to mark-to-market certain types of the positions in its portfolio (*i.e.*, treat them as if they were closed out at the end of each year) and (b) may cause the Fund to recognize income without receiving cash with which to pay dividends or make distributions in amounts necessary to satisfy the distribution requirements for avoiding income and excise taxes. The Fund will monitor its transactions, will make the appropriate tax elections and will make the appropriate entries in its books and records when it acquires any zero coupon security, non-U.S. currency, forward contract, option, futures contract or hedged investment in order to mitigate the effect of these rules and prevent disqualification of the Fund as a RIC.

The Fund's investments in so-called "Section 1256 contracts," such as regulated futures contracts, most non-U.S. currency forward contracts traded in the interbank market and options on most security indexes, are subject to special tax rules. All Section 1256 contracts held by the Fund at the end of its taxable year are required to be marked to their market value, and any unrealized gain or loss on those positions will be included in the Fund's income as if each position had been sold for its fair market value at the end of the taxable year. The resulting gain or loss will be combined with any gain or loss realized by the Fund from positions in Section 1256 contracts closed during the taxable year. Provided such positions were held as capital assets and were not part of a "hedging transaction" nor part of a "straddle," 60% of the resulting net gain or loss will be treated as long-term capital gain or loss, and 40% of such net gain or loss will be treated as short-term capital gain or loss, regardless of the period of time the positions were actually held by the Fund.

As a result of entering into swap contracts, the Fund may make or receive periodic net payments. The Fund may also make or receive a payment when a swap is terminated prior to maturity through an assignment of the swap or other closing transaction. Periodic net payments will generally constitute ordinary income or deductions, while termination of a swap will generally result in capital gain or loss (which will be a long-term capital gain or loss if the Fund has been a party to the swap for more than one year). With respect to certain types of swaps, the Fund may be required to currently recognize income or loss with respect to future payments on such swaps or may elect under certain circumstances to mark such swaps to market annually for tax purposes as ordinary income or loss.

**Qualified Dividend Income and Qualified REIT Dividends.** For non-corporate shareholders, distributions by the Fund of investment company taxable income (including any short-term capital gains), whether received in cash or shares, will be taxable either as ordinary income or as qualified dividend income, which is eligible to be taxed at long-term capital gain rates to the extent the Fund receives qualified dividend income on the securities it holds and the Fund reports the distribution as qualified dividend income. Qualified dividend income is, in general, dividend income from taxable U.S. corporations and certain non-U.S. corporations (*e.g.*, non-U.S. corporations that are not PFICs and which are incorporated in a possession of the U.S. or in certain countries with a comprehensive tax treaty with the U.S., or the stock of which is readily tradable on an established securities market in the U.S. (where the dividends are paid with respect to such stock)). Substitute payments received by the Fund with respect to dividends paid on securities lent out will not be qualified dividend income.

A dividend from the Fund will not be treated as qualified dividend income to the extent that: (i) the shareholder has not held the shares on which the dividend was paid for 61 days during the 121-day period that begins on the date that is 60 days before the date on which the shares become ex-dividend

with respect to such dividend or the Fund fails to satisfy those holding period requirements with respect to the securities it holds that paid the dividends distributed to the shareholder (or, in the case of certain preferred stocks, the holding requirement of 91 days during the 181-day period beginning on the date that is 90 days before the date on which the stock becomes ex-dividend with respect to such dividend); (ii) the Fund or the shareholder is under an obligation (whether pursuant to a short sale or otherwise) to make related payments with respect to substantially similar or related property; or (iii) the shareholder elects to treat such dividend as investment income under Section 163(d)(4)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Dividends received by the Fund from a REIT or another RIC may be treated as qualified dividend income only to the extent the dividend distributions are attributable to qualified dividend income received by such REIT or other RIC. It is expected that dividends received by the Fund from a REIT and distributed to a shareholder generally will be taxable to the shareholder as ordinary income. However, for tax years beginning after December 31, 2017 and before January 1, 2026, a non-corporate taxpayer who is a direct REIT shareholder may claim a 20% “qualified business income” deduction for ordinary REIT dividends, and a RIC may report dividends as eligible for this deduction to the extent the RIC’s income is derived from ordinary REIT dividends (reduced by allocable RIC expenses). A shareholder may treat the dividends as such provided the RIC and the shareholder satisfy applicable holding period requirements. A dividend from the Fund will not be treated as qualified REIT dividend income to the extent that: (i) the shareholder has not held the shares on which the dividend was paid for at least 46 days during the 91-day period that begins on the date that is 45 days before the date on which the shares become ex-dividend with respect to such dividend or the Fund fails to satisfy those holding period requirements with respect to the share of REIT stock it holds that paid the dividends distributed to the shareholder; or (ii) the Fund or the shareholder is under an obligation (whether pursuant to a short sale or otherwise) to make related payments with respect to substantially similar or related property. Distributions by the Fund of its net short-term capital gains will be taxable as ordinary income.

**Corporate Dividends Received Deduction.** For corporate shareholders, dividends paid by the Fund that are attributable to dividends received by the Fund from U.S. corporations may qualify for the U.S. federal dividends received deduction and the Fund reports the distribution as eligible for such deduction. A 46-day minimum holding period during the 90-day period that begins 45 days prior to ex-dividend date (or 91-day minimum holding period during the 180 period beginning 90 days prior to ex-dividend date for certain preference dividends) during which risk of loss may not be diminished is required for the applicable shares, at both the Fund and shareholder level, for a dividend to be eligible for the dividends received deduction. Dividends received by the Fund from a REIT are not eligible for the dividends received deduction. In addition, dividends received by the Fund from another RIC may be eligible for such deduction only to the extent the dividends received from such RIC would themselves qualify for the dividends received deduction.

**Tax-Exempt Investors and Excess Inclusion Income.** Under current law, the Fund serves to block unrelated business taxable income (“UBTI”) from being realized by its tax-exempt shareholders. UBTI includes unrelated debt-financed income, which generally consists of income and gains derived by a tax-exempt investor from the disposition of property that has been acquired with borrowed money. A tax-exempt shareholder could realize UBTI by virtue of its investment in the Fund if the shareholder borrows money to acquire its shares fund.

Certain types of income received by the Fund from REITs, real estate mortgage investment conduits, taxable mortgage pools or other investments may cause the Fund to report some or all of its distributions as “excess inclusion income.” To Fund shareholders, such excess inclusion income may: (i) constitute taxable income, as UBTI for those shareholders who would otherwise be tax-exempt such as individual retirement accounts, 401(k) accounts, Keogh plans, pension plans and certain charitable entities; (ii) not be offset by otherwise allowable deductions for tax purposes; (iii) not be eligible for

reduced U.S. withholding for non-U.S. shareholders even from tax treaty countries; and (iv) cause the Fund to be subject to tax if certain “disqualified organizations,” as defined by the Internal Revenue Code, are Fund shareholders. If a charitable remainder annuity trust or a charitable remainder unitrust (each as defined in Section 664 of the Internal Revenue Code) has UBTI for a taxable year, a 100% excise tax on the UBTI is imposed on the trust.

The Fund tries to avoid investing in REITs that are expected to generate excess inclusion income, but the Fund may not always be successful in doing so. Because information about a REIT’s investments may be inadequate or inaccurate, or because a REIT may change its investment program, the Fund may not be successful in avoiding the consequences described above. Avoidance of investments in REITs that generate excess inclusion income may require the Fund to forego otherwise attractive investment opportunities.

**Non-U.S. Investments.** Under Section 988 of the Internal Revenue Code, gains or losses attributable to fluctuations in exchange rates between the time the Fund accrues income or receivables or expenses or other liabilities denominated in a non-U.S. currency and the time the Fund actually collects such income or pays such liabilities are generally treated as ordinary income or ordinary loss. In general, gains (and losses) realized on debt instruments will be treated as Section 988 gain (or loss) to the extent attributable to changes in exchange rates between the U.S. dollar and the currencies in which the instruments are denominated. Similarly, gains or losses on non-U.S. currency, non-U.S. currency forward contracts and certain non-U.S. currency options or futures contracts denominated in non-U.S. currency, to the extent attributable to fluctuations in exchange rates between the acquisition and disposition dates, are also treated as ordinary income or loss unless the Fund were to elect otherwise.

The Fund may be subject to non-U.S. income taxes withheld at the source. The Fund, if permitted to do so, may elect to “pass through” to its investors the amount of non-U.S. income taxes paid by the Fund provided that the Fund held the security on the dividend settlement date and for at least 15 additional days immediately before and/or thereafter, with the result that each investor with respect to shares of the Fund held for a minimum 16-day holding period at the time of deemed distribution will (i) include in gross income, even though not actually received, the investor’s pro rata share of the Fund’s non-U.S. income taxes, and (ii) either deduct (in calculating U.S. taxable income, but only for investors who itemize their deductions on their personal tax returns) or credit (in calculating U.S. federal income tax) the investor’s pro rata share of the Fund’s non-U.S. income taxes. Withholding taxes on dividends on non-U.S. securities while such securities are lent out by the Fund are not eligible for non-U.S. tax credit pass through. Taxes not “passed through” for tax purposes will not be available to shareholders for foreign tax credit purposes. A non-U.S. person invested in the Fund in a year that the Fund elects to “pass through” its non-U.S. taxes may be treated as receiving additional dividend income subject to U.S. withholding tax. A non-U.S. tax credit may not exceed the investor’s U.S. federal income tax otherwise payable with respect to the investor’s non-U.S. source income. For this purpose, shareholders must treat as non-U.S. source gross income (i) their proportionate shares of non-U.S. taxes paid by the Fund and (ii) the portion of any dividend paid by the Fund that represents income derived from non-U.S. sources; the Fund’s gain from the sale of securities will generally be treated as U.S.-source income. Certain limitations will be imposed to the extent to which the non-U.S. tax credit may be claimed. If your Fund shares are loaned pursuant to securities lending arrangements, you may lose the ability to use any non-U.S. tax credits passed through by the Fund or to treat Fund dividends (paid while the shares are held by the borrower) as qualified dividends. Regarding a short sale with respect to shares of the Fund, substitute payments made to the lender of such shares may not be deductible under certain circumstances. Consult your financial intermediary or tax advisor.

The Fund may file refund claims in various countries to recover taxes withheld on dividend income. Whether or when the Fund will receive a tax refund is within the control of the individual country.

Pending confirmatory guidance from the IRS, the refunds received may reduce the Fund's pass-through of foreign tax credits in such year and potentially future years or may result in the Funds paying an IRS compliance fee to cover the effect of the tax credits previously passed through to shareholders on refunded foreign taxes.

**Passive Foreign Investment Companies.** If the Fund purchases shares in PFICs, it may be subject to U.S. federal income tax on a portion of any "excess distribution" or gain from the disposition of such shares even if such income is distributed as a taxable dividend by the Fund to its shareholders. Additional charges in the nature of interest may be imposed on the Fund in respect of deferred taxes arising from such distributions or gains.

