

NORTHERN FUNDS

U.S. Government Fund



Summary Prospectus | October 23, 2018

Ticker: NOUGX

Before you invest, you may want to review the Fund's complete Prospectus, which contains more information about the Fund and its risks. You can find the Fund's complete Prospectus and other information about the Fund online at northerntrust.com/prospectus. You can also get this information at no cost by calling 800-595-9111 or by sending an e-mail request to northern-funds@ntrs.com. If you purchase shares of the Fund through a financial intermediary (such as a bank or a broker-dealer), the complete Prospectus and other information are also available from your financial intermediary. The Fund's complete Prospectus and Statement of Additional Information, both dated October 23, 2018, as supplemented, are incorporated by reference into this summary prospectus and may be obtained, free of charge, at the website, phone number or e-mail address noted above.

INVESTMENT OBJECTIVE

The Fund seeks a high level of current income.

FEES AND EXPENSES OF THE FUND

This table describes the fees and expenses that you may pay if you buy and hold shares of the Fund.

Shareholder Fees (fees paid directly from your investment)

None

Annual Fund Operating Expenses (expenses that you pay each year as a percentage of the value of your investment)⁽¹⁾

Management Fees	0.38%
Other Expenses	0.52%
Transfer Agent Fees	0.02%
Other Operating Expenses	0.50%

Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses⁽²⁾ 0.09%

Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses⁽³⁾ 0.99%

Expense Reimbursement⁽⁴⁾ (0.50)%

Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses After Expense Reimbursement⁽³⁾ 0.49%

- ⁽¹⁾ The expense information has been restated to reflect current fees.
- ⁽²⁾ Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses are expenses incurred indirectly by the Fund through its ownership of shares in other investment companies. They are not direct costs paid by Fund shareholders.
- ⁽³⁾ The Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses and Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses After Expense Reimbursement will not correlate to the Fund's ratios of average net assets to (1) expenses before reimbursements and credits and (2) expenses net of reimbursements and credits, respectively, included in the Fund's Financial Highlights in the Fund's complete Prospectus, which do not reflect indirect expenses, such as Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses.
- ⁽⁴⁾ Northern Trust Investments, Inc. ("NTI") has contractually agreed to reimburse a portion of the operating expenses of the Fund (other than certain excepted expenses, i.e., Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses, the compensation paid to each Independent Trustee of the Trust, expenses of third party consultants engaged by the Board of Trustees, membership dues paid to the Investment Company Institute and Mutual Fund Directors Forum, expenses in connection with the negotiation and renewal of the revolving credit facility, extraordinary expenses and interest) to the extent the "Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses" exceed 0.40%. NTI also has contractually agreed to reimburse all of Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses of the Fund attributable to the Fund's investments in affiliated non-money market investment companies. The "Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses After Expense Reimbursement" may be higher than the contractual limitation as a result of the excepted expenses and the Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses that are not reimbursed. These contractual limitations may not be terminated before October 23, 2019 without the approval of the Board of Trustees.

EXAMPLE

The following Example is intended to help you compare the cost of investing in 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 of 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 remain the same. Although your actual costs may be higher or lower, based on these assumptions your costs would be:

1 Year	3 Years	5 Years	10 Years
\$50	\$265	\$498	\$1,167

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 and may result in higher taxes when Fund shares are held in a taxable account. These costs, which are not reflected in annual portfolio operating expenses or in the Example, affect the Fund's performance. During the most recent fiscal year, the Fund's portfolio turnover rate was 429.23% of the average value of its portfolio.

PRINCIPAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

In seeking a high level of current income, the Fund will invest, under normal circumstances, at least 80% of its net assets in securities issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government or by its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises and repurchase agreements relating to such securities. These may include:

- U.S. Treasury bills, notes and bonds;
- Obligations of the U.S. government or its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises, including obligations that are issued by private issuers that are guaranteed as to principal and interest by the U.S. government, its agencies or instrumentalities;
- Mortgage-related securities issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government or by its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises, including US agency mortgage-backed pass-through securities ("MBS") that may not be backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government;
- Stripped securities evidencing ownership of future interest or principal payments on obligations of the U.S. government or its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises;
- Repurchase agreements collateralized by the above instruments; and

- Structured debt securities that are issued or guaranteed directly by the U.S. government or by its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises.
- The Fund also may make limited investments in the obligations of supranational organizations (such as the World Bank).

