

# Closed-end fund market review

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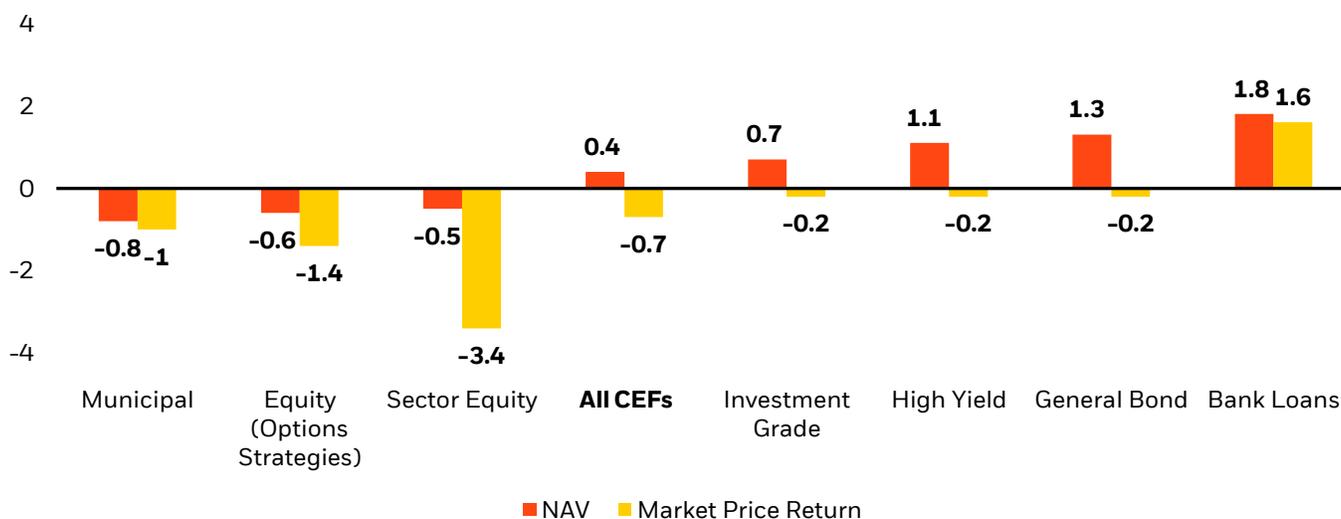
Third quarter 2021

## Closed-end fund market overview

Equities moved slightly higher in the third quarter, led by strong corporate earnings and a supportive Federal Reserve (Fed). The S&P 500 hit an all-time high, but pulled back amid inflation concerns in late September, finishing the quarter up 0.6%. Bonds were positive on the quarter, with the Barclays US Aggregate Bond Index up 0.5%. The 10-year US treasury yield finished the quarter at 1.52%, which was 7 basis points higher than at the end of June. For most of the quarter, longer duration bonds outperformed short duration, but saw a reversal toward the end of September on expectations that the Fed would start to taper QE. High yield bonds outpaced government and investment grade bonds over the period.

Closed-end fund (“CEFs”) performance was generally flat for the quarter, with the average CEF up 0.4% on net asset value (“NAV”) and down -0.7% on market price. Bank Loan CEFs were the best performing fund’s in the CEF market on the quarter. The strong performance was led by demand for floating rate assets in the face of potential rising interest rates. Over the quarter, discounts in the CEF space widened by an average of 100 basis points, ending the quarter at an average of -1.5%. Discount widening was largely driven by a risk-off market sentiment and volatility in September. Overall, CEF’s continue to trade at narrower discounts than historic averages (5-year avg. CEF discount is -5.6%) given the sustained market demand for income (the avg. CEF is yielding 6.5%).

