

A California Registered Investment Advisor

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Form ADV Part 2 March 30, 2016

This brochure provides clients and prospective clients with information about South County Financial Planning, LLC and the qualifications, business practices, and nature of its services that should be carefully considered before becoming an advisory client.

The contents of this brochure have not been approved or verified by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or any other state or federal governmental authority. While the firm and its associates may be registered with the State of California or other jurisdictions, it does not imply a certain level of skill or training on the part of the firm or its associated personnel.

Questions relative to the firm, its services, or this ADV Part 2 may be made to the attention of Ms. Angela Grillo at (949) 240-6125. Additional information about the firm, other advisory firms, or associated investment advisor representatives is available on the Internet at www.adviserinfo.sec.gov.

### **Item 2 - Material Changes**

The firm has made no material changes to its Form ADV Part 2A brochure since the previous version dated March 16, 2015.

The firm may at any time update this document and either send a copy of its updated brochure or provide a summary of material changes to its brochure and an offer to send an electronic or hard copy form of the updated brochure. Clients are also able to download this brochure from the SEC's Website: www.adviserinfo.sec.gov or may contact our firm at (949) 240-6125 to request a copy at any time.

As with all firm documents, clients and prospective clients are encouraged to review this brochure in its entirety and are encouraged to ask questions at any time prior to or throughout the engagement.

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<u>Important Information</u>: Throughout this document, South County Financial Planning shall also be referred to as the "firm," "our," "we" or "us." These terms are utilized for the reader's ease of use while reviewing the brochure and are not meant to imply the firm is larger than it actually may be at the time of publication. The client or prospective client may also be referred to as "you," "your," etc., and refers to a client engagement involving a single *person* as well as two or more *persons*.

This brochure contains 22 pages and is not complete without all pages.

### **Item 4 - Advisory Business**

### **About Our Firm**

We hold ourselves to a *fiduciary standard*, which means South County Financial Planning and its associates will act in the utmost good faith and perform in a manner believed to be in the best interest of our clients. As investment advisors we are required to put you -- the client -- first. We feel this sets us apart from other firms (such as broker/dealers) that may be held to a, perhaps lesser, *suitability* standard and may not be required under current regulation to place clients' interests ahead of their own or to disclose their conflicts of interest involving their clients' transactions.

We are a California-domiciled registered investment advisor that provides fee-only financial planning, investment consultation and investment management services. In addition to our registration as an investment advisor in California since 2008, our firm and its associates may register or meet certain exemptions to registration in other states in which we conduct business. Ms. Angela Grillo (noted in Item 19) is our firm principal (supervisor), managing member, and majority shareholder.

Approximately 65% of South County Financial Planning, LLC's advisory business activity is oriented toward financial planning services involving expense budgeting and savings, education, insurance, charitable and estate planning, among others. 25% percent of our firm's advisory activities involve providing investment management services for client accounts that does not involve continuous monitoring of investment accounts or discretionary trading authority. The remaining 10% of our time and effort is oriented toward furnishing investment advice through periodic investment consultation. We do not we sponsor or serve as portfolio manager for a wrap fee investment program.

#### Client Assets Under Management

The firm does not provide investment supervisory services, which involve ongoing and continuous supervision of client accounts. Therefore, the firm does not have reportable assets under its management.

The firm's investment management services include periodic reviews and advice, as well as assistance with implementation of trades on a non-discretionary basis (as discussed in Item 16).

#### **Our Services**

A complimentary interview is conducted by a qualified representative of our firm to determine the scope of services to be provided. During or prior to this meeting, we will provide you with our current ADV Part 2 brochure that incorporates our Privacy Policy.

Should you wish to engage the firm for its services, we must enter into a written agreement; thereafter discussion and analysis will be conducted to determine your financial need, goals, holdings, etc.

It is important that the information or financial statements you provide are accurate. We may (but are not obligated to) verify the information you have provided and that will be used in the planning or advisory process.

We offer our services through two programs: Hourly Financial Planning and Investment Advice, and Annual Retainer Financial Planning including Non-Discretionary Investment Management.

### Hourly Financial Planning and Investment Advice

Advice may be provided on such subjects as cash flow analysis, retirement capital needs, employer benefits planning, special needs or estate planning, charitable giving, small business planning, education funding, risk management issues, tax strategies, or other specific areas you may request.

Investment advice may involve providing information on the types of investment vehicles available, investment analysis and strategies, asset selection and portfolio allocation, as well as assisting you in establishing your own investment account at a selected broker/dealer or custodian of your choosing. Our financial planning and investment advice may be broad-based or more narrowly focused as you desire. Note that when these services focus only on certain areas of your interest or need your overall financial situation or needs may not be fully addressed.

We will then present you with our analysis and a written summary of the significant observations, assumptions and recommendations over each area that our firm was engaged to provide advice.

You will retain full discretion over all implementation decisions and are free to accept or reject any recommendation we make. Further, it remains your responsibility to promptly notify us if there is any change in your financial situation or investment objectives for the purpose of our reviewing, evaluating, or revising previous recommendations and/or services. Upon completion of our presentation or delivery of advice, the engagement is concluded.

#### Annual Retainer Financial Planning including Non-Discretionary Investment Management

This program is designed for those who prefer access to financial planning services throughout the year without paying additional planning fees and also want to have their investments allocated, reviewed and managed by our firm on an annual or sooner basis instead (as opposed to re-engaging the firm in the future), or who are uncomfortable executing their own trades.

