

# Short Duration Strategic Income Fund

## Quarterly Commentary

### Market Review

**Bonds declined modestly.** U.S. investment-grade bonds retreated during the quarter but maintained a year-to-date gain. Investor optimism improved as banking industry turmoil subsided and Congress averted a debt ceiling crisis. While all key investment-grade sectors declined for the three-month period, credit-sensitive sectors fared better than rate-sensitive bonds.

**Fed hiked then paused.** After implementing its 10th-consecutive rate hike in May, the Federal Reserve (Fed) took a break in June, holding rates at a range of 5% to 5.25%. However, with inflation still well-above target and the job market still robust, policymakers admitted the pause was likely temporary and more tightening could be necessary. Accordingly, expectations for Fed rate cuts later this year faded.

**U.S. economy beat forecasts.** Data released in the period showed the economy grew at a 2% annualized pace in the first quarter, beating forecasts. Indicators were mixed in the second quarter. Manufacturing contracted and sank to a six-month low, while the services sector grew. The unemployment rate ended June slightly higher than it was in March, but consumer confidence rose to a four-month high.

**Treasury yields resumed their upward march.** After dropping in the first quarter, Treasury yields reversed course amid better-than-expected economic data and a still-hawkish Fed. Overall, the 10-year Treasury yield climbed 0.37% to 3.84%, and the two-year yield jumped 0.87% to 4.9%. The yield curve remained inverted.

**Riskier assets outperformed.** In the risk-on quarter, credit spreads tightened, and credit-sensitive securities, including corporate and securitized bonds, outperformed Treasuries. With yields rising, Treasuries were among the market's weakest performers. Meanwhile, high-yield corporates delivered gains for the quarter and outperformed investment-grade corporates.

**Inflation's pace slowed.** The annual rates of headline and core Consumer Price Index (CPI) moderated to 4% and 5.3%, respectively, in May (reported in June), still well above Fed targets. Declining energy prices largely accounted for the easing in headline CPI. An 8% increase in shelter costs accounted for most of core CPI's gain. Longer-term inflation expectations declined, and Treasury inflation-protected securities underperformed nominal Treasuries.

### Portfolio Performance Review

**Securitized holdings drove performance.** The securitized sector was a top contributor, largely due to our emphasis on credit-sensitive holdings. Results were broadly positive, led by our positions in collateralized loan obligations, non-agency collateralized mortgage-backed securities and non-agency collateralized mortgage obligations. Throughout the quarter, we adjusted the allocation to reflect our up-in-quality bias.

**Corporate credit contributed.** Investment-grade and high-yield credit exposure boosted performance. In the investment-grade arena, selections among banking, finance and gaming companies drove results. In the high-yield segment, real estate investment trusts, bank loans and wireline companies contributed. Elsewhere, our emerging markets allocation slightly contributed, largely due to a position in a Mexican energy company.

### Goal and Strategy

Current income through investments in income-producing securities.

### Portfolio Management Team

Name	Start Date	
	Industry	Company
Charles Tan	1994	2018
Jason Greenblath	2002	2019
Jeffrey Houston, CFA	1986	1990
Peter Van Gelderen	2005	2021
Gavin Fleischman	2000	2008

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**Duration detracted.** We positioned the portfolio at the longer end of its target duration range, given our expectations for the economy to slow and yields to decline. This strategy detracted from performance as yields continued to climb in the quarter. Additionally, Treasury holdings and a small position in preferred securities modestly weighed on performance.

### Portfolio Positioning

**Recession elusive but still likely.** We expect the combination of elevated inflation, restrictive monetary policy and tighter lending conditions to eventually trigger a recession. The timing and depth of the downturn remain uncertain, though, largely due to the labor market, which has been surprisingly resilient. In our estimate, recession may emerge in late 2023 or early 2024.

**Fed close to ending rate-hike campaign.** While inflation has moderated from last year's multiyear highs, it remains above the Fed's comfort zone. It takes time for the full effects of Fed rate increases to flow through the economy, and we believe an economic pullback is imminent. We expect more tightening in the third quarter before the Fed definitively concludes its rate-hike campaign.