## Third quarter CEF total returns % (NAV and market price)



Source: Lipper as of 9/30/2021. Returns are shown net of advisory fees paid by the fund and net of the fund’s operating fees and expenses. Investors who purchase shares of the fund through an investment adviser or other financial professional may separately pay a fee to that service provider. **Past performance is not indicative of future results.**

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## Municipal

Municipal bonds were down slightly over the third quarter, as longer duration assets took a hit toward the end of September. The sell-off in September was driven by less favorable supply and demand dynamics and rising interest rates as Fed began to outline a plan for tapering asset purchases. The average muni CEF was down -0.8 % on NAV and -1.0% on market price in the third quarter.

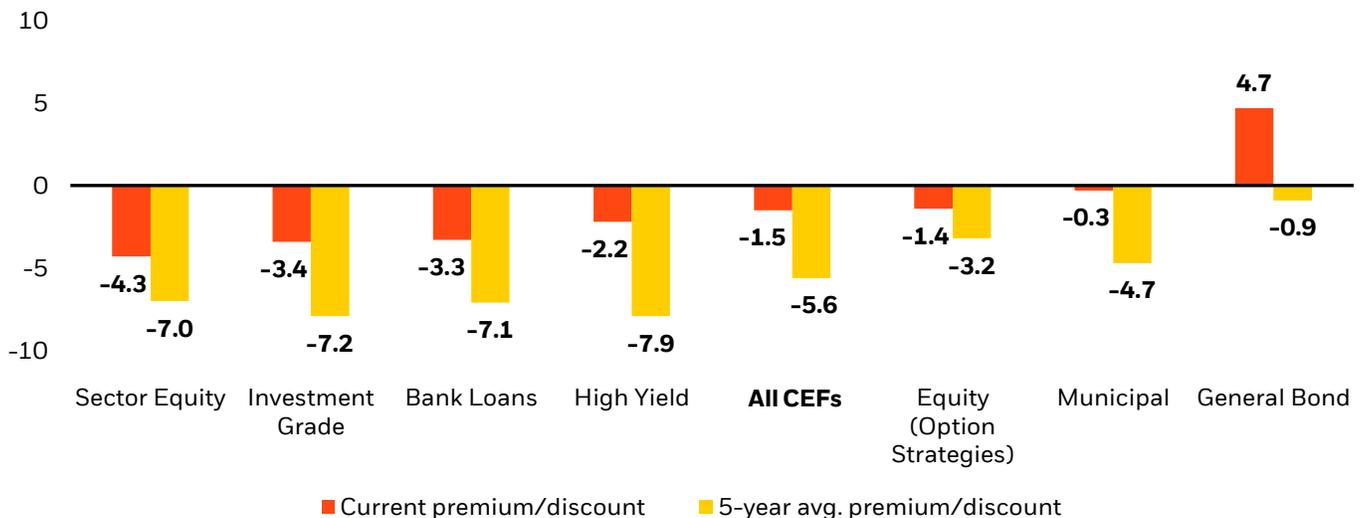
The demand for muni CEFs continues to be supported by low yields across the fixed income universe. The average tax equivalent yield for muni CEFs is 7.4%. Muni CEF discounts narrowed an average of only 10 basis points over the quarter, finishing at an -0.3%, still much narrower than their 5 year average discount of -4.7%. Low short-term interest rates have been helpful in lowering leverage costs, leading to a number of distribution increases across the industry. The SIFMA municipal swap index, a common base rate used to calculate leverage costs finished June at a rate of 0.05%, much lower than its 3-year average of 0.81%. A low short-term interest rate environment generally bodes well for muni CEF distribution stability.

## Fixed income

Most bond sectors were rangebound over the course of the third quarter. The 10-year treasury moved lower in July and August, but ended the quarter at around the same level it started due to inflation concerns in September. High yield bonds outperformed investment grade bonds as global bond yields moved higher toward the end of the quarter. The average fixed income CEF was up 1.2% on NAV and 0.3% on market price over the quarter.

Fixed income CEF discounts widened 130 basis points, on average, finishing the quarter at an average discount of -1.1%, still much narrower than their 5-year average discount of -6.0%. Investors have turned to fixed income CEFs for their competitive yields. The average fixed income CEF is currently yielding 6.8%. The demand for yield has kept discounts in the category relatively narrow. Most fixed income CEFs use leverage in an attempt to enhance their earnings. Low short-term rates have reduced leverage costs and have benefited distributions stability in the space. This dynamic helps support competitive yields compared to their open-end fund counterparts.