Following our planning process and delivery of your presentation, you would grant our firm non-discretionary authority (described in Item 16) to execute our investment recommendations through the selected custodian. This service is provided in a four-tiered offering:

<u>Tier 1</u> - For investments up to \$300,000 (total of all accounts aggregated), this service level includes your initial financial plan, an annual update to your financial plan, one additional "what-if scenario" update to your financial plan before it is time for your annual review, your ability to receive assistance with all financial issues within the expertise of our firm throughout the year, and implementation and management of your investment portfolio.

<u>Tier 2</u> - For investments ranging from \$300,001 to \$800,000 (total of all accounts aggregated), this service level includes everything in Tier 1, plus two additional "what-if scenario" updates to your financial plan before it is time for your annual review.

<u>Tier 3</u> - For accounts of \$800,001 to \$1,500,000 (total of all accounts aggregated), we provide everything in Tier 1, plus unlimited "what-if scenario" updates to your financial plan before it is time for your annual review.

<u>Tier 4</u> - For accounts of \$1,500,001 or more (total of all accounts aggregated), we provide everything in Tier 1, plus unlimited "what-if scenario" updates to your financial plan before it is time for your annual review.

#### **Workshop Presentations**

We may provide educational workshops on an "as announced" basis for groups desiring general advice on investments and personal finance. Topics may include issues related to wealth management, financial planning, retirement strategies, or various other economic and investment topics.

Our workshops are educational in nature and do not involve the sale of an investment. Information presented will not be based on any one person's need, nor do we provide individualized investment advice to attendees during event general sessions.

### **General Information**

We do not provide legal or accounting services. With your consent, we may work with your attorney or accountant to assist with the coordination and implementation of accepted strategies. You should be aware that these advisors may bill you separately for services and these fees will be in addition to those of our firm.

Our firm will use its best judgment and good faith effort in rendering its services. South County Financial Planning, LLC cannot warrant or guarantee any particular level of account performance, or that an account will be profitable over time. Past performance is not necessarily indicative of future results.

Except as may otherwise be provided by law, our firm will not be liable to the client, heirs, or assignees for any loss an account may suffer by reason of an investment decision made or other action taken or omitted in good faith by our firm with that degree of care, skill, prudence and diligence under the circumstances that a prudent person acting in a fiduciary capacity would use, any loss arising from our adherence to your direction or that of your legal agent, or any act or failure to act by a service provider maintaining an account.

Notwithstanding the preceding statement, nothing within our client agreement is intended to diminish in any way our fiduciary obligation to act in your best interest or in any way limit or waive your rights under federal or state securities laws or the rules pursuant those laws.

# Item 5 - Fees and Compensation<sup>1</sup>

#### Hourly Financial Planning and Investment Advice

We generally offer our financial planning and investment advice under an hourly engagement. Prior to entering into this agreement you will receive an estimate of the fee range. Our current hourly fee is \$250 per hour and will be billed for the actual time spent by our firm, assessed in six minute increments, and a partial increment will be treated as a whole.

Alternatively and at our discretion, we will offer our financial planning and investment advice under a fixed fee basis. Typically, this alternative is provided for more complex projects and based upon the estimated amount of time involved to complete the plan. The fixed fee ranges from \$500 - \$10,000.

Services to be provided and the anticipated fee will be detailed in the written service agreement. Our fees may be negotiable at the discretion of our firm principal and comparable services may potentially be provided elsewhere for a lower fee. We believe our fees are reasonable in light of the firm's services to be provided and the engaged associates' experience.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>South County Financial Planning, LLC reserves the right (but is not obligated) to assess a lower fee to pre-existing clients that have engaged the firm prior to the date of this disclosure as well as its associates and related persons' accounts.

We may require a deposit in the amount of the lesser of \$500 or one-half of the lower-end of the estimated fee range. Most planning engagements last one-to-two months, however, engagements spanning more than three months will be billed quarterly, in arrears.

The balance of fees due are payable immediately upon our presentation of the plan or advice to you or your legal agent. Should your final payment not be made we anticipate withholding your plan documents that would normally be provided at the conclusion of the engagement.

# Annual Retainer Financial Planning including Non-Discretionary Investment Management

Our retainer fee for these services will be based on the amount of assets under management, broken down into three tiers:

- Tier 1 Assets up to \$300,000 (total of all accounts aggregated), the annual retainer is \$2,000 per year.
- *Tier 2* Assets from \$300,001 up to \$800,000 (total of all accounts aggregated), the annual retainer is \$4,000 per year.
- *Tier 3* Assets from \$800,001 to \$1,500,000 (total of all accounts aggregated), the annual retainer is \$5,000 per year.
- *Tier 4* Assets from \$1,500,000 and above (total of all accounts aggregated), the annual retainer is \$10,000 per year.

There is no minimum portfolio size for these services. However, the minimum annual Retainer Fee is \$2,000.

Fees paid for your initial hourly Financial Planning and Investment Advice engagement may be applied to your initial term retainer.

All fees under this service engagement are billed quarterly, in advance. Fees are due within 20 days of our invoice. Partial months of service will be pro-rated for the number of days the agreement has been in force.

Our fees for these services may be negotiable at the discretion of our firm principal and comparable services may be provided elsewhere for a lower fee. We believe our fees are reasonable in light of the firm's services to be provided and the engaged associates' experience.

Further information about our fees in relationship to our operational practices is noted in Item 12 of this document.

#### Workshops

Our workshop engagements are generally *pro bono* in nature. In the event there is a charge for a workshop, it is anticipated to be paid by the engagement sponsor, such as an employer or association. Fees for these events are typically a fixed fee amount based on the cost of workshop materials and would be negotiated with the sponsor in advance of the presentation.