If the Fund were to invest in a PFIC and elect to treat the PFIC as a "qualified electing fund" under the Internal Revenue Code, in lieu of the foregoing requirements, the Fund might be required to include in income each year a portion of the ordinary earnings and net capital gains of the qualified electing fund, even if not distributed to the Fund, and such amounts would be subject to the 90% and excise tax distribution requirements described above. In order to make this election, the Fund would be required to obtain certain annual information from the PFICs in which it invests, which may be difficult or impossible to obtain.

Alternatively, the Fund may make a mark-to-market election that would result in the Fund being treated as if it had sold and repurchased its PFIC stock at the end of each year. In such case, the Fund would report any such gains as ordinary income and would deduct any such losses as ordinary losses to the extent of previously recognized gains. The election must be made separately for each PFIC owned by the Fund and, once made, would be effective for all subsequent taxable years, unless revoked with the consent of the IRS. By making the election, the Fund could potentially ameliorate the adverse tax consequences with respect to its ownership of shares in a PFIC, but in any particular year may be required to recognize income in excess of the distributions it receives from PFICs and its proceeds from dispositions of PFIC stock. The Fund may have to distribute this "phantom" income and gain to satisfy the 90% distribution requirement and to avoid imposition of the 4% excise tax.

The Fund will make the appropriate tax elections, if possible, and take any additional steps that are necessary to mitigate the effects of these rules.

**Reporting.** If a shareholder recognizes a loss with respect to the Fund's shares of \$2 million or more for an individual shareholder or \$10 million or more for a corporate shareholder, the shareholder must file with the IRS a disclosure statement on IRS Form 8886. Direct shareholders of portfolio securities are in many cases exempted from this reporting requirement, but under current guidance, shareholders of a RIC are not exempted. The fact that a loss is reportable under these regulations does not affect the legal determination of whether the taxpayer's treatment of the loss is proper. Shareholders should consult their tax advisors to determine the applicability of these regulations in light of their individual circumstances.

**Other Taxes.** Dividends, distributions and redemption proceeds may also be subject to additional state, local and non-U.S. taxes depending on each shareholder's particular situation.

**Taxation of Non-U.S. Shareholders.** Dividends paid by the Fund to non-U.S. shareholders (other than a pass-through entity to the extent owned by U.S. persons) are generally subject to withholding tax at a 30% rate or a reduced rate specified by an applicable income tax treaty to the extent derived from investment income and short-term capital gains. Dividends paid by the Fund from net tax-exempt income or long-term capital gains are generally not subject to such withholding tax. In order to obtain a reduced rate of withholding, a non-U.S. shareholder will be required to provide an IRS Form W-8BEN or IRS Form W-8BEN-E certifying its entitlement to benefits under a treaty. The withholding tax does



not apply to regular dividends paid to a non-U.S. shareholder who provides an IRS Form W-8ECI, certifying that the dividends are effectively connected with the non-U.S. shareholder's conduct of a trade or business within the U.S. Instead, the effectively connected dividends will be subject to regular U.S. income tax as if the non-U.S. shareholder were a U.S. shareholder. A non-U.S. corporation receiving effectively connected dividends may also be subject to additional "branch profits tax" imposed at a rate of 30% (or lower treaty rate). A non-U.S. shareholder who fails to provide an IRS Form W-8BEN, IRS Form W-8BEN-E or other applicable form may be subject to backup withholding at the appropriate rate.

Except as discussed below, properly-reported dividends are generally exempt from U.S. federal withholding tax where they (i) are paid in respect of the Fund's "qualified net interest income" (generally, the Fund's U.S. source interest income, other than certain contingent interest and interest from obligations of a corporation or partnership in which the Fund is at least a 10% shareholder or partner, reduced by expenses that are allocable to such income), (ii) are paid in respect of the Fund's "qualified short-term capital gains" (generally, the excess of the Fund's net short-term capital gain over the Fund's long-term capital loss for such taxable year) or (iii) are paid in respect of the Fund's interest income earned on municipal and other tax-exempt securities. However, depending on its circumstances, the Fund may report all, some or none of its potentially eligible dividends as interest-related dividends, short-term capital gains dividends or exempt-interest dividends and/or treat such dividends, in whole or in part, as ineligible for this exemption from withholding. In order to qualify for this exemption from withholding, a non-U.S. shareholder will need to comply with applicable certification requirements relating to its non-U.S. status (including, in general, furnishing an IRS Form W-8BEN, IRS Form W-8BEN-E or substitute Form). In the case of shares held through an intermediary, the intermediary may withhold even if the Fund reports the payment as qualified net interest income or qualified short-term capital gain. Non-U.S. shareholders should contact their intermediaries with respect to the application of these rules to their accounts.

Special rules may apply to a foreign shareholder receiving a Fund distribution if at least 50% of the Fund's assets consist of interests in U.S. real property interests, including certain REITs and U.S. real property holding corporations (as defined in the Internal Revenue Code and Treasury regulations). Fund distributions that are attributable to gain from the disposition of a U.S. real property interest will be taxable as ordinary dividends and subject to withholding at a 30% or lower treaty rate if the foreign shareholder held no more than 5% of the Fund's shares at any time during the one-year period ending on the date of the distribution. If the foreign shareholder held at least 5% of the Fund's shares, the distribution would be treated as income effectively connected with a trade or business within the U.S. and the foreign shareholder would be subject to withholding tax at a rate of 21% and would generally be required to file a U.S. federal income tax return. Similar consequences would generally apply to a foreign shareholder's gain on the sale of Fund shares unless the Fund is domestically controlled (meaning that more than 50% of the value of the Fund's shares is held by U.S. shareholders) or the foreign shareholder owns no more than 5% of the Fund's shares at any time during the five-year period ending on the date of sale. Finally, a domestically controlled Fund may be required to recognize a portion of its gain on the in-kind distribution of certain U.S. real property interests. Shareholders that are nonresident aliens or foreign entities are urged to consult their own tax advisors concerning the particular tax consequences to them of an investment in the Fund.

Separately, a 30% withholding tax is currently imposed on U.S.-source dividends, interest and other income items paid to: (i) foreign financial institutions, including non-U.S. investment funds; and (ii) certain other foreign entities. To avoid withholding, foreign financial institutions will need to: (i) enter into agreements with the IRS that state that they will provide the IRS information, including the names, addresses and taxpayer identification numbers of direct and indirect U.S. account holders; comply with due diligence procedures with respect to the identification of U.S. accounts; report to the IRS certain information with respect to U.S. accounts maintained; agree to withhold tax on certain payments made

to non-compliant foreign financial institutions or to account holders who fail to provide the required information; and determine certain other information concerning their account holders, or (ii) in the event an intergovernmental agreement and implementing legislation are adopted, provide local revenue authorities with similar account holder information. Other foreign entities may need to report the name, address, and taxpayer identification number of each substantial U.S. owner or provide certifications of no substantial U.S. ownership unless certain exceptions apply.

Shares of the Fund held by a non-U.S. shareholder at death will be considered situated within the U.S. and subject to the U.S. estate tax.

The foregoing discussion is a summary of certain material U.S. federal income tax considerations only and is not intended as a substitute for careful tax planning. Purchasers of shares should consult their own tax advisors as to the tax consequences of investing in such shares, including consequences under state, local and non-U.S. tax laws. Finally, the foregoing discussion is based on applicable provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, regulations, judicial authority and administrative interpretations in effect on the date of this SAI. Changes in applicable authority could materially affect the conclusions discussed above, and such changes often occur.

## Financial Statements

Financial statements for the Fund are not available because, as of the date of this SAI, the Fund has no financial information to report.

## Miscellaneous Information

**Counsel.** Sidley Austin LLP, located at 787 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019, is counsel to the Trust.

**Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm.** PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, located at Two Commerce Square, 2001 Market Street, Suite 1800, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103, serves as the Trust's independent registered public accounting firm, audits the Fund's financial statements, and may perform other services.

**Investors' Rights.** The Fund relies on the services of BFA and its other service providers, including the Distributor, administrator, custodian and transfer agent. Further information about the duties and roles of these service providers is set out in this SAI. Investors who acquire shares of the Fund are not parties to the relevant agreement with these service providers and do not have express contractual rights against the Fund or its service providers, except certain institutional investors that are Authorized Participants may have certain express contractual rights with respect to the Distributor under the terms of the relevant Authorized Participant Agreement. Investors may have certain legal rights under federal or state law against the Fund or its service providers. In the event that an investor considers that it may have a claim against the Fund, or against any service provider in connection with its investment in the Fund, such investor should consult its own legal advisor.

By contract, Authorized Participants irrevocably submit to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of any New York State or U.S. federal court sitting in New York City over any suit, action or proceeding arising out of or relating to the Authorized Participant Agreement. Jurisdiction over other claims, whether by investors or Authorized Participants, will turn on the facts of the particular case and the law of the jurisdiction in which the proceeding is brought.

## **Appendix A1**

### **Open-End Fund Proxy Voting Policy**

#### **Procedures Governing Delegation of Proxy Voting to Fund Advisers**

Effective Date: April 1, 2020

#### **Open-End Mutual Funds (including money market funds)**

##### **iShares ETFs and BlackRock ETFs**

The Boards of Trustees/Directors (“Directors”) of open-end funds (the “Funds”) advised by BlackRock Fund Advisors or BlackRock Advisors, LLC (“BlackRock”), have the responsibility for the oversight of voting proxies relating to portfolio securities of the Funds, and have determined that it is in the best interests of the Funds and their shareholders to delegate the responsibility to vote proxies to BlackRock, subject to the principles outlined in this Policy, as part of BlackRock’s authority to manage, acquire and dispose of account assets, all as contemplated by the Funds’ respective investment management agreements.

BlackRock has adopted guidelines and procedures (together and as from time to time amended, the “BlackRock Proxy Voting Guidelines”) governing proxy voting by accounts managed by BlackRock.

BlackRock will cast votes on behalf of each of the Funds on specific proxy issues in respect of securities held by each such Fund (or may refrain from voting) in accordance with the BlackRock Proxy Voting Guidelines.

BlackRock will report on an annual basis to the Directors on (1) a summary of all proxy votes that BlackRock has made on behalf of the Funds in the preceding year together with a representation that all votes were in accordance with the BlackRock Proxy Voting Guidelines, and (2) any changes to the BlackRock Proxy Voting Guidelines that have not previously been reported.

## **Appendix A2**

# **BlackRock Investment Stewardship Global Corporate Governance & Engagement Principles January 2020**

**BlackRock**

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If you would like additional information, please contact:  
[ContactStewardship@blackrock.com](mailto:ContactStewardship@blackrock.com)



## **INTRODUCTION TO BLACKROCK**

BlackRock's purpose is to help more and more people experience financial well-being. As a fiduciary to our clients, we provide the investment and technology solutions they need when planning for their most important goals. We manage assets on behalf of institutional and individual clients, across a full spectrum of investment strategies, asset classes and regions. Our client base includes pension plans, endowments, foundations, charities, official institutions, insurers and other financial institutions, as well as individuals around the world.

