

Retirement Investment Advisory Service (StraightLine)  
Frequently Asked Questions

**What is an Investment Advisory Service?**

Some individuals would like help in picking the right investments for their retirement accounts. An Investment Advisory Service provides that assistance by understanding what the individual's long-term retirement goals are and matching the best available investments to help the individual meet their goals. The Pension Protection Act signed by President Bush in August of 2006 provided guidance to employers on offering this type of service to employees. StraightLine Group, LLC (StraightLine) is an investment advisory firm that was chosen to offer their optional services to MSU faculty, staff and retirees.

**Who is StraightLine?**

StraightLine is a Michigan company that advises individuals on their retirement investments. They were incorporated in 2002 by individuals with years of experience in investment research and advising individuals on their investments. StraightLine helps individuals build a well diversified retirement account to grow for the long-term and to weather the short-term economic storms.

**What service does StraightLine offer?**

StraightLine will be providing opportunities for MSU employees and retirees during group meetings and seminars to learn general investment concepts and gather information on StraightLine. If you choose, StraightLine will meet with you one-on-one and learn about your retirement goals. They can then offer two levels of advisory services.

The first level of service, "Pro(b)", is for those employees that want someone to do it all for them. StraightLine will not only offer advice, but they will also complete the transactions on the individual's account and manage the investments.

The second level of service, "ProAdvice", is for that individual that just needs help in picking the investments. The employee will then go online to make the changes on the investment sponsor's website (for example, TIAA-CREF or Fidelity).

StraightLine can offer more details on the services they provide.

**How do I contact StraightLine?**

You can call StraightLine at 877-EDU-403B (877-338-4032) or visit their website at [www.myrplan.com/msu](http://www.myrplan.com/msu) for more information.

**How do I meet with them? Where are they located?**

StraightLine will be offering both group information meetings and one-on-one sessions. There will be details on dates and locations provided in mailings sent to employees, and can be viewed at MSU Human Resources News website at [www.hr.msu.edu/hrsite/HRNews](http://www.hr.msu.edu/hrsite/HRNews). You can also contact them directly to schedule a meeting at a time and location that is convenient for you.

**Why is MSU offering StraightLine's services to employees and retirees?**

"Which investments should I choose?" is a common question that many employees ask when they are signing up for the MSU Retirement Plans. Employees often choose investments based on what their co-workers, friends or family say without understanding their long-term goals. Offering assistance on this issue by enhancing employee retirement investment resources is one of MSU's Boldness by Design initiatives. StraightLine can provide employees an independent, unbiased and research-based approach to effectively invest in the MSU Retirement Plans.

**How did MSU choose StraightLine?**

A national search was initiated through a request for proposal process to find qualified firms that could offer independent advice to MSU employees. The search involved extensive review of each firm's qualifications and had to meet very stringent requirements. StraightLine offered the best available investment advisory service at the most reasonable price.

**Do the current Investment Sponsors offer investment advice?**

Yes they do and some MSU employees have been happy with the advice provided. However, they will only advise you on their own investments. For example, you can meet with a TIAA-CREF investment consultant that will provide a similar service, but they can only present advice on investments that TIAA-CREF offer.

**What is the cost of the optional service?**

It will depend on the level of service that StraightLine will provide you and the balance in your accounts. Regardless, the fee will not exceed \$500 annually.

The do it all for you service, called Pro(b), is based on the total balance of all your accounts serviced by StraightLine. There is no charge if your balance is less than \$5,000. There will be an annual fee of \$200 if your balance is between \$5,001 - \$25,000. An annual fee of \$350 if your balance is between 25,001 - \$50,000. If your total balance is \$50,001 and over, the annual is only \$500.

The ProAdvice service, which provides the advice while you complete the transactions, is a flat fee of \$250 annually and is not based on the value of your accounts.

Please contact StraightLine for more detailed information.

**How will I pay for the service?**

MSU is working with the Investment Sponsors to establish a process to have the fees taken out of your retirement account. If this is not available when you sign up, or if you choose otherwise, you can pay for the service by credit card or check. Please contact StraightLine for more detailed information.

**Can StraightLine meet with both me and my spouse?**

Yes, StraightLine makes available the opportunity for an MSU employee and spouse to meet with StraightLine, even if the spouse does not work for MSU. The fee for the spouse will be discounted by 50%.

**Do I have to wait for the next Benefits Open Enrollment to sign up?**

No, the service that StraightLine offers is available anytime. Please contact StraightLine for further detail. Also, you may sign up for the 403(b) Base Plan, 403(b) Supplemental Plan and the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan anytime throughout the year. Review details at the MSU HR website at [www.hr.msu.edu](http://www.hr.msu.edu).

**How is this service different than the one recently announced by the MSU Credit Union?**

The MSU Credit Union, as most financial institutions do, offers investment advice and financial planning services to their customers. Their service is typically broader, and designed to be used by the general public. However, MSU has contracted with StraightLine to offer the advisory service specifically to MSU employees, and they will have more detailed knowledge of the exact investments offered in the MSU Retirement Plans.