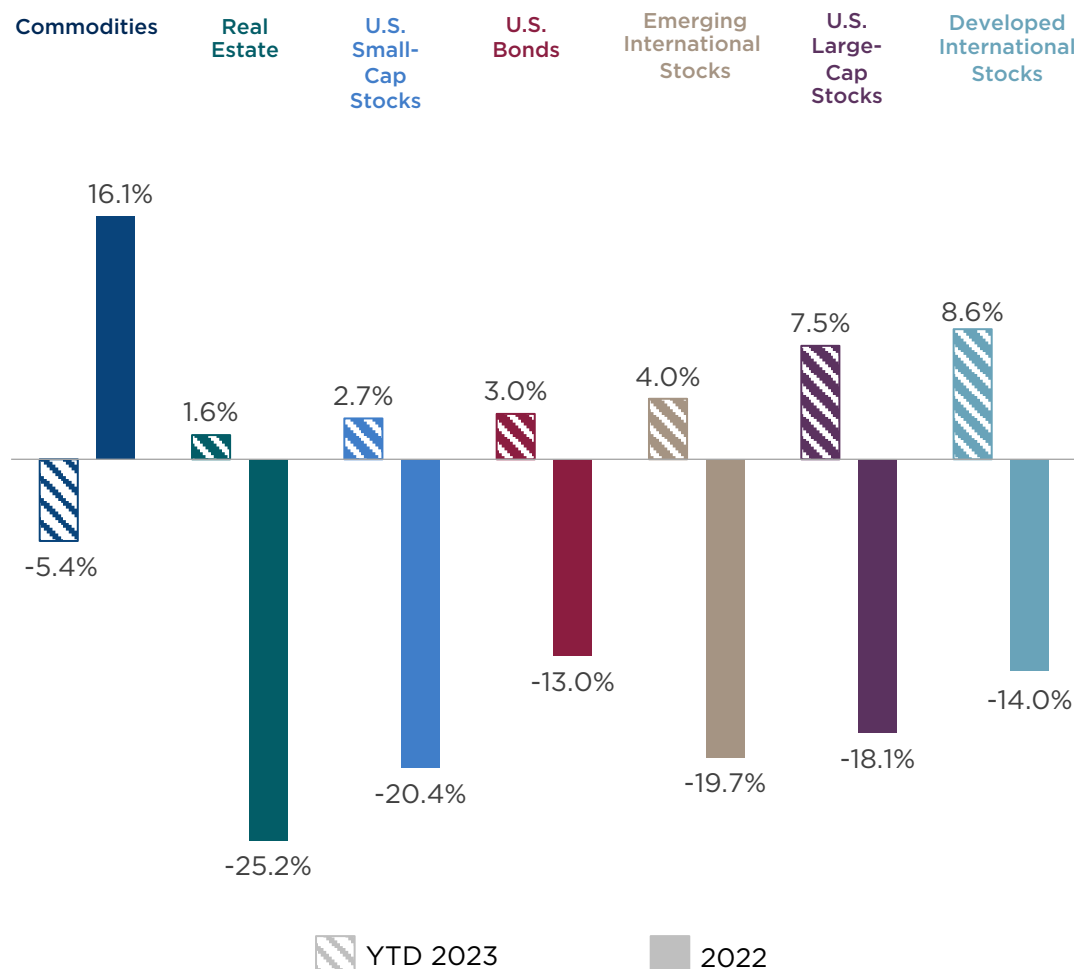


## STRONG RETURNS, SHAKY NERVES

After a strong start to 2023, the first quarter ended on a high note despite a rapid-fire array of troubling news. In early March, two large banks failed, and policymakers stepped in to keep isolated problems from becoming a systemic crisis. Despite the headlines, stock and bond markets were surprisingly calm.

- In the U.S., large-cap stocks floated upward, with their small-cap counterparts trailing behind.
- The financial sector faced understandably stiff headwinds, and investors reacted to banking sector news by rotating back to the comfort of mega-cap technology companies with ample cash flows.
- Skeptical of future Fed actions, bond investors drove prices higher as yields slipped lower.
- Outside the U.S., international developed and emerging markets saw modest but steady gains. The post-pandemic reopening of China, stabilizing energy prices across Europe, and a weakening U.S. dollar contributed.
- Real estate posted a modest gain for the quarter, although many of the same challenges of last year remain as headwinds.
- 2022's standout performer, commodities, was the only major asset class in negative territory for the quarter as oil prices slipped.



Asset class returns are represented by the following indexes: Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index (U.S. bonds), S&P 500 Index (U.S. large-cap stocks), Russell 2000® (U.S. small-cap stocks), MSCI EAFE Index (international developed market stocks), MSCI Emerging Market Index (emerging market stocks), Dow Jones U.S. Real Estate Index (real estate), and Bloomberg Commodity Index (commodities).

## DIGGING DEEPER: STOCKS AND BONDS

### Equities

	Q1 2023	YTD 2023	Last 12 Months
U.S. Stocks	7.5%	7.5%	-7.8%
• Q1 Best Sector: Technology	21.8%	21.8%	-4.6%
• Q1 Worst Sector: Financials	-5.6%	-5.6%	-14.3%
International Stocks	8.6%	8.6%	-0.9%
Emerging Markets Stocks	4.0%	4.0%	-10.3%

### Fixed Income

	3.31.23	12.31.22	3.31.22
1-Year U.S. Treasury Yield	4.62%	4.71%	1.61
10-Year U.S. Treasury Yield	3.47%	3.88%	2.34%
	QTD 2023	YTD 2023	Last 12 Months
10-Year U.S. Treasury Total Return	3.76%	3.76%	-6.79%

### Equities – Relative Performance by Market Capitalization and Style

Q1 2023				YTD 2023				Last 12 Months			
	Value	Blend	Growth		Value	Blend	Growth		Value	Blend	Growth
Large	1.0%	7.5%	14.4%	Large	1.0%	7.5%	14.4%	Large	-5.9%	-7.8%	-10.9%
Mid	1.3%	4.1%	9.1%	Mid	1.3%	4.1%	9.1%	Mid	-9.2%	-8.8%	-8.5%
Small	-0.7%	2.7%	6.1%	Small	-0.7%	2.7%	6.1%	Small	-13.0%	-11.6%	-10.6%

