

# Equity Dividend Fund

BlackRock®

INST: MADVX • A: MDDVX • C: MCDVX

★★★★ Morningstar (Inst)

**Performance:** The Fund delivered a positive investment return and underperformed its benchmark during the month of February.

▲ **Contributors:** Financials & Utilities

▼ **Detractors:** Industrials & Communication Services

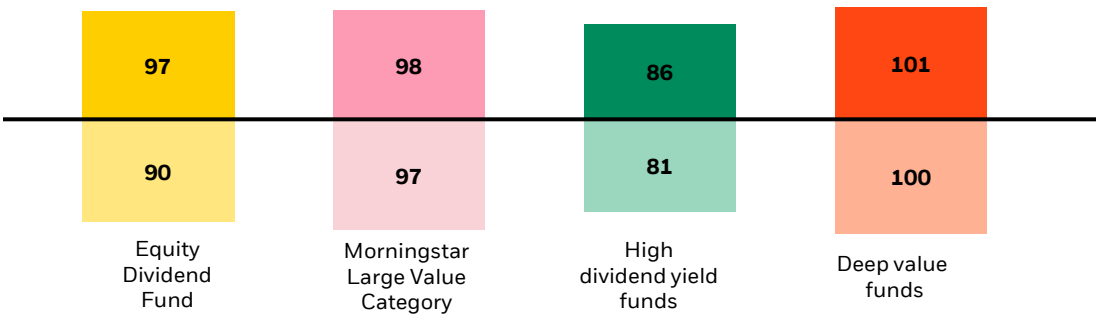
**Positioning:** We prefer areas of the market that are poised for future dividend growth versus those offering high current yields. A large portion of the fund is allocated to financials, health care and industrials.

▲ **Increased:** Financials

▼ **Decreased:** Communication Services

## The fund's focus on dividend growth has delivered strong performance with less risk

Upside and downside capture versus the Russell 1000 Value Index since PM change (8/4/14-02/29/24)



Upside/downside capture is a measure of performance relative to a benchmark in periods of rising and falling markets. Upside capture is the percentage of the benchmark's gains captured during periods when the benchmark was rising. Downside capture is the percentage of the benchmark's losses captured during periods when the benchmark was falling. An upside or downside capture of 100% means performance was equal to that of the benchmark. A capture rate above 100% means the gains (i.e., upside capture) or losses (i.e., downside capture) were greater than that of the benchmark. A capture rate below 100% means the gains (i.e., upside capture) or losses (i.e., downside capture) were smaller than that of the benchmark. High dividend yield funds represented by the MSCI USA High Dividend Yield Index. Deep value funds represented by the Manager Benchmark Aggregate US Deep Value Index.

### A large cap value strategy built for diverse markets

The fund seeks high quality companies with histories of paying and growing their dividend at attractive valuations. With this strategy, the fund has outperformed 41% of its peers since PM inception in August 2014.

| As of 02/29/24              | BlackRock Equity Dividend Fund | Russell 1000 Value Index |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3-year return on equity     | 13.03                          | 13.72                    |
| 3-year dividend growth rate | 6.70                           | 5.27                     |
| Forward P/E ratio           | 11.90x                         | 15.90x                   |
| 3-year annualized return    | 8.71                           | 8.41                     |
| 3-year standard deviation   | 15.48                          | 16.29                    |

There is no guarantee that a company will continue to pay dividends. The 3-year dividend growth rate represents the median annual growth of the underlying stocks; it is not a dividend yield. Standard deviation is a measure of volatility of returns. Higher deviation represents higher volatility.