The Fund may also seek to obtain all or a portion of the Fund's exposure to MBS by investing in shares of one or more affiliated or unaffiliated investment companies, including exchange-traded funds ("ETFs"), and the amount may at times exceed 25% of the Fund's assets. As of the date of this Prospectus, NTI expects to obtain exposure to MBS through an investment in the FlexShares® Disciplined Duration MBS Index Fund (an "Underlying Fund" and together with other affiliated or unaffiliated investment companies and ETFs, the "Underlying Funds"), an affiliated ETF managed by NTI. The Underlying Fund seeks investment results that correspond generally to the price and yield performance, before fees and expenses, of a securities index that reflects the performance of a selection of investment-grade US agency residential mortgage-backed pass-through securities. NTI may seek to gain exposure to MBS through investments in one or more other affiliated or unaffiliated Underlying Funds, if it is determined to be in the best interest of the Fund.

In buying and selling securities for the Fund, the Fund's investment adviser uses a relative value approach. This approach involves an analysis of general economic and market conditions. It also involves the use of models that analyze and compare expected returns and assumed risks. Under the relative value approach, the Fund's investment adviser will emphasize particular securities and types of securities (such as treasury, agency, asset-backed and mortgage-related securities) that the team believes will provide a favorable return in light of these risks.

The Fund's dollar-weighted average maturity, under normal circumstances, will range between one and ten years.

The Fund makes significant investments in securities issued by U.S. government-sponsored entities. Obligations issued by U.S. government-sponsored entities are neither issued nor guaranteed by the U.S. Treasury and therefore are not backed by the full faith and credit of the United States.

The Fund's investment adviser may engage in active trading, and will not consider portfolio turnover a limiting factor in making decisions for the Fund.

PRINCIPAL RISKS

AFFILIATED PERSON RISK is the risk that the Fund's investment adviser may select investments for the Fund based on its own financial interests rather than the Fund's interests. Conflicts of interest may arise as the Fund's officers and Trustees and investment adviser fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities to the Fund and to certain affiliated funds in which the Fund may invest.

CREDIT (OR DEFAULT) RISK is the risk that the inability or unwillingness of an issuer or guarantor of a fixed-income security, or a counterparty to a repurchase or other transaction, to meet its payment or other financial obligations will adversely affect the value of the Fund's investments and its returns. Changes in the credit rating of a debt security held by the Fund could have a similar effect.

CYBERSECURITY RISK is the risk of an unauthorized breach and access to fund assets, customer data (including private

shareholder information), or proprietary information, or the risk of an incident occurring that causes the Fund, the investment adviser, custodian, transfer agent, distributor and other service providers and financial intermediaries to suffer data breaches, data corruption or lose operational functionality. Successful cyber-attacks or other cyber-failures or events affecting the Fund or its service providers may adversely impact the Fund or its shareholders.

DEBT EXTENSION RISK is the risk that an issuer will exercise its right to pay principal on an obligation held by the Fund (such as a mortgage-backed security) later than expected. This may happen during a period of rising interest rates. Under these circumstances, the value of the obligation will decrease and the Fund will suffer from the inability to invest in higher yielding securities.

ETF RISK. The Fund faces additional risks because of its investments in the Underlying Fund and/or other ETFs. An ETF faces additional risks because its shares are listed on a securities exchange, including the potential lack of an active market for the ETF's shares, losses from trading in the secondary market, periods of high volatility and disruption in the creation/ redemption process of the ETF. Any of these factors may lead to the ETF's shares trading at a premium or discount to net asset value ("NAV"). ETF shares also may possibly face trading halts and/or delisting.