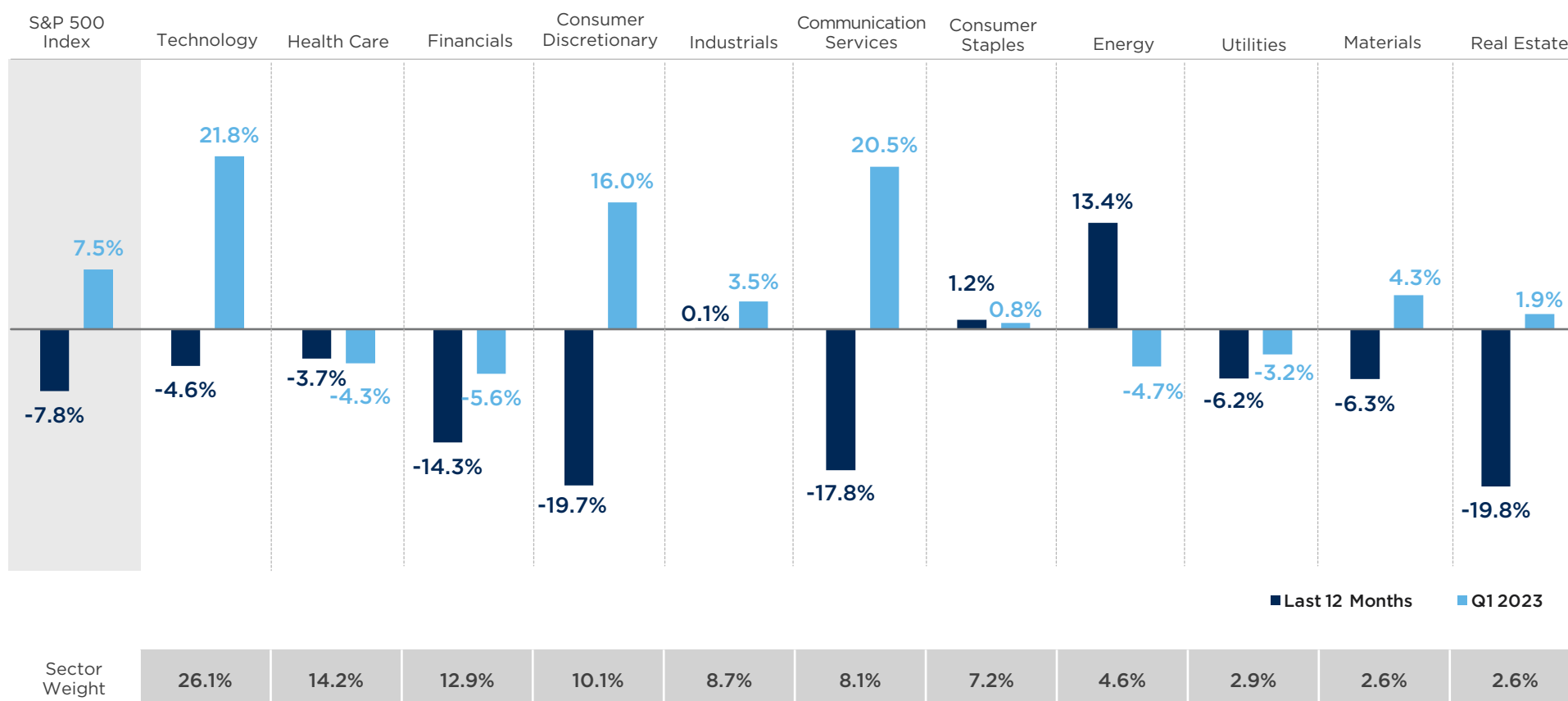
Sources: Bloomberg, U.S. Treasury. Asset class returns are represented by the following indexes: S&P 500 Index (U.S. stocks), MSCI EAFE Index (international developed market stocks), and MSCI Emerging Markets Index (emerging market stocks). Relative performance by market capitalization and style is based upon the Russell US Style Indexes except for large-cap blend, which is based upon the S&P 500 Index.



## DIGGING DEEPER: U.S. EQUITY MARKETS

The S&P 500 Index is a market-capitalization-weighted index of U.S. large-cap stocks across a diverse set of industry sectors. The stocks represented in these 11 sectors generated a range of returns for the last 12 months and the most recent quarter.

Returns by S&P 500 Sector



Source: Bloomberg. All calculations are cumulative total return, not annualized, including dividends for the stated period. Past performance is not indicative of future returns.



## DIGGING DEEPER: FIXED INCOME MARKET

Interest Rates	3 Months	2 Years	5 Years	10 Years	30 Years	Mortgage Rate
December 2022	4.37%	4.43%	4.00%	3.88%	3.97%	6.66%
March 2023	4.75%	4.03%	3.58%	3.47%	3.65%	6.81%
Change	0.37%	-0.40%	-0.43%	-0.41%	-0.31%	0.15%

U.S. Treasury yields moved mostly lower this quarter as turmoil in the banking sector left investors with the expectation of less aggressive future Fed policy. Mortgage rates remain exceptionally high, contributing to a slowing housing market.

Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index	Yield to Worst	Duration	Total Return Q1 2023	Spread	Treasury Rate	AA Spread	BBB Spread
December 2022	4.68%	6.17	2.96%	0.51%	4.17%	0.73%	1.59%
March 2023	4.40%	6.33		0.57%	3.83%	0.75%	1.67%
Change	-0.28%	0.16%		0.06%	-0.34%	0.02%	0.08%

Performance for core bonds was positive for the quarter, after declining 13% in 2022. Yields moved lower for core fixed income, while credit spreads increased only slightly.

Bloomberg U.S. Long Credit Index	Yield to Worst	Duration	Total Return Q1 2023	Spread	Treasury Rate	AA Spread	BBB Spread
December 2022	5.59%	12.81	5.42%	1.57%	4.02%	1.06%	1.93%
March 2023	5.28%	13.05		1.59%	3.69%	1.06%	1.93%
Change	-0.31%	0.24		0.01%	-0.32%	0.00%	0.01%

Performance for longer-maturity bonds was boosted this quarter by lower yields and nearly unchanged credit spreads.

Sources: Bloomberg, U.S. Treasury, CAPTRUST Research



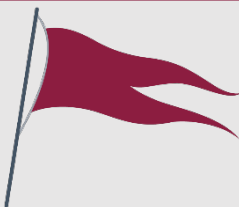
## ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The economy's forward path has become even more complicated with recent high-profile but isolated bank failures accentuating the impact of rising rates. While the Fed remains committed to taming inflation, it must also consider the lagged impact of prior tightening actions. Stricter regulation and tighter lending conditions could compound the effect of its restrictive monetary policy and further slow the economy.