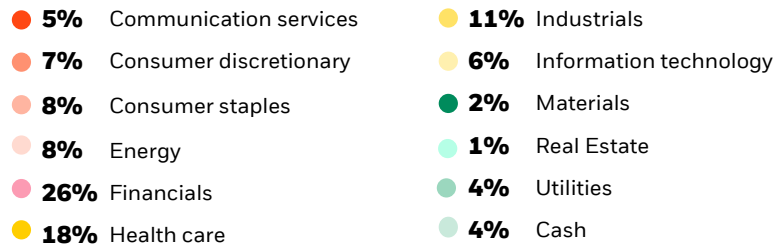
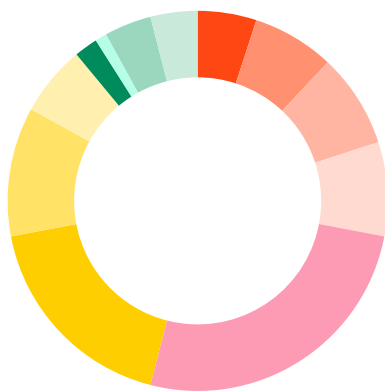
### Fund data based on Institutional shares, which may not be available to all investors; other share classes will vary.

Index performance is shown for illustrative purposes only. It is not possible to invest directly in an unmanaged index. **Performance data quoted represents past performance and is no guarantee of future results. Investment returns and principal values may fluctuate so that an investor's shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost. All returns assume reinvestment of dividends and capital gains. Current performance may be lower or higher than that shown. Refer to blackrock.com for most recent month-end performance.** Morningstar ranking based on total return of Institutional shares as of 02/29/24. Fund performance ranked against 900 funds since PM inception in August 2014.<sup>1</sup>

The Overall Morningstar Rating of 4 stars pertains to the fund's Institutional shares, rated against 1,128 Large Value Funds as of 02/29/24. Ratings are based on risk-adjusted total return and a weighted average of performance figures associated with Morningstar's 3-, 5- and 10-year rating metrics. Ratings are determined monthly and subject to change.<sup>2</sup>

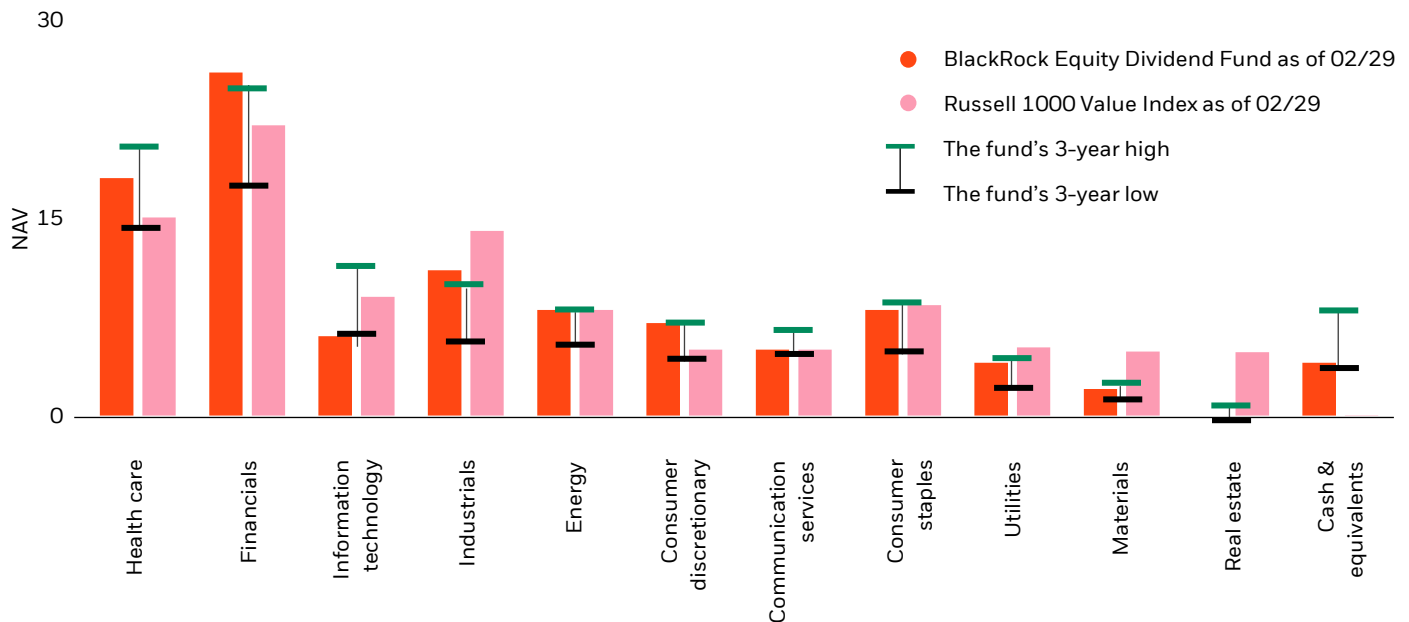
## Individual stock selection drives changes in sector allocation

In February we increased our exposure to the financials sector, while decreasing holdings in communication services



## Allocations relative to the index and fund history

The fund is investing in a combination of attractively priced cyclical and sectors with good stability characteristics.