#### **Account Valuation**

For purposes of determining investment account asset values, securities and other investment instruments traded on a market in which actual transaction prices are publicly reported will be valued at the last reported sale price on the principal market in which they are traded.

If there are no sales on such date, then they will be determined by the mean between the *closing bid* and *asked price* on that date. Other readily-marketable securities will be valued using a pricing service or through quotations from one or more inter-market dealers. In the absence of a market value, we may seek an independent third party opinion or through a good faith determination by a qualified associate of our firm.

### Additional Fees/No-Load Products

Specific product recommendations made by our firm usually involve "no-load" (i.e., no commission) selections, if available, or low-load vehicles if necessary. In some cases, such as with insurance, there may not be a suitable selection available for recommendation, however, neither our firm nor our associates will be paid a commission on your purchase.

Any transactional or custodial fees assessed by a selected service provider, individual retirement account fees, or qualified retirement plan account termination fees are borne by you as noted in the current, separate fee schedule of the selected provider. Fees paid to our firm for our services are separate from any charges you may pay for mutual funds, exchange-trade funds (ETFs) or other investments of this type. We do not receive "trailer" or SEC Rule 12b-1 fees from any investment company. Fees charged by these issuers are detailed in their prospectuses or product descriptions and you are encouraged to read these documents before investing. Our firm and its associates receive none of these described or similar fees or charges.

#### **Termination of Services**

**Termination of Services involving Financial Planning and Investment Advice** - Either party may terminate an engagement upon written notice within five days of signing the Service Agreement, at which time no fees would be due. If you elect to terminate the Service Agreement prior to the completion of the assignment, you will be responsible and will be invoiced for time incurred by our firm on your behalf. We will promptly reimburse you for any prepaid, unearned or unapplied fees upon our receipt of your written termination notice.

**Termination of Investment Management Services** – If you engage our firm for its investment management, you will have a period of five business days from the date of signing the Investment Management Agreement to unconditionally rescind the agreement and receive a full refund of all fees paid. Thereafter, either party may terminate the Investment Management Agreement with 30 days written notice. Upon termination, fees will be prorated to the date of termination and any earned fees will be charged to the client.

Following termination notice, our firm will not be responsible for future allocations, transactional services or investment advice upon receipt of termination notice.

## <u>Item 6 - Performance-Based Fees and Side-By-Side Management</u>

Our fees will not be based upon a share of capital gains or capital appreciation (growth) of any portion of managed funds, also known as "performance-based fees." South County Financial Planning does not use a performance-based fee structure because of the potential conflict of interest this type of fee structure may pose. Performance-based compensation may create an incentive for a firm to recommend an investment that may carry a higher degree of risk to a client.

Side-by-side management refers to a firm simultaneously managing accounts that do pay performance based fees (such as a hedge fund) and those that do not; this type of arrangement, and the conflict of interest it may pose, is also not applicable to our firm's practices.

# **Item 7 - Types of Clients**

We provide our services to individual investors, trusts, estates, and businesses of various scale to assist them in meeting their financial objectives in what is believed to be a cost-effective way.

Our ability to provide our service and advice depends on access to important information. Accordingly, you are expected to provide us with an adequate level of information and supporting documentation throughout the term of the engagement, including but not limited to: source of funds, income levels, your (or your legal agent's) authority to act on behalf of the account, among other information. This helps us determine the appropriateness of our financial planning or investment strategy for you and your account. It is very important that you keep us up-to-date on significant changes that may call for an update to your financial and investment plans. Events such as job changes, retirement, change in marital status, or the purchase or sale of a home or business can have a tremendous impact on your circumstances and needs. If we are aware of such events, we can make the adjustments needed to your plan or advice in order to keep you on track toward your goals.

We do not require minimum income levels, minimum level of assets, or other conditions for our services; however, our minimum retainer fee of \$2,000 may make it impractical for investors that have lower incomes or aggregated account assets less than \$67,000. Such clients would likely be better served with the hourly program than the retainer program.

Our firm reserves the right to waive or reduce certain fees based on unique individual circumstances, special arrangements, pre-existing relationships or as otherwise may be determined by our firm principal. We also reserve the right to decline services to any prospective client for any reason.

#### Item 8 - Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies and Risk of Loss

#### Method of Analysis

If we are engaged to provide investment consultation or investment management services, we will first evaluate several factors, including your:

- current financial situation,
- current and long-term needs,
- investment goals and objectives,
- level of investment knowledge, and
- tolerance for risk.

We make asset allocation and investment policy decisions based on these and other factors. We will then discuss with you how, in our best judgment, to meet your objectives while at the same time seeking a prudent level of risk exposure.

Our goal in creating your portfolio is to assume the minimum level of risk necessary to achieve the required level of return – that is, the return needed for meeting your objectives. To achieve this, we typically employ what we believe to be an appropriate blend of fundamental and technical analyses to develop long-term investment strategies.

Fundamental analysis involves evaluating economic factors including interest rates, current state of the economy, and future growth of an issuer or sector, among others. Technical analysis may involve studying securities, markets, or economies as a whole in an effort to determine potential future behaviors.

By combining these analyses, the firm believes it may better assist the client in determining the appropriate strategy that has been adapted to their requirements and goals.

Our research and recommendations may be drawn from sources that include financial publications, investment analysis and reporting software, research materials from outside sources, corporate rating services, annual reports, prospectuses and other regulatory filings, and company press releases.

#### **Investment Strategies**

Our firm believes that a long term, buy-and-hold investment strategy is preferred over active or more frequent investment management. To try to lessen the possibility of large losses, however, we typically recommend setting "stop loss" trading orders on stock and ETF positions. Investment policy decisions are made, in our best judgment, to help you achieve your overall financial objectives while minimizing risk exposure.

