

**ASTRA GUARANTEED INCOME 2.1**

# **INVESTOR'S GUIDE**

**SSQ** *Investment  
and Retirement*

*We thrive on mutual trust*



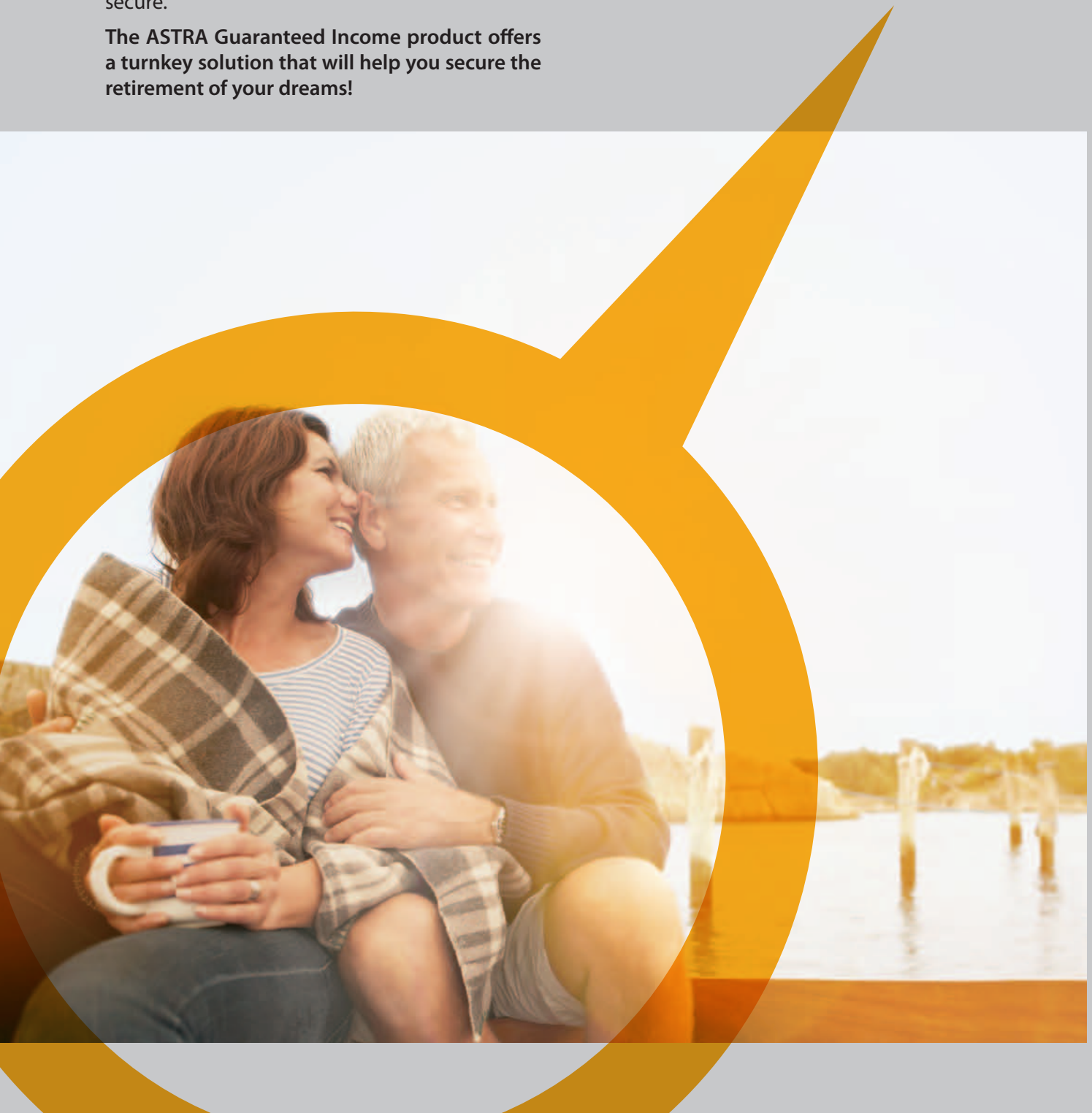
Retirement is a concern for most investors. In fact, you yourself may be wondering if you have enough savings set aside to last you through the retirement years.