## Dividend yields

| Largest holdings                   | % of net assets | Dividend yield (%) | Largest holdings                   | % of net assets | Dividend yield (%) |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| WELLS FARGO                        | 3.42            | 2.52               | GENERAL MOTORS                     | 2.33            | 1.17               |
| CITIGROUP INC                      | 3.04            | 3.82               | LEIDOS HOLDINGS INC                | 2.27            | 1.19               |
| AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL GROUP INC   | 2.65            | 1.98               | L3HARRIS TECHNOLOGIES INC          | 2.24            | 2.19               |
| SHELL PLC                          | 2.37            | 4.20               | KRAFT HEINZ                        | 2.15            | 4.54               |
| FIRST CITIZENS BANCSHARES INC CLAS | 2.37            | 0.42               | SS AND C TECHNOLOGIES HOLDINGS INC | 2.08            | 1.51               |

Yields shown relate to the individual securities and do not reflect the fund's dividend yield.

All data as of 02/29/24.

# New Year, Same Questions for U.S. Stocks

As we forge ahead into the new year, a few key themes remain top of mind: navigating a late cycle economy, increased appetite for quality, and widening market breadth. Despite inflation falling and strong economic data we saw in the past year, we expect a slowdown in 2024 leading to challenging economic conditions and a possible recession. While the odds of a widespread recession have certainly diminished relative to 2023, risks remain and it's imperative to keep an eye on the precautionary signals. Some late cycle risks in our view include low unemployment (3.7%)<sup>1</sup>, negative monetary supply growth, an inverted yield curve, and dwindling consumer savings. With these risks top of mind, we retain our focus on quality equities to provide added resilience in our portfolios. As the Fed turns more dovish, we see quality stocks in a strong relative position as rate hikes come to a possible end. Quality fared well in 2023 as evidenced by the “magnificent seven”<sup>2</sup>, many of which exhibit quality characteristics such as healthy balance sheets and strong free cash flow. As these mega-cap market leaders have grown expensive and valuations have expanded, so has the market-capitalization-weighted index (S&P 500). We believe the equal-weighted S&P 500 will take back its lead in the year ahead, indicating more market breadth and greater potential for stock-level dispersion. After a year of elevated recession fears and heightened volatility, we see greater opportunity in the new year as we focus on quality equities with sustainable earnings growth despite a potential economic slowdown.

1 Source: bls.gov as of Dec 31, 2023

2 Source: BlackRock, “magnificent seven” are the largest US based companies by market cap that performed well in 2023 due to the latest artificial intelligence boom.