### HEADWINDS

#### The Fed Conflict

- Although inflation remains elevated, prices have descended. The Fed now faces the task of achieving price stability while avoiding strain on the financial system.



#### Financial System in Turmoil

- Regional and community banks risk losing cash deposits to the perceived safety of larger institutions. Such moves may lead to tighter lending conditions across several economic sectors.

#### Earnings at Risk

- Despite cost-cutting, certain sectors could see squeezed margins. Financial firms may see tighter regulation and lower net interest margins, while a mild winter and cost inflation could create headwinds for energy companies.

#### Debt-Ceiling Deadlock

- To avoid the consequences of a default, Congress needs to raise the debt ceiling by mid-summer.
- This debt-ceiling compromise must be struck between polarized parties with thin margins, raising the odds of political fireworks.

### TAILWINDS

#### Consumer Goods Inflation Easing

- The cost of key consumer goods, like food, gas, and housing, is gradually abating.
- Reduced logistic pressures and the Chinese economic reopening have improved supply-side capacity.
- Warmer weather, conservation, and the use of energy reserves have benefited oil and gas prices.
- A wave of new supply has tempered rent growth.



#### Resilient Labor Market and Consumer Spending

- While wage pressures have eased, job growth remains robust. A stronger labor market provides greater household confidence, supporting consumer spending across goods and services.

#### Traditional Diversification Benefits

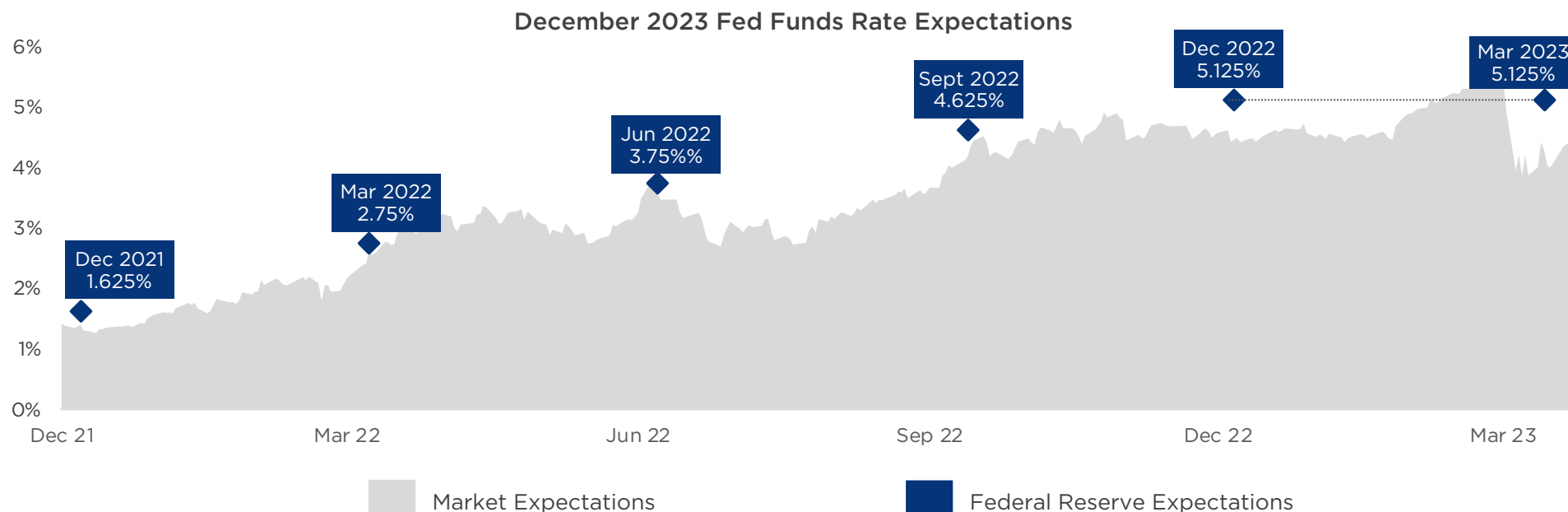
- 2022's highly unusual environment made diversification an ineffective tool.
- Supported by a higher risk-free rate, the new year has shown hints of more normal diversification relationships between asset classes, with stock and bond prices reacting differently to economic data.

The wide range of potential outcomes and an uncertain policy environment limit the ability to create a singular forecast with confidence. Investors should remain vigilant, diversified, and prepared for ongoing volatility.



## A FED IN CONFLICT

Before the banking system stresses that emerged in March, the Fed was prepared to maintain higher-for-longer interest rates in the face of labor market strength and inflation that remains above target. Now, the Fed must balance its goal of lowering inflation while maintaining stability in the financial system. With so much uncertainty surrounding the forward path, expectations are diverging.



### OBSERVATIONS

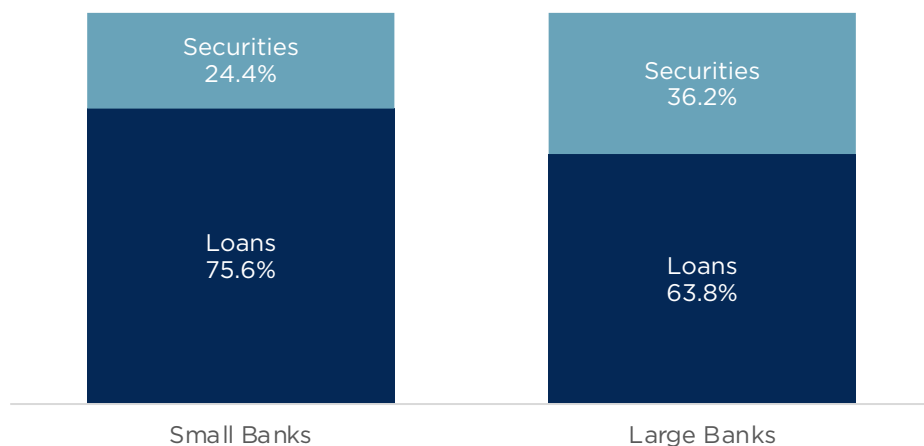
- For much of 2022, both the market's expectations and the Fed's forecasts were aligned about where the fed funds rate would land at the end of 2023. However, the two began to diverge in late 2022, with the Fed maintaining its higher-for-longer stance, while markets envisioned a quicker Fed pivot.
- Both sides remain data-dependent. A stronger-than-expected January jobs report sent market expectations above Fed targets. However, the bank collapses in March sent expectations sharply lower as the market anticipated rate cuts before 2024. How this difference of opinion reconciles will be a critical contributor to market conditions and investor sentiment for the remainder of the year.

