

Summary Prospectus

MAY 1, 2017

Social Choice Equity Fund of the TIAA-CREF Life Funds

Ticker: TLCHX

Before you invest, you may want to review the Fund's prospectus, which contains more information about the Fund and its risks. You can find the Fund's prospectus and other information about the Fund online at www.tiaa.org/tclf_pro. You can also get this information at no cost by calling 800-223-1200 or by sending an e-mail request to disclosure@tiaa.org. The Fund's prospectus and Statement of Additional Information ("SAI"), each dated May 1, 2017, as subsequently supplemented, and the sections of the Fund's shareholder report dated December 31, 2016 from "Portfolio of Investments" through "Notes to Financial Statements," are incorporated into this Summary Prospectus by reference and may be obtained free of charge at the website, phone number or e-mail address noted above.

Investment objective

The Fund seeks a favorable long-term total return that reflects the investment performance of the overall U.S. stock market while giving special consideration to certain environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria.

Fees and expenses

This table describes the fees and expenses that you may pay if you buy and hold shares of the Fund. The expenses shown do not reflect any separate account fees or expenses deducted under the variable annuity contracts or variable life insurance policies using the Fund as an underlying investment option.

SHAREHOLDER FEES (fees paid directly from your investment)

Maximum sales charge imposed on purchases (percentage of offering price)	0%
Maximum deferred sales charge	0%
Maximum sales charge imposed on reinvested dividends and other distributions	0%
Redemption fee	0%
Exchange fee	0%

ANNUAL FUND OPERATING EXPENSES (expenses that you pay each year as a percentage of the value of your investment)

Management fees	0.15%
Other expenses	0.21%
Total annual Fund operating expenses	0.36%
Waivers and expense reimbursements ¹	(0.14)%
Total annual Fund operating expenses after fee waiver and/or expense reimbursement	0.22%

¹ Under the Fund's expense reimbursement arrangements, the Fund's investment adviser, Teachers Advisors, LLC, has contractually agreed to reimburse the Fund for any Total annual Fund operating expenses (excluding interest, taxes, brokerage commissions or other transactional expenses, Acquired fund fees and expenses and extraordinary expenses) that exceed 0.22% of average daily net assets for shares of the Fund. These expense reimbursement arrangements will continue through at least April 30, 2018, unless changed with approval of the Board of Trustees.

Example

This example is intended to help you compare the cost of investing in shares of the Fund with the cost of investing in other mutual funds. The example assumes that you invest \$10,000 in the Fund for the time periods indicated and then redeem all your shares at the end of those periods. The example also assumes that your investment has a 5% return each year and that the Fund's operating expenses, before expense reimbursements, remain the same. The example assumes that the Fund's expense reimbursement agreement will remain in place through April 30, 2018, but that there will be no waiver or expense reimbursement agreement in effect thereafter. The example does not reflect the fees and expenses of any variable annuity contract or variable life insurance policy and the costs in the example would be higher if they did. Although your actual costs may be higher or lower, based on these assumptions your costs would be:

1 year	\$	23
3 years	\$	102
5 years	\$	188
10 years	\$	442

Portfolio turnover

The Fund pays transaction costs, such as commissions, when it buys and sells securities (or "turns over" its portfolio). A higher portfolio turnover rate may indicate higher transaction costs. These costs, which are not reflected in annual fund operating expenses or in the example, affect the Fund's performance. During the fiscal year ended December 31, 2016, the Fund's portfolio turnover rate was 21% of the average value of its portfolio.

Principal investment strategies

Under normal circumstances, the Fund invests at least 80% of its assets in equity securities. The Fund attempts to achieve the return of the U.S. stock market as represented by its benchmark, the Russell 3000® Index, while investing only in companies whose activities are consistent with the Fund's ESG criteria. See "Additional information about the Fund's benchmark index" below for more information about the Fund's benchmark.

The ESG criteria the Fund takes into consideration are non-fundamental investment policies. Such criteria and the universe of investments that the Fund utilizes may be changed without the approval of the Fund's shareholders. For purposes of the 80% investment policy, the term "assets" means net assets, plus the amount of any borrowings for investment purposes.

The Fund's investments are subject to certain ESG criteria. The ESG criteria are implemented based on data provided by independent research vendor(s). All companies must meet or exceed minimum ESG performance standards to be eligible for inclusion in the Fund. The evaluation process favors companies with leadership in ESG performance relative to their peers. Typically, environmental assessment categories include climate change, natural resource use, waste management and environmental opportunities. Social evaluation categories include human capital, product safety and social opportunities. Governance assessment categories include corporate governance, business ethics and government and public policy. How well companies adhere to international norms and principles and involvement in major ESG controversies (examples of which may relate to the environment, customers, human rights and community, labor rights and supply chain, and governance) are other considerations.