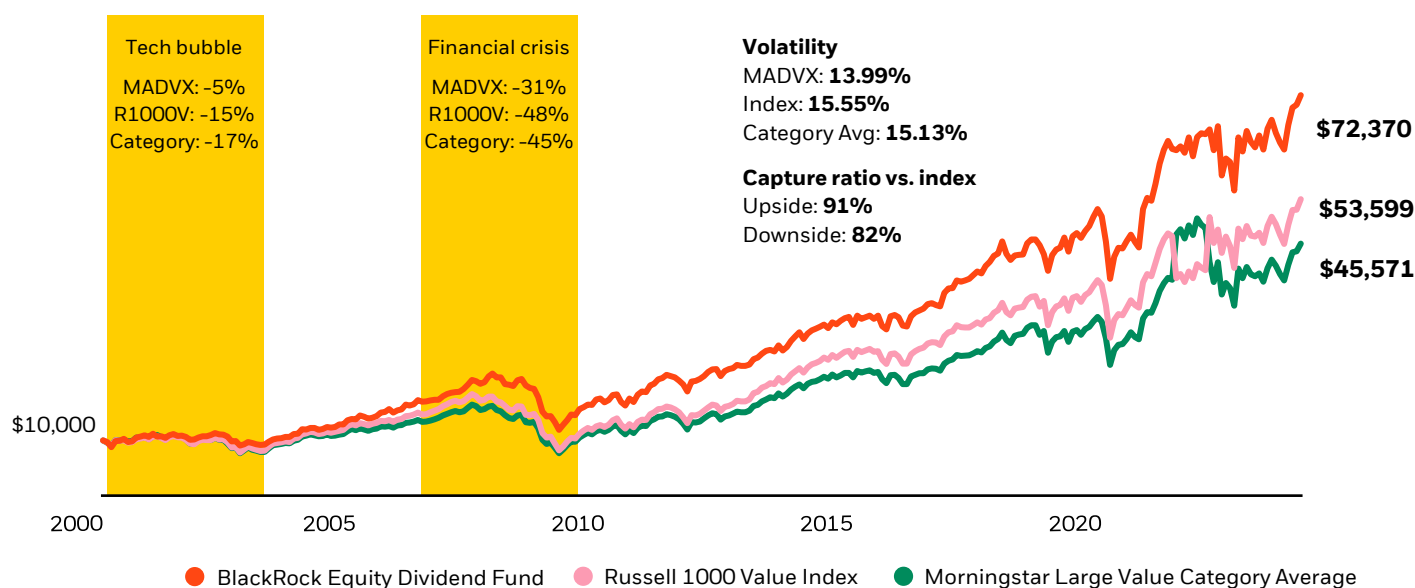
**Tony DeSpirito, JD**

Chief Investment Officer, US Fundamental Equities and Lead Portfolio Manager of the Equity Dividend Fund

## Portfolio Managers

Tony DeSpirito, JD; David Zhao

## The fund has outperformed the market and its peers with less volatility



Source: Morningstar, January 2000 – February 2024. Fund data is based on Institutional shares. Performance reflects a hypothetical investment of \$10,000. Volatility is measured by annualized standard deviation. Capture ratios are based on monthly returns. Capture ratios measure a fund's performance vs an index. An upside capture ratio above 100 indicates that a fund gained more than the index when the index generated positive returns. A downside capture ratio below 100 indicates that a fund has lost less than the index when the index generated negative returns.

## Average annual total returns (%) as of 02/29/24

|  | 1 Month<br>(not annualized) | YTD<br>(not annualized) | 1 Year | 3 Year | 5 Year | 10 Year | 30-day SEC yield as of 02/29* |              |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------------------------------|--------------|
|  |                             |                         |        |        |        |         | Subsidized                    | Unsubsidized |
| Institutional                                | 2.49                        | 3.23                    | 13.23  | 8.71   | 10.20  | 9.47    | 2.04                          | 2.04         |
| Investor A (Without Sales Charge)            | 2.45                        | 3.20                    | 12.93  | 8.45   | 9.92   | 9.19    | 1.73                          | 1.73         |
| Investor A (With Sales Charge)               | -2.93                       | -2.22                   | 7.00   | 6.52   | 8.74   | 8.61    |                               |              |
| Lipper Equity Income Funds Avg. <sup>†</sup> | 3.12                        | 3.37                    | 13.82  | 8.83   | 9.56   | 8.56    | –                             | –            |
| Morningstar Large Value Funds                | 3.26                        | 3.60                    | 13.91  | 9.31   | 9.88   | 8.74    | –                             | –            |
| Russell 1000 Value Index <sup>‡</sup>        | 3.69                        | 3.80                    | 14.01  | 8.41   | 9.38   | 8.74    | –                             | –            |

**Annualized total returns as of 12/31/23 for Institutional shares: 1 yr 12.69%; 5 yrs, 11.53%; 10 yrs, 9.03%; for Investor A shares without/with maximum sales charge: 1 yr, 12.37%/6.47%; 5 yrs, 11.26%/10.07%; 10 yrs, 8.76%/8.18%.**