### Current premium/discount versus 5-year average as of September 30, 2021



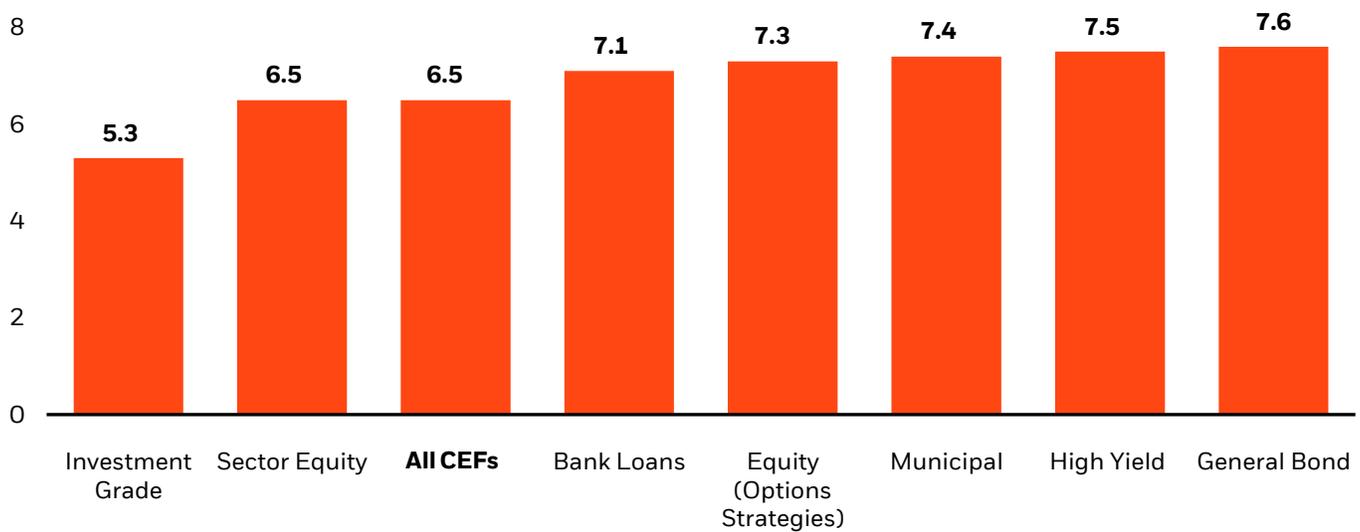
Source: Lipper as of 9/30/2021.

## Equity

US equities started the quarter strong on the heels of strong earnings numbers and a dovish message from the Fed, but fell towards the end of September. Inflation and growth concerns popped up toward the end of the quarter, leading to a spike in volatility and equity sell-off in growth sectors. Equity CEFs finished the quarter negative, with the average equity CEF down -0.5% on NAV and -2.4% in market price.

NAV's outperformed market prices as discounts widened in the space. Discounts in the equity CEF space widened by 80 basis points over the quarter, finishing at an average discount of -2.8%. Discount widening in the space was led by sector equity funds. In particular, technology CEF discounts widened more than any other sector as growth oriented stocks took a hit in September.

### Distribution rate (% of market price) as of September 30, 2021



Source: Lipper as of 9/30/2021. Distribution rate is calculated by annualizing the fund's latest declared regular distribution and dividing that number by the funds market price as of the stated date. Distributions are sourced from net investment income, unless noted otherwise. Tax-Equivalent Distribution Rate calculated using a 40.8% effective tax rate.

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## Index description:

SIFMA Municipal Swap Index: 7-day high-grade market index comprised of tax-exempt Variable Rate Demand Obligations (VRDOs) with certain characteristics. The Index is calculated and published by Bloomberg. The Index is overseen by SIFMA's Municipal Swap Index Committee.

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