## **PHILOSOPHY ON CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

BlackRock Investment Stewardship ("BIS") activities are focused on maximizing long-term value for our clients. BIS does this through engagement with boards and management of investee companies and, for those clients who have given us authority, through voting at shareholder meetings.

We believe that there are certain fundamental rights attached to shareholding. Companies and their boards should be accountable to shareholders and structured with appropriate checks and balances to ensure that they operate in shareholders' best interests. Effective voting rights are central to the rights of ownership and there should be one vote for one share. Shareholders should have the right to elect, remove and nominate directors, approve the appointment of the auditor and to amend the corporate charter or by-laws. Shareholders should be able to vote on matters that are material to the protection of their investment, including but not limited to, changes to the purpose of the business, dilution levels and pre-emptive rights, and the distribution of income and capital structure. In order to make informed decisions, we believe that shareholders have the right to sufficient and timely information.

Our primary focus is on the performance of the board of directors. As the agent of shareholders, the board should set the company's strategic aims within a framework of prudent and effective controls, which enables risk to be assessed and managed. The board should provide direction and leadership to management and oversee management's performance. Our starting position is to be supportive of boards in their oversight efforts on shareholders' behalf and we would generally expect to support the items of business they put to a vote at shareholder meetings. Votes cast against or withheld from resolutions proposed by the board are a signal that we are concerned that the directors or management have either not acted in the best interests of shareholders or have not responded adequately to shareholder concerns. We assess voting matters on a case-by-case basis and in light of each company's unique circumstances taking into consideration regional best practices and long-term value creation.

These principles set out our approach to engaging with companies, provide guidance on our position on corporate governance and outline how our views might be reflected in our voting decisions. Corporate governance practices can vary internationally, so our expectations in relation to individual companies are based on the legal and regulatory framework of each local market. However, we believe there are overarching principles of corporate governance that apply globally and provide a framework for more detailed, market-specific assessments.

We believe BlackRock has a responsibility in relation to monitoring and providing feedback to companies, sometimes known as "stewardship." These ownership responsibilities include engaging with management or board members on corporate governance matters, voting proxies in the best long-term economic interests of our clients, and engaging with regulatory bodies to ensure a sound policy framework consistent with promoting long-term shareholder value creation. We also believe in the responsibility to our clients to have appropriate resources and oversight structures. Our approach is set out in the section below titled "BlackRock's oversight of its investment stewardship activities" and is further detailed in a team profile on our website.

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, ENGAGEMENT AND VOTING

We recognize that accepted standards of corporate governance differ between markets, but we believe there are sufficient common threads globally to identify an overarching set of principles. The objective of our investment stewardship activities is the protection and enhancement of the value of our clients' investments in public corporations. Thus, these principles focus on practices and structures that we consider to be supportive of long-term value creation. We discuss below the principles under six key themes. In our regional and market-specific voting guidelines we explain how these principles inform our voting decisions in relation to specific resolutions that may appear on the agenda of a shareholder meeting in the relevant market.

The six key themes are:

- Boards and directors
- Auditors and audit-related issues
- Capital structure, mergers, asset sales and other special transactions
- Compensation and benefits
- Environmental and social issues
- General corporate governance matters and shareholder protections

At a minimum, we expect companies to observe the accepted corporate governance standards in their domestic market or to explain why doing so is not in the interests of shareholders. Where company reporting and disclosure is inadequate or the approach taken is inconsistent with our view of what is in the best interests of shareholders, we will engage with the company and/or use our vote to encourage a change in practice. In making voting decisions, we perform independent research and analysis, such as reviewing relevant information published by the company and apply our voting guidelines to achieve the outcome we believe best protects our clients' long-term economic interests. We also work closely with our active portfolio managers, and may take into account internal and external research.

BlackRock views engagement as an important activity; engagement provides us with the opportunity to improve our understanding of the challenges and opportunities that investee companies are facing and their governance structures. Engagement also allows us to share our philosophy and approach to investment and corporate governance with companies to enhance their understanding of our objectives. Our engagements often focus on providing our feedback on company disclosures, particularly where we believe they could be enhanced. There are a range of approaches we may take in engaging companies depending on the nature of the issue under consideration, the company and the market.

BlackRock's engagements emphasize direct dialogue with corporate leadership on the governance issues identified in these principles that have a material impact on financial performance. These engagements enable us to cast informed votes aligned with clients' long-term economic interests. We generally prefer to engage in the first instance where we have concerns and give management time to address or resolve the issue. As a long-term investor, we are patient and persistent in working with our portfolio companies to have an open dialogue and develop mutual understanding of governance matters, to promote the adoption of best practices and to assess the merits of a company's approach to its governance. We monitor the companies in which we invest and engage with them constructively and privately where we believe doing so helps protect shareholders' interests. We do not try to micro-manage companies, or tell management and boards what to do. We present our views as a long-term shareholder and listen to companies' responses. The materiality and immediacy of a given issue will generally determine the level of our engagement and whom we seek to engage at the company, which could be management representatives or board directors.

## ***Boards and directors***

The performance of the board is critical to the economic success of the company and to the protection of shareholders' interests. Board members serve as agents of shareholders in overseeing the strategic direction and operation of the company. For this reason, BlackRock focuses on directors in many of our engagements and sees the election of directors as one of our most important responsibilities in the proxy voting context.

We expect the board of directors to promote and protect shareholder interests by:

- establishing an appropriate corporate governance structure
- supporting and overseeing management in setting long-term strategic goals, applicable measures of value-creation and milestones that will demonstrate progress, and steps taken if any obstacles are anticipated or incurred
- ensuring the integrity of financial statements
- making independent decisions regarding mergers, acquisitions and disposals
- establishing appropriate executive compensation structures
- addressing business issues, including environmental and social issues, when they have the potential to materially impact company reputation and performance

There should be clear definitions of the role of the board, the committees of the board and senior management such that the responsibilities of each are well understood and accepted. Companies should report publicly the approach taken to governance (including in relation to board structure) and why this approach is in the best interest of shareholders. We will seek to engage with the appropriate directors where we have concerns about the performance of the board or the company, the broad strategy of the company, or the performance of individual board members. We believe that when a company is not effectively addressing a material issue, its directors should be held accountable.

BlackRock believes that directors should stand for re-election on a regular basis. We assess directors nominated for election or re-election in the context of the composition of the board as a whole. There should be detailed disclosure of the relevant credentials of the individual directors in order for shareholders to assess the caliber of an individual nominee. We expect there to be a sufficient number of independent directors on the board to ensure the protection of the interests of all shareholders. Common impediments to independence may include but are not limited to:

- current or former employment at the company or a subsidiary within the past several years
- being, or representing, a shareholder with a substantial shareholding in the company
- interlocking directorships
- having any other interest, business or other relationship which could, or could reasonably be perceived to, materially interfere with the director's ability to act in the best interests of the company

BlackRock believes that the operation of the board is enhanced when there is a clearly independent, senior non-executive director to chair it or, where the chairman is also the CEO (or is otherwise not independent), an independent lead director. The role of this director is to enhance the effectiveness of the independent members of the board through shaping the agenda, ensuring adequate information is provided to the board and encouraging independent participation in board deliberations. The lead independent board director should be available to shareholders in those situations where a director is best placed to explain and justify a company's approach.

To ensure that the board remains effective, regular reviews of board performance should be carried out and assessments made of gaps in skills or experience amongst the members. BlackRock believes it is beneficial for new directors to be brought onto the board periodically to refresh the group's thinking and to ensure both continuity and adequate succession planning. In identifying potential candidates, boards should take into consideration the multiple dimensions of diversity, including personal factors such as gender, ethnicity, and age; as well as professional characteristics, such as a director's industry, area of expertise, and geographic location. The board should review these dimensions of the current directors and how they might be augmented by incoming directors. We believe that directors are in the best position to assess the optimal size for the board, but we would be concerned if a board seemed too small to have an appropriate balance of directors or too large to be effective.

There are matters for which the board has responsibility that may involve a conflict of interest for executives or for affiliated directors. BlackRock believes that shareholders' interests are best served when the board forms committees of fully independent directors to deal with such matters. In many markets, these committees of the board specialize in audit, director nominations and compensation matters. An ad hoc committee might also be formed to decide on a special transaction, particularly one with a related party or to investigate a significant adverse event.

### ***Auditors and audit-related issues***

Comprehensive disclosure provides investors with a sense of the company's long-term operational risk management practices and, more broadly, the quality of the board's oversight. In the absence of robust disclosures, we may reasonably conclude that companies are not adequately managing risk.

BlackRock recognizes the critical importance of financial statements, which should provide a true and fair picture of a company's financial condition. We will hold the members of the audit committee or equivalent responsible for overseeing the management of the audit function. We take particular note of cases involving significant financial restatements or ad hoc notifications of material financial weakness.

The integrity of financial statements depends on the auditor being free of any impediments to being an effective check on management. To that end, we believe it is important that auditors are, and are seen to be, independent. Where the audit firm provides services to the company in addition to the audit, the fees earned should be disclosed and explained. Audit committees should have in place a procedure for assessing annually the independence of the auditor.

### ***Capital structure, mergers, asset sales and other special transactions***

The capital structure of a company is critical to its owners, the shareholders, as it impacts the value of their investment and the priority of their interest in the company relative to that of other equity or debt investors. Pre-emptive rights are a key protection for shareholders against the dilution of their interests.

Effective voting rights are central to the rights of ownership and we believe strongly in one vote for one share as a guiding principle that supports good corporate governance. Shareholders, as the residual claimants, have the strongest interest in protecting company value, and voting power should match economic exposure.

We are concerned that the creation of a dual share class may result in an over-concentration of power in the hands of a few shareholders, thus disenfranchising other shareholders and amplifying the potential conflict of interest, which the one share, one vote principle is designed to mitigate. However, we recognize that in certain circumstances, companies may have a valid argument for dual-class listings, at least for a limited period of time. We believe that such companies should review these dual-class structures on a regular basis or as company circumstances change. Additionally, they should

receive shareholder approval of their capital structure on a periodic basis via a management proposal in the company's proxy. The proposal should give unaffiliated shareholders the opportunity to affirm the current structure or establish mechanisms to end or phase out controlling structures at the appropriate time, while minimizing costs to shareholders.

In assessing mergers, asset sales or other special transactions, BlackRock's primary consideration is the long-term economic interests of shareholders. Boards proposing a transaction need to clearly explain the economic and strategic rationale behind it. We will review a proposed transaction to determine the degree to which it enhances long-term shareholder value. We would prefer that proposed transactions have the unanimous support of the board and have been negotiated at arm's length. We may seek reassurance from the board that executives' and/or board members' financial interests in a given transaction have not adversely affected their ability to place shareholders' interests before their own. Where the transaction involves related parties, we would expect the recommendation to support it to come from the independent directors and it is good practice to be approved by a separate vote of the non-conflicted shareholders.