Sources: Bloomberg, CAPTRUST Research. Data as of 3.31.2023.

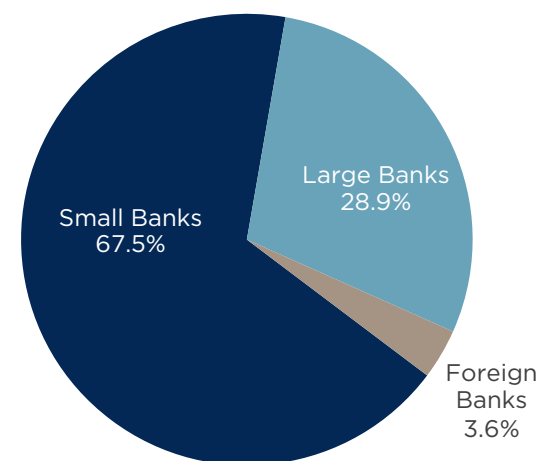
## BANK STRESS IMPACTS MAY PERSIST

After the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank in early March, regional and community banks have come under pressure. The week after these disruptions, savers withdrew more than \$180 billion from small banks, the largest weekly deposit decline of the last 20 years. Large banks were the primary beneficiaries, as investors flocked to their perceived safety. Continued declines in deposit balances could ultimately leave small and midsize banks vulnerable, leading to tighter lending conditions across several economic sectors.

Percent of Bank Credit



Issuers of Commercial Real Estate Loans



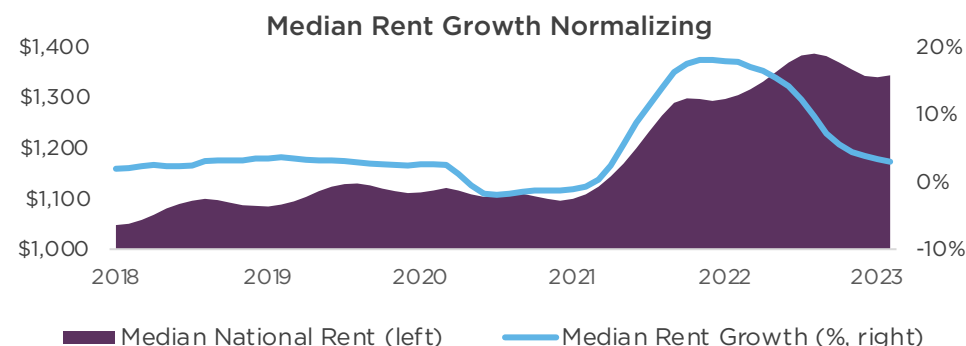
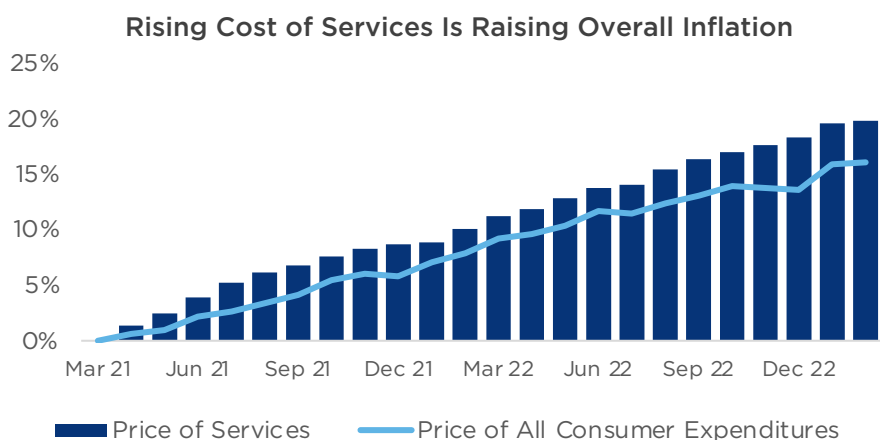
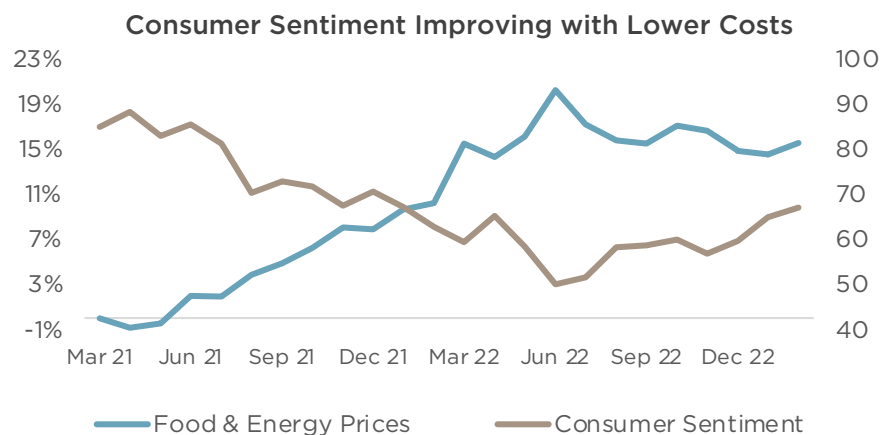
### OBSERVATIONS

- Generally, large banks maintain a higher percentage of their bank credit—or a portion of total assets—in securities and lend approximately 65% of available credit. Conversely, loans make up approximately 75% of smaller banks' available bank credit. Consequently, a deposit shift from small banks to larger ones will likely restrict the amount of credit available across the overall economy.
- Most vulnerable is the commercial real estate market, where small banks provide nearly 70% of all commercial real estate loans. Restrictive credit conditions could create challenges for these markets that are already facing valuation pressure from rising interest rates.

Sources: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, CAPTRUST Research. Large banks are defined as the largest 25 U.S. chartered commercial banks. Small banks are defined all chartered U.S. commercial banks excluding the top 25.

## RELIEF FOR CONSUMERS AS PRICES FALL

Consumer purchasing power has improved as the prices of key items such as groceries and gasoline have receded from their 2022 peaks. The robust labor market has also contributed to a more confident consumer by driving wages higher. However, these same high labor costs are adversely impacting the price of worker-dependent services, like home repair, travel, and entertainment, contributing to higher overall inflation.



