# 2023 ANNUAL MANAGEMENT REPORT OF FUND PERFORMANCE

December 31, 2023

Offered by Educators Financial Group Portfolio Adviser: Fiera Capital Inc., Toronto, Ontario

# **Educators Monthly Income Fund**





This annual management report of fund performance contains financial highlights but does not contain the annual financial statements of the investment fund. You can get a copy of the annual financial statements at your request, and at no cost, by calling 1.800.263.9541, by writing to us at Educators Financial Group, 2225 Sheppard Ave. East, Suite 1105, Toronto, Ontario, M2J 5C2, or by visiting our website at www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca or SEDAR at www.sedar.com.

Securityholders may also contact us using one of these methods to request a copy of the investment fund's interim financial report, proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosure.

# **Caution Regarding Forward-looking Statements**

This report may contain forward-looking statements about the Fund, including its strategy, risks, expected performance and condition. Forward-looking statements include statements that are predictive in nature, that depend upon or refer to future events or conditions, or that include words such as "expects", "anticipates", "intends", "plans", "believes", "estimates" or negative versions thereof and similar forward-looking expressions.

In addition, any statement that may be made concerning future performance, strategies or prospects, and possible future Fund action, is also a forward-looking statement. Forward-looking statements are based on current expectations and projections about future general economic, political and relevant market factors, such as interest rates, foreign exchange rates, equity and capital markets, and the general business environment, in each case assuming no changes to applicable tax or other laws or government regulation. Expectations and projections about future events are inherently subject to, among other things, risks, and uncertainties, some of which may be unforeseeable. Accordingly, assumptions concerning future economic and other factors may prove to be incorrect at a future date.

Forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance, and actual events and results could differ materially from those expressed or implied in any forward-looking statements made by the Fund. Any number of important factors could contribute to these digressions, including, but not limited to, general economic, political and market factors in North America and internationally, including international conflicts, interest and foreign exchange rates, global equity and capital markets, business competition, technological change, changes in government regulations, unexpected judicial or regulatory proceedings, and catastrophic events, including any potential lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Fund and/or its operations.

It should be stressed that the above-mentioned list of factors is not exhaustive. You are encouraged to consider these and other factors carefully before making any investment decisions and you are urged to avoid placing undue reliance on forward-looking statements. Further, you should be aware of the fact that the Fund has no specific intention of updating any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, prior to the release of the next Management Report of Fund Performance unless required by applicable law.



# MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION OF FUND PERFORMANCE

# Investment Objective and Strategies

The investment objective of the Educators Monthly Income Fund (the "Fund") is to provide a consistent stream of monthly income and some capital appreciation by investing in a portfolio of fixed income, investment trust units and equity investments. A minimum of 6% and a maximum of 60% of the portfolio will be invested in fixed income securities, while a minimum of 40% and a maximum of 94% of the portfolio will be invested in Canadian equity securities. Non-Canadian securities are generally limited to no more than 30% of the Fund's net assets. Foreign currency exposure may or may not be hedged. The fundamental investment objective of the Fund may not be changed without the prior approval of the unitholders.

# Risk

The risks of investing in the Fund remain as discussed in the Simplified Prospectus. No changes affecting the overall level of risk of investing in the Fund were made to the Fund in the one-year period ending December 31, 2023.

# **Results of Operations**

The Fund's net assets increased by 9.6% to \$65.7 million at the end of December 2023, up from \$59.9 million at the end of December 2022.

# Investment Performance

For the year/period ending December 31, 2023 (*the period*), the Educators Monthly Income Fund – Class A Series provided a return of 9.23%, versus a Benchmark return of 10.26%. The Benchmark comprises 70% S&P/TSX Composite Total Return Index, 27% FTSE Canada Bond Universe Index and 3% FTSE Canada 91 Day Treasury Bill Index (the Benchmark).