We believe asset allocation is a key component of investment portfolio design, and that the appropriate allocation of assets across diverse investment categories (stock vs. bond, foreign vs. domestic, large cap vs. small cap, etc.) is a primary determinant of portfolio returns and critical to the long-term success of an investor's financial objectives.

We generally use low-cost investments such as index mutual funds and ETFs whenever it is possible and reasonable to do so. In certain circumstances stocks, bonds, mutual funds, closed-end funds, and other publicly-traded securities may be used.

#### Risk of Loss

While we believe our strategies and investment recommendation are designed to potentially produce the highest possible return for a given level of risk, we cannot guarantee that an investment objective or planning goal will be achieved. Past performance is not necessarily indicative of future results.

Some investment decisions may result in loss, including potential loss of the original principal invested. Each client must be able to bear the various risks involved in the investment of account assets, which may include market, currency, interest rate, and liquidity, operational or political risk, among others. Although our investment strategies include steps to mitigate the risk of loss, it is neither possible nor reasonable to expect to eliminate such risk entirely.

When our research and analyses is based upon commercially available software, rating services, general market and financial information, or due diligence reviews, we are relying upon the accuracy and validity of the information or capabilities being provided by selected vendors, rating services, market data, and the issuers themselves. We make a reasonable effort to determine the accuracy of the information received but we cannot predict events, actions taken or not taken, or the validity of all information researched or provided which may or may not affect the advice to a client or account.

When a portfolio employs a passive, efficient markets theory, you will need to consider the potential risk that your broader allocation may generate lower-than-expected returns than that from a specific asset, and that the return on each type of asset is a deviation from the average return from the asset class. We believe this variance from the "expected return" is generally low under normal market conditions if the portfolio is made up of diverse, non-correlated assets.

If your preferred investment strategy involves more frequent trading, it may result in additional transactional costs or create taxable events, and in some instances potentially reducing or negating any benefit derived by shorter term investing.

South County Financial Planning, LLC Form ADV Part 2 – 20160330 Page 10 of 22 Investment vehicles such as ETFs and indexed funds have the potential to be affected by "tracking error risk," which might be defined as a deviation from their stated benchmark (index). Since the core of a portfolio may attempt to closely replicate a stated benchmark, the source of the tracking error or deviation may come from a "sample index" that may not as closely align the stated benchmark. In these instances, the firm may choose to reduce the weighting of a holding or use a "replicate index" position as part of its core holdings to minimize the effects of the tracking error in relation to the overall portfolio.

Also, while many index funds and ETFs are known for their potential tax-efficiency and higher "qualified dividend income" (QDI) percentages, there are certain asset classes or holding periods within a fund or ETF that may not benefit. Shorter holding periods or certain commodities and currencies (potentially within the fund/ETF) may be considered nonqualified, therefore the investments QDI will be considered if tax efficiency is an important aspect of your portfolio.

### **Item 9 - Disciplinary Information**

Neither the firm nor any member of its management has been involved in a material criminal or civil action in a domestic, foreign or military jurisdiction, an administrative enforcement action, or self-regulatory organization proceeding that would reflect poorly upon our firm's advisory business or the integrity of our firm.

#### Item 10 - Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations

Our policies require our firm and its associates to conduct business activities in a manner that avoid actual or potential conflicts of interest between the firm, its employees and clients, or that may be contrary to law.

We will provide disclosure to each client prior to and throughout the term of an engagement regarding any conflicts of interest which might reasonably compromise our impartiality or independence.

Neither our firm nor a member of its management is, or has a material relationship with any of the following types of entities:

- broker/dealer, municipal securities dealer, or government securities dealer or broker;
- futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator, or commodity trading advisor;
- banking or thrift institution;
- lawyer or law firm;\*
- accountant or accounting firm;\*
- insurance company or agency;\*
- pension consultant;
- real estate broker or dealer;
- sponsor or syndicator of limited partnerships; or
- investment company or other pooled investment vehicle (including a mutual fund, closed-end investment company, unit investment trust, private investment company or "hedge fund," and offshore fund).

<sup>\*</sup>Upon your request and when appropriate to do so, we may provide referrals to various professionals other in your area, such as an accountant or attorney.

We do not have an agreement with or receive fees from these professionals for these informal referrals. Any fees charged by these other entities for their services are completely separate from advisory fees charged by our advisory firm.

Our firm rents office space from Insurance Solutions, a property and casualty insurance and business insurance company. The two firms are not affiliated in any way, and there is no sharing of fees or payment of referral fees between South County Financial Planning and Insurance Solutions.

Should we ever provide you with a recommendation to an unaffiliated registered investment advisor to manage your portfolio, we will first ensure we have conducted what we believe is an appropriate level of due diligence on the recommended third-party investment advisor, to include ensuring their firm is appropriately registered or notice-filed within your jurisdiction. Please note that we are not paid for this referral nor do we share in any fees these firms may receive in managing your investment account.

South County Financial Planning is a member of the Garrett Planning Network (Garrett), and the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA). These organizations assist financial planners in fee-only financial planning practices. Neither is, nor believed required to be, a registered financial industry participant. The firm pays an annual membership fee to these organizations for extensive services that include training, compliance and operational support to enhance the firm's ability to provide quality service and advice to the investing public, as well as the reference of the firm's contact information on the Garrett and NAPFA websites for interested members of the public. Both Garrett and NAPFA members must also adhere to ethical guidelines and meet experiential and education requirements.