Certain ETFs, including the Underlying Fund, are not actively managed and their investment advisers may not attempt to take defensive positions in any market conditions, including declining markets. These ETFs are also subject to tracking error risk, which is the risk that the performance of an ETF may vary substantially from the performance of its underlying index. Additionally, the calculation methodology or sources of information of the underlying index of an ETF may not provide an accurate assessment of included issuers or correct valuation of securities.

INFLATION RISK is the risk that interest payments on inflation-indexed securities can be unpredictable and will vary as the principal and/or interest is periodically adjusted based on the rate of inflation. If the index measuring inflation falls, the interest payable on these securities will be reduced.

INTEREST RATE RISK is the risk that during periods of rising interest rates, the Fund's yield (and the market value of its securities) will tend to be lower than prevailing market rates; in periods of falling interest rates, the Fund's yield (and the market value of its securities) will tend to be higher. Securities with longer maturities tend to be more sensitive to changes in interest rates, causing them to be more volatile than securities with shorter maturities. Securities with shorter maturities tend to provide lower returns and be less volatile than securities with longer maturities. If interest rates rise, the Fund's yield may not increase proportionately, and the maturities of fixed income securities that have the ability to be prepaid or called by the issuer may be extended. The risks associated with increasing interest rates are heightened given that interest rates are near historic lows, but are expected to increase in the future with unpredictable effects on the markets and the Fund's investments. A general rise in interest rates may cause investors to move out of fixed income securities on a large scale, which could adversely affect the price and liquidity of fixed income securities and could also result in increased redemptions from the Fund. A low or declining interest rate environment poses additional risks to the Fund's performance, including the risk that proceeds from prepaid or maturing instruments may have to be reinvested at a lower interest rate. Fluctuations in interest rates may also affect the liquidity of fixed income securities and instruments held by the Fund.

INVESTMENT COMPANY RISK includes the risks of investing indirectly in affiliated and unaffiliated investment companies, including ETFs, through your investment in the Fund. Investors will incur a proportionate share of the expenses of the investment company in which the Fund invests (including operating expenses and management fees) in addition to the fees and expenses regularly borne by the Fund. In addition, the Fund will be affected by the investment policies, practices and performance of such investments in direct proportion to the amount of assets the Fund invests in such investment company. Certain investment companies are not actively managed and their investment advisers may not attempt to take defensive positions in any market conditions, including declining markets. This could cause the Fund's performance to be lower than if the Fund employed active management with respect to that portion of the Fund's portfolio. Certain investment companies in which the Fund may invest may have a large percentage of their shares owned by fewer shareholders. Large redemption activity could result in the affiliated fund incurring additional costs and being forced to sell portfolio securities at a loss to meet redemptions. Certain investment companies may be new funds. There can be no assurance that a new investment company will grow to an economically viable size, in which case the investment company may cease operations. In such an event, the Fund may be required to liquidate or transfer its investment at an inopportune time.

MANAGEMENT RISK is the risk that a strategy used by the Fund's investment adviser may fail to produce the intended results or that imperfections, errors or limitations in the tools and data used by the investment adviser may cause unintended results.

MARKET RISK is the risk that general market conditions, such as real or perceived adverse economic or political conditions, inflation, changes in interest rates, lack of liquidity in the bond markets or adverse investor sentiment could cause the value of your investment in the Fund, or its yield, to decline. The market value of the securities in which the Fund invests may go up or down in response to the prospects of particular sectors or governments and/or general economic conditions throughout the world due to increasingly interconnected global economies and financial markets.

MORTGAGE-RELATED SECURITIES RISK is the risk of investing in mortgage-related securities issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government or by its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises, including US agency mortgage-backed pass-through securities ("MBS"). These securities may not be backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government. Mortgage-related securities are subject to Credit (or Default) Risk, Interest Rate Risk, Debt Extension Risk and Prepayment (or Call) Risk. Because of these risks, mortgage-related securities react differently to changes in interest rates than other bonds. Small movements in interest rates (both increases and decreases) may quickly and significantly reduce the value of certain mortgage-related securities.