### OBSERVATIONS

- Consumer sentiment reached an all-time low in June 2022, just as food and energy prices peaked. Sentiment has improved as prices have come down.
- Landlords are holding rents steady in anticipation of competition, as the market is expected to see the largest delivery of new unit supply since 1986. Much of this supply comes from real estate developers seeking to capitalize on pent-up housing demand.
- The cost of services has risen 20% in just two years as workers return to the office and in-person activities. This increase is driving persistently high headline inflation even as the cost of goods has ebbed.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, University of Michigan Consumer Sentiment Index, CAPTRUST Research. Data as of March 31, 2023.



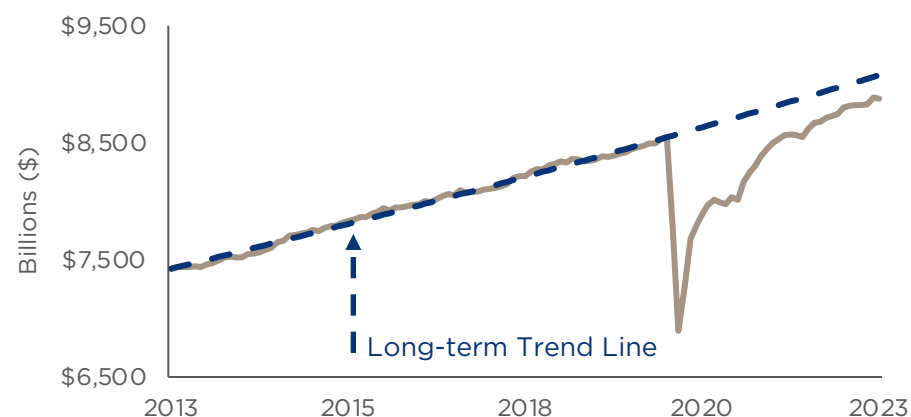
## REGISTERS KEEP RINGING WITH JOBS, SAVINGS

While the strong labor market is proving to be a thorn in the Fed's side, it continues to support economic activity, giving consumers greater confidence to maintain spending. While personal savings rates have recently fallen below long-term averages, this additional spending has been supported by excess savings accumulated during the pandemic. Based on the February 2020 savings level, economists estimate approximately \$1 trillion in excess savings remains in the system.

### U.S. Real Consumer Spending - Goods



### U.S. Real Consumer Spending - Services



#### OBSERVATIONS: GOODS

- Spending on goods continues to run above pre-pandemic levels. At the end of February 2023, spending on goods was approximately \$285 billion above the long-term trend line.
- The easing of inflation across goods sectors has supported real spending.
- As supply chains have reopened, supply-demand imbalances have quickly cleared.

#### OBSERVATIONS: SERVICES

- While spending on services has not fully returned to long-term trends, the recovery across the industry has been robust.
- Continued inflation pressures, especially wage inflation, across the services sector have restricted real spending.
- While higher wages support nominal spending, higher real wages are also driving up the cost of services, limiting the impact of spending.

Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis-SAAR, Bloomberg, CAPTRUST Research

# ASSET CLASS RETURNS

Period Ending 3.31.23 | Q1 23

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Q1 2023
Small-Cap Growth 29.09%	Fixed Income 7.84%	Mid-Cap Value 18.51%	Small-Cap Growth 43.30%	Mid-Cap Value 14.75%	Large-Cap Growth 5.67%	Small-Cap Value 31.74%	Large-Cap Growth 30.21%	Cash 1.87%	Large-Cap Growth 36.39%	Large-Cap Growth 38.49%	Mid-Cap Value 28.34%	Cash 1.46%	Large-Cap Growth 14.37%
Mid-Cap Growth 26.38%	Large-Cap Growth 2.64%	Small-Cap Value 18.05%	Mid-Cap Growth 35.74%	Large-Cap Value 13.45%	Fixed Income 0.55%	Mid-Cap Value 20.00%	International Equities 25.62%	Fixed Income 0.01%	Mid-Cap Growth 35.47%	Mid-Cap Growth 35.59%	Small-Cap Value 28.27%	Large-Cap Value -7.54%	Mid-Cap Growth 9.14%
Mid-Cap Value 24.75%	Large-Cap Value 0.39%	International Equities 17.90%	Small-Cap Value 34.52%	Large-Cap Growth 13.05%	Cash 0.05%	Large-Cap Value 17.34%	Mid-Cap Growth 25.27%	Large-Cap Growth -1.51%	Small-Cap Growth 28.48%	Small-Cap Growth 34.63%	Large-Cap Growth 27.60%	Mid-Cap Value -12.03%	International Equities 8.62%
Small-Cap Value 24.50%	Cash 0.10%	Large-Cap Value 17.51%	Large-Cap Growth 33.48%	Mid-Cap Growth 11.90%	Mid-Cap Growth -0.20%	Small-Cap Growth 11.32%	Small-Cap Growth 22.17%	Mid-Cap Growth -4.75%	Mid-Cap Value 27.06%	International Equities 8.28%	Large-Cap Value 25.16%	Fixed Income -13.01%	Small-Cap Growth 6.07%
Large-Cap Growth 16.71%	Mid-Cap Value -1.38%	Mid-Cap Growth 15.81%	Mid-Cap Value 33.46%	Fixed Income 5.97%	International Equities -0.39%	Mid-Cap Growth 7.33%	Large-Cap Value 13.66%	Large-Cap Value -8.27%	Large-Cap Value 26.54%	Fixed Income 7.51%	Mid-Cap Growth 12.73%	International Equities -14.01%	Fixed Income 2.96%
Large-Cap Value 15.51%	Mid-Cap Growth -1.65%	Large-Cap Growth 15.26%	Large-Cap Value 32.53%	Small-Cap Growth 5.60%	Small-Cap Growth -1.38%	Large-Cap Growth 7.08%	Mid-Cap Value 13.34%	Small-Cap Growth -9.31%	International Equities 22.66%	Mid-Cap Value 4.96%	International Equities 11.78%	Small-Cap Value -14.48%	Mid-Cap Value 1.32%
International Equities 8.21%	Small-Cap Growth -2.91%	Small-Cap Growth 14.59%	International Equities 23.29%	Small-Cap Value 4.22%	Large-Cap Value -3.83%	Fixed Income 2.65%	Small-Cap Value 7.84%	Mid-Cap Value -12.29%	Small-Cap Value 22.39%	Small-Cap Value 4.63%	Small-Cap Growth 2.83%	Small-Cap Growth -26.36%	Cash 1.07%
Fixed Income 5.89%	Small-Cap Value -5.50%	Fixed Income 4.22%	Cash 0.07%	Cash 0.03%	Mid-Cap Value -4.78%	International Equities 1.51%	Fixed Income 3.54%	Small-Cap Value -12.86%	Fixed Income 8.72%	Large-Cap Value 2.80%	Cash 0.05%	Mid-Cap Growth -26.72%	Large-Cap Value 1.01%
Cash 0.13%	International Equities -11.73%	Cash 0.11%	Fixed Income -2.02%	International Equities -4.48%	Small-Cap Value -7.47%	Cash 0.33%	Cash 0.86%	International Equities -13.36%	Cash 2.28%	Cash 0.67%	Fixed Income -1.54%	Large-Cap Growth -29.14%	Small-Cap Value -0.66%