Associates of the firm may hold individual membership or serve on committees or board of professional industry associations such as the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA), Financial Planning Association (FPA), or the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc.

Generally, participation in any of these entities require membership fees to be paid, adherence to ethical guidelines, as well as in meeting experiential and ongoing educational requirements.

### Item 11 - Code of Ethics, Participation or Interest in Client Transactions and Personal Trading

#### Code of Ethics

We have adopted a Code of Ethics that establishes policies of ethical conduct for all our personnel. Our firm accepts the obligation not only to comply with all applicable laws and regulations but also to act in an ethical and professionally responsible manner in all professional services and activities.

Our policies include prohibitions against insider trading, circulation of industry rumor, certain political contributions, among others.

Associates who are CFP® designees or FPA members also adhere to the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Code of Ethics. These principles include:

#### Principle 1 – Integrity

An advisor will provide professional services with integrity. Integrity demands honesty and candor which must not be subordinated to personal gain and advantage.

Advisors are placed by clients in positions of trust by clients, and the ultimate source of that trust is the advisor's personal integrity. Allowance can be made for innocent error and legitimate differences of opinion; but integrity cannot co-exist with deceit or subordination of one's principles.

## Principle 2 – Objectivity

An advisor will provide professional services objectively. Objectivity requires intellectual honesty and impartiality. Regardless of the particular service rendered or the capacity in which an advisor functions, an advisor should protect the integrity of their work, maintain objectivity and avoid subordination of their judgment.

#### Principle 3 – Competence

Advisors will maintain the necessary knowledge and skill to provide professional services competently.

Competence means attaining and maintaining an adequate level of knowledge and skill, and applies that knowledge effectively in providing services to clients. Competence also includes the wisdom to recognize the limitations of that knowledge and when consultation with other professionals is appropriate or referral to other professionals necessary. Advisors make a continuing commitment to learning and professional improvement.

### Principle 4 – Fairness

Advisors will be fair and reasonable in all professional relationships. Fairness requires impartiality, intellectual honesty and disclosure of material conflict(s) of interest. It involves a subordination of one's own feelings, prejudices and desires so as to achieve a proper balance of conflicting interests. Fairness is treating others in the same fashion that you would want to be treated and is an essential trait of any professional.

# Principle 5 – Confidentiality

Advisors will protect the confidentiality of all client information. Confidentiality means ensuring that information is accessible only to those authorized to have access. A relationship of trust and confidence with the client can only be built upon the understanding that the client's information will remain confidential.

#### Principle 6 – Professionalism

Advisors will act in a manner that demonstrates exemplary professional conduct. Professionalism requires behaving with dignity and courtesy to all who use their services, fellow professionals, and those in related professions. Advisors cooperate with fellow advisors to enhance and maintain the profession's public image and improve the quality of services.

#### Principle 7 – Diligence

Advisors will provide professional services diligently. Diligence is the provision of services in a reasonably prompt and thorough manner, including the proper planning for, and supervision of, the rendering of professional services.

Additionally, associates of our firm that are NAPFA or Garrett members adhere to the NAPFA *Fiduciary Oath* that states that:

"The advisor shall exercise his/her best efforts to act in good faith and in the best interests of the client.

The advisor shall provide written disclosure to the client prior to the engagement of the advisor, and thereafter throughout the term of the engagement, of any conflicts of interest, which will or reasonably may compromise the impartiality or independence of the advisor.

The advisor, or any party in which the advisor has a financial interest, does not receive any compensation or other remuneration that is contingent on any client's purchase or sale of a financial product.

The advisor does not receive a fee or other compensation from another party based on the referral of a client or the client's business.

### Following the NAPFA Fiduciary Oath means I shall:

- \* Always act in good faith and with candor.
- \* Be proactive in disclosing any conflicts of interest that may impact a client.
- \* Not accept any referral fees or compensation contingent upon the purchase or sale of a financial product."

We periodically review and amend our Code of Ethics to ensure that it remains current, and we require all firm access persons to attest to their understanding of and adherence to the Code of Ethics at least annually. Our firm will provide of copy of its Code of Ethics to any client or prospective client upon request.

# **Privacy Policy**

We respect the privacy of all our clients and prospective clients; both past and present. We recognize that you have entrusted us with non-public personal information and it is important to us that all employees and clients of our firm know our policy concerning what we do with that information.

We collect personal information about our clients from the following sources:

- Information our clients provide to us to complete their financial plan or investment recommendation,
- Information our clients provide to us in agreements, account applications, and other documents completed in connection with the opening and maintenance of their accounts,
- Information our clients provide to us orally, and
- Information we may receive from service providers, such as custodians, about client transactions.

We do not disclose non-public personal information about our clients to anyone, except in the following circumstances:

- When required to provide services our clients have requested,
- When our clients have specifically authorized us to do so in writing,
- When required during the course of a firm assessment (i.e., independent audit), or
- When permitted or required by law (i.e., periodic regulatory examination).

Within our firm, we restrict access to client information to staff that need to know that information. All personnel and our service providers understand that everything handled in our office is confidential and they are instructed to not discuss client information with someone else that may request information about an account unless they are specifically authorized in writing by the client to do so. This includes, for example, providing information about a spouse's IRA account, children about parents' accounts, etc.

To ensure security and confidentiality, we maintain physical, electronic, and procedural safeguards to protect the privacy of client information.

We will notify you annually of our privacy policy and at any time, in advance, if our policy is expected to change.

### Participation or Interest in Client Transactions

Neither our firm, associates or any related person is authorized to recommend to a client, or effect a transaction for a client, involving any security in which our firm or a related person has a material financial interest, such as in the capacity as an underwriter, advisor to the issuer, etc.