You may also be concerned about the impact market fluctuations may have on your savings in the years leading up to retirement. You are quite right to be concerned!

Perhaps you're thinking about taking money out of equity markets, but are not sure which kind of investment vehicle would be both profitable AND secure.

**The ASTRA Guaranteed Income product offers a turnkey solution that will help you secure the retirement of your dreams!**

## **GET PEACE OF MIND AND A SECURE RETIREMENT WITH ASTRA GUARANTEED INCOME**





I want security,  
flexibility  
AND growth.  
No compromises!

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER AS YOUR RETIREMENT DRAWS NEAR

As you get closer to retiring, you need to consider a number of factors to determine if you will have enough savings to get you through your retirement years:

- your life expectancy
- inflation
- your financial needs
- market fluctuations

The first three factors can be roughly estimated at the time you start investing. However, market fluctuations are especially unpredictable and investors are at their mercy, particularly during the years immediately before retirement. In fact, “last minute” market slow-downs can have a catastrophic impact on the savings of individuals who are planning to retire soon, because they won’t have the time required to make up their losses. **That’s why clients find ASTRA Guaranteed Income so reassuring.**

### Risk Zone for Retirement

The five-to-ten-year period preceding and following retirement is critical. During this time, major fluctuations in the value of the portfolio may have dramatic consequences on the whole retirement because investors no longer have the time needed to recuperate their losses and must start withdrawing their savings. The quality of their retirement may therefore be greatly affected.



## **BENEFITS OF ASTRA GUARANTEED INCOME**

Given the uncertainty of the financial markets, you may be tempted to give up variable investment products for the guaranteed security of financial vehicles such as annuities, but that would also mean giving up all hope of increasing your future income. **This is why we have developed ASTRA Guaranteed Income: It offers you the security, flexibility and growth potential you need.**

ASTRA Guaranteed Income is a segregated fund investment product that provides annual income. As such, it offers the same benefits as an investment in funds, including flexibility, return potential, etc. However, because it offers a minimum guaranteed income **for life**, ASTRA Guaranteed Income also combines the benefits traditionally associated with annuities such as secure income and capital protection.

### **The ASTRA Guaranteed Income product can offer all the security of annuity products**

- Predictable income regardless of market conditions
- Guaranteed lifetime income from age 55
- 100% protection of capital or more in the event of death\*
- Possible exemption from seizure and easier estate planning

### **While offering the flexibility and growth potential of variable investments**

- Ability to select and modify investments
- Flexibility as to the time and the amount of the lifetime withdrawal: income may be increased when payments are deferred
- Capital and income may increase over time through bonuses and resets
- Ability to make withdrawals at any time
- Choice of registered or non-registered plans

\*reduced in proportion to withdrawals





**Advantage # 1** Lifetime Withdrawal Amount (LWA)

**THE CERTAINTY OF OBTAINING A LIFETIME INCOME**

**ASTRA Guaranteed Income ensures that you will receive a stable annual income for the rest of your life, even when the market value of your investments has been depleted.**

The lifetime withdrawal amount (LWA) is the maximum amount that can be paid out each year, if desired, from the time the annuitant reaches age 55, or later, depending on the investor's choice, for the annuitant's lifetime. It is equal to a percentage of the guaranteed withdrawal balance (GWB) used to calculate the amount guaranteed to be paid out in the form of annual withdrawals.

The LWA is paid when you need it: payments may begin as early as age 55 or later, you choose when, and may vary depending on the annuitant's age when the LWA payment began as can be seen below.