The Fund underperformed its blended Benchmark over the period. Unlike the Benchmark, the Fund's return is net of fees and expenses paid by the Fund. Detailed performance is provided under the heading "Past Performance" in this report. Investors cannot invest in the Benchmark without incurring fees, expenses and commissions which are not reflected in Benchmark returns.

Markets rallied in 2023 despite continued recessionary fears, hawkish monetary policy, and the first quarter's banking crisis. While several vulnerable U.S. regional banks and Swiss banking giant Credit Suisse were caught up in the early year turmoil, wellcapitalized developed market banking systems and policymakers' timely interventions prevented issues from spreading. Following these events, Canadian and International markets generally traded sideways in a wide range with mixed sentiment until expectations of central bank rate cuts powered an impressive rally during the final two months of 2023. In comparison, U.S. equities roared past peers amidst resilient earnings and speculative interest in a narrow group of large cap stocks linked to Artificial Intelligence. Domestically, the Bank of Canada ("BoC") increased its Benchmark overnight interest rate by 0.75%, leaving the overnight rate at 5.00% at year-end, adding to tight financial conditions that muted Canadian economic growth and equity returns. This shifted in late-2023 when equity markets experienced a sustained and rapid rise across almost all sectors as the prospect of a soft-landing and an end to rising rates ignited optimism. All told, the strongest performing domestic equity sectors in 2023 were Information Technology, Health Care, and Financials. Materials, Utilities and Communication Services were the biggest laggards.

The equity portion of the Fund enhanced performance on an absolute basis but underperformed its Benchmark over the period. The Fund benefited from positive relative contributions in the Materials, Energy, and Financials sectors. The Fund's lack of exposure to the Materials sector and underweight exposure in the Energy sector both contributed positively, as returns lagged other sectors over the course of the year. Within the Financials sector, non-bank issuers such as Mastercard, CME Group, and TMX Group contributed positively, as the Fund holds an overweight position in these names (compared to the benchmark) and their returns were greater than the sector overall. Security selection within the Information Technology sector detracted from performance, as the strong contributions from the portfolio's holdings in Constellation Software and Accenture were more than offset by the impact of Shopify, which is not held in the Fund, but has a significant weight in the benchmark and performed strongly over the year.

The fixed income portion of the Fund performed in line with its Benchmark over the period, as the Securitization, Financial, and Energy sectors contributed, while the portfolio's underweight position in the Provincial sector detracted from relative performance. Securitization holdings, backed by such assets as credit card receivables and auto loans, continued to be the largest contributors during the year, despite seeing some issuance in the primary market. Strong credit enhancements and high prepayments for securitization pools outweighed delinquencies, resulting in strong performance. In addition, given that the yield curve ended the year higher across most maturities, the Securitization sector benefitted from its typically shorter maturities—as compared to other corporate sectors.

The Fund's allocation to equities increased during the period, the fixed income weight remained stable, and the allocation to cash and equivalents was reduced. The Fund's holdings in equities increased from 58.7% to 66.4%, composed of a 50.6% exposure to Canadian equity and a 15.8% exposure to foreign equity. The fixed income allocation ended the period at 19.3%, down from 19.9% and it continues to include exposure to short-term Canadian fixed income. The Fund ended the period with an allocation of 14.3% in cash and equivalents, down from 21.6%, as these assets were redeployed within the equity portfolio. The asset allocation positioning versus the Benchmark detracted from performance in 2023.



# Recent Developments

The initiatives put forth by the central banks to curb inflation, combined with recent signaling that rate cuts would be included in their outlook for 2024, were well received by the market. This shift in policy led bond yields sharply lower and supported risk-taking, including equities. However, with inflation still ahead of target, coupled with resilient consumer spending, there remains a risk that the market is being overly optimistic and that rates may stay higher for longer, which has investors resetting their expectations. Additionally, growing global geo-political instability, along with tensions escalating in other areas, and elections taking place in seven of the world's most populous countries this year, all provides further grounds for caution.

Based on the economic and earnings data released thus far, the portfolio adviser has maintained the Fund's equity positioning and will continue to focus on the types of companies that can withstand tough times and are currently trading at attractive discounts to their intrinsic values.