Our employees are prohibited from borrowing from or lending to a client unless the client is an approved financial institution.

We recognize that should we act as the advisor to the sponsor of an ERISA-qualified retirement plan (i.e., 401(k) or pension plan) and one of our associates serves in an advisory capacity to one or more of the plan's participants, a potential or implied conflict of interest may occur. We may require our associate to cease in this plan participant advisory capacity or, upon disclosure to and approval from the plan sponsor, allow the dual advisory role to continue with consideration being made to offset fees where appropriate.

Our firm provides a range of services to you and all of our clients, which includes financial planning and investment advice as well investment management services where we are paid a fee. Due to our firm's ability to offer one or more of these services to you and possibly receive a fee for each type of engagement, a potential conflict of interest may exist. Therefore, you are under no obligation to act upon our recommendations and, if you elect to act on any of our recommendations, you are under no obligation to complete all of them through our firm.

#### **Personal Trading**

Our firm and its "related persons" may buy or sell securities similar to, or different from, those we recommend to clients for their accounts. A recommendation made to one client may be different in nature or in timing from a recommendation made to a different client. At no time, however, will our firm or any related party receive preferential treatment over our clients.

In an effort to reduce or eliminate certain conflicts of interest involving personal trading, our policy may require that we restrict or prohibit associates' transactions in specific reportable securities transactions. Any exceptions or trading pre-clearance must be approved by a principal of our firm in advance of the transaction in an account, and we will maintain the required personal securities transaction records per current regulation.

#### **Item 12 - Brokerage Practices**

South County Financial Planning is not affiliated with any bank, custodian, or broker-dealer firm ("service provider"). When engaged to provide investment advice, we will offer to use the service provider with whom your assets are currently maintained.

Should you prefer a new service provider, we will suggest a custodian or discount brokerage firm that we believe best fits your individual need, budget, as well the provider's ease of use.

It is our policy to limit non-cash compensation (termed "soft dollars" in certain jurisdictions) that we may receive from any provider to those services that enhance our ability to equally serve our clients, and we will not "pay up" to receive additional services from a service provider.

In light of the nature of our advisory services, we do not believe we are obligated to conduct "best execution" assessments of client transactions under current guidelines. We will periodically conduct a review of any provider we recommend to assess their range of services and capabilities, reasonableness of fees, among other items, in comparison to industry peers.

### **Client Referrals**

All compensation paid to our firm is paid directly by our clients and, therefore, we do not receive additional compensation when you engage a recommended service provider.

### Directed Brokerage

We do not require or engage in directed brokerage involving our accounts. You are free to use any particular service provider to execute some or all transactions and are responsible for negotiating the terms and/or arrangements for each account. We will not be obligated to conduct due diligence, seek better execution services or prices from your selected service provider, or aggregate transactions for execution.

### Trade Aggregation

Since our firm is not directly engaged for continuous investment supervisory services, it does not aggregate trades on behalf of client accounts. Transactions for each of our clients will be completed independently and this may result in potentially less favorable transaction rates or greater price spreads than those accounts where trades have been aggregated.

#### **Item 13 - Review of Accounts**

#### Hourly Financial Planning and Investment Advice

Periodic financial check-ups or reviews are recommended for clients receiving financial planning and investment consultation services; and it is the client's responsibility to initiate these reviews.

Reviews will be conducted by the assigned financial planner and normally involve analysis and possible revision of a previous financial plan or investment allocation. Portfolio "Snapshot" reports may be also be provided, however, we will not provide ongoing performance reporting.

#### **Investment Management Services**

Investment management services accounts are reviewed at least quarterly throughout the engagement by the assigned investment advisor representative, supervisory personnel (such as our firm principal), and/or a qualified independent entity engaged by our firm.

Additional reviews may be triggered by news or research related to a specific holding, a change in our view of the investment merits of a holding, or news related to the macroeconomic climate affecting a sector or holding within that sector.

Accounts may also be reviewed when being considered for an additional holding or an increase in a current position. Account cash levels above or below that deemed appropriate for the investment environment, given the client's stated tolerance for risk and investment objectives, may also trigger a review.

Investment management services clients will receive account statements sent directly from mutual fund companies, transfer agents, custodians or brokerage companies where their investments are maintained. Clients should review these statements carefully. Our firm may provide periodic portfolio reviews for these accounts, however, we do not provide our own ongoing performance reporting.

Clients are urged to carefully review and compare account statements that they have received directly from their service provider with any report received from our firm.

### **Item 14 - Client Referrals and Other Compensation**

We do not engage in solicitation activities as defined by statute.

As noted earlier, South County Financial Planning and its associates may be members of Garrett, FPA, NAPFA or other professional associations. A benefit these entities may provide to the investing public is the availability of online search tools that allow interested parties (prospective clients) to search for participant firms or individual financial planners within a selected state or region.

These passive websites may provide means for interested persons to contact a firm or financial planner via electronic mail, telephone number, or other contact information, in order to interview the participating firm or planner. Members of the public may also choose to telephone association staff to inquire about a firm or individual planner within their area, and they would receive the same or similar information. A portion of our membership fees may be used so that our name will be listed in some or all of these entities' websites (or other listings).