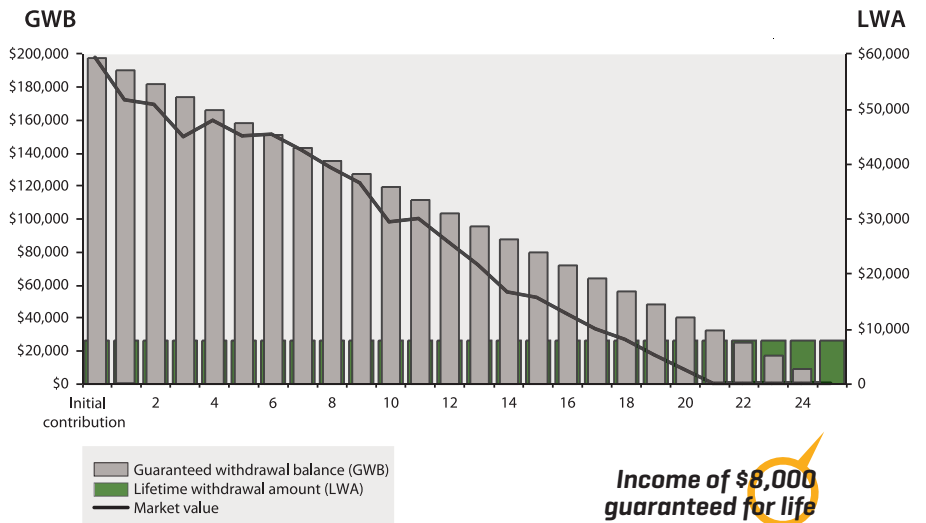
Age of annuitant when the first LWA payment is made	Annual lifetime income (LWA)
age 55 to 59	3.00% of the guaranteed withdrawal balance
age 60 to 64	3.50% of the guaranteed withdrawal balance
age 65 to 69	4.00% of the guaranteed withdrawal balance
age 70 to 74	4.25% of the guaranteed withdrawal balance
age 75 and over	5.00% of the guaranteed withdrawal balance

In addition, this withdrawal percentage may be increased, depending on the annuitant's age when the GWB is automatically reset every three years.

**Example**



Denis, aged 65, invests \$200,000 and would like to begin withdrawing income immediately. Regardless of the market value of his investments, Denis is assured of obtaining 4% of his investment each year (i.e. the LWA rate applicable upon the first LWA payment) for life, which in this example equals to \$8,000. **This income will not decrease, even if the market value of his investments goes down to \$0.**



In this example we assume that the value of the investments decreases throughout the period in question and Denis never withdraws more than the maximum amounts permitted in a given year. Denis may at any time withdraw amounts exceeding the LWA up to the market value of his investments. However, if he does, the guaranteed amount may be reduced for future years. This example is provided for reference purposes only.

## Advantage # 2 Resets

# TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MARKET GROWTH WITHOUT BEARING THE CONSEQUENCES OF MARKET DOWNTURNS

**ASTRA Guaranteed Income allows you to increase the guaranteed minimum withdrawal benefit (GMWB) when markets are doing well.**

If the markets are up, resets enable the guaranteed amounts to be increased.

The guaranteed withdrawal balance (GWB) is **automatically reset once every three years** on the anniversary date of the initial contribution to funds eligible for the GMWB.

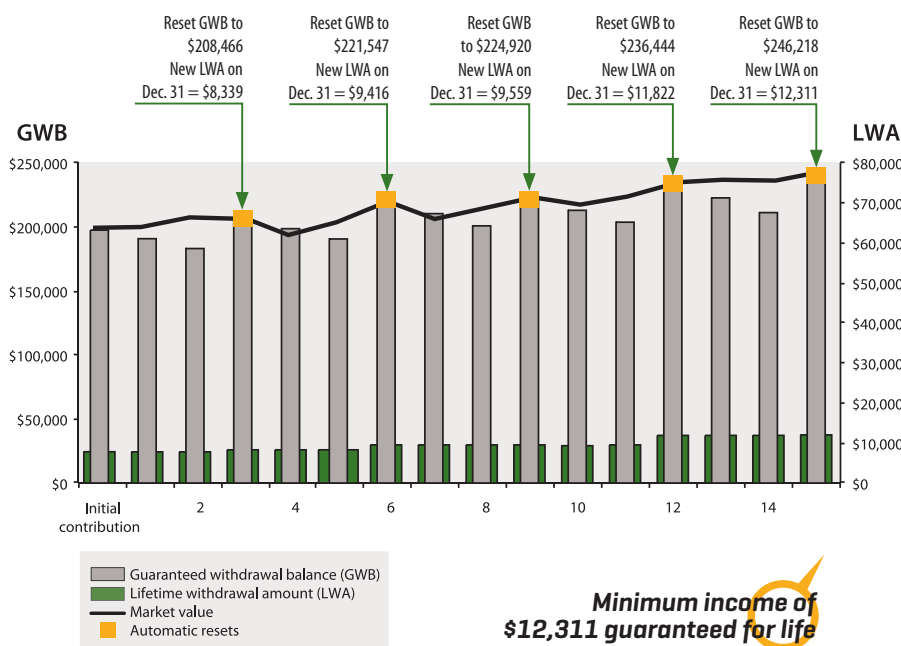
This reset feature establishes the GWB at the market value of the funds eligible for the GMWB in force at the time of the reset, provided it exceeds the current GWB. In other words, the reset cannot decrease the GWB.