Small-Cap Value Stocks (Russell 2000 Value)	Large-Cap Value Stocks (Russell 1000 Value)	International Equities (MSCI EAFE)
Small-Cap Growth Stocks (Russell 2000 Growth)	Mid-Cap Growth Stocks (Russell Mid-Cap Growth)	Fixed Income (Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond)
Large-Cap Growth Stocks (Russell 1000 Growth)	Mid-Cap Value Stocks (Russell Mid-Cap Value)	Cash (Merrill Lynch 3-Month Treasury Bill)

Source: Markov Processes, Inc., Bloomberg, Mobius

The information contained in this report is from sources believed to be reliable but is not warranted by CAPTRUST to be accurate or complete.



# INDEX PERFORMANCE

Period Ending 3.31.23 | Q1 23

INDEXES	Q1 2023	YTD	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	1 YEAR	3 YEARS	5 YEARS	10 YEARS
90-Day U.S. Treasury	1.07%	1.07%	1.46%	0.05%	0.67%	2.28%	1.87%	2.50%	0.89%	1.41%	0.87%
Bloomberg Government 1-3 Year	1.59%	1.59%	-3.81%	-0.60%	3.14%	3.59%	1.58%	0.23%	-0.83%	1.09%	0.81%
Bloomberg Intermediate Govt	2.26%	2.26%	-7.73%	-1.69%	5.73%	5.20%	1.43%	-1.52%	-2.31%	1.06%	0.90%
Bloomberg Muni Bond	2.78%	2.78%	-8.53%	1.52%	5.21%	7.54%	1.28%	0.26%	0.35%	2.03%	2.38%
Bloomberg Intermediate Govt/Credit	2.33%	2.33%	-8.23%	-1.44%	6.43%	6.80%	0.88%	-1.66%	-1.28%	1.40%	1.32%
Bloomberg Intermediate Credit	2.47%	2.47%	-9.10%	-1.03%	7.08%	9.52%	0.01%	-1.88%	0.37%	1.86%	1.95%
Bloomberg Aggregate Bond	2.96%	2.96%	-13.01%	-1.54%	7.51%	8.72%	0.01%	-4.78%	-2.77%	0.90%	1.36%
Bloomberg Corporate IG Bond	3.50%	3.50%	-15.76%	-1.04%	9.89%	14.54%	-2.51%	-5.55%	-0.54%	1.62%	2.32%
Bloomberg High Yield	3.57%	3.57%	-11.19%	5.28%	7.11%	14.32%	-2.08%	-3.34%	5.91%	3.21%	4.10%
Bloomberg Global Aggregate	3.01%	3.01%	-16.25%	-4.71%	9.20%	6.84%	-1.20%	-8.07%	-3.43%	-1.34%	0.07%
Bloomberg U.S. Long Corporate	5.45%	5.45%	-25.62%	-1.13%	13.94%	23.89%	-7.24%	-11.46%	-2.56%	1.14%	2.97%
S&P 500	7.50%	7.50%	-18.11%	28.71%	18.40%	31.49%	-4.38%	-7.73%	18.62%	11.18%	12.23%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	0.93%	0.93%	-6.86%	20.95%	9.72%	25.34%	-3.48%	-1.98%	17.33%	9.01%	11.14%
NASDAQ Composite	16.77%	16.77%	-33.10%	21.39%	43.64%	35.23%	-3.88%	-14.05%	16.66%	11.58%	14.09%
Russell 1000 Value	1.01%	1.01%	-7.54%	25.16%	2.80%	26.54%	-8.27%	-5.91%	17.94%	7.49%	9.12%
Russell 1000	7.46%	7.46%	-19.13%	26.45%	20.96%	31.43%	-4.78%	-8.39%	18.57%	10.86%	12.01%
Russell 1000 Growth	14.37%	14.37%	-29.14%	27.60%	38.49%	36.39%	-1.51%	-10.90%	18.59%	13.65%	14.58%
Russell Mid-Cap Value Index	1.32%	1.32%	-12.03%	28.34%	4.96%	27.06%	-12.29%	-9.22%	20.71%	6.53%	8.79%
Russell Mid-Cap Index	4.06%	4.06%	-17.32%	22.58%	17.10%	30.54%	-9.06%	-8.78%	19.21%	8.05%	10.05%
Russell Mid-Cap Growth Index	9.14%	9.14%	-26.72%	12.73%	35.59%	35.47%	-4.75%	-8.52%	15.21%	9.07%	11.16%
MSCI EAFE	8.62%	8.62%	-14.01%	11.78%	8.28%	22.66%	-13.36%	-0.86%	13.53%	4.03%	5.49%
MSCI ACWI ex U.S.	7.00%	7.00%	-15.57%	8.29%	11.13%	22.13%	-13.78%	-4.56%	12.33%	2.97%	4.65%
Russell 2000 Value	-0.66%	-0.66%	-14.48%	28.27%	4.63%	22.39%	-12.86%	-12.96%	21.03%	4.54%	7.21%
Russell 2000	2.74%	2.74%	-20.44%	14.82%	19.96%	25.52%	-11.01%	-11.61%	17.52%	4.71%	8.03%
Russell 2000 Growth	6.07%	6.07%	-26.36%	2.83%	34.63%	28.48%	-9.31%	-10.60%	13.37%	4.26%	8.49%
MSCI Emerging Markets	4.02%	4.02%	-19.74%	-2.22%	18.69%	18.90%	-14.25%	-10.30%	8.23%	-0.53%	2.37%
Dow Jones U.S. Real Estate Index	1.57%	1.57%	-25.17%	38.99%	-5.29%	28.92%	-4.03%	-18.70%	9.79%	5.64%	5.96%
HFRX Absolute Return Index	-0.20%	-0.20%	0.85%	2.10%	2.72%	4.37%	-0.49%	0.54%	3.87%	1.79%	1.94%
Consumer Price Index (Inflation)	0.94%	0.94%	6.42%	7.10%	1.28%	2.26%	1.92%	4.99%	5.35%	3.87%	2.65%
BLENDED BENCHMARKS	Q1 2023	YTD	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	1 YEAR	3 YEARS	5 YEARS	10 YEARS
25% S&P 500/5% MSCI EAFE/70% BB Agg	4.37%	4.37%	-14.08%	6.13%	10.87%	14.96%	-1.55%	-5.07%	3.27%	3.87%	4.42%
30% S&P 500/10% MSCI EAFE/60% BB Agg	4.88%	4.88%	-14.35%	8.27%	11.56%	16.79%	-2.44%	-4.98%	5.16%	4.58%	5.20%
35% S&P 500/15% MSCI EAFE/50% BB Agg	5.39%	5.39%	-14.64%	10.44%	12.18%	18.63%	-3.34%	-4.92%	7.05%	5.27%	5.97%
40% S&P 500/20% MSCI EAFE/40% BB Agg	5.90%	5.90%	-14.96%	12.64%	12.75%	20.48%	-4.25%	-4.88%	8.96%	5.94%	6.72%
45% S&P 500/25% MSCI EAFE/30% BB Agg	6.41%	6.41%	-15.28%	14.87%	13.25%	22.33%	-5.17%	-4.86%	10.87%	6.58%	7.46%
60% S&P 500/40% Bloomberg Barclays Agg	5.67%	5.67%	-15.79%	15.86%	14.73%	22.18%	-2.35%	-6.25%	9.91%	7.34%	8.03%