Prospective clients locating our firm or one of our associates via this method are not actively marketed by these associations. Clients who find us in this way do not pay more for their services than clients referred to us in another fashion, such as by another client. We do not pay these entities for prospective client referrals, nor is there a fee-sharing arrangement reflective of a solicitor engagement.<sup>2</sup>

We may provide referrals to various other professionals, such as an attorney, accountant, or insurance agent, as a service to our clients. We do not have an agreement with or receive referral fees from these professionals for these informal referrals. We share office space with an insurance agency, but the firms are not affiliated and there is no compensation or consideration of any kind for informal referrals that may occur. Any fees charged by these other entities for their services are completely separate from fees charged by South County Financial Planning.

# Item 15 - Custody

Your funds and securities will be maintained by an unaffiliated, qualified custodian that you select, such as a bank, broker/dealer, mutual fund company, or transfer agent -- not with our firm or our associates.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The firm believes this arrangement is in consonance with SEC No-Action Letter No. 1251421 in its response to the National Football League Players Association.

In keeping with our policy of not having custody of client funds or securities, we:

- Restrict our firm and associates from acting as trustee for or having full power of attorney over a client account;
- Do not accept or forward client securities (i.e., stock certificates) erroneously delivered to our firm;
- Will not collect fees of \$500 or more for services to be performed six months or more in advance; and
- Will not authorize any associate to have knowledge of a client's account access information (i.e., online 401(k), brokerage or bank accounts), even for the convenience or accommodation of the client or their legal agent when such access might result in physical control over client assets.

You will be provided with transaction confirmations and summary account statements provided directly to you by your selected service provider, and you should read these documents carefully. Typically, these statements are provided on a monthly or quarterly basis, or as transactions occur. We will not create a statement for you nor be the sole recipient of your statements.

Should you ever receive periodic reports or "Snapshots" from our firm that may include performance-related information, you are urged to compare your account statements that you have received directly from your service provider with any report you receive from our firm.

#### **Item 16 - Investment Discretion**

We provide our investment management services to our clients through a *non-discretionary* account agreement which requires all account transactions to occur after your approval, including periodic rebalancing. Because of this pre-approval requirement, you must make yourself available and keep our firm apprised of your current contact information so that transaction instructions can be efficiently effected on your behalf.

By definition, decisions that involve only an approved trade's execution price or time do not constitute the exercise of discretion.

We will retain information about all client account directions, limitations and rescissions, which are reviewed and approved by a firm principal.

#### **Item 17 - Voting Client Securities**

#### **Proxy Voting**

Our firm does not vote proxies on your behalf nor do we offer guidance on how to vote proxies. You will maintain exclusive responsibility for directing the manner in which proxies solicited by issuers of securities that are beneficially owned by you shall be voted, as well as making all other elections relative to mergers, acquisitions, tender offers or other events pertaining to your holdings.

#### Other Corporate Actions

We will have no power, authority, responsibility, or obligation to take any action with regard to any claim or potential claim in any bankruptcy proceeding, class action securities litigation or other litigation or proceeding relating to securities held at any time in a client account, including, without limitation, to file proofs of claim or other documents related to such proceeding, or to investigate, initiate, supervise or monitor class action or other litigation involving client assets.

### **Receipt of Materials**

You may receive proxies or other similar solicitations sent directly from your selected custodian or transfer agent. Should we receive a duplicate copy, note that we do not generally forward these or any correspondence relating to the voting of your securities, class action litigation, or other corporate actions.

### **Item 18 - Financial Information**

#### **Balance Sheet**

With the exception of our having the ability to withdraw our advisory fees through the services of a qualified, unaffiliated custodian and per your prior written authorization, we will not have custody of your assets (as described in Item 15). This includes our policy of not collecting fees from you of \$500 or more for services we will perform six months or more in advance.

Due to the nature of our firm's services and operational practices, an audited balance sheet is not required nor included in this brochure.

### Financial Conditions Reasonably Likely to Impair Advisory Firm's Ability to Meet Commitments to Clients

The firm and its management do not have a financial condition likely to impair our ability to meet our commitment to our clients.

#### Bankruptcy Petitions during the Past 10 Years

The firm and its management have not been the subject of a bankruptcy petition at any time during the past 10 years.

# Item 19 - Requirements for State-Registered Advisors<sup>3</sup>

## Principal Executive Officer and Management Person

Managing Member/Majority Shareholder/Firm Principal/Investment Advisor Representative

Angela Lee Grillo [Born 1969]

#### Educational Background and Business Experience

### **Educational Background**

B.S. Business Administration; CSU - Dominguez Hills (1991) CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ Practitioner (CFP®)¹ (2006)

### **Business Experience**

South County Financial Planning, LLC; Laguna Niguel, CA (2008-Present) President, Financial Planner, Investment Advisor Representative

PURE Financial Advisors, Inc.; San Diego, CA (2008) Financial Planner, Investment Advisor Representative

Compak Asset Management, Inc.; Irvine, CA (2004-2008) Financial Planner, Investment Advisor Representative

Linda A. Barlow, CFP®; Santa Ana, CA (2004) Assistant Financial Planner, Investment Advisor Representative

Yosemite Capital Management; Tustin, CA (2001-2004) Investment Advisor Representative, Client Services Manager

RGT Capital Management, Inc.; Irvine, CA (2000-2001)
Portfolio Administrator, Investment Advisor Representative

Concord Investment Counsel, Inc.; San Diego, CA (2000) Portfolio Administrator

LPL Financial Services; Orange, CA (1999-2000) Investment Representative

#### **Disciplinary Information**

Registered investment advisors are required to disclose all material facts regarding any legal or disciplinary events that would be material to your evaluation of each supervised person providing investment advice. No information is applicable to this Item. There are no criminal or civil actions, administrative enforcement proceedings, self regulatory organization enforcement proceedings or any other proceedings applicable to the firm or Ms. Grillo.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Comprehensive responses to Item 19 is presented in lieu of Form ADV Part 2B per response numbers 6 and 7 (page 22) of SEC's 2010 *General Instructions for Part 2 of Form ADV*.