**Rates nearing a peak.** After rising in the second quarter, Treasury yields are near pre-banking-crisis levels of early 2023 and likely close to peaking. As growth fades, we expect yields to move lower, underscoring our confidence in a duration overweight relative to the benchmark. Additionally, demand for higher-quality bonds should rise as recession nears, further highlighting this strategy's potential benefits.

**Staying defensive as risks rise.** We believe a defensive tilt is warranted due to recession risk and the credit cycle's shift into low growth with margin pressure. Valuations remain vulnerable to slowing fundamentals and the Fed's inflation-fighting moves. Accordingly, we have extended portfolio duration, reduced credit risk across sectors and boosted liquidity via Treasury purchases.

**Awaiting better valuations.** We expect credit spreads to widen as deteriorating macroeconomic fundamentals and tighter credit conditions emerge. Because of this, we have lifted credit quality and focused on higher-yielding, less-volatile securities. Once spreads widen and valuations improve, we plan to draw on the portfolio's higher-than-usual liquidity to add back credit risk.

**Security selection is paramount.** Tighter financial conditions and slowing growth continue to test economic and credit fundamentals. Accordingly, we believe maintaining our stringent security selection process that draws on fundamental research and qualitative insights remains vital. Our key goals amid today's heightened volatility are to identify market dislocations and capture yield.

# Short Duration Strategic Income Fund

TICKERS Investor Class: ASDVX | I Class: ASDHX | A Class: ASADX | C Class: ASCDX | R Class: ASDRX | R5 Class: ASDJX | R6 Class: ASXDX

Data presented reflects past performance. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Current performance may be higher or lower than the performance shown. To obtain performance data current to the most recent month end, please visit [www.americancentury.com/performance](http://www.americancentury.com/performance). Investment return and share value will fluctuate, and redemption value may be more or less than original cost. Data assumes reinvestment of dividends and capital gains. Returns for periods less than one year are not annualized. For information about other share classes available, please consult the prospectus. There is no guarantee that the investment objectives will be met. Dividends and yields represent past performance and there is no guarantee that they will continue to be paid.

## Average Annual Total Returns for Period Ended 6/30/2023

Class	Qtr (%)	1 Year (%)	3 Year (%)	5 Year (%)	10 Year (%)	Since Inception (%)	Inception Date	Gross Expense Ratio (%)
Investor	-0.09	1.09	0.47	1.66	-	1.60	7/28/14	0.53
I	0.05	1.19	0.57	1.78	-	1.65	4/10/17	0.43
R5	-0.04	1.29	0.63	1.86	-	1.80	7/28/14	0.33
R6	-0.03	1.23	0.69	1.91	-	1.85	7/28/14	0.28
Bloomberg U.S. 1-3 Year Government/Credit Bond Index	-0.37	0.52	-0.88	1.13	-	-	-	-

Historical performance for the I Class prior to its inception is based on the performance of the R5 Class shares. I Class performance has been adjusted to reflect the differences in expenses between the classes, if applicable.

Expense ratio is as of the fund's current prospectus. The I Class minimum investment amount is \$5 million (\$3 million for endowments and foundations) per fund. The R5 and R6 Share Classes are available only to participants in group employer-sponsored retirement plans where a financial intermediary provides recordkeeping services to plan participants.

Returns or yields for the fund would have been lower if a portion of the management fee had not been waived. Review the annual or semiannual report for the most current information.

Periods greater than one year have been annualized.

**You should consider the fund's investment objectives, risks, and charges and expenses carefully before you invest. The fund's prospectus or summary prospectus, which can be obtained at [americancentury.com](http://americancentury.com), contains this and other information about the fund, and should be read carefully before investing.**

Investment return and principal value of security investments will fluctuate. The value at the time of redemption may be more or less than the original cost. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Diversification does not assure a profit nor does it protect against loss of principal.