Sources: Morningstar Direct, MPI. The opinions expressed in this report are subject to change without notice. This material has been prepared or is distributed solely for informational purposes and is not a solicitation or an offer to buy any security or to participate in any investment strategy. The performance data quoted represents past performance and does not guarantee future results. Index averages are provided for comparison purposes only. The information and statistics in this report are from sources believed to be reliable but are not guaranteed to be accurate or complete. CAPTRUST is an investment adviser registered under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940.



## FIDUCIARY UPDATE

Retirement plan fiduciaries should be mindful of recent compliance issues that may impact their plans.



### DOL FORM 5500 CHANGES: FINAL

The DOL made several changes to the 2023 Form 5500 filing (to be filed in 2024), including:

- The participant counting methodology—which establishes whether a plan is considered large or small for audit purposes—has changed from all eligible participants to only those with account balances at the beginning of the year. The change will push many plans—403(b)s in particular—below the audit threshold, potentially saving plan sponsors time and money.
- Questions regarding compliance testing that were removed more than a decade ago were reinstated.
- New categories were added to the Administrative Expenses lines of Schedule H, including audit fees, bank or trust company fees, actuarial fees, legal fees, valuation fees, salaries, and trustee fees and expenses.

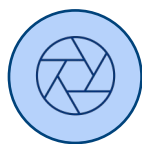


### IRS REGULATIONS ON FORFEITURES: PROPOSED

On February 27, the Internal Revenue Service issued long-awaited proposed regulations on forfeitures that clarify the following:

- Forfeitures incurred under a defined contribution plan must be used within 12 months following the close of the plan year. This is less restrictive than prior informal guidance that stated that forfeitures should generally be utilized in the plan year in which they occurred.
- To ensure that forfeitures are properly utilized, recordkeepers should ideally maintain separate forfeiture accounts by plan year.
- Defined benefit plan forfeitures cannot be used to reduce required employer contributions.

## BACK TO BASICS: STABLE VALUE AND GENERAL ACCOUNT PRODUCTS



### STABLE VALUE FUND

#### Objective: Capital Preservation & Liquidity

Funds invest in high quality, short- to intermediate-term fixed income securities with perceived minimal interest rate and credit risk. They can be housed in a collective investment trust, insurance separate account, or separately managed account.

#### PROS:

- Underlying portfolio and crediting rate transparency
- Higher long-term yield compared to cash accounts
- Book value accounting provides for a more stable crediting rate versus money market funds
- Principal is guaranteed by wrap providers
- Lower interest rate sensitivity due to shorter duration securities versus general account products

#### CONSIDERATIONS:

- Liquidity constraints at the plan level, typically 12 months
- Higher interest rate sensitivity due to longer-duration securities versus money markets
- Trading constraints at the participant level depending on other funds in the plan (e.g., equity wash provisions)



### GENERAL ACCOUNT OPTION

#### Objective: Stable Returns with Full Principal and Interest Guarantee

Investments are held in a group annuity contract that is supported by the assets of the insurer's general account (balance sheet includes insurer's liabilities, surplus, and reserves).

#### PROS:

- Provide attractive crediting rates relative to other product types due to longer duration securities
- Crediting rates are typically preannounced and guaranteed for a certain period
- Principal plus interest is guaranteed by insurer
- Potential to increase rates faster than stable value funds, particularly for new business

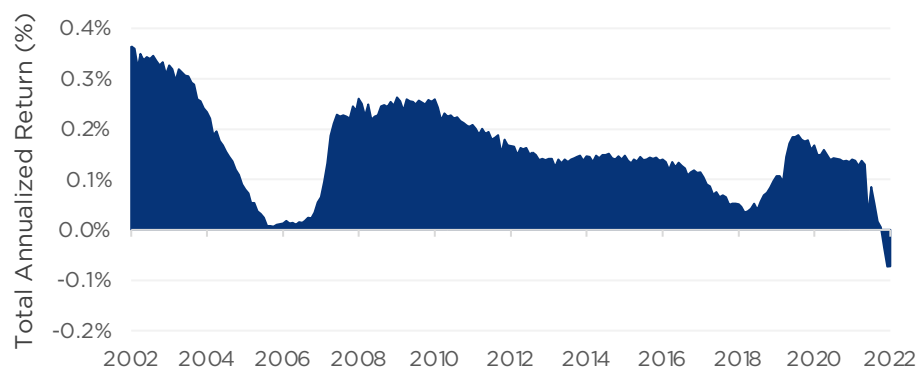
#### CONSIDERATIONS:

- Liquidity restrictions of five years (typically) or market value adjustment (MVA)
- Lack of portfolio and crediting rate transparency
- Guarantee is backed by the claims-paying ability of insurer
- Assets may be tied up in the event of insolvency
- Recordkeeper portability constraints