BlackRock believes that shareholders have a right to dispose of company shares in the open market without unnecessary restriction. In our view, corporate mechanisms designed to limit shareholders' ability to sell their shares are contrary to basic property rights. Such mechanisms can serve to protect and entrench interests other than those of the shareholders. We believe that shareholders are broadly capable of making decisions in their own best interests. We expect any so-called 'shareholder rights plans' proposed by a board to be subject to shareholder approval upon introduction and periodically thereafter for continuation.

### ***Compensation and benefits***

BlackRock expects a company's board of directors to put in place a compensation structure that incentivizes and rewards executives appropriately and is aligned with shareholder interests, particularly generating sustainable long-term shareholder returns. We would expect the compensation committee to take into account the specific circumstances of the company and the key individuals the board is trying to incentivize. We encourage companies to ensure that their compensation plans incorporate appropriate and challenging performance conditions consistent with corporate strategy and market practice. We use third party research, in addition to our own analysis, to evaluate existing and proposed compensation structures. We hold members of the compensation committee or equivalent board members accountable for poor compensation practices or structures.

BlackRock believes that there should be a clear link between variable pay and company performance that drives shareholder returns. We are not supportive of one-off or special bonuses unrelated to company or individual performance. We acknowledge that the use of peer group evaluation by compensation committees can help ensure competitive pay; however, we are concerned when increases in total compensation at a company are justified solely on peer benchmarking rather than outperformance. We support incentive plans that foster the sustainable achievement of results relative to competitors. The vesting timeframes associated with incentive plans should facilitate a focus on long-term value creation. We believe consideration should be given to building claw back provisions into incentive plans such that executives would be required to forgo rewards when they are not justified by actual performance. Compensation committees should guard against contractual arrangements that would entitle executives to material compensation for early termination of their contract. Finally, pension contributions and other deferred compensation arrangements should be reasonable in light of market practice.

Non-executive directors should be compensated in a manner that is commensurate with the time and effort expended in fulfilling their professional responsibilities. Additionally, these compensation

arrangements should not risk compromising their independence or aligning their interests too closely with those of the management, whom they are charged with overseeing.

### ***Environmental and social issues***

Our fiduciary duty to clients is to protect and enhance their economic interest in the companies in which we invest on their behalf. It is within this context that we undertake our corporate governance activities. We believe that well-managed companies will deal effectively with the material environmental and social (“E&S”) factors relevant to their businesses. Robust disclosure is essential for investors to effectively gauge companies’ business practices and planning related to E&S risks and opportunities.

BlackRock expects companies to issue reports aligned with the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) and the standards put forward by the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB). We view the SASB and TCFD frameworks as complementary in achieving the goal of disclosing more financially material information, particularly as it relates to industry-specific metrics and target setting. TCFD’s recommendations provide an overarching framework for disclosure on the business implications of climate change, and potentially other E&S factors. We find SASB’s industry-specific guidance (as identified in its materiality map) beneficial in helping companies identify and discuss their governance, risk assessments, and performance against these key performance indicators (KPIs). Any global standards adopted, peer group benchmarking undertaken, and verification processes in place should also be disclosed and discussed in this context.

BlackRock has been engaging with companies for several years on disclosure of material E&S factors. Given the increased understanding of sustainability risks and opportunities, and the need for better information to assess them, we specifically ask companies to:

- 1) publish a disclosure in line with industry-specific SASB guidelines by year-end, if they have not already done so, or disclose a similar set of data in a way that is relevant to their particular business; and
- 2) disclose climate-related risks in line with the TCFD’s recommendations, if they have not already done so. This should include the company’s plan for operating under a scenario where the Paris Agreement’s goal of limiting global warming to less than two degrees is fully realized, as expressed by the TCFD guidelines.

See our commentary on our approach to engagement on TCFD and SASB aligned reporting for greater detail of our expectations.

We will use these disclosures and our engagements to ascertain whether companies are properly managing and overseeing these risks within their business and adequately planning for the future. In the absence of robust disclosures, investors, including BlackRock, will increasingly conclude that companies are not adequately managing risk.

We believe that when a company is not effectively addressing a material issue, its directors should be held accountable. We will generally engage directly with the board or management of a company when we identify issues. We may vote against the election of directors where we have concerns that a company might not be dealing with E&S factors appropriately. Sometimes we may reflect such concerns by supporting a shareholder proposal on the issue, where there seems to be either a significant potential threat or realized harm to shareholders’ interests caused by poor management of material E&S factors.



In deciding our course of action, we will assess the company's disclosures and the nature of our engagement with the company on the issue over time, including whether:

- The company has already taken sufficient steps to address the concern
- The company is in the process of actively implementing a response
- There is a clear and material economic disadvantage to the company in the near-term if the issue is not addressed in the manner requested by the shareholder proposal

We do not see it as our role to make social or political judgments on behalf of clients. Our consideration of these E&S factors is consistent with protecting the long-term economic interest of our clients' assets. We expect investee companies to comply, at a minimum, with the laws and regulations of the jurisdictions in which they operate. They should explain how they manage situations where local laws or regulations that significantly impact the company's operations are contradictory or ambiguous to global norms.

### ***Climate risk***

Within the framework laid out above, as well as our guidance on "How BlackRock Investment Stewardship engages on climate risk," we believe that climate presents significant investment risks and opportunities that may impact the long-term financial sustainability of companies. We believe that the reporting frameworks developed by TCFD and SASB provide useful guidance to companies on identifying, managing, and reporting on climate-related risks and opportunities.

We expect companies to help their investors understand how the company may be impacted by climate risk, in the context of its ability to realize a long-term strategy and generate value over time. We expect companies to convey their governance around this issue through their corporate disclosures aligned with TCFD and SASB. For companies in sectors that are significantly exposed to climate-related risk, we expect the whole board to have demonstrable fluency in how climate risk affects the business and how management approaches assessing, adapting to, and mitigating that risk.

Where a company receives a shareholder proposal related to climate risk, in addition to the factors laid out above, our assessment will take into account the robustness of the company's existing disclosures as well as our understanding of its management of the issues as revealed through our engagements with the company and board members over time. In certain instances, we may disagree with the details of a climate-related shareholder proposal but agree that the company in question has not made sufficient progress on climate-related disclosures. In these instances, we may not support the proposal, but may vote against the election of relevant directors.

### ***General corporate governance matters and shareholder protections***

BlackRock believes that shareholders have a right to timely and detailed information on the financial performance and viability of the companies in which they invest. In addition, companies should also publish information on the governance structures in place and the rights of shareholders to influence these. The reporting and disclosure provided by companies help shareholders assess whether their economic interests have been protected and the quality of the board's oversight of management. We believe shareholders should have the right to vote on key corporate governance matters, including changes to governance mechanisms, to submit proposals to the shareholders' meeting and to call special meetings of shareholders.

## **BLACKROCK'S OVERSIGHT OF ITS INVESTMENT STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES**

### ***Oversight***

We hold ourselves to a very high standard in our investment stewardship activities, including proxy voting. This function is executed by a team called BlackRock Investment Stewardship ("BIS") which is comprised of BlackRock employees who do not have other responsibilities other than their roles in BIS. BIS is considered an investment function. The team does not have sales responsibilities.

BlackRock maintains three regional advisory committees ("Stewardship Advisory Committees") for (a) the Americas; (b) Europe, the Middle East and Africa ("EMEA"); and (c) Asia-Pacific, generally consisting of senior BlackRock investment professionals and/or senior employees with practical boardroom experience. The regional Stewardship Advisory Committees review and advise on amendments to the proxy voting guidelines covering markets within each respective region ("Guidelines").

In addition to the regional Stewardship Advisory Committees, the Investment Stewardship Global Oversight Committee ("Global Committee") is a risk-focused committee, comprised of senior representatives from various BlackRock investment teams, BlackRock's Deputy General Counsel, the Global Head of Investment Stewardship ("Global Head"), and other senior executives with relevant experience and team oversight.

The Global Head has primary oversight of the activities of BIS, including voting in accordance with the Guidelines, which require the application of professional judgment and consideration of each company's unique circumstances. The Global Committee reviews and approves amendments to these Global Corporate Governance & Engagement Principles. The Global Committee also reviews and approves amendments to the regional Guidelines, as proposed by the regional Stewardship Advisory Committees.

In addition, the Global Committee receives and reviews periodic reports regarding the votes cast by BIS, as well as regular updates on material process issues, procedural changes and other risk oversight considerations. The Global Committee reviews these reports in an oversight capacity as informed by the BIS corporate governance engagement program and Guidelines.

BIS carries out engagement with companies, monitors and executes proxy votes, and conducts vote operations (including maintaining records of votes cast) in a manner consistent with the relevant Guidelines. BIS also conducts research on corporate governance issues and participates in industry discussions to keep abreast of important developments in the corporate governance field. BIS may utilize third parties for certain of the foregoing activities and performs oversight of those third parties. BIS may raise complicated or particularly controversial matters for internal discussion with the relevant investment teams and/or refer such matters to the appropriate regional Stewardship Advisory Committees for review, discussion and guidance prior to making a voting decision.

### ***Vote execution***

We carefully consider proxies submitted to funds and other fiduciary account(s) ("Fund" or "Funds") for which we have voting authority. BlackRock votes (or refrains from voting) proxies for each Fund for which we have voting authority based on our evaluation of the best long-term economic interests of shareholders, in the exercise of our independent business judgment, and without regard to the relationship of the issuer of the proxy (or any shareholder proponent or dissident shareholder) to the Fund, the Fund's affiliates (if any), BlackRock or BlackRock's affiliates, or BlackRock employees (see "Conflicts management policies and procedures", below).

When exercising voting rights, BlackRock will normally vote on specific proxy issues in accordance with the Guidelines for the relevant market. The Guidelines are reviewed regularly and are amended

consistent with changes in the local market practice, as developments in corporate governance occur, or as otherwise deemed advisable by BlackRock's Stewardship Advisory Committees. BIS may, in the exercise of their professional judgment, conclude that the Guidelines do not cover the specific matter upon which a proxy vote is required or that an exception to the Guidelines would be in the best long-term economic interests of BlackRock's clients.

In the uncommon circumstance of there being a vote with respect to fixed income securities or the securities of privately held issuers, the decision generally will be made by a Fund's portfolio managers and/or BIS based on their assessment of the particular transactions or other matters at issue.

In certain markets, proxy voting involves logistical issues which can affect BlackRock's ability to vote such proxies, as well as the desirability of voting such proxies. These issues include but are not limited to: (i) untimely notice of shareholder meetings; (ii) restrictions on a foreigner's ability to exercise votes; (iii) requirements to vote proxies in person; (iv) "share-blocking" (requirements that investors who exercise their voting rights surrender the right to dispose of their holdings for some specified period in proximity to the shareholder meeting); (v) potential difficulties in translating the proxy; (vi) regulatory constraints; and (vii) requirements to provide local agents with unrestricted powers of attorney to facilitate voting instructions. We are not supportive of impediments to the exercise of voting rights such as shareblocking or overly burdensome administrative requirements.