Within the fixed income portion of the Fund there have also been no significant changes made to the portfolio since year-end. The portfolio adviser to focus on sectors and securities that generate strong cash flows, maintain high-quality balance sheets, and can either tolerate or pass along higher input costs, as they are expected to outperform in more challenging markets.

# **Related Party Transactions**

In 2023 Educators Financial Group did not refer any conflict of interest matters to the Fund's Independent Review Committee (*the IRC*) and accordingly did not rely upon any recommendation of the IRC in respect of any related party transactions.

Educators Financial Group is the Manager and Trustee of the Fund. Educators Financial Group is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF). OSSTF may from time to time invest in units of the Fund.



# **FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS**

The following tables show selected key financial information about the Fund and are intended to help you understand the Fund's financial performance for the past five years. Currently Class I units of the Fund are not being offered to purchase.

# Educators Monthly Income Fund – Class A Series – Net Assets per Unit (1)

	Year ended December 31					
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	
Net Assets, beginning of year/period	\$9.17	\$10.20	\$9.30	\$9.74	\$9.07	
Increase (decrease) from operations:						
Total revenue	\$0.30	\$0.27	\$0.27	\$0.29	\$0.33	
Total expenses, including transaction costs [excluding distributions]	(\$0.13)	(\$0.13)	(\$0.13)	(\$0.13)	(\$0.14)	
Realized gains (losses) for the period	(\$0.08)	\$0.13	\$0.28	(\$0.04)	\$0.62	
Unrealized gains (losses) for the period	\$0.72	(\$0.70)	\$1.08	(\$0.04)	\$0.47	
Total increase (decrease) from operations <sup>(2)</sup>	\$0.81	(\$0.43)	\$1.50	\$0.08	\$1.28	
Distributions:						
From net investment income (excluding dividends)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
From dividends	\$0.60	\$0.14	\$0.12	\$0.15	\$0.20	
From capital gains	\$	\$0.11	\$	\$0.02	\$0.39	
Return of capital	\$	\$0.35	\$0.48	\$0.43	\$0.01	
Total Annual Distributions <sup>(3)</sup>	\$0.60	\$0.60	\$0.60	\$0.60	\$0.60	
Net Assets, end of year/period	\$9.38	\$9.17	\$10.20	\$9.30	\$9.74	

# Ratios and Supplemental Data (based on Net Asset Value)

		Year ended December 31				
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	
Total Net Asset Value (000's) (4)	\$61,483	\$57,070	\$59,185	\$53,215	\$59,411	
Number of units outstanding <sup>(4)</sup>	6,551,306	6,224,925	5,799,608	5,721,925	6,101,290	
Management expense ratio (5)	1.30%	1.31%	1.31%	1.31%	1.31%	
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions (6)	1.30%	1.31%	1.31%	1.31%	1.31%	
Trading expense ratio (7)	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.02%	0.05%	
Portfolio turnover rate <sup>(8)</sup>	26.15%	23.22%	27.14%	46.75%	98.31%	
Net Asset Value per unit	\$9.38	\$9.17	\$10.20	\$9.30	\$9.74	



# Educators Monthly Income Fund – Class F Series – Net Assets per Unit (1)

	Year ended December 31			
	2023	2022	2021	
Net Assets, beginning of year/period	\$9.09	\$10.06	\$10.00	
Increase (decrease) from operations:				
Total revenue	\$0.31	\$0.27	\$0.10	
Total expenses, including transaction costs [excluding distributions]	(\$0.06)	(\$0.07)	(\$0.02)	
Realized gains (losses) for the period	(\$0.09)	\$0.15	\$0.01	
Unrealized gains (losses) for the period	\$0.74	(\$0.56)	\$0.72	
Total increase (decrease) from operations (2)	\$0.90	(\$0.21)	\$0.81	
Distributions:				
From net investment income (excluding dividends)	\$	\$	\$	
From dividends	\$0.60	\$0.14	\$0.06	
From capital gains	\$	\$0.11	\$	
Return of capital	\$	\$0.35	\$0.24	
Total Annual Distributions <sup>(3)</sup>	\$0.60	\$0.60	\$0.30	
Net Assets, end of year/period	\$9.36	\$9.09	\$10.06	

