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## BlackRock enhances iRetire platform for advisors

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By Editorial Staff      Thu, Jun 8, 2017

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BlackRock has added a retirement income component to its iRetire platform to help advisors illustrate and demonstrate asset allocation and decumulation strategies and scenarios to clients while using the asset manager’s CoRI index—which tracks the cost of \$1 of lifetime annual income—and its iShare ETF portfolios.

Managing “the ups and downs of the market without knowing how long their client is going to live” makes a retirement advisor’s job difficult, said a BlackRock release, adding that iRetire gives advisors “the tools to engage in a relatable, repeatable conversation that is sophisticated enough to help manage the problem and simple enough to use with clients.”

iRetire is an “end-to-end retirement planning framework that financial advisors can use to take clients to and through retirement,” the BlackRock release said. It is backed by Aladdin, BlackRock’s proprietary institutional multi-asset technology platform. Launched in 2015, iRetire is now available to some 70,000 advisors, BlackRock said.

Big asset managers like PIMCO, the actively managed bond fund firm, and BlackRock, a multi-trillion-dollar ETF specialist, are trying to compete for the attention of the many advisors who want to address their clients’ needs for safe retirement income through diversification and without insurance products, such as annuities.

In a “give-em-the-razor-and-sell-em-the-blades” approach, both BlackRock and PIMCO have developed proxies for estimating cost of retirement income along with products with which to produce the income. In the defined contribution space, PIMCO has developed a PRICE (PIMCO Retirement Income Cost Estimate) and multi-asset, active bond funds. BlackRock created the CoRI (Cost of Retirement Income) Index and a lineup of target-date bond funds that track it.

A BlackRock spokesperson told *RIJ* this week that iRetire’s new capabilities “at and in retirement,” which goes beyond its previous capabilities, enable advisors “to maintain regular check-ins with their clients to manage the journey through retirement, allowing them to make adjustments as necessary (after seeing what impact those adjustments could have). Some clients may have immediate or unexpected needs, so iRetire allows advisors to quickly demonstrate the impact to sustainable spending after these immediate needs are met.”