As a consequence, BlackRock votes proxies on a "best-efforts" basis. In addition, BIS may determine that it is generally in the best interests of BlackRock's clients not to vote proxies if the costs (including but not limited to opportunity costs associated with shareblocking constraints) associated with exercising a vote are expected to outweigh the benefit the client would derive by voting on the proposal.

Portfolio managers have full discretion to vote the shares in the Funds they manage based on their analysis of the economic impact of a particular ballot item. Portfolio managers may from time to time reach differing views on how best to maximize economic value with respect to a particular investment. Therefore, portfolio managers may, and sometimes do, vote shares in the Funds under their management differently from one another. However, because BlackRock's clients are mostly long-term investors with long-term economic goals, ballots are frequently cast in a uniform manner.

### ***Conflicts management policies and procedures***

BIS maintains the following policies and procedures that seek to prevent undue influence on BlackRock's proxy voting activity. Such influence might stem from any relationship between the investee company (or any shareholder proponent or dissident shareholder) and BlackRock, BlackRock's affiliates, a Fund or a Fund's affiliates, or BlackRock employees. The following are examples of sources of perceived or potential conflicts of interest:

- BlackRock clients who may be issuers of securities or proponents of shareholder resolutions
- BlackRock business partners or third parties who may be issuers of securities or proponents of shareholder resolutions
- BlackRock employees who may sit on the boards of public companies held in Funds managed by BlackRock
- Significant BlackRock, Inc. investors who may be issuers of securities held in Funds managed by BlackRock
- Securities of BlackRock, Inc. or BlackRock investment funds held in Funds managed by BlackRock

- BlackRock, Inc. board members who serve as senior executives of public companies held in Funds managed by BlackRock

BlackRock has taken certain steps to mitigate perceived or potential conflicts including, but not limited to, the following:

- Adopted the Guidelines which are designed to protect and enhance the economic value of the companies in which BlackRock invests on behalf of clients.
- Established a reporting structure that separates BIS from employees with sales, vendor management or business partnership roles. In addition, BlackRock seeks to ensure that all engagements with corporate issuers, dissident shareholders or shareholder proponents are managed consistently and without regard to BlackRock's relationship with such parties. Clients or business partners are not given special treatment or differentiated access to BIS. BIS prioritizes engagements based on factors including but not limited to our need for additional information to make a voting decision or our view on the likelihood that an engagement could lead to positive outcome(s) over time for the economic value of the company. Within the normal course of business, BIS may engage directly with BlackRock clients, business partners and/or third parties, and/or with employees with sales, vendor management or business partnership roles, in discussions regarding our approach to stewardship, general corporate governance matters, client reporting needs, and/or to otherwise ensure that proxy-related client service levels are met.
- Determined to engage, in certain instances, an independent fiduciary to vote proxies as a further safeguard to avoid potential conflicts of interest, to satisfy regulatory compliance requirements, or as may be otherwise required by applicable law. In such circumstances, the independent fiduciary provides BlackRock's proxy voting agent with instructions, in accordance with the Guidelines, as to how to vote such proxies, and BlackRock's proxy voting agent votes the proxy in accordance with the independent fiduciary's determination. BlackRock uses an independent fiduciary to vote proxies of (i) any company that is affiliated with BlackRock, Inc., (ii) any public company that includes BlackRock employees on its board of directors, (iii) The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc., (iv) any public company of which a BlackRock, Inc. board member serves as a senior executive, and (v) companies when legal or regulatory requirements compel BlackRock to use an independent fiduciary. In selecting an independent fiduciary, we assess several characteristics, including but not limited to: independence, an ability to analyze proxy issues and vote in the best economic interest of our clients, reputation for reliability and integrity, and operational capacity to accurately deliver the assigned votes in a timely manner. We may engage more than one independent fiduciary, in part in order to mitigate potential or perceived conflicts of interest at an independent fiduciary. The Global Committee appoints and reviews the performance of the independent fiduciary(ies), generally on an annual basis.

When so authorized, BlackRock acts as a securities lending agent on behalf of Funds. With regard to the relationship between securities lending and proxy voting, BlackRock's approach is driven by our clients' economic interests. The decision whether to recall securities on loan to vote is based on a formal analysis of the revenue producing value to clients of loans, against the assessed economic value of casting votes. Generally, we expect that the likely economic value to clients of casting votes would be less than the securities lending income, either because, in our assessment, the resolutions being voted on will not have significant economic consequences or because the outcome would not be affected by BlackRock recalling loaned securities in order to vote. BlackRock also may, in our discretion, determine that the value of voting outweighs the cost of recalling shares, and thus recall shares to vote in that instance.

Periodically, BlackRock reviews our process for determining whether to recall securities on loan in order to vote and may modify it as necessary.

## **Voting guidelines**

The issue-specific Guidelines published for each region/country in which we vote are intended to summarize BlackRock's general philosophy and approach to issues that may commonly arise in the proxy voting context in each market where we invest. These Guidelines are not intended to be exhaustive. BIS applies the Guidelines on a case-by-case basis, in the context of the individual circumstances of each company and the specific issue under review. As such, these Guidelines do not indicate how BIS will vote in every instance. Rather, they share our view about corporate governance issues generally, and provide insight into how we typically approach issues that commonly arise on corporate ballots.

## **Reporting and vote transparency**

We inform clients about our engagement and voting policies and activities through direct communication and through disclosure on our website. Each year we publish an annual report, an annual engagement and voting statistics report, and our full voting record to our website. On a quarterly basis, we publish regional reports which provide an overview of our investment stewardship engagement and voting activities during the quarter, including market developments, speaking engagements, and engagement and voting statistics. Additionally, we make public our market-specific voting guidelines for the benefit of clients and companies with whom we engage.

*This document is provided for information purposes only and must not be relied upon as a forecast, research, or investment advice. BlackRock is not making any recommendation or soliciting any action based upon the information contained herein and nothing in this document should be construed as constituting an offer to sell, or a solicitation of any offer to buy, securities in any jurisdiction to any person. This information provided herein does not constitute financial, tax, legal or accounting advice, you should consult your own advisers on such matters.*

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## **Appendix A3**

### **BlackRock Investment Stewardship**

#### **Corporate governance and proxy voting guidelines for U.S. securities**

**January 2020**

**BlackRock**



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If you would like additional information, please contact:  
[ContactStewardship@blackrock.com](mailto:ContactStewardship@blackrock.com)

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the BlackRock Investment Stewardship Global Corporate Governance Guidelines & Engagement Principles.

## **INTRODUCTION**

BlackRock, Inc. and its subsidiaries (collectively, “BlackRock”) seek to make proxy voting decisions in the manner most likely to protect and enhance the economic value of the securities held in client accounts. The following issue-specific proxy voting guidelines (the “Guidelines”) are intended to summarize BlackRock Investment Stewardship’s general philosophy and approach to corporate governance issues that most commonly arise in proxy voting for U.S. securities. These Guidelines are not intended to limit the analysis of individual issues at specific companies and are not intended to provide a guide to how BlackRock will vote in every instance. Rather, they share our view about corporate governance issues generally, and provide insight into how we typically approach issues that commonly arise on corporate ballots, as well as our expectations of boards of directors. They are applied with discretion, taking into consideration the range of issues and facts specific to the company and the individual ballot item.

## **VOTING GUIDELINES**

These guidelines are divided into eight key themes which group together the issues that frequently appear on the agenda of annual and extraordinary meetings of shareholders:

- Boards and directors
- Auditors and audit-related issues
- Capital structure
- Mergers, asset sales, and other special transactions
- Executive compensation
- Environmental and social issues
- General corporate governance matters
- Shareholder protections

## **BOARDS AND DIRECTORS**

### ***Director elections***

In general, BlackRock supports the election of directors as recommended by the board in uncontested elections. However, we believe that when a company is not effectively addressing a material issue, its directors should be held accountable. We may withhold votes from directors or members of particular board committees in certain situations, as indicated below.

### ***Independence***

We expect a majority of the directors on the board to be independent. In addition, all members of key committees, including audit, compensation, and nominating / governance committees, should be independent. Our view of independence may vary slightly from listing standards.

In particular, common impediments to independence in the U.S. may include:

- Employment as a senior executive by the company or a subsidiary within the past five years
- An equity ownership in the company in excess of 20%
- Having any other interest, business, or relationship which could, or could reasonably be perceived to, materially interfere with the director's ability to act in the best interests of the company

We may vote against directors serving on key committees that we do not consider to be independent.

When evaluating controlled companies, as defined by the U.S. stock exchanges, we will only vote against insiders or affiliates who sit on the audit committee, but not other key committees.

### ***Oversight***

We expect the board to exercise appropriate oversight over management and business activities of the company. We will consider voting against committee members and / or individual directors in the following circumstances:

- Where the board has failed to exercise oversight with regard to accounting practices or audit oversight, we will consider voting against the current audit committee, and any other members of the board who may be responsible. For example, this may apply to members of the audit committee during a period when the board failed to facilitate quality, independent auditing if substantial accounting irregularities suggest insufficient oversight by that committee
- Members of the compensation committee during a period in which executive compensation appears excessive relative to performance and peers, and where we believe the compensation committee has not already substantially addressed this issue
- The chair of the nominating / governance committee, or where no chair exists, the nominating / governance committee member with the longest tenure, where the board is not comprised of a majority of independent directors. However, this would not apply in the case of a controlled company
- Where it appears the director has acted (at the company or at other companies) in a manner that compromises his / her reliability to represent the best long-term economic interests of shareholders
- Where a director has a pattern of poor attendance at combined board and applicable key committee meetings. Excluding exigent circumstances, BlackRock generally considers attendance at less than 75% of the combined board and applicable key committee meetings by a board member to be poor attendance
- Where a director serves on an excess number of boards, which may limit his / her capacity to focus on each board's requirements. The following illustrates the maximum number of boards on which a director may serve, before he / she is considered to be over-committed:

	<b>Public Company CEO</b>	<b># Outside Public Boards*</b>	<b>Total # of Public Boards</b>
Director A	✓	1	2
Director B		3	4

\* In addition to the company under review

### ***Responsiveness to shareholders***

We expect a board to be engaged and responsive to its shareholders. Where we believe a board has not substantially addressed shareholder concerns, we may vote against the appropriate committees and / or individual directors. The following illustrates common circumstances:

- The independent chair or lead independent director, members of the nominating / governance committee, and / or the longest tenured director(s), where we observe a lack of board responsiveness to shareholders, evidence of board entrenchment, and / or failure to promote adequate board succession planning
- The chair of the nominating / governance committee, or where no chair exists, the nominating / governance committee member with the longest tenure, where board member(s) at the most recent election of directors have received withhold votes from more than 30% of shares voted and the board has not taken appropriate action to respond to shareholder concerns. This may not apply in cases where BlackRock did not support the initial withhold vote
- The independent chair or lead independent director and / or members of the nominating / governance committee, where a board fails to implement shareholder proposals that receive a majority of votes cast at a prior shareholder meeting, and the proposals, in our view, have a direct and substantial impact on shareholders' fundamental rights or long-term economic interests

### ***Shareholder rights***

We expect a board to act with integrity and to uphold governance best practices. Where we believe a board has not acted in the best interests of its shareholders, we may vote against the appropriate committees and / or individual directors. The following illustrates common circumstances:

- The independent chair or lead independent director and members of the governance committee, where a board implements or renews a poison pill without shareholder approval
- The independent chair or lead independent director and members of the governance committee, where a board amends the charter / articles / bylaws such that the effect may be to entrench directors or to significantly reduce shareholder rights
- Members of the compensation committee where the company has repriced options without shareholder approval
- If a board maintains a classified structure, it is possible that the director(s) with whom we have a particular concern may not be subject to election in the year that the concern arises. In such situations, if we have a concern regarding a committee or committee chair that is not up for re-election, we will generally register our concern by withholding votes from all available members of the relevant committee.

