

SPARK Institute starts data project for non-registered plan investment options

By Editor Test *Tue, Dec 28, 2010*

The new standards will help the providers share the comparison chart information electronically with one another and with existing investment information aggregators, the institute says.

Starting in 2012, the U.S. Department of Labor will require every sponsor of a 401(k) plan or similar plans to create a single chart listing all of the plan's investment options so that participants can compare them easily.

The SPARK Institute, an association of the largest retirement plan service providers and investment managers, says it has started developing standards to help providers of non-registered plan investment options meet the new data requirements.

The new standards will help the providers share the comparison chart information electronically with one another and with existing investment information aggregators, the institute says. The institute notes that it already has developed information-sharing standards for 403(b) plans and lifetime income arrangements.

The chart must include options such as fixed annuities, collective investment funds or separately managed accounts that aren't registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and don't ordinarily release the same kinds of public reports that registered mutual funds do, according to the SPARK Institute, which is based in Simsbury, Conn.

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