The opinions expressed are those of the portfolio investment team and are no guarantee of the future performance of any American Century Investments portfolio. Statements regarding specific holdings represent personal views and compensation has not been received in connection with such views. This information is for an educational purpose only and is not intended to serve as investment advice.

The information is not intended as a personalized recommendation or fiduciary advice and should not be relied upon for investment, accounting, legal or tax advice.

The letter ratings indicate the credit worthiness of the underlying bonds in the portfolio and generally range from AAA (highest) to D (lowest).

Generally, as interest rates rise, the value of the securities held in the fund will decline. The opposite is true when interest rates decline.

Source: Bloomberg Index Services Ltd. Bloomberg U.S. 1-3 Year Government/Credit Bond Index is a component of the U.S. Government/Credit Bond Index, which includes Treasury and agency securities (Government Bond Index) and publicly issued U.S. corporate and foreign debentures and secured notes (Credit Bond Index). The bonds in the index are investment-grade with a maturity between one and three years.



# Commentary Glossary

**Adjustable-Rate Mortgages (ARMs):** Mortgages in which the interest rate is adjusted periodically according to a specific index.

**Agency Securities (Agencies):** Debt securities issued by U.S. government agencies.

**Agency MBS:** Mortgage-backed securities issued by U.S. government agencies.

**Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT):** A parallel tax system that was created to keep high income individuals from avoiding taxes through various deductions and exemptions.

**Asset-Backed Securities (ABS):** A form of securitized debt backed by loan assets such as auto loans, student loans, and credit card debt.

**Basis Points:** Used to express percentage values that are carried out to two decimal places. One basis point equals 0.01%.

**Breakeven Rate:** Yield difference between nominal Treasury notes and TIPS; indicates the market's expectations for inflation.

**Carry-Oriented Currencies:** Higher-yielding currencies of countries where interest rates are generally higher than those of countries with lower-yielding currencies. These higher-yielding currencies are targeted for "carry trades," where investors borrow money in a low-interest rate currency and invest in a higher yielding currency, potentially profiting from the difference in interest rates.

**Collateralized Loan Obligations (CLOs):** A form of securitized debt, typically backed by pools of corporate loans and their payments.

**Collateralized Mortgage Obligations (CMOs):** A form of structured, securitized debt derived from mortgage-backed securities, typically backed by pools of residential mortgages and their payments.

**Commercial Mortgage-Backed Securities (CMBS):** Securities representing ownership in pools of commercial real estate loans used to finance the construction and improvement of income-producing properties such as hotels, shopping centers, and office buildings.

**Commercial Paper:** Short-term debt issued by corporations to raise cash and to cover current expenses in anticipation of future revenues.

**Commodity:** Basic raw materials such as precious metals and natural resources.

**Consumer Price Index (CPI):** Published by the U.S. government, CPI is the most commonly used statistic to measure inflation in the U.S. economy.

**Contribution to Duration (CTD):** A measure of bond portfolio risk that reflects a bond sector's contribution to the overall duration of the portfolio.

**Corporate Debt:** Debt instruments issued by private corporations.

**Covered Bonds:** Debt securities backed by cash flows from pools of mortgages or public sector loans. The asset pools help secure or "cover" these bonds if the originating financial institution becomes insolvent.

**Coupon Interest Rate:** The interest rate that is assigned to an interest-paying fixed income security when it is issued.

**Credit Analysis:** An analysis of the financial strength of the issuer of a security, and the ability of that issuer to provide timely payment of interest and principal.

**Credit Default Swap:** Credit derivative contracts between two counterparties that can be used to hedge credit risk or speculate on the changes in the credit quality of a corporation or government entity.

**Credit Quality:** Measures (usually in terms of high or low) the ability of issuers of debt securities to make timely interest and principal payments.

**Credit Risk:** The risk that the inability of the issuers of debt securities to make payments will cause these securities to decline in value.

**Currency Overlay:** A financial trading strategy used to separate the management of currency risk from other portfolio strategies. A currency overlay manager can seek to hedge the risk from adverse movements in exchange rates, and/or attempt to profit from tactical currency views.