### ***Board composition and effectiveness***

We encourage boards to periodically renew their membership to ensure relevant skills and experience within the boardroom. To this end, regular performance reviews and skills assessments should be conducted by the nominating / governance committee.

Furthermore, we expect boards to be comprised of a diverse selection of individuals who bring their personal and professional experiences to bear in order to create a constructive debate of competing views and opinions in the boardroom. We recognize that diversity has multiple dimensions. In identifying potential candidates, boards should take into consideration the full breadth of diversity

including personal factors, such as gender, ethnicity, and age; as well as professional characteristics, such as a director's industry, area of expertise, and geographic location. In addition to other elements of diversity, we encourage companies to have at least two women directors on their board. Our publicly available commentary explains our approach to engaging on board diversity.

We encourage boards to disclose their views on:

- The mix of competencies, experience, and other qualities required to effectively oversee and guide management in light of the stated long-term strategy of the company
- The process by which candidates are identified and selected, including whether professional firms or other sources outside of incumbent directors' networks have been engaged to identify and / or assess candidates
- The process by which boards evaluate themselves and any significant outcomes of the evaluation process, without divulging inappropriate and / or sensitive details
- The consideration given to board diversity, including, but not limited to, gender, ethnicity, race, age, experience, geographic location, skills, and perspective in the nomination process

While we support regular board refreshment, we are not opposed in principle to long-tenured directors, nor do we believe that long board tenure is necessarily an impediment to director independence. A variety of director tenures within the boardroom can be beneficial to ensure board quality and continuity of experience.

Our primary concern is that board members are able to contribute effectively as corporate strategy evolves and business conditions change, and that all directors, regardless of tenure, demonstrate appropriate responsiveness to shareholders. We acknowledge that no single person can be expected to bring all relevant skill sets to a board; at the same time, we generally do not believe it is necessary or appropriate to have any particular director on the board solely by virtue of a singular background or specific area of expertise.

Where boards find that age limits or term limits are the most efficient and objective mechanism for ensuring periodic board refreshment, we generally defer to the board's determination in setting such limits.

To the extent that we believe that a company has not adequately accounted for diversity in its board composition within a reasonable timeframe, we may vote against the nominating / governance committee for an apparent lack of commitment to board effectiveness.

### ***Board size***

We typically defer to the board in setting the appropriate size and believe directors are generally in the best position to assess the optimal board size to ensure effectiveness. However, we may oppose boards that appear too small to allow for effective shareholder representation or too large to function efficiently.

### ***CEO and management succession planning***

There should be a robust CEO and senior management succession plan in place at the board level that is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. We expect succession planning to cover both long-term planning consistent with the strategic direction of the company and identified leadership needs over time, as well as short-term planning in the event of an unanticipated executive departure. We

encourage the company to explain its executive succession planning process, including where accountability lies within the boardroom for this task, without prematurely divulging sensitive information commonly associated with this exercise.

### ***Classified board of directors / staggered terms***

We believe that directors should be re-elected annually and that classification of the board generally limits shareholders' rights to regularly evaluate a board's performance and select directors. While we will typically support proposals requesting board de-classification, we may make exceptions, should the board articulate an appropriate strategic rationale for a classified board structure, such as when a company needs consistency and stability during a time of transition, e.g. newly public companies or companies undergoing a strategic restructuring. A classified board structure may also be justified at non-operating companies in certain circumstances. We would, however, expect boards with a classified structure to periodically review the rationale for such structure and consider when annual elections might be appropriate.

Without a voting mechanism to immediately address concerns of a specific director, we may choose to vote against or withhold votes from the available slate of directors by default (see "Shareholder rights" for additional detail).

### ***Contested director elections***

The details of contested elections, or proxy contests, are assessed on a case-by-case basis. We evaluate a number of factors, which may include: the qualifications of the dissident and management candidates; the validity of the concerns identified by the dissident; the viability of both the dissident's and management's plans; the likelihood that the dissident's solutions will produce the desired change; and whether the dissident represents the best option for enhancing long-term shareholder value.

### ***Cumulative voting***

We believe that a majority vote standard is in the best long-term interest of shareholders. It ensures director accountability via the requirement to be elected by more than half of the votes cast. As such, we will generally oppose proposals requesting the adoption of cumulative voting, which may disproportionately aggregate votes on certain issues or director candidates.

### ***Director compensation and equity programs***

We believe that compensation for directors should be structured to attract and retain the best possible directors, while also aligning their interests with those of shareholders. We believe director compensation packages that are based on the company's long-term value creation and include some form of long-term equity compensation are more likely to meet this goal. In addition, we expect directors to build meaningful share ownership over time.

### ***Majority vote requirements***

BlackRock believes that directors should generally be elected by a majority of the shares voted and will normally support proposals seeking to introduce bylaws requiring a majority vote standard for director elections. Majority voting standards assist in ensuring that directors who are not broadly supported by shareholders are not elected to serve as their representatives. Some companies with a plurality voting standard have adopted a resignation policy for directors who do not receive support from at least a majority of votes cast. Where we believe that the company already has a sufficiently robust majority voting process in place, we may not support a shareholder proposal seeking an alternative mechanism.



## ***Risk oversight***

Companies should have an established process for identifying, monitoring, and managing key risks. Independent directors should have ready access to relevant management information and outside advice, as appropriate, to ensure they can properly oversee risk management. We encourage companies to provide transparency around risk measurement, mitigation, and reporting to the board. We are particularly interested in understanding how risk oversight processes evolve in response to changes in corporate strategy and / or shifts in the business and related risk environment. Comprehensive disclosure provides investors with a sense of the company's long-term operational risk management practices and, more broadly, the quality of the board's oversight. In the absence of robust disclosures, we may reasonably conclude that companies are not adequately managing risk.

## ***Separation of chairman and CEO***

We believe that independent leadership is important in the boardroom. In the U.S. there are two commonly accepted structures for independent board leadership: 1) an independent chairman; or 2) a lead independent director when the roles of chairman and CEO are combined.

In the absence of a significant governance concern, we defer to boards to designate the most appropriate leadership structure to ensure adequate balance and independence.

In the event that the board chooses a combined chair / CEO model, we generally support the designation of a lead independent director if they have the power to: 1) provide formal input into board meeting agendas; 2) call meetings of the independent directors; and 3) preside at meetings of independent directors. Furthermore, while we anticipate that most directors will be elected annually, we believe an element of continuity is important for this role for an extended period of time to provide appropriate leadership balance to the chair / CEO.

The following table illustrates examples of responsibilities under each board leadership model:

	<b>Combined Chair / CEO Model</b>		<b>Separate Chair Model</b>
	Chair / CEO	Lead Director	Chair
Board Meetings	Authority to call full meetings of the board of directors	Attends full meetings of the board of directors  Authority to call meetings of independent directors  Briefs CEO on issues arising from executive sessions	Authority to call full meetings of the board of directors
Agenda	Primary responsibility for shaping board agendas, consulting with the lead director	Collaborates with chair / CEO to set board agenda and board information	Primary responsibility for shaping board agendas, in conjunction with CEO

	Combined Chair / CEO Model		Separate Chair Model
	Chair / CEO	Lead Director	Chair
Board Communications	Communicates with all directors on key issues and concerns outside of full board meetings	Facilitates discussion among independent directors on key issues and concerns outside of full board meetings, including contributing to the oversight of CEO and management succession planning	Facilitates discussion among independent directors on key issues and concerns outside of full board meetings, including contributing to the oversight of CEO and management succession planning

## AUDITORS AND AUDIT-RELATED ISSUES

BlackRock recognizes the critical importance of financial statements to provide a complete and accurate portrayal of a company's financial condition. Consistent with our approach to voting on boards of directors, we seek to hold the audit committee of the board responsible for overseeing the management of the audit function at a company, and may withhold votes from the audit committee members where the board has failed to facilitate quality, independent auditing. We look to the audit committee report for insight into the scope of the audit committee responsibilities, including an overview of audit committee processes, issues on the audit committee agenda, and key decisions taken by the audit committee. We take particular note of cases involving significant financial restatements or material weakness disclosures, and we expect timely disclosure and remediation of accounting irregularities.

The integrity of financial statements depends on the auditor effectively fulfilling its role. To that end, we favor an independent auditor. In addition, to the extent that an auditor fails to reasonably identify and address issues that eventually lead to a significant financial restatement, or the audit firm has violated standards of practice that protect the interests of shareholders, we may also vote against ratification. From time to time, shareholder proposals may be presented to promote auditor independence or the rotation of audit firms. We may support these proposals when they are consistent with our views as described above.

## CAPITAL STRUCTURE PROPOSALS

### ***Equal voting rights***

BlackRock believes that shareholders should be entitled to voting rights in proportion to their economic interests. We believe that companies that look to add or already have dual or multiple class share structures should review these structures on a regular basis or as company circumstances change. Companies should receive shareholder approval of their capital structure on a periodic basis via a management proposal on the company's proxy. The proposal should give unaffiliated shareholders the opportunity to affirm the current structure or establish mechanisms to end or phase out controlling structures at the appropriate time, while minimizing costs to shareholders.

### ***Blank check preferred stock***

We frequently oppose proposals requesting authorization of a class of preferred stock with unspecified voting, conversion, dividend distribution, and other rights (“blank check” preferred stock) because they may serve as a transfer of authority from shareholders to the board and as a possible entrenchment device. We generally view the board’s discretion to establish voting rights on a when-issued basis as a potential anti-takeover device, as it affords the board the ability to place a block of stock with an investor sympathetic to management, thereby foiling a takeover bid without a shareholder vote.

Nonetheless, we may support the proposal where the company:

- Appears to have a legitimate financing motive for requesting blank check authority
- Has committed publicly that blank check preferred shares will not be used for anti-takeover purposes
- Has a history of using blank check preferred stock for financings
- Has blank check preferred stock previously outstanding such that an increase would not necessarily provide further anti-takeover protection but may provide greater financing flexibility

### ***Increase in authorized common shares***

BlackRock considers industry-specific norms in our analysis of these proposals, as well as a company’s history with respect to the use of its common shares. Generally, we are predisposed to support a company if the board believes additional common shares are necessary to carry out the firm’s business. The most substantial concern we might have with an increase is the possibility of use of common shares to fund a poison pill plan that is not in the economic interests of shareholders.

