Services Brief

Defined Contribution

HIGHLIGHTS
Three Key Factors
Proven Approach
DC Framework

Developing practical and cost-effective solutions for DC plans

Marquette Associates takes a partnership approach to defined contribution consulting. Our team customizes solutions for our defined contribution clients by following a three-pronged approach to investment program structure and focusing on the major factors that contribute to a successful program — risk, quality, and cost.

Risk
Investment Policy Development
Fund Line-Up Monitoring
Trustee Education

Quality
Program Monitoring
Investment Manager Search
Experienced Team

Cost
Optimal Fund Line-Up
Fee Negotiation
Vendor Reviews
Benchmarking Studies

PROVEN APPROACH

Grounded in more than 35 years of experience and research, the Marquette approach to defined contribution plan stewardship focuses on helping plan sponsors adopt a robust governance and monitoring framework. Marquette believes that DC plan sponsors should adopt a governance framework where the depth and quality of the investment lineup is as important as the maximization of participant engagement, plan design, and the oversight of all vendors responsible for providing third-party services.

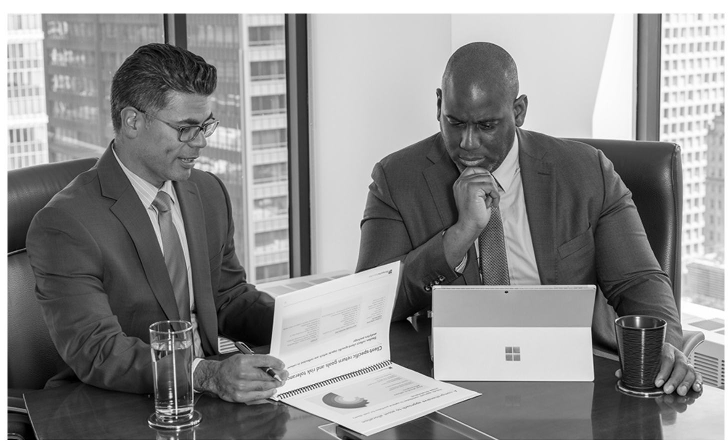
DEFINED CONTRIBUTION CLIENTS

98

DEFINED CONTRIBUTION ASSETS UNDER ADVISEMENT

$84B

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2025



Marquette's DC Framework

The investment structure for a defined contribution plan or participant-directed retirement plan should facilitate good decision-making in the investment process and allow participants to build a diversified portfolio that meets their retirement goals. Marquette helps DC plan sponsors adopt frameworks that include:

Participant Engagement Maximization
Conduct participant surveys to learn behaviors and review vendor communication strategies

Optimal Program Design
Establish reference points with peer group specific and broad market benchmark studies

Effective Investment Structure
From investment policy development and creating an optimal fund lineup to fund performance monitoring and ongoing manager research

Vendor Management
Benchmark and monitor direct/indirect costs, and the level of service provided to the plan

Maximizing Participant Engagement

Social, cognitive, and emotional factors can lead plan participants to depart from so-called rational behaviors. Trustees should not assume that all participants will act rationally or in their best interest. Without an effective program structure, plan participants may not be able to meet their long-term retirement savings goals.

Marquette helps plan sponsors understand plan demographic trends from a behavioral finance perspective by conducting surveys, publishing timely research, and assisting with vendor communication strategies.

Tiered Structure

The tiered investment structure was developed as a way to overcome common behavioral biases that can impede a participant's efforts to build an effective investment portfolio.

Tier I: A "one-stop shop" fund solution, typically a target date fund. Objective is to provide a "set and forget" fund option for cautious investors.

Tier II: A "core" set of actively and passively managed funds. Objective is to provide a diversified set of "core" building blocks for more hands-on investors.

Tier III: A set of specialty options or features such as a mutual fund window or a specialty standalone fund. Objective is to provide additional options for sophisticated investors.