The ESG evaluation process is conducted on an industry-specific basis and involves the identification of key performance indicators, which are given more or less relative weight compared to the broader range of potential assessment categories. Concerns in one area do not automatically eliminate an issuer from being an eligible Fund investment. When ESG concerns exist, the evaluation process gives careful consideration to how companies address the risks and opportunities they face in the context of their sector or industry and relative to their peers. The Fund will not generally invest in companies significantly involved in certain business activities, including but not limited to the production of alcohol, tobacco, military weapons, firearms, nuclear power and gambling products and services.

Once a universe of ESG-eligible companies is established, the Fund's investment adviser, Teachers Advisors, LLC ("Advisors"), then uses quantitative investment techniques to attempt to closely match, to the extent practicable, the overall risk characteristics of the benchmark index. The Fund holdings will generally consist of a subset of the eligible investment universe. The Fund is not required to invest in all companies that meet the ESG criteria.

The Corporate Governance and Social Responsibility Committee (the "CGSR Committee") of the Board of Trustees of the Trust ("Board of Trustees") reviews

the ESG criteria used to screen securities held by the Fund and approves the vendor of that service. Advisors seeks to ensure that the Fund's investments are consistent with its ESG criteria, but Advisors cannot guarantee that this will always be the case for every Fund investment. Consistent with its responsibilities, the CGSR Committee evaluates options for implementing the Fund's ESG investment criteria and monitors the ESG vendors selected to supply the ESG-eligible universe. Advisors has the right to change the ESG vendor(s) at any time and to add to the number of vendors providing the universe of eligible companies. Investing on the basis of ESG criteria is qualitative and subjective by nature, and there can be no assurance that the process utilized by the Fund's vendor(s) or any judgment exercised by the CGSR Committee or Advisors will reflect the beliefs or values of any particular investor.

The Fund is not restricted from investing in any securities issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government or its agencies or instrumentalities. The Fund may also invest in securities issued by other countries or their agencies or instrumentalities as approved by the CGSR Committee. Consistent with its ESG criteria, the Fund may invest up to 15% of its assets in foreign investments.

Principal investment risks

You could lose money over short or long periods by investing in this Fund. An investment in the Fund, due to the nature of the Fund's portfolio holdings, typically is subject to the following principal investment risks:

- **ESG Criteria Risk**—The risk that because the Fund's ESG criteria exclude securities of certain issuers for nonfinancial reasons, the Fund may forgo some market opportunities available to funds that do not use these criteria.
- **Market Risk**—The risk that market prices of portfolio investments held by the Fund may fall rapidly or unpredictably due to a variety of factors, including changing economic, political or market conditions. Market risk may affect a single issuer, industry or sector of the economy, or it may affect the market as a whole.
- **Issuer Risk** (often called **Financial Risk**)—The risk that an issuer's earnings prospects and overall financial position will deteriorate, causing a decline in the value of the issuer's financial instruments over short or extended periods of time.
- **Foreign Investment Risk**—Foreign markets can be more volatile than the U.S. market due to increased risks of adverse issuer, political, regulatory, currency, market or economic developments and can result in greater price volatility and perform differently from financial instruments of U.S. issuers. This risk may be heightened in emerging or developing markets. Foreign investments may also be less liquid and more difficult to value than investments in U.S. issuers.
- **Large-Cap Risk**—The risk that large-capitalization companies are more mature and may grow more slowly than the economy as a whole and tend to go in and out of favor based on market and economic conditions.

- **Mid-Cap Risk**—The risk that the stocks of mid-capitalization companies often experience greater price volatility, lower trading volume and less liquidity than the stocks of larger, more established companies.
- **Small-Cap Risk**—The risk that the stocks of small-capitalization companies often experience greater price volatility than large- or mid-sized companies because small-cap companies are often newer or less established than larger companies and are likely to have more limited resources, products and markets. Securities of small-cap companies are often less liquid than securities of larger companies as a result of there being a smaller market for their securities, which can have an adverse effect on the pricing of these securities and on the ability to sell these securities when Advisors deems it appropriate.
- **Active Management Risk**—The risk that Advisors' strategy, investment selection or trading execution may cause the Fund to underperform relative to the benchmark index or mutual funds with similar investment objectives.
- **Benchmark Risk**—The risk that the Fund's performance may not correspond to its benchmark index for any period of time and may underperform such index or the overall financial market. Additionally, to the extent that the Fund's investments vary from the composition of its benchmark index, the Fund's performance could potentially vary from the index's performance to a greater extent than if the Fund merely attempted to replicate the index.
- **Quantitative Analysis Risk**—The risk that stocks selected using quantitative modeling and analysis could perform differently from the market as a whole.
- **Illiquid Investments Risk**—The risk that illiquid investments may be difficult to sell for the value at which they are carried, if at all, or at any price within the desired time frame.