### ***Increase or issuance of preferred stock***

We generally support proposals to increase or issue preferred stock in cases where the company specifies the voting, dividend, conversion, and other rights of such stock where the terms of the preferred stock appear reasonable.

### ***Stock splits***

We generally support stock splits that are not likely to negatively affect the ability to trade shares or the economic value of a share. We generally support reverse stock splits that are designed to avoid delisting or to facilitate trading in the stock, where the reverse split will not have a negative impact on share value (e.g. one class is reduced while others remain at pre-split levels). In the event of a proposal for a reverse split that would not also proportionately reduce the company’s authorized stock, we apply the same analysis we would use for a proposal to increase authorized stock.

## **MERGERS, ASSET SALES, AND OTHER SPECIAL TRANSACTIONS**

BlackRock’s primary concern is the best long-term economic interests of shareholders. While merger, asset sales, and other special transaction proposals vary widely in scope and substance, we closely examine certain salient features in our analyses, such as:

- The degree to which the proposed transaction represents a premium to the company’s trading price. We consider the share price over multiple time periods prior to the date of the merger

announcement. In most cases, business combinations should provide a premium. We may consider comparable transaction analyses provided by the parties' financial advisors and our own valuation assessments. For companies facing insolvency or bankruptcy, a premium may not apply

- There should be clear strategic, operational, and / or financial rationale for the combination
- Unanimous board approval and arm's-length negotiations are preferred. We will consider whether the transaction involves a dissenting board or does not appear to be the result of an arm's-length bidding process. We may also consider whether executive and / or board members' financial interests in a given transaction appear likely to affect their ability to place shareholders' interests before their own
- We prefer transaction proposals that include the fairness opinion of a reputable financial advisor assessing the value of the transaction to shareholders in comparison to recent similar transactions

### ***Poison pill plans***

Where a poison pill is put to a shareholder vote by management, our policy is to examine these plans individually. Although we oppose most plans, we may support plans that include a reasonable "qualifying offer clause." Such clauses typically require shareholder ratification of the pill and stipulate a sunset provision whereby the pill expires unless it is renewed.

These clauses also tend to specify that an all cash bid for all shares that includes a fairness opinion and evidence of financing does not trigger the pill, but forces either a special meeting at which the offer is put to a shareholder vote, or the board to seek the written consent of shareholders where shareholders could rescind the pill at their discretion. We may also support a pill where it is the only effective method for protecting tax or other economic benefits that may be associated with limiting the ownership changes of individual shareholders.

We generally vote in favor of shareholder proposals to rescind poison pills.

### ***Reimbursement of expenses for successful shareholder campaigns***

We generally do not support shareholder proposals seeking the reimbursement of proxy contest expenses, even in situations where we support the shareholder campaign. We believe that introducing the possibility of such reimbursement may incentivize disruptive and unnecessary shareholder campaigns.

## **EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION**

We note that there are both management and shareholder proposals related to executive compensation. We generally vote on these proposals as described below, except that we typically oppose shareholder proposals on issues where the company already has a reasonable policy in place that we believe is sufficient to address the issue. We may also oppose a shareholder proposal regarding executive compensation if the company's history suggests that the issue raised is not likely to present a problem for that company.

### ***Advisory resolutions on executive compensation ("Say on Pay")***

In cases where there is a Say on Pay vote, BlackRock will respond to the proposal as informed by our evaluation of compensation practices at that particular company and in a manner that appropriately

addresses the specific question posed to shareholders. In a commentary on our website, entitled “BlackRock Investment Stewardship’s approach to executive compensation,” we explain our beliefs and expectations related to executive compensation practices, our Say on Pay analysis framework, and our typical approach to engagement and voting on Say on Pay.

### ***Advisory votes on the frequency of Say on Pay resolutions***

BlackRock will generally support triennial pay frequency votes, but we defer to the board to determine the appropriate timeframe upon which pay should be reviewed. In evaluating pay, we believe that the compensation committee is responsible for constructing a plan that appropriately incentivizes executives for long-term value creation, utilizing relevant metrics and structure to ensure overall pay and performance alignment. In a similar vein, we defer to the board to establish the most appropriate timeframe for review of pay structure, absent a change in strategy that would suggest otherwise.

However, we may support an annual pay frequency vote in some situations, for example, where we conclude that a company has failed to align pay with performance. In these circumstances, we will also consider voting against the compensation committee members.

### ***Claw back proposals***

We generally favor recoupment from any senior executive whose compensation was based on faulty financial reporting or deceptive business practices. In addition to fraudulent acts, we also favor recoupment from any senior executive whose behavior caused direct financial harm to shareholders, reputational risk to the company, or resulted in a criminal investigation, even if such actions did not ultimately result in a material restatement of past results. This includes, but is not limited to, settlement agreements arising from such behavior and paid for directly by the company. We typically support shareholder proposals on these matters unless the company already has a robust claw back policy that sufficiently addresses our concerns.

### ***Employee stock purchase plans***

We believe these plans can provide performance incentives and help align employees’ interests with those of shareholders. The most common form of employee stock purchase plan (“ESPP”) qualifies for favorable tax treatment under Section 423 of the Internal Revenue Code. We will typically support qualified ESPP proposals.

### ***Equity compensation plans***

BlackRock supports equity plans that align the economic interests of directors, managers, and other employees with those of shareholders. We believe that boards should establish policies prohibiting the use of equity awards in a manner that could disrupt the intended alignment with shareholder interests (e.g. the use of stock as collateral for a loan; the use of stock in a margin account; the use of stock [or an unvested award] in hedging or derivative transactions). We may support shareholder proposals requesting the establishment of such policies.

Our evaluation of equity compensation plans is based on a company’s executive pay and performance relative to peers and whether the plan plays a significant role in a pay-for-performance disconnect. We generally oppose plans that contain “evergreen” provisions, which allow for the unlimited increase of shares reserved without requiring further shareholder approval after a reasonable time period. We also generally oppose plans that allow for repricing without shareholder approval. We may also oppose plans that provide for the acceleration of vesting of equity awards even in situations where an actual change of control may not occur. We encourage companies to structure their change of control provisions to require the termination of the covered employee before acceleration or special payments are triggered.

## ***Golden parachutes***

We generally view golden parachutes as encouragement to management to consider transactions that might be beneficial to shareholders. However, a large potential pay-out under a golden parachute arrangement also presents the risk of motivating a management team to support a sub-optimal sale price for a company.

When determining whether to support or oppose an advisory vote on a golden parachute plan, we normally support the plan unless it appears to result in payments that are excessive or detrimental to shareholders. In evaluating golden parachute plans, BlackRock may consider several factors, including:

- Whether we believe that the triggering event is in the best interest of shareholders
- Whether management attempted to maximize shareholder value in the triggering event
- The percentage of total premium or transaction value that will be transferred to the management team, rather than shareholders, as a result of the golden parachute payment
- Whether excessively large excise tax gross-up payments are part of the pay-out
- Whether the pay package that serves as the basis for calculating the golden parachute payment was reasonable in light of performance and peers
- Whether the golden parachute payment will have the effect of rewarding a management team that has failed to effectively manage the company

It may be difficult to anticipate the results of a plan until after it has been triggered; as a result, BlackRock may vote against a golden parachute proposal even if the golden parachute plan under review was approved by shareholders when it was implemented.

We may support shareholder proposals requesting that implementation of such arrangements require shareholder approval. We generally support proposals requiring shareholder approval of plans that exceed 2.99 times an executive's current salary and bonus, including equity compensation.

## ***Option exchanges***

We believe that there may be legitimate instances where underwater options create an overhang on a company's capital structure and a repricing or option exchange may be warranted. We will evaluate these instances on a case-by-case basis. BlackRock may support a request to reprice or exchange underwater options under the following circumstances:

- The company has experienced significant stock price decline as a result of macroeconomic trends, not individual company performance
- Directors and executive officers are excluded; the exchange is value neutral or value creative to shareholders; tax, accounting, and other technical considerations have been fully contemplated
- There is clear evidence that absent repricing, the company will suffer serious employee incentive or retention and recruiting problems

BlackRock may also support a request to exchange underwater options in other circumstances, if we determine that the exchange is in the best interest of shareholders.



### ***Pay-for-Performance plans***

In order for executive compensation exceeding \$1 million USD to qualify for federal tax deductions, related to Section 162(m) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (“OBRA”) requires companies to link compensation for the company’s top five executives to disclosed performance goals and submit the plans for shareholder approval. The law further requires that a compensation committee comprised solely of outside directors administer these plans. Because the primary objective of these proposals is to preserve the deductibility of such compensation, we generally favor approval in order to preserve net income.

### ***Supplemental executive retirement plans***

BlackRock may support shareholder proposals requesting to put extraordinary benefits contained in Supplemental Executive Retirement Plans (“SERP”) agreements to a shareholder vote unless the company’s executive pension plans do not contain excessive benefits beyond what is offered under employee-wide plans.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

Our fiduciary duty to clients is to protect and enhance their economic interest in the companies in which we invest on their behalf. It is within this context that we undertake our corporate governance activities. We believe that well-managed companies will deal effectively with the material environmental and social (“E&S”) factors relevant to their businesses.

Robust disclosure is essential for investors to effectively gauge companies’ business practices and planning related to E&S risks and opportunities.

BlackRock expects companies to issue reports aligned with the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) and the standards put forward by the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB). We view the SASB and TCFD frameworks as complementary in achieving the goal of disclosing more financially material information, particularly as it relates to industry-specific metrics and target setting. TCFD’s recommendations provide an overarching framework for disclosure on the business implications of climate change, and potentially other E&S factors. We find SASB’s industry-specific guidance (as identified in its materiality map) beneficial in helping companies identify and discuss their governance, risk assessments, and performance against these key performance indicators (KPIs). Any global standards adopted, peer group benchmarking undertaken, and verification process in place should also be disclosed and discussed in this context.

BlackRock has been engaging with companies for several years on disclosure of material E&S factors. Given the increased understanding of sustainability risks and opportunities, and the need for better information to assess them, we specifically ask companies to:

- 1) Publish disclosures in line with industry specific SASB guidelines by year-end, if they have not already done so, or disclose a similar set of data in a way that is relevant to their particular business; and
- 2) Disclose climate-related risks in line with the TCFD’s recommendations, if they have not already done so. This should include the company’s plan for operating under a scenario where the Paris Agreement’s goal of limiting global warming to less than two degrees is fully realized, as expressed by the TCFD guidelines.

See our commentary on our approach to engagement on TCFD and SASB aligned reporting for greater detail of our expectations.