### Example



Donna, aged 65, invests \$200,000 and would like to begin withdrawing income immediately. Regardless of the market value of her investments, Donna is guaranteed to receive 4% of her investment each year (i.e. the LWA rate applicable upon the first LWA payment) for life, which in this example equals to \$8,000. This income will not decrease, even if the market value of her investments goes down to \$0.

**Income may be increased as a result of the automatic resets made every three years.** In this example, after the 15th year, Donna is guaranteed to receive a minimum of \$12,311 per year for life, and this amount may be higher if the value of her investments continues to increase.



In this example we assume that the value of the investments may increase throughout the period in question and Donna never withdraws more than the maximum amounts permitted per year. Donna may at any time withdraw amounts exceeding the LWA up to the market value of her investments. However, if she does, the guaranteed amount may be reduced for future years. This example is provided for reference purposes only.

### Advantage # 3 Bonuses

## DON'T NEED TO MAKE WITHDRAWALS RIGHT AWAY? EVEN BETTER!

**ASTRA Guaranteed Income offers an annual bonus that increases the guaranteed amounts when no withdrawals are made in a given year.**

If you don't need to make withdrawals during a given year, a bonus is granted, which increases the guaranteed amounts.

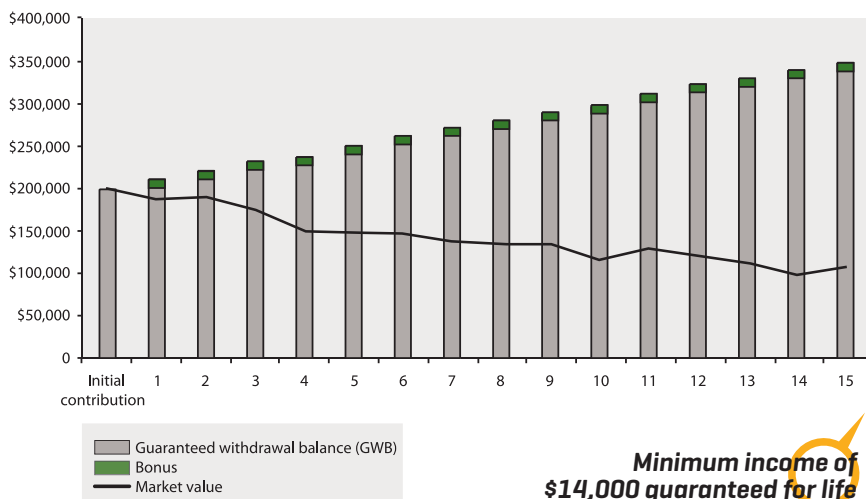
The annual GWB Bonus is granted every year following the initial contribution to funds eligible for the GMWB if **no** withdrawals are made during the year. For example, if no withdrawals are made in years 2, 6 and 12, a bonus will be granted for each of these years. The GWB Bonus is calculated every December 31. It is equal to 5% of the bonus calculation base (BCB) and is added to the GWB.

### Example



Bill, aged 50, invests \$200,000 and would like to begin withdrawing an income starting January 1 after his 65th birthday. The guaranteed withdrawal balance (GWB) used to establish the LWA from the time the investor requests to receive it is increased on December 31 **by a 5% bonus. This occurs on every December 31 following the initial contribution** (or transfer) to funds eligible for the GMWB.