Please see the non-summary portion of the Prospectus for more detailed information about the risks described above.

Past performance

The following chart and table help illustrate some of the risks of investing in the Fund by showing changes in the Fund's performance from year to year. The bar chart shows the annual total returns of shares of the Fund during the preceding ten-year period. Below the bar chart are the best and worst returns for a calendar quarter during the same period. The performance table following the bar chart shows the Fund's average annual total returns over the one-year, five-year, ten-year and since-inception periods (where applicable) ended December 31, 2016, and how those returns compare to those of the Fund's benchmark index. Returns do not reflect fees and expenses of any variable annuity or variable life insurance contract and would be lower if they did.

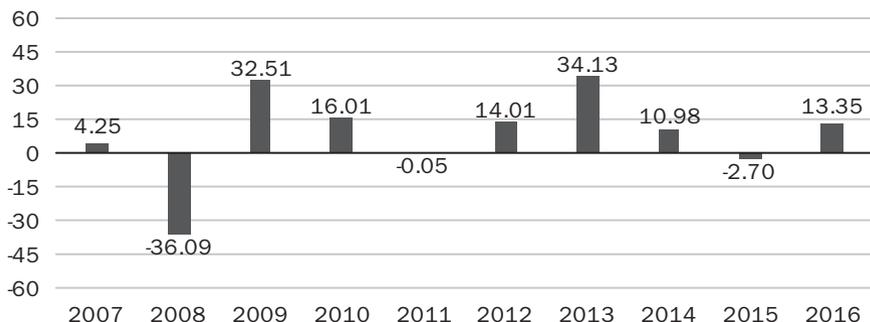
The returns shown below reflect previous agreements by Advisors to waive or reimburse the Fund for certain fees and expenses. Without these waivers and reimbursements, the returns of the Fund would have been lower. Past

performance of the Fund is not necessarily an indication of how it will perform in the future. The benchmark index listed below is unmanaged, and you cannot invest directly in an index. The returns for the benchmark index reflect no deduction for fees, expenses or taxes.

For current performance information of the Fund, including performance to the most recent month-end, please visit www.tiaa.org.

ANNUAL TOTAL RETURNS (%)

Social Choice Equity Fund



Best quarter: 17.72%, for the quarter ended June 30, 2009. Worst quarter: -23.71%, for the quarter ended December 31, 2008.

AVERAGE ANNUAL TOTAL RETURNS

For the Periods Ended December 31, 2016

	Inception date	One year	Five years	Ten years
Social Choice Equity Fund	4/3/2000	13.35%	13.36%	6.72%
Russell 3000® Index				
(reflects no deductions for fees, expenses or taxes)		12.74%	14.67%	7.07%

Current performance of the Fund's shares may be higher or lower than that shown above.

After-tax returns have not been shown because they are not relevant since Fund shares currently are held only through insurance company separate accounts.

Portfolio management

Investment Adviser. The Fund's investment adviser is Teachers Advisors, LLC.

Portfolio Managers. The following persons manage the Fund on a day-to-day basis:

Name:	Philip James (Jim) Campagna, CFA	Lei Liao, CFA
Title:	Managing Director	Managing Director
Experience on Fund:	since 2005	since 2014

Purchase and sale of Fund shares

Please contact the insurance company that issued your variable annuity or life insurance contract for more information on the purchase and sale of Fund shares.

Tax information

Because the only shareholders of the Fund are the insurance companies offering the contracts, no discussion is included here about the federal income tax consequences at the shareholder level. The federal income tax consequences for purchases of a variable annuity or life insurance contract are described in the prospectus for such contracts.

Payments to insurance companies and broker-dealers and other financial intermediary compensation

The Fund is only available as an underlying investment for the contracts. The Fund and its distributor (and their related companies) may make payments to the sponsoring insurance company (or its affiliates) and to broker-dealers and other financial intermediaries for distribution and/or other services. These payments may be a factor that the insurance company considers in including the Fund as an underlying investment option in the variable contract. Payments to broker-dealers and other financial intermediaries may create a conflict of interest by influencing the broker-dealer or other financial intermediary to recommend a variable product and the Fund over another investment. Ask your financial adviser or visit the website of the insurance company or the financial intermediary for more information. The disclosure document for your variable contract may contain additional information about these payments.

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