### **Other Business Activities**

Ms. Grillo currently serves as a committee member on the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee for the city of San Juan Capistrano, California. The committee is responsible for ensuring that bond proceeds are being spent pursuant to local ordinance, auditing expenditures and reporting to the City Council.

Ms. Grillo has served on the Board of Directors for the following non-profit organizations:

- Orange County Chapter of the Financial Planning Association (FPA) as the Chair of the Community
  Relations and Pro-Bono Committee. Through this position, she and her team of dedicated FPA volunteers
  coordinated financial awareness programs throughout Orange County. Twice a year, volunteers answer
  phone calls to the Orange County Register Hotline and provide one-on-one advice to the general public.
  Volunteers also assist Junior Achievement by teaching financial literacy to elementary school children in
  their classrooms.
- Women Investing in Security & Education (WISE) as the Vice President of Fund Development and Chair of the Exhibitor Committee. Every September, WISE hosts an annual conference dedicated to providing financial education to women. Ms. Grillo has spoken at the conference on "How to Choose a Financial Planner."
- Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK) as Treasurer. TASK is dedicated to educating families of special needs children about their rights in the public school Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process as well as connecting them with additional resources.

### **Additional Compensation**

Ms. Grillo is not compensated for advisory services involving performance-based fees, nor does she or the firm have a material relationship involving an issuer of a security. Our firm also prohibits employees from accepting or receiving additional economic benefit, such as sales awards or other prizes, for providing advisory services to its clients.

She is not actively engaged in another *investment-related* business or occupation. She is not registered nor has an application pending to register as a registered representative of a broker/dealer or associated person of a futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator, or commodity trading advisor. Therefore, Ms. Grillo does not receive commissions, bonuses or other compensation based on the sale of securities or other investment products, including that as a registered representative of a broker/dealer, and including distribution or service ("trail") fees from the sale of mutual funds.

## Supervision

Ms. Grillo serves in multiple capacities with our firm, including Managing Member, Firm Principal (Supervisor) and Investment Advisor Representative. We recognize not having all organizational duties segregated may potentially create a conflict of interest, however, we believe our policies and procedures are designed to ensure appropriate recordkeeping and supervision. Certain functions may be outsourced to assist in these efforts when deemed necessary.

Questions relative to the firm, its services, or this ADV Part 2 may be made to the attention of Ms. Grillo at (949) 240-6125.

Additional information about our firm, other advisory firms, associated investment advisor representatives, including Ms. Grillo, is available on the Internet at www.adviserinfo.sec.gov. A search of this site for firms or their associated personnel can be accomplished by their name or a unique firm identifier, known as an *IARD number*. The IARD number for South County Financial Planning, LLC is 146691, and Ms. Grillo's reference number is 3150878.

The business and disciplinary history, if any, of an investment advisory firm and its representatives may also be obtained by calling the California Securities Division at (866) 275-2677.

### Requirements for State-Registered Advisors

There have been neither arbitration awards nor any awards where the firm or Ms. Grillo has been found liable in any civil, self-regulatory or administrative proceeding. South County Financial Planning, LLC and Ms. Grillo have not been the subject of a bankruptcy petition.

# About the CFP® Professional Designation

<sup>1</sup>The **CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™**, CFP<sup>\*</sup> and federally registered CFP (with flame design) marks (collectively, the "CFP<sup>\*</sup> marks") are professional certification marks granted in the United States by Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. ("CFP Board").

The CFP\* certification is a voluntary certification; no federal or state law or regulation requires financial planners to hold CFP\* certification. It is recognized in the United States and a number of other countries for its (1) high standard of professional education; (2) stringent code of conduct and standards of practice; and (3) ethical requirements that govern professional engagements with clients.

To attain the right to use the CFP marks, an individual must satisfactorily fulfill the following requirements:

- Education Complete an advanced college-level course of study addressing the financial planning subject areas that CFP Board's studies have determined as necessary for the competent and professional delivery of financial planning services, and attain a Bachelor's Degree from a regionally accredited United States college or university (or its equivalent from a foreign university). CFP Board's financial planning subject areas include insurance planning and risk management, employee benefits planning, investment planning, income tax planning, retirement planning, and estate planning;
- Examination Pass the comprehensive CFP® Certification Examination. The examination includes case studies and client scenarios designed to test one's ability to correctly diagnose financial planning issues and apply one's knowledge of financial planning to real world circumstances;
- Experience Complete at least three years of full-time financial planning-related experience (or the equivalent, measured as 2,000 hours per year); and
- Ethics Agree to be bound by CFP Board's *Standards of Professional Conduct*, a set of documents outlining the ethical and practice standards for CFP professionals.

Individuals who become certified must complete the following ongoing education and ethics requirements in order to maintain the right to continue to use the CFP\* marks:

- Continuing Education Complete 30 hours of continuing education hours every two years, including two hours on the Code of Ethics
  and other parts of the Standards of Professional Conduct, to maintain competence and keep up with developments in the financial
  planning field; and
- Ethics Renew an agreement to be bound by the Standards of Professional Conduct. The Standards prominently require that CFP<sup>\*</sup> professionals provide financial planning services at a fiduciary standard of care. This means CFP<sup>\*</sup> professionals must provide financial planning services in the best interests of their clients.

CFP professionals who fail to comply with the above standards and requirements may be subject to CFP Board's enforcement process, which could result in suspension or permanent revocation of their CFP certification.