In this example, after the 15th year (i.e. as of January 1 after turning age 65), Bill is guaranteed to receive a minimum of \$14,000 per year for life (LWA). In addition, this amount (LWA) may be increased if the value of the investments continues to increase.



In this example we assume that the value of the investments decreases throughout the period in question and Bill does not make any withdrawals from funds eligible for the GMWB during this period. Bill may at any time withdraw amounts up to the market value of his investments. However, if he does, the guaranteed amount and available bonuses may be reduced for future years. The bonus is not granted for years during which a withdrawal (regardless of the amount) is made from funds eligible for the GMWB. This example is provided for reference purposes only.

*The bonus is an amount added to the GWB. This amount is not a sum paid into the contract or a guaranteed rate of return, therefore, it has no redeemable value and cannot be withdrawn.*

**Minimum income of \$14,000 guaranteed for life**

## DEFERRED INCOME AND WELL-PERFORMING MARKETS

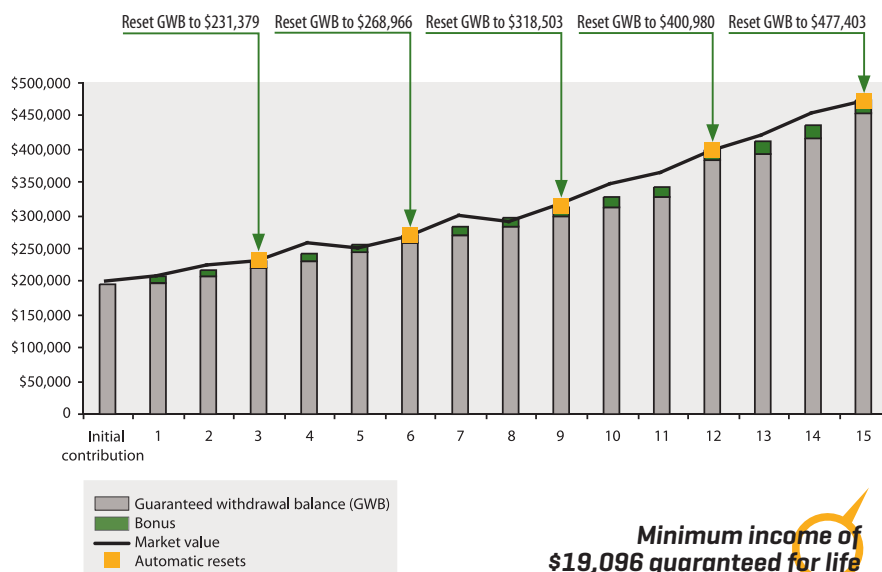
The guaranteed minimum withdrawal may be maximized by bonuses and resets when markets are performing well.

### Example



Joanne, aged 50, invests \$200,000 and would like to begin withdrawing an income starting January 1 after her 65th birthday. The guaranteed withdrawal balance (GWB) used to establish the lifetime withdrawal amount (LWA) from the time the investor requests to receive it is increased by a 5% bonus on December 31. This occurs on every December 31 following the initial contribution (or transfer) to funds eligible for the GMWB.

Income may be increased as a result of the automatic resets made every three years. In this example, after the 15th year (i.e. as of January 1 after turning age 65), Joanne is guaranteed to receive a minimum of \$19,096 per year for life (LWA). In addition, this amount (LWA) may be higher if the value of the investments continues to increase.



In this example we assume that the value of the investments may increase throughout the period in question and Joanne does not make any withdrawals from funds eligible for the GMWB during this period. Joanne may at any time withdraw amounts up to the market value of her investments. However, if she does, the guaranteed amount and available bonuses may be reduced for future years. The bonus is not granted for years during which a withdrawal (regardless of the amount) is made from funds eligible for the GMWB. This example is provided for reference purposes only.

*The bonus is an amount added to the GWB. This amount is not a sum paid into the contract or a guaranteed rate of return, therefore, it has no redeemable value and cannot be withdrawn.*

**Minimum income of \$19,096 guaranteed for life**



## Advantage # 4 Guarantee upon death of the annuitant

### PROTECTING YOUR ASSETS UPON DEATH

**ASTRA Guaranteed Income comes with a guaranteed value upon the death of the annuitant that protects the assets for your estate.**

The guaranteed value upon the death of the annuitant is equal to **100%** of all contributions made to the funds in the contract (adjusted for withdrawals).