**Debt Service:** The amount of money required within a given period to keep current on required/scheduled repayments of outstanding debt, including interest and principal.

**Deflation:** A decline in prices for goods, assets and services.

**Derivatives:** Securities whose performance and/or structure is derived from the performance and/or structure of other assets, interest rates or indexes.

**Duration:** A measure of the price sensitivity of a fixed income investment to changes in interest rates. The longer the duration, expressed in years, the more a fixed income investment's price will change when interest rates change.

**Emerging Markets (EM) Debt:** Debt issued by countries whose economies are considered to be developing or emerging from underdevelopment.

**Excess Return:** The return of an investment portfolio minus the return of what is considered to be a relatively risk-free asset, such as a U.S. Treasury bill.

**Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF):** Represents a group of securities but is traded on an exchange like an individual stock.

**Federal Funds Rate:** An overnight interest rate banks charge each other for loans.

**Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC):** The committee that sets interest rate and credit policies for the Federal Reserve System, the U.S. central bank.

**Federal Reserve (Fed):** The U.S. central bank, responsible for monetary policies affecting the U.S. financial system and the economy.

**Fundamental Factors:** Economic or financial data used in determining asset value.

**Futures Contracts (Futures):** Agreements to buy or sell a specific amount of a commodity or financial instrument at a particular price on a stipulated future date.

**General Obligation (GO) Bonds:** Municipal bonds that are secured by the full faith and credit of the issuer, including its taxing power.

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** A measure of the total economic output in goods and services for an economy.

**Government-Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs):** Privately owned corporations created by Congress to provide funding and help to reduce the cost of capital for certain borrowing sectors of the economy such as homeowners, students and farmers.

**Headline Risk:** Refers to the risk that a negative news media headline about one security issuer, incident or sector could affect the demand for and pricing of a much wider swath of securities.

**Hedge:** An investment designed to reduce the risk of an adverse price move in another investment. Often a hedge consists of taking an offsetting position in a related investment, such as a futures contract.

**High-Yield (HY) Debt:** Fixed income securities with lower credit quality and lower credit ratings. High-yield securities are rated below BBB-.

**Hybrid Adjustable-Rate Mortgages (ARMs):** Combine the characteristics of fixed-rate and adjustable-rate mortgages, with rates remaining fixed for a set period of time and then adjusting periodically according to a specific index.

**Inflation:** An economic condition of rising prices for goods, services and assets, or equivalently, a declining value of money. Core inflation excludes food and energy prices, which tend to be volatile. It is the opposite of Deflation.

**Inflation-Indexed Securities:** Debt securities that offer returns adjusted for inflation. Typically, the principal of inflation-indexed securities is indexed to a widely used inflation measure and adjusted accordingly. Interest payments can be adjusted as well.

**Interest Rate Risk:** The risk that a fixed income investment's value will change due to changes in interest rates.

**Investment-Grade (IG) Debt:** Fixed income securities with relatively high credit quality and credit ratings in the upper ranges of those provided by credit rating services. Using Standard & Poor's ratings as the benchmark, investment-grade securities are those rated BBB- or higher.

**Leverage:** The use of financial instruments and/or borrowed capital to increase potential returns or to increase purchasing power.

**Long Position:** Typical ownership of an asset or investment that gives the owner the right to transfer ownership, the right to any income generated by the asset, and the right to any profits or losses due to value changes.

**Long/Short Position:** A "market neutral" investing strategy that involves taking long positions in assets that are expected to increase in value and short positions in assets that are expected to decrease in value.

**Master Limited Partnerships (MLPs):** Publicly traded, generally higher-yielding securities of enterprises that engage in certain businesses, usually pertaining to the use of natural resources.

**MSCI ACWI (All Country World Index):** A free float-adjusted market capitalization-weighted index that is designed to measure the equity market performance of developed and emerging markets.

**Municipal Securities:** Debt securities typically issued by or on behalf of U.S. state and local governments, their agencies or authorities to raise money for a variety of public purposes, including financing for state and local governments as well as financing for specific projects and public facilities.

