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## Three Firms Team Up For a Big Green 401k Platform

**Pete Swisher**, senior VP and national practice leader for White Plains, New York-based **Pentegra**, **Todd Kading**, president of Austin, Texas-based **LeafHouse Financial**, and **Rob Thomas**, president of Springfield, Massachusetts-based **Social(k)**, **confirmed** on March 4 that a new aggregate retirement program is on its way. The *Big Green Retirement Plan*, the result of a collaboration between the three companies, will offer bundled 401(k) plan services and is designed to allow customers to incorporate their personal beliefs into their investment decisions via Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) options.

For the new program, Pentegra will be providing recordkeeping and 3(16) fiduciary administrator services to assist plan sponsors with internal administrative workload. LeafHouse Financial, meanwhile, will provide 3(38) discretionary investment fiduciary services, monitoring and managing the plan's SRI and ESG investment platform.

"It's taken about [a year] to make this possible," **Zack Demers**, Pentegra's New England regional director, who helped orchestrate the collaboration, tells **401kWire**. "From climate change to human rights, people today are showing a yearning to align their personal beliefs with their investments. A company's 401(k) should be something that allows this."

Speaking to **401kWire**, Swisher highlights the range of ethical angles possible with ESG investing. "This is religious-based, this is green investment, this is sustainability investing, it's governance-related," he says. "ESG investing wraps these things together."

The pieces have fallen into place for this type of collaboration, according to LeafHouse's Kading. "Our firm sees the trajectory of ESG investing rising, and believes the time is right to offer investment oversight to retirement plans," he states.

Thomas echoes the sentiment: "We're seeing a huge uptake in ESG investing," he tells **401kWire**. "Now it's major national

pushes to bring this product into the marketplace ... The market's ready."

Social(k)'s first recordkeeper relationship started in 2005, when it was **launched** by ExpertPlan (now part of **Ascensus**). Then in 2015 the Social(k) team expanded to connect with four recordkeepers in total.

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[Back to Top](#)