In addition, the guaranteed value upon death is **automatically reset once every three years** on the anniversary date of the initial contribution to funds eligible for the GMWB.

Resets continue to be made up to the year in which the annuitant reaches age 80. A final reset is made on the date of the annuitant's 80th birthday.

Please contact your financial security advisor or refer to the *Information Folder and Contract* for more details.

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One more way to ensure  
your peace of mind!

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## Advantage # 5 ASTRA Funds

### EXCELLENT INVESTMENT VEHICLES TO HELP YOUR INCOME GROW

A wide selection of excellent **income and balanced funds** is available under the ASTRA Guaranteed Income product, including ASTRA Strategy Funds and ASTRA Celestia Funds, for example.

Available ASTRA Funds invest in different asset classes including alternative asset classes, and the equity component may represent up to 90%.

SSQ Investment and Retirement does business exclusively with **external investment managers**. This has many advantages, including full autonomy when it comes to choosing our investment managers. Because we can select from among all available managers, our clients have access to money management specialists in all asset classes with a broad range of management styles and proven track records.

It goes without saying that our decision to delegate the selection of securities entails taking **responsibility for monitoring** the performance of the asset managers we have selected and ensuring their management styles remain in line with the mandates they are given.

Please consult the *Fund Facts* for more information about the funds offered under the ASTRA Guaranteed Income product.



**This document is applicable only to ASTRA Guaranteed Income 2.1 and not to the previous versions of the product.**

SSQ offers guarantees relative to the contributions the contractholder makes to ASTRA Funds. These guarantees ensure that the contractholder holds a given minimum percentage of contributions upon the maturity of the guarantee and upon the death of the annuitant. In addition, in relation to the ASTRA Guaranteed Income product and available funds, a guaranteed minimum withdrawal benefit (GMWB) is offered. The benefits described do not apply to fund returns which are not guaranteed.

Investors may withdraw the desired amount at the desired time, subject to applicable tax rules. However, withdrawals may have a significant impact on guaranteed amounts and available bonuses. It is therefore important that you understand the impact your withdrawals may have on your benefit.

The lifetime withdrawal amount (LWA) may be paid from the time the annuitant reaches age 55, or later, depending on the choice of the investor. Payments will continue until the death of the annuitant.

The bonus is an amount added to the GWB. This amount is not a sum paid into the contract or a guaranteed rate of return, therefore, it has no redeemable value and cannot be withdrawn.

**For more details about ASTRA Guaranteed Income, please contact your financial security advisor and refer to the *Information Folder*.**

#### **Legal notice and limitation of liability**

The financial scenario simulations and returns presented herein are provided for reference purposes only. Please refer to the *Information Folder*, *Annuity Contract* and *Application Form* before investing. The actual rate of return on investment is not guaranteed and may vary. There are no guarantees that past performance will be repeated in the future. Returns shown do not take into account sales, redemptions, distributions or other optional charges that may reduce returns. **Any amount allocated to a segregated fund is invested at the risk of the contractholder and may increase or decrease in value.**

The information contained in this document is of a general nature pertaining to investment options and strategies and must not be considered as investment advice that can be applied to all investment situations. It is strongly recommended that you consult your financial security advisor, who will analyze your needs on an individual basis and then recommend the appropriate products that correspond to your investor profile, financial situation, risk tolerance level and personal circumstances.



## **ABOUT SSQ FINANCIAL GROUP**

With nearly \$3 billion in annual revenue and nearly \$10 billion in assets under management, SSQ Financial Group is a leading mutual diversified financial institution.

The Group serves over 1 million customers and provides jobs to over 1,900 employees. SSQ, Life Insurance Company Inc., the Group's principal company, is recognized as a leader in the group insurance industry and as an expert in the investment and retirement sector. SSQ Financial Group is also a rising star in home and auto insurance under the SSQ General Insurance Company Inc. banner and has recently expanded into the individual insurance market thanks to its new subsidiary, SSQ Insurance Company Inc.



*We thrive on mutual trust*

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