PORTFOLIO TURNOVER RISK is the risk that high portfolio turnover, including investments made on a shorter-term basis or instruments with a maturity of one year or less at the time of acquisition, may lead to increased Fund expenses that may result in lower investment returns. High portfolio turnover may also result in higher short-term capital gains taxable to shareholders when distributed. Distributions may be derived

primarily from short-term capital gains that are taxable as ordinary income. Short-term capital gains and losses realized by the Fund are not eligible to offset a shareholder's short-term capital losses or gains, respectively, earned from other investments. For the fiscal years ended March 31, 2018 and March 31, 2017, the annual portfolio turnover rate of the Fund was 429% and 665%, respectively.

PREPAYMENT (OR CALL) RISK is the risk that prepayment of the underlying mortgages or other collateral of some fixed-income securities may result in a decreased rate of return and a decline in value of those securities.

U.S. GOVERNMENT SECURITIES RISK is the risk that the U.S. government will not provide financial support to its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises if it is not obligated to do so by law. Certain U.S. government securities purchased by the Fund are neither issued nor guaranteed by the U.S. Treasury and, therefore, may not be backed by the full faith and credit of the United States. It is possible that the issuers of such securities will not have the funds to meet their payment obligations in the future.

As with any mutual fund, it is possible to lose money on an investment in the Fund. An investment in the Fund is not a deposit of any bank and is not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, any other government agency, or The Northern Trust Company, its affiliates, subsidiaries or any other bank.

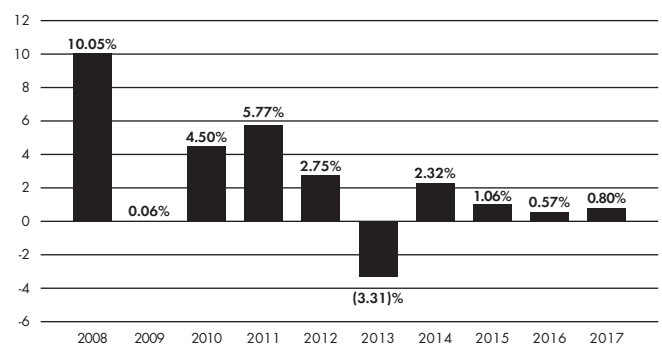
FUND PERFORMANCE

The bar chart and table that follow provide an indication of the risks of investing in the Fund by showing (A) changes in the performance of the Fund from year to year, and (B) how the average annual total returns of the Fund compare to those of a broad-based securities market index.

The Fund's past performance, before and after taxes, is not necessarily an indication of how the Fund will perform in the future.

Updated performance information for the Fund is available and may be obtained on the Fund's website at northerntrust.com/funds or by calling 800-595-9111.

CALENDAR YEAR TOTAL RETURN*



* Year to date total return for the six months ended June 30, 2018 is (0.82)%. For the periods shown in the bar chart above, the highest quarterly return was 6.60% in the fourth quarter of 2008, and the lowest quarterly return was (2.52)% in the fourth quarter of 2016.

AVERAGE ANNUAL TOTAL RETURN

(For the periods ended December 31, 2017)

	Inception Date	1-Year	5-Year	10-Year	Since Inception
U.S. Government Fund	4/01/94				
Returns before taxes		0.80%	0.27%	2.40%	3.96%
Returns after taxes on distributions		0.18%	(0.14)%	1.41%	2.43%
Returns after taxes on distributions and sale of Fund shares		0.46%	0.20%	1.51%	2.48%
Bloomberg Barclays Intermediate U.S. Government Bond Index (reflects no deduction for fees, expenses, or taxes)		1.14%	0.92%	2.70%	4.55%

After-tax returns are calculated using the historical highest individual federal marginal income tax rates and do not reflect the impact of state and local taxes. Actual after-tax returns depend on an investor's tax situation and may differ from those shown. After-tax returns shown are not relevant to investors who hold their shares through tax-deferred arrangements, such as 401(k) plans or individual retirement accounts.