We will use these disclosures and our engagements to ascertain whether companies are properly managing and overseeing these risks within their business and adequately planning for the future. In the absence of robust disclosures, investors, including BlackRock, will increasingly conclude that companies are not adequately managing risk.

We believe that when a company is not effectively addressing a material issue, its directors should be held accountable. We will generally engage directly with the board or management of a company when we identify issues. We may vote against the election of directors where we have concerns that a company might not be dealing with E&S factors appropriately. Sometimes we may reflect such concerns by supporting a shareholder proposal on the issue, where there seems to be either a significant potential threat or realized harm to shareholders' interests caused by poor management of material E&S factors. In deciding our course of action, we will assess the nature of our engagement with the company on the issue over time, including whether:

- The company has already taken sufficient steps to address the concern
- The company is in the process of actively implementing a response
- There is a clear and material economic disadvantage to the company in the near-term if the issue is not addressed in the manner requested by the shareholder proposal

We do not see it as our role to make social, ethical, or political judgments on behalf of clients, but rather, to protect their long-term economic interests as shareholders. We expect investee companies to comply, at a minimum, with the laws and regulations of the jurisdictions in which they operate. They should explain how they manage situations where such laws or regulations are contradictory or ambiguous.

### ***Climate risk***

Within the framework laid out above, as well as our guidance on “How BlackRock Investment Stewardship engages on climate risk,” we believe that climate presents significant investment risks and opportunities that may impact the long-term financial sustainability of companies. We believe that the reporting frameworks developed by TCFD and SASB provide useful guidance to companies on identifying, managing, and reporting on climate-related risks and opportunities.

We expect companies to help their investors understand how the company may be impacted by climate risk, in the context of its ability to realize a long-term strategy and generate value over time. We expect companies to convey their governance around this issue through their corporate disclosures aligned with TCFD and SASB. For companies in sectors that are significantly exposed to climate-related risk, we expect the whole board to have demonstrable fluency in how climate risk affects the business and how management approaches assessing, adapting to, and mitigating that risk.

Where a company receives a shareholder proposal related to climate risk, in addition to the factors laid out above, our assessment will take into account the robustness of the company's existing disclosures as well as our understanding of its management of the issues as revealed through our engagements with the company and board members over time. In certain instances, we may disagree with the details of a climate-related shareholder proposal but agree that the company in question has not made sufficient progress on climate-related disclosures. In these instances, we may not support the proposal, but may vote against the election of relevant directors.

### ***Corporate political activities***

Companies may engage in certain political activities, within legal and regulatory limits, in order to influence public policy consistent with the companies' values and strategies, and thus serve

shareholders' best long-term economic interests. These activities can create risks, including: the potential for allegations of corruption; the potential for reputational issues associated with a candidate, party, or issue; and risks that arise from the complex legal, regulatory, and compliance considerations associated with corporate political activity. We believe that companies which choose to engage in political activities should develop and maintain robust processes to guide these activities and to mitigate risks, including a level of board oversight.

When presented with shareholder proposals requesting increased disclosure on corporate political activities, we may consider the political activities of that company and its peers, the existing level of disclosure, and our view regarding the associated risks. We generally believe that it is the duty of boards and management to determine the appropriate level of disclosure of all types of corporate activity, and we are generally not supportive of proposals that are overly prescriptive in nature. We may decide to support a shareholder proposal requesting additional reporting of corporate political activities where there seems to be either a significant potential threat or actual harm to shareholders' interests, and where we believe the company has not already provided shareholders with sufficient information to assess the company's management of the risk.

Finally, we believe that it is not the role of shareholders to suggest or approve corporate political activities; therefore we generally do not support proposals requesting a shareholder vote on political activities or expenditures.

## **GENERAL CORPORATE GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

### ***Adjourn meeting to solicit additional votes***

We generally support such proposals unless the agenda contains items that we judge to be detrimental to shareholders' best long-term economic interests.

### ***Bundled proposals***

We believe that shareholders should have the opportunity to review substantial governance changes individually without having to accept bundled proposals. Where several measures are grouped into one proposal, BlackRock may reject certain positive changes when linked with proposals that generally contradict or impede the rights and economic interests of shareholders.

### ***Exclusive forum provisions***

BlackRock generally supports proposals to seek exclusive forum for certain shareholder litigation. In cases where a board unilaterally adopts exclusive forum provisions that we consider unfavorable to the interests of shareholders, we will vote against the independent chair or lead independent director and members of the governance committee.

### ***Multi-jurisdictional companies***

Where a company is listed on multiple exchanges or incorporated in a country different from its primary listing, we will seek to apply the most relevant market guideline(s) to our analysis of the company's governance structure and specific proposals on the shareholder meeting agenda. In doing so, we typically consider the governance standards of the company's primary listing, the market standards by which the company governs itself, and the market context of each specific proposal on the agenda. If the relevant standards are silent on the issue under consideration, we will use our professional judgment as to what voting outcome would best protect the long-term economic interests of investors.

We expect that companies will disclose the rationale for their selection of primary listing, country of incorporation, and choice of governance structures, in particular where there is conflict between relevant market governance practices.

### ***Other business***

We oppose giving companies our proxy to vote on matters where we are not given the opportunity to review and understand those measures and carry out an appropriate level of shareholder oversight.

### ***Reincorporation***

Proposals to reincorporate from one state or country to another are most frequently motivated by considerations of anti-takeover protections, legal advantages, and / or cost savings. We will evaluate, on a case-by-case basis, the economic and strategic rationale behind the company's proposal to reincorporate. In all instances, we will evaluate the changes to shareholder protection under the new charter / articles / bylaws to assess whether the move increases or decreases shareholder protections. Where we find that shareholder protections are diminished, we may support reincorporation if we determine that the overall benefits outweigh the diminished rights.

### ***IPO governance***

We expect boards to consider and disclose how the corporate governance structures adopted upon initial public offering ("IPO") are in shareholders' best long-term interests. We also expect boards to conduct a regular review of corporate governance and control structures, such that boards might evolve foundational corporate governance structures as company circumstances change, without undue costs and disruption to shareholders. In our letter on unequal voting structures, we articulate our view that "one vote for one share" is the preferred structure for publicly-traded companies. We also recognize the potential benefits of dual class shares to newly public companies as they establish themselves; however, we believe that these structures should have a specific and limited duration. We will generally engage new companies on topics such as classified boards and supermajority vote provisions to amend bylaws, as we believe that such arrangements may not be in the best interest of shareholders in the long-term.

We will typically apply a one-year grace period for the application of certain director-related guidelines (including, but not limited to, director independence and over-boarding considerations), during which we expect boards to take steps to bring corporate governance standards in line with our expectations.

Further, if a company qualifies as an emerging growth company (an "EGC") under the Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act of 2012 (the "JOBS Act"), we will give consideration to the NYSE and NASDAQ governance exemptions granted under the JOBS Act for the duration such a company is categorized as an EGC. We expect an EGC to have a totally independent audit committee by the first anniversary of its IPO, with our standard approach to voting on auditors and audit-related issues applicable in full for an EGC on the first anniversary of its IPO.

## **SHAREHOLDER PROTECTIONS**

### ***Amendment to charter / articles / bylaws***

We believe that shareholders should have the right to vote on key corporate governance matters, including on changes to governance mechanisms and amendments to the charter / articles / bylaws. We may vote against certain directors where changes to governing documents are not put to a

shareholder vote within a reasonable period of time, in particular if those changes have the potential to impact shareholder rights ( see “Director elections” herein). In cases where a board’s unilateral adoption of changes to the charter / articles / bylaws promotes cost and operational efficiency benefits for the company and its shareholders, we may support such action if it does not have a negative effect on shareholder rights or the company’s corporate governance structure.

When voting on a management or shareholder proposal to make changes to the charter / articles / bylaws, we will consider in part the company’s and / or proponent’s publicly stated rationale for the changes, the company’s governance profile and history, relevant jurisdictional laws, and situational or contextual circumstances which may have motivated the proposed changes, among other factors. We will typically support changes to the charter / articles / bylaws where the benefits to shareholders, including the costs of failing to make those changes, demonstrably outweigh the costs or risks of making such changes.

### ***Proxy access***

We believe that long-term shareholders should have the opportunity, when necessary and under reasonable conditions, to nominate directors on the company’s proxy card.

In our view, securing the right of shareholders to nominate directors without engaging in a control contest can enhance shareholders’ ability to meaningfully participate in the director election process, stimulate board attention to shareholder interests, and provide shareholders an effective means of directing that attention where it is lacking. Proxy access mechanisms should provide shareholders with a reasonable opportunity to use this right without stipulating overly restrictive or onerous parameters for use, and also provide assurances that the mechanism will not be subject to abuse by short-term investors, investors without a substantial investment in the company, or investors seeking to take control of the board.

In general, we support market-standardized proxy access proposals, which allow a shareholder (or group of up to 20 shareholders) holding three percent of a company’s outstanding shares for at least three years the right to nominate the greater of up to two directors or 20% of the board. Where a standardized proxy access provision exists, we will generally oppose shareholder proposals requesting outlier thresholds.

### ***Right to act by written consent***

In exceptional circumstances and with sufficiently broad support, shareholders should have the opportunity to raise issues of substantial importance without having to wait for management to schedule a meeting. We therefore believe that shareholders should have the right to solicit votes by written consent provided that: 1) there are reasonable requirements to initiate the consent solicitation process (in order to avoid the waste of corporate resources in addressing narrowly supported interests); and 2) shareholders receive a minimum of 50% of outstanding shares to effectuate the action by written consent. We may oppose shareholder proposals requesting the right to act by written consent in cases where the proposal is structured for the benefit of a dominant shareholder to the exclusion of others, or if the proposal is written to discourage the board from incorporating appropriate mechanisms to avoid the waste of corporate resources when establishing a right to act by written consent. Additionally, we may oppose shareholder proposals requesting the right to act by written consent if the company already provides a shareholder right to call a special meeting that we believe offers shareholders a reasonable opportunity to raise issues of substantial importance without having to wait for management to schedule a meeting.

### ***Right to call a special meeting***

In exceptional circumstances and with sufficiently broad support, shareholders should have the opportunity to raise issues of substantial importance without having to wait for management to schedule a meeting. We therefore believe that shareholders should have the right to call a special meeting in cases where a reasonably high proportion of shareholders (typically a minimum of 15% but no higher than 25%) are required to agree to such a meeting before it is called, in order to avoid the waste of corporate resources in addressing narrowly supported interests. However, we may oppose this right in cases where the proposal is structured for the benefit of a dominant shareholder to the exclusion of others. We generally believe that a right to act via written consent is not a sufficient alternative to the right to call a special meeting.

### ***Simple majority voting***

We generally favor a simple majority voting requirement to pass proposals. Therefore, we will support the reduction or the elimination of supermajority voting requirements to the extent that we determine shareholders' ability to protect their economic interests is improved. Nonetheless, in situations where there is a substantial or dominant shareholder, supermajority voting may be protective of public shareholder interests and we may support supermajority requirements in those situations.

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