# Ratios and Supplemental Data (based on Net Asset Value)

	Year ended December 31			
	2023	2022	2021	
Total Net Asset Value (000's) (4)	\$4,189	\$2,862	\$1,756	
Number of units outstanding <sup>(4)</sup>	447,338	314,875	174,594	
Management expense ratio (5)	0.63%	0.63%	0.62%	
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions (6)	0.63%	0.63%	0.62%	
Trading expense ratio (7)	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	
Portfolio turnover rate <sup>(8)</sup>	26.15%	23.22%	27.14%	
Net Asset Value per unit	\$9.36	\$9.09	\$10.06	

(1) This information is derived from the Fund's audited annual financial statements. For financial years beginning after January 1, 2014, the financial highlights were derived from the Fund's financial statements prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). All references to "Net Assets" or "Net Assets per Unit" in these financial highlights are references to net assets attributable to holders of redeemable units determined in accordance with IFRS as presented in the financial statements of the Fund.

(2) Net assets and distributions are based on the actual number of units outstanding at the relevant time. The increase/decrease from operations is based on the weighted average number of units outstanding over the financial period. This table is not intended to be a reconciliation of beginning to ending net assets per unit.

<sup>(3)</sup> Distributions were either paid in cash or reinvested in additional units of the Fund.

<sup>(4)</sup> This information is provided as at December 31 of the year shown.

<sup>(6)</sup> Management expense ratio is based on total expenses (excluding [distributions], commissions, and other portfolio transaction costs) for the stated period and is expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value during the period.

<sup>(6)</sup> The management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions shows what the management expense ratio of the Fund would have been if Educators Financial Group had not charged a lesser amount for its management fee.

(7) The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value during the period.

(8) The Fund's portfolio turnover rate indicates how actively the Fund's portfolio adviser manages its portfolio investments. A portfolio turnover rate of 100% is equivalent to the Fund buying and selling all of the securities in its portfolio once in the course of the year. The higher a fund's portfolio turnover rate in a year, the greater the trading costs payable by the fund in the year, and the greater the chance of an investor receiving taxable capital gains in the year. There is not necessarily a relationship between a high turnover rate and the performance of a fund.



#### **Management Fees**

Educators Financial Group is the Manager-Trustee, promoter, and principal distributor of the Fund, and is responsible for the day-to-day management and administration of the Fund.

The Manager-Trustee monitors and evaluates the performance of the Fund and pays for the investment management services of the portfolio adviser, as well as all administrative services required by the Fund. As compensation for these services, Educators Financial Group is entitled to receive a fee, payable monthly and calculated daily, based on the Net Asset Value of the Fund, at the annual rate of 1.15% for the Class A Series and 0.55% for the Class F Series.

The Fund is responsible for paying any applicable tax owing on its management fee.

Approximately 15.2% of the total management fees collected from all Series were used to pay for portfolio management services, with the remainder of the fees allocated to custodial services, marketing, technology, and Manager-Trustee operating expenses.

# Past Performance

#### General

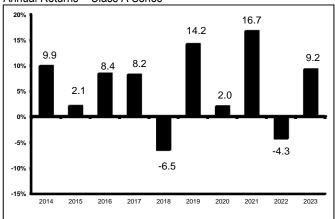
The Fund's performance information shown assumes that all distributions made by the Fund in the period(s) shown were reinvested in additional units of the Fund.