**Nominal Yield:** The interest rate to par value that the bond issuer promises to pay bond purchasers.

**Non-Agency Mortgage-Backed Securities (MBS):** MBS are groups of home mortgages that are sold by the issuing banks and then packaged together into "pools" and sold as a single security. Non-agency MBS are issued by private entities, such as financial institutions.

**Mortgage-Backed Securities (MBS):** A form of securitized debt that represents ownership in pools of mortgage loans and their payments.

**Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE):** This price deflator which comes from the Bureau of Economic Analysis' quarterly report on U.S. gross domestic product is based on a survey of businesses and is intended to capture the price changes in all final goods, no matter the purchaser. Because of its broader scope and certain differences in the methodology used to calculate the PCE price index, the Federal Reserve holds the PCE deflator as its preferred, consistent measure of inflation over time.

**Quantitative Easing (QE):** A form of monetary policy used by central banks to stimulate economic growth by purchasing domestic government securities to increase the domestic money supply, lower interest rates and encourage investors to make investments in riskier assets such as stocks and high-yield securities.

**Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs):** Securities that trade like stocks and invest in real estate through properties or mortgages.

**Real Yield:** A yield that has been adjusted to remove the effects of inflation.

**Revenue Bonds:** Municipal bonds that are secured by the net revenues from the project or facility being financed.

**S&P 500 Index:** The S&P 500® Index is composed of 500 selected common stocks most of which are listed on the New York Stock Exchange. It is not an investment product available for purchase.

**Secondary Market:** A market where investors make purchases from other investors, rather than from the initial issuers.

**Securitized Debt:** Debt resulting from aggregating debt instruments into a pool of similar debts, then issuing new securities backed by the pool. ABS, MBS, and CMOs are common forms of securitized debt.

**Short Position:** Refers to the sale of an asset borrowed, not owned, by the seller in anticipation of a price decline. If the seller can buy the asset later (to return what was borrowed) at a lower price, a profit results. If the price rises, the borrower/seller suffers a loss.

**Sovereign Debt:** A country's government-issued debt, priced in its native currency, which can be sold to investors in other countries.

**Spreads, Maturity Spreads, Credit Spreads:** Measured differences between two interest rates or yields that are being compared with each other. Spreads typically are measured between fixed income securities of the same credit quality, but different maturities (maturity spreads), or of the same maturity, but different credit quality (credit spreads).

**Spread Sectors:** Non-Treasury debt sectors with securities that usually trade at higher yields than comparable-maturity U.S. Treasury securities. These sectors typically trade at higher yields than Treasuries because they usually have relatively higher credit risk and/or more risk of prepayment.

**Spread Widening, Tightening:** Changes in spreads that reflect changes in relative value, with spread widening usually indicating relative price depreciation and spread tightening indicating relative price appreciation.

**Swaps:** Two-party contracts entered into primarily by institutional investors for periods ranging from a few weeks to more than one year. In a standard "swap" transaction, two parties agree to exchange the returns (or differentials in rates of return) earned or realized on particular predetermined investments or instruments.

**Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (TIPS):** Inflation-linked debt securities issued by the U.S. Treasury.

**Technical Factors:** Market price behavior, trends, volume, and momentum data used in determining asset value.

**Variable-Rate Demand Notes (VRDNs):** Short-term debt securities that track market interest rates using periodic (daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly) interest rate adjustments.

**Weighted Average Life to Maturity:** The average time in years to receive the principal repayments.

**Yield:** A rate of return for bonds and other fixed-income securities. There are several types of yields and yield calculations.

**Yield Curve:** A line graph showing the yields of fixed income securities from a single sector from a range of different maturities at a single point in time.

**Yield to Maturity:** A common performance calculation for fixed income securities, which takes into account total annual interest payments, the purchase price, the redemption value, and the amount of time remaining until maturity.

**Real Yield to Maturity:** Yield to maturity minus any "inflation premium" that had been added/priced in.

**Zero-Coupon Securities:** Debt securities that are sold at a deep discount then redeemed for their full face value at maturity.

