

## **Simply Safe, Safely Simple: Retirement Income Planning using Fixed Annuities**

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LIMRA recently published the results of focus group interviews with financial advisors on retirement income planning. The advisors said that guaranteed income products are too complicated and software planning tools are too cumbersome. They want retirement income products that are easier to explain to their clients.

Perhaps they never considered fixed annuities?

With fixed annuities, income planning is simple. With just a few simple questions, you can give your client a guaranteed minimum income, with the potential for more.

Ask your client:

- How much money have you saved for retirement, and how much more do you plan to add to that savings before retirement?
- When do you plan to retire, and what will be your age at that time?
- Would you like a lifetime payout based solely on your life or on you and your spouse's lives together?

You then have two attractive options you can present: and lifetime income annuity or an income rider on a deferred annuity.

### **Lifetime Income Annuity**

A Lifetime Income Annuity or payout (the old term is "annuitization") is essentially a trade. When you retire, you trade your annuity's cash value for a guaranteed monthly income – the carrier takes your cash value and in return promises that it will pay you income as long as you live.

It is easy to figure the guaranteed payout (annuitization) of your client's existing annuity. Simply take their current savings and any future planned savings, accumulate them at the annuity's guaranteed minimum interest rate to the planned retirement date, then look up the guaranteed annuitization purchase factor in the deferred annuity contract. Multiply the purchase factor times the cash value, and voila, you have now computed the worst-case guaranteed monthly income. Or check out one of the income annuity calculators on the web for current Lifetime Income (immediate) Annuity products. You will find many free websites that allow you to contrast and compare options and companies.

There is still considerable upside potential. During the deferral period, the carrier could credit a rate of interest in excess of the guaranteed minimum interest rate. At the time of

annuitization, the carrier could be offering better purchase factors than those guaranteed in the deferred annuity contract.

So, with annuitization, you have simplicity, the ability to guarantee a worst-case monthly lifetime income in retirement, and upside potential.

### **Income Rider**

Suppose your client wants a guaranteed monthly income but doesn't want to trade the annuity's cash value to get it. No problem! Just purchase a fixed annuity with an income rider.

Just like the annuitization example above, the income rider will specify an interest rate to use during the deferral period and a purchase factor to use when income payments start. Simply take your client's current savings and any future planned savings, accumulate them at the deferral period interest rate to the planned retirement date, then multiply that balance times the income purchase factor. And voila, you have now simply computed the guaranteed monthly income.

There is still upside potential. If the interest credited during the deferral period or even after income payments start is sufficient higher than the interest rate guaranteed by the income rider, the income payments could be higher than you expected.

So, with an income rider, you have simplicity, the ability to guarantee a worst-case monthly lifetime income in retirement, and upside potential. If you use a fixed indexed annuity (a fixed annuity whose additional interest is calculated using the current performance of a selected index or indices), you also get some protection against inflation because the interest crediting is based on market index growth.

LIMRA reported that the focus group participants said that most clients are seeking dependability and stability for their retirement income. If the advisor is also trying to remove complication from the equation, there's no simpler, more dependable or stable choice than a fixed annuity. ♦