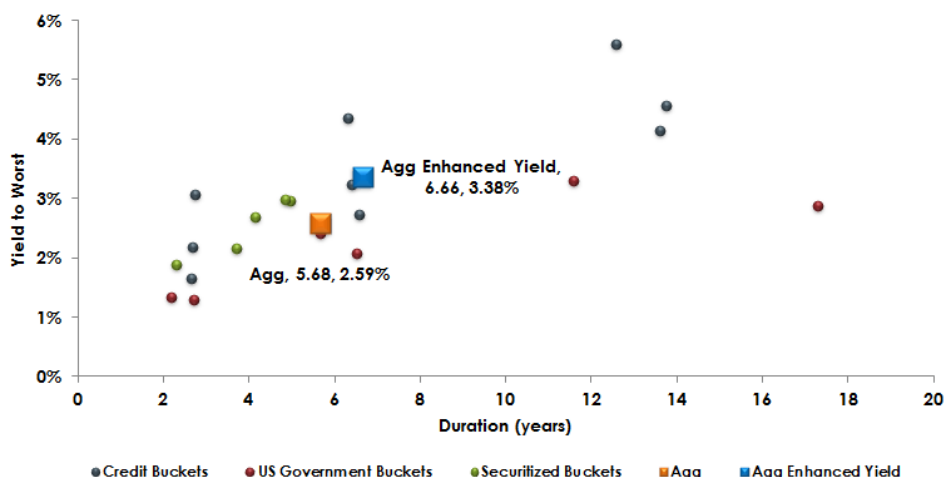


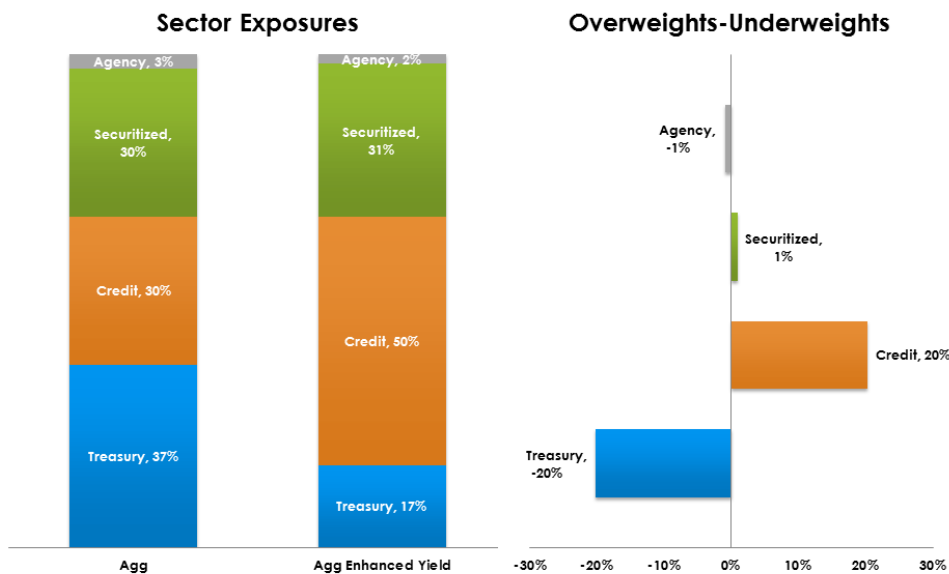
# LOOKING WITHIN THE AGG FOR INCOME

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With U.S. equity markets down nearly 9%<sup>1</sup> at the start of 2016, many investors are being confronted with difficult questions surrounding their asset allocation decisions. While exposure to equities may be causing pain, bond markets have not provided the typical ballast to performance that we've seen in previous sell-offs. This is primarily a symptom of today's low [interest rate](#) environment where total returns from bond strategies are being driven primarily by price returns as opposed to income. While the [Barclays U.S. Aggregate Index \(Agg\)](#) will likely remain the defacto benchmark for U.S. fixed income markets, we believe that relying on this strategy as a core holding in portfolios is suboptimal. In order to address these issues, WisdomTree partnered with Barclays to create the [Barclays U.S. Aggregate Enhanced Yield Index](#). In our view, this approach allows investors to construct a more intuitive portfolio with higher income potential while still retaining many of the familiar characteristics of their performance benchmark. **Enhancing Yield** In financial markets, there is seldom (if ever) a free lunch. Therefore, the only way to enhance the yield and return profile of a fixed income portfolio is by substituting one risk for another. In order to enhance the Agg's income potential, the enhanced strategy starts with the same investable universe as the Agg but then seeks to reweight the exposures in order to increase yield. By applying sector, [credit](#) quality and [duration](#) constraints to this process, the strategy has been able to broadly retain the risk characteristics of the Agg, but with 86 [basis points \(bps\)](#) of higher income potential.<sup>2</sup> Put another way, the investment's income potential is boosted by over 30%. This is generally achieved by decreasing exposure to U.S. Treasuries and increasing exposure to credit (corporate and [mortgage backed securities](#)). Nearly 22% of the Agg is concentrated in Treasuries maturing between one and five years. These securities have an average yield of 1.04%, which is only 43% of the Agg's overall yield of 2.41%.<sup>3</sup> These securities provide protection in a risk-off environment—but not nearly as much as longer-dated Treasuries. By allocating less to the short end of the Treasury curve, the Enhanced Agg provides a more balanced exposure to the fixed income market. **Yield and Duration Comparison, December 31,**



2015



Source: WisdomTree, as of 12/31/15. Past performance is not indicative of future results. You cannot invest directly in an index. Subject to change. Yield to Worst is the rate of return generated assuming a bond is redeemed by the issuer on the least desirable date for the investor.

### Increasing Yield Could

**Increase Total Return** Fixed Income 101 teaches us that the yield of a bond is the single largest determinant of future total returns. By seeking to increase the yield, we also seek to increase the expected total returns of the investment. While we can't make the claim that this strategy will always outperform, we believe that a higher starting yield could generