Counsel Essentials Balanced Portfolio Series A

March 31, 2026

A diversified portfolio of exchange traded funds (ETFs) that seeks to provide a balance of income and long-term capital appreciation by investing primarily in a globally diversified portfolio of ETFs. The portfolio may also invest in other mutual funds or in securities directly.

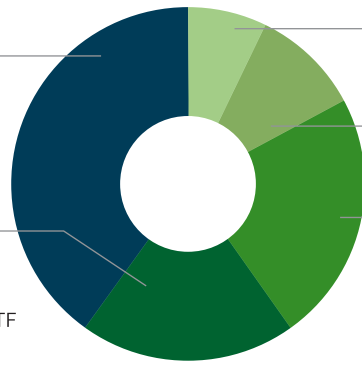
Is this portfolio right for you?

- Provides access to an all-in-one ETF portfolio that is designed to provide the growth potential of diversified equities with the safer elements of fixed income.
- Designed to be a lower cost solution.
- Monthly distributions.

Neutral portfolio allocation[1]

40.0% Fixed Income
- MACKENZIE Investments: 32.0% Canadian bond ETF
- BLACKROCK: 4.0% Emerging markets ETF
- BLACKROCK: 4.0% High yield ETF

19.6% International Equity
- MACKENZIE Investments: 12.8% International equity ETF
- Vanguard: 3.8% International small cap ETF
- MACKENZIE Investments: 3.0% Emerging markets equity ETF



Alternative Strategies 7.5%
- Real estate ETF 7.5%: MACKENZIE Investments

Canadian Equity 10.0%
- Canadian equity ETF 10.0%: MACKENZIE Investments

U.S. Equity 23.0%
- U.S. equity ETF 19.2%: MACKENZIE Investments
- U.S. small cap equity ETF 3.8%: Vanguard

The asset allocation weights depicted above represent the neutral allocations as at January 20, 2025.

Annualized performance (%)

Period	1 mth	3 mths	6 mths	1 yr	3 yr	5 yr	10 yr	Inception return
Series A	-3.4	0.0	0.8	9.9	10.1	5.6	-	4.7

Performance (%) calendar year returns

Period	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	YTD
Series A	-	-	-	11.4	1.7	8.7	-12.4	10.6	14.9	9.6	0.0

Historical performance (%) Current value of $10,000

$14,175

Key data

Fund type	Global Neutral Balanced
Fund code	CGF290
Inception date	September 13, 2018
Mgmt. fee	1.35%
Admin. fee	0.15%
MER	1.70%

Distribution frequency

Income	Monthly
Capital gains	Annual
Distributions	-

Distributions represent the annual distributions paid during 2025

Risk tolerance

Low to Medium

Portfolio characteristics

Dividend yield	2.5%
Yield to maturity	3.7%
Duration (years)	6.1
Average credit rating	A

Investment

Min.	Subsq.	RRSP eligible
$500	$100	Yes

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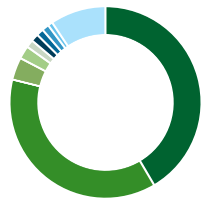
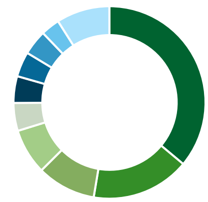
How the fund is invested[2] as at Jan 31, 2026





Asset allocation	(%)
US Equity	36.9
Domestic Bonds	30.2
International Equity	18.7
Canadian Equity	6.3
Foreign Bonds	5.9
Cash and Equivalents	1.0
Income Trust Units	0.8
Other	0.1

Geographic allocation	(%)
United States	41.6
Canada	37.4
Japan	3.8
United Kingdom	2.2
Switzerland	1.3
Australia	1.3
France	1.2
Germany	1.2
China	0.8
Other	9.4

Sector allocation	(%)
Fixed Income	36.1
Technology	16.6
Financial Services	9.9
Real Estate	7.7
Healthcare	4.7
Consumer Services	4.5
Consumer Goods	4.2
Industrial Goods	4.2
Basic Materials	3.2
Other	9.0

Top holdings

Underlying funds/holdings	(%) of NAV
Mackenzie US Large Cap Equity Index ETF (QUU)	31.0
Mackenzie Canadian Aggregate Bond Index ETF (QBB)	28.6
Mackenzie International Equity Index ETF (QDX)	11.6
Mackenzie Canadian Equity Index ETF (QCN)	6.2
Mackenzie Developed Markets Real Est In ETF (QRET)	5.6
Mackenzie Canadian Short-Term Bond Index ETF (QSB)	3.3
Vanguard Small-Cap Index ETF (VB)	3.1
Vanguard FTSE All-World exUS SmllCap Idx ETF (VSS)	3.1
iShares Broad USD High Yield Corp Bond ETF (USHY)	3.0
Mackenzie Emerging Markets Equity Index ETF (QEE)	2.4

Top fixed income holdings	(%) of NAV
Canada Government 1.25% 01-Jun-2030	1.1
Canada Government 0.50% 01-Dec-2030	0.7
Ontario Province 4.60% 02-Jun-2039	0.6
Canada Government 2.00% 01-Dec-2051	0.5
Canada Government 3.00% 01-Jun-2034	0.5
Canada Government 1.00% 01-Jun-2027	0.5
Canada Government 2.75% 01-Dec-2055	0.4
Canada Government 1.50% 01-Jun-2031	0.4
Canada Housing Trust No 1 4.25% 15-Mar-2034	0.4
Canada Government 1.50% 01-Dec-2031	0.3

Top equity holdings	(%) of NAV
NVIDIA Corp	2.3
Apple Inc	2.0
Microsoft Corp	1.5
Amazon.com Inc	1.1
Alphabet Inc Cl A	0.9
Alphabet Inc Cl C	0.8
Broadcom Inc	0.8
Meta Platforms Inc Cl A	0.7
Tesla Inc	0.6
JPMorgan Chase & Co	0.4

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Why Invest with Counsel Portfolios

Our Portfolio Management team builds and maintains our portfolios based on in-depth analysis to align to a broad range of investor risk profiles. We take an unbiased approach when choosing our money managers by incorporating a proprietary and disciplined methodology for researching and selecting independent asset managers from across the globe. Each manager is monitored and held accountable to their mandate to help ensure our investors have the best chance at achieving their financial goals.

Q4 2025 Fund Commentary

Commentary and opinions are provided by Portfolio Solutions Group

Market Commentary

Global equities gained over the fourth quarter of 2025 and outperformed global bonds, which posted a small gain (all returns are in Canadian-dollar terms on a total-return basis). Stocks gained in large part due to the U.S. Federal Reserve Board (Fed) lowering interest rates over the quarter. However, returns were muted over concerns that artificial intelligence (AI) spending may be entering bubble territory.

The U.S. equity market advanced, posting a low-single-digit return. The health care sector was the strongest-performing sector. Canadian equities posted a gain and outperformed U.S. equities, getting a strong performance from the materials sector. EAFE equities advanced, underperforming Canadian equities but outperforming U.S. equities. Equities in the U.K. and Japan contributed to the performance of EAFE equities. Emerging markets equities also gained and slightly underperformed their developed market peers, with equities in Taiwan and India contributing to performance.

The FTSE Canada Universe Bond Index declined over the quarter. As government yields moved higher, government bond prices declined. Government bonds underperformed corporate bonds, which posted a small gain. Corporate bond prices benefited from narrowing credit spreads (the difference in yield between corporate and government bonds). Communication services sector bonds posted the largest increase in the corporate bonds sleeve. High-yield bond prices rose on a total-return basis and outperformed investment-grade corporate bonds.

The Bank of Canada, the Fed and the Bank of England lowered their policy interest rates. The European Central Bank held steady on its key interest rates, while the Bank of Japan raised its policy interest rate. The yield on 10-year Government of Canada bonds rose from 3.18% to 3.43%. Sovereign bond yields in the U.S., the U.K., Germany and Japan also increased.

Portfolio Activity

The portfolio manager did not make any change to the Portfolio during the quarter.

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Outlook

In the portfolio manager's view, the final quarter of 2025 reinforced a stark divergence in global growth. The U.S. economy remains the anchor, with AI-driven productivity gains offsetting softer labour trends, while Canada, Europe and the U.K. continue to hover near stagnation.

Looking ahead, five forces shape the path into 2026. First, AI is delivering real-economy benefits even as equity leadership narrows and valuations stretch, increasing the risk that equity weakness spills into credit and tightens broader financial conditions. Second, China is stuck in low growth and persistent deflation, with policy focused on self-sufficiency and manufacturing scale over household demand, which exports disinflation through goods prices and keeps domestic yields anchored. Third, global trade remains fragmented as industrial policy, investment controls and regional supply chains reshape flows. This is an especially important watchpoint for Canada given sensitivity to U.S. policy and the North American trade framework review. Fourth, central banks are easing monetary policy cautiously, modestly in the U.S. and Canada, with more room in Europe and the U.K., while Japan may continue gradual tightening. Central banks may lean on liquidity operations or slower balance-sheet runoff to stabilize bond markets if conditions turn disorderly. Fifth, fiscal pressures are building, making policy credibility and refinancing capacity decisive for market pricing.

We believe equity markets still reflect optimism, particularly in the U.S., where AI-linked earnings support elevated multiples, but concentration and sentiment extremes raise caution flags. Commodities remain mixed, with structural demand supporting gold and oil softer on ample supply. Private-credit growth and funding-market functioning warrant close attention as potential transmission channels for stress.

Our focus remains resilience over precision, balancing U.S. exposure with broad diversification, maintaining liquidity and incorporating alternative income to navigate an environment where risks build quietly but can break suddenly.

We keep core U.S. equity exposure, while reducing dependence on narrow leadership through global diversification and multi-factor strategies, and by tilting toward domestic-demand and structural-growth themes less reliant on global trade flows. In fixed income, we pair high-quality duration with alternative income, such as private credit and mortgages, for yield and duration management, while elevating underwriting standards and liquidity buffers given potential vulnerabilities in private credit and the possibility of disorderly interest-rate moves.

Liquidity and flexibility remain central, allowing portfolios to absorb shocks tied to AI investment cycles, fiscal credibility shifts, bond-market volatility or trade-policy adjustments. Key risk monitors include equity-to-credit spillover, upside inflation surprises that slow the pace of easing, bond-market functioning, North American trade developments and fiscal signalling in high-refinancing jurisdictions.

A constructive upside remains in view. If AI-driven productivity gains broaden across services and diffuse internationally, inflation pressures would ease, real incomes would strengthen and fiscal dynamics would improve, an important scenario to capture in allocation and rebalancing plans even if it is not the base case.

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[1]The asset allocation weights depicted above represent the neutral allocations for the fund and may differ from the current allocation. The neutral allocation may comprise a combination of investments in equities, fixed income securities, securities that are designed to track a market index or other securities. Canada Life Investment Management Ltd., the portfolio manager of the fund, has the discretion to change the allocation without prior notice. [2]Effective holdings of the fund are held either directly, or through an underlying mutual fund. Asset allocations reflected are as a percentage of the fund's net asset value. Individual securities held by ETFs are not reflected in the Fund's Top Holdings listings. For money market fund reports: The current yield is an annualized historical yield based on the seven-day period ended on the date noted above and does not represent an actual one-year return. For information on the fund or any underlying Counsel funds, please read the Fund Facts, Simplified Prospectus and/or other reporting documents before investing, available at www.counselportfolios.ca. All third-party marks are used with permission.

Note: Occasionally, a negative value may be reported for Cash holdings that reflects the sale of securities and/or redemption transactions that have not settled at month end.