## STABLE VALUE FUNDS VS. MONEY MARKET: MARKET IMPACT

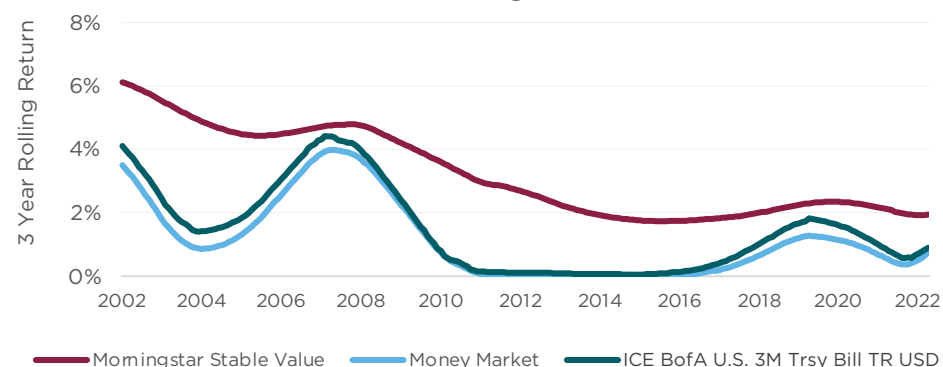
In response to high levels of inflation, the Federal Reserve rapidly increased its overnight lending rate with a series of eight rate hikes starting in March 2022. Through these hikes, the target fed funds rate increased from 0.00%-0.25% to 4.75%-5.00% as of March 2023. Short-term bonds have been most impacted by this shift in market environment, warranting an assessment of capital preservation options in retirement plans.

Stable Value Monthly Excess Return vs. Money Market



- Rapid rate increases have created an inverted yield curve where short-term bonds are yielding more than long-term bonds.
- As money market funds reinvest in higher yielding bonds, their short-term returns have exceeded stable value funds recently.

Three-Year Rolling Performance



- Money market funds hold shorter-term securities, typically one year or less, and follow changes in interest rates quickly.
- Historically, the structural advantage of stable value is that insurance wraps allow the funds to purchase a mix of short- and intermediate-term bonds while maintaining price stability for investors.

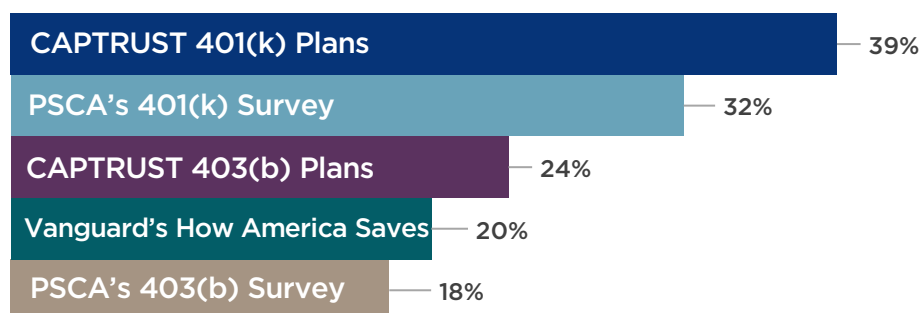
### TAKEAWAYS

- CAPTRUST continues to recommend stable value funds for defined contribution plans. Over longer periods, they have delivered a higher return with less volatility than money markets.
- Stable value funds track interest rate movements over time but their movements up and down are slower by design.
- A return to a normal yield curve—where longer-term bonds yield more than shorter-term bonds—will reestablish the structural advantage for stable value funds over money market funds.

## SELF-DIRECTED BROKERAGE ACCOUNT: TRENDS & CONSIDERATIONS

Under ERISA 404(a), brokerage windows—or self-directed brokerage accounts (SDBAs)—are excluded as designated investment alternatives, yet the implementation and ongoing monitoring of SDBAs are likely considered fiduciary acts and subject to ERISA. However, there is limited DOL guidance setting standards or expectations for how plan fiduciaries should evaluate, implement, and monitor SDBAs.

PERCENTAGE OF PLANS OFFERING SDBAs<sup>1</sup>



SDBA IMPLEMENTATION TRENDS<sup>2</sup>

Types of Investment Options		Percentage of Plans	
		Mutual Funds Only	Broader Options
	Schwab	13%	87%
	Fidelity	16%	84%
	Empower	7%	93%
Maximum Allowable Percentage		Capped	Uncapped
	Schwab	<10%	>90%
	Fidelity	75%	25%
	Empower	19%	81%

CONSIDERATIONS	EVALUATION	IMPLEMENTATION	MONITORING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will this add value for our participants?</li> <li>Does our vendor offer different SDBA options?</li> <li>What is the brokerage provider's reputation and experience?</li> <li>What are the fees for the service?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should a limit be placed on the types of available investments?</li> <li>Is there a need to limit certain investments for compliance or business reasons?</li> <li>Should there be a limit on the amount or percentage of assets in the SDBA?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are transaction, account, and other participant fees reasonable?</li> <li>Do our participant disclosures include general descriptions of the SDBA including fees and expenses?</li> </ul>

CAPTRUST does not advise on self-directed brokerage accounts. The information above is intended to be educational in nature. Plan sponsors should consult their ERISA counsel for further guidance or questions related to fiduciary obligations and SDBAs.

<sup>1</sup> PSCA's "2022 403(b) Plan Survey," PSCA's "65<sup>th</sup> Annual Survey," Vanguard's "How America Saves 2022," and CAPTRUST Research

<sup>2</sup> Data represents recordkept retirement plans of all types and size from the quoted sources

## FIDUCIARY FLASH TRAINING – COMMITTEE EDUCATION

Fiduciary training is a critical part of being a fiduciary and a way to minimize fiduciary risk through education and governance. The DOL views fiduciary training as an important element to managing a retirement plan and frequently looks for evidence of formal training during plan investigations. A sound fiduciary curriculum covers a range of topics—from an overview of ERISA to best practices for monitoring investments. In this installment, we cover the basics of training: who should receive it and why, recommended frequency, and available resources.



### WHO

Committees and designated plan fiduciaries have a responsibility to continuously monitor and make decisions regarding the plan's investments, operations, administration, fees, and more. Providing formal fiduciary training is an effective way to ensure the committee understands its responsibility to act exclusively in the best interest of plan participants and comply with ERISA.



### WHEN

New committee members should have formal training as soon as practical following their appointment. Existing committee members should receive periodic refreshers and ongoing training to build a deeper level of understanding, stay informed of current industry trends and updated regulations, and review plan-related litigation outcomes. All training should be documented in your fiduciary file.



### HOW

CAPTRUST provides comprehensive fiduciary training to meet committee members' needs, including in-person training, webinars, and printed materials. Work with your CAPTRUST advisor to develop a program and cadence that best fits the needs of your committee and overall governance structure.