In calculating the federal income taxes due on redemptions, capital gains taxes resulting from redemptions are subtracted from the redemption proceeds and the tax benefits from capital losses resulting from the redemptions are added to the redemption proceeds. Under certain circumstances, the addition of the tax benefits from capital losses resulting from redemptions may cause the Returns after taxes on distributions and sale of Fund shares to be greater than the Returns after taxes on distributions or even the Returns before taxes.

MANAGEMENT

INVESTMENT ADVISER AND PORTFOLIO MANAGER. Northern Trust Investments, Inc., a subsidiary of Northern Trust Corporation, serves as the investment adviser of the U.S. Government Fund. Michael R. Chico, Vice President of Northern Trust Investments, Inc., and Daniel J. Personette, Vice President of Northern Trust Investments, Inc., have been managers of the Fund since July 2013 and October 2018, respectively. The Northern Trust Company, an affiliate of Northern Trust Investments, Inc., serves as transfer agent, custodian and sub-administrator to the Fund.

PURCHASE AND SALE OF FUND SHARES

You may open an account directly with Northern Funds (the "Trust") with a minimum initial investment of \$2,500 in the Fund (\$500 for an IRA; \$250 under the Automatic Investment Plan; and \$500 for employees of Northern Trust and its affiliates). The minimum subsequent investment is \$50 (except for reinvestments of distributions for which there is no minimum). The Fund reserves the right to waive these minimums. You may also purchase Fund shares through your account at Northern Trust or an authorized intermediary.

On any business day, you may sell (redeem) or exchange shares through your account by contacting your Northern Trust account representative or authorized intermediary. If you purchase shares directly from the Trust, you may sell (redeem) or exchange your shares in one of the following ways:

- By Mail – Send a written request to: Northern Funds, P.O. Box 75986, Chicago, Illinois 60675-5986.
- By Telephone – Authorize the telephone privilege on your New Account Application. Call 800-595-9111 to use the telephone privilege.
- By Wire – Authorize wire redemptions on your New Account Application and have proceeds sent by federal wire transfer to a previously designated bank account (the minimum redemption amount by this method is \$250). You will be charged \$15 for each wire redemption unless the designated bank account is maintained at Northern Trust or an affiliated bank. Call 800-595-9111 for instructions.
- By Systematic Withdrawal – If you own shares of the Fund with a minimum value of \$10,000, you may elect to have a fixed sum redeemed at regular intervals and distributed in cash or reinvested in one or more other funds of the Trust. Call 800-595-9111 for an application form and additional information. The minimum amount is \$250 per withdrawal.
- By Exchange – Complete the Exchange Privilege section of your New Account Application to exchange shares of one fund in the Trust for shares of another fund in the Trust. Shares being exchanged must have a value of at least \$1,000 (\$2,500 if a new account is being established by the exchange, \$500 if the new account is an IRA). Call 800-595-9111 for more information.
- By Internet – You may initiate transactions between Northern Trust banking and Fund accounts by using Northern Trust Private Passport. For details and to sign up for this service, go to northerntrust.com/funds or contact your Relationship Manager.

TAX INFORMATION

The Fund's distributions are generally taxable to you as ordinary income, capital gains, or a combination of the two, unless you are investing through a tax-exempt or tax-deferred arrangement, such as a 401(k) plan or an individual retirement account. Distributions may be taxable upon withdrawal from tax-deferred accounts.

PAYMENTS TO BROKERS-DEALERS AND OTHER FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

If you purchase the Fund through a broker-dealer or other financial intermediary (such as a bank), the Fund and its related companies may pay the intermediary for the sale of Fund shares and related services. These payments may create a conflict of interest by influencing the broker-dealer or other intermediary and your salesperson to recommend the Fund over another investment. Ask your salesperson or visit your financial intermediary's website for more information.