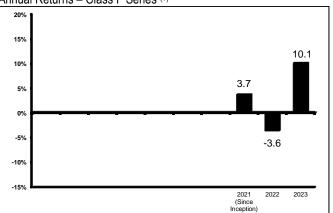
The performance information does not take into account sales, redemption, distribution, or other optional charges that would have reduced returns or performance. The performance of different fund series may vary for a number of reasons, including differences in management fees and expenses. Please remember that how the Fund has performed in the past does not necessarily indicate how it will perform in the future.

#### Year-by-Year Returns

The bar chart shows the Fund's annual performance for each of the years shown and illustrates how the Fund's performance has changed from year to year. The bar chart shows, in percentage terms, how much an investment made on the first day of each financial period would have grown or decreased by the last day of each financial period.

Annual Returns – Class A Series





Annual Returns – Class F Series (1)

(1) The Class F Series commenced operation May 14, 2021

#### Annual Returns – Class I Series

Currently Class I units of the Fund are not being offered to purchase.



#### Annual Compound Returns

The following table compares the historical annual compound returns of the Fund since inception with the performance of the blended Benchmark index comprised as follows: 70% S&P/TSX Composite Total Return Index, a capitalization-weighted index designed to measure the market activity of some of the largest float adjusted stocks listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange, 27% FTSE Canada Universe Bond Index, which is a broad measure of the total return of Canadian bonds that mature in more than one year and 3% FTSE Canada 91 Day Treasury Bill Index, which measures the performance attributable to 91-day Treasury Bills of the provincial and federal governments.

Educators Monthly Income Fund	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year
Class A Series	9.23	6.86	7.28	5.75
Class F Series 1	10.09	NA	NA	NA
Class I Series <sup>2</sup>				
Blended Benchmark	10.26	6.03	8.46	6.16

<sup>1</sup> Since Inception (May 14, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Currently not being offered to purchase

The Benchmark returns do not include any costs of investing. See Management Discussion of Fund Performance for a discussion of performance relative to the Benchmark.

# SUMMARY OF INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

(Based on Net Asset Value)

As at December 31, 2023

Sector Mix	Percentage of Net Asset
	Value
Financials	23.81 %
Short-term investments	14.24 %
Consumer Staples	13.36 %
Industrials	11.47 %
Corporate Bonds	10.50 %
Information Technology	8.69 %
Consumer Discretionary	5.14 %
Canadian Mutual Funds	4.21 %
Communication Services	3.79%
Government Bonds	3.36 %
Asset-Backed Securities	1.09 %
Net Other Assets (Liabilities)	0.30 %
Cash and Cash Equivalents	0.04 %

# Top 25 Holdings

Security Name	Percentage of Net Asset Value
Canadian Treasury Bill, 5.03%, February 15, 2024	14.06 %
IMAXX Short Term Bond Fund Class O	4.21 %
Constellation Software Inc.	3.61 %
National Bank of Canada	3.00 %
Royal Bank of Canada	2.98 %
Canadian Pacific Kansas City Ltd.	2.79 %
Bank of Montreal	2.76 %
TMX Group Ltd.	2.72 %
Intact Financial Corp.	2.71 %
Toronto-Dominion Bank	2.69 %
Mastercard Inc.	2.69 %
Thomson Reuters Corp.	2.65 %
Costco Wholesale Corp.	2.57 %
Canadian National Railway Co.	2.50 %
Metro Inc.	2.47 %
TELUS Corp.	2.39 %
Restaurant Brands International Inc.	2.37 %
Alimentation Couche-Tard Inc.	2.23 %
Loblaw Cos Ltd.	2.03 %
Dollarama Inc.	2.02 %
Toromont Industries Ltd.	1.98 %
FactSet Research Systems Inc.	1.91 %
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1.86 %
Accenture PLC	1.74 %
PepsiCo Inc.	1.71 %
Total Net Assets (000's)	\$65,671

The top 25 holdings represent approximately 74.65% of the total net assets of the Fund.

The summary of investment portfolio of the Fund is as at December 31, 2023 and may change due to the Fund's ongoing portfolio transactions. Updates are available quarterly.

# EDUCATORS FINANCIAL GROUP

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