**Data represents past performance and is no guarantee of future results. Investment returns and principal values may fluctuate so that an investor's shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost. All returns assume reinvestment of dividends and capital gains distributions. Current performance may be lower or higher than that shown. Investment returns reflect total fund operating expenses, net of all fees, waivers and/or expense reimbursements. Total/Net fund expenses, as stated in the fund's most recent prospectus, for Institutional shares: 0.70%/0.69%; for Investor A shares: 0.94%/0.93%. Institutional and Investor A shares have contractual waivers with an end date of 6/30/25, terminable upon 90 days' notice. Share classes have different sales charges, fees and other features. Investor A share has a maximum front-end sales charge of 5.25%. Institutional shares have no front- or back-end load. Institutional shares have limited availability and may be purchased at various minimums. See prospectus for details. Index performance is shown for illustrative purposes only. It is not possible to invest directly in an unmanaged index.**

**Important risks:** The fund is actively managed and its characteristics will vary. Stock and bond values fluctuate in price so the value of your investment can go down depending on market conditions. International investing involves special risks including, but not limited to political risks, currency fluctuations, illiquidity and volatility. These risks may be heightened for investments in emerging markets. The fund may use derivatives to hedge its investments or to seek to enhance returns. Derivatives entail risks relating to liquidity, leverage and credit that may reduce returns and increase volatility. The opinions expressed are those of the fund's portfolio management team as of February 29, 2024, and may change as subsequent conditions vary. Information and opinions are derived from proprietary and nonproprietary sources deemed by BlackRock to be reliable, are not necessarily all-inclusive and are not guaranteed as to accuracy. <sup>1</sup>The fund outperformed 72% of peers over the 10 years (rated against 822 funds), 57% of peers over 5 years (rated against 1,069 funds) and 43% of peers over 1 year (rated against 1,128 funds). <sup>2</sup> 30-day SEC Yield reflects the income earned by an investor in the fund during a 30-day period after deducting the fund's expenses. Unsubsidized SEC Yield represents what a fund's 30-day SEC Yield would have been had no fee waiver or expense reimbursement been in place during the period. <sup>†</sup> Lipper category is as of 02/29/24 and may not accurately represent the current composition of the portfolio. <sup>‡</sup> The Russell 1000 Value Index comprises the large-cap value segment of U.S. equities. BlackRock provides compensation in connection with obtaining or using third-party ratings and rankings. <sup>2</sup> The Morningstar Rating™ for funds, or "star rating", is calculated for managed products (including mutual funds, variable annuity and variable life subaccounts, exchange-traded funds, closed-end funds, and separate accounts) with at least a three-year history. Exchange-traded funds and open-ended mutual funds are considered a single population for comparative purposes. It is calculated based on a Morningstar Risk-Adjusted Return measure that accounts for variation in a managed product's monthly excess performance, placing more emphasis on downward variations and rewarding consistent performance. The top 10% of products in each product category receive 5 stars, the next 22.5% receive 4 stars, the next 35% receive 3 stars, the next 22.5% receive 2 stars, and the bottom 10% receive 1 star. The Overall Morningstar Rating for a managed product is derived from a weighted average of the performance figures associated with its 3-, 5-, and 10-year (if applicable) Morningstar Rating metrics. The weights are: 100% 3-year rating for 36-59 months of total returns, 60% 5-year rating/40% 3-year rating for 60-119 months of total returns, and 50% 10-year rating/30% 5-year rating/20% 3-year rating for 120 or more months of total returns. While the 10-year overall star rating formula seems to give the most weight to the 10-year period, the most recent 3-year period actually has the greatest impact because it is included in all three rating periods. BlackRock Equity Dividend Fund received a Morningstar Rating of 3 stars for the 3-year period, 3 stars for the 5-year period and 4 stars for the 10-year period, rated against 1,128, 1,069 & 822 Large Value Funds, respectively. Performance results represent past performance and are no guarantee of future results. Ratings are for Institutional share class. Other classes may have different performance characteristics. BlackRock provides compensation in connection with obtaining or using third-party ratings and rankings.

**You should consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses of the fund carefully before investing. The prospectus and, if available, the summary prospectus contain this and other information about the fund and are available, along with information on other BlackRock funds, by calling 800-882-0052 or from your financial professional. The prospectus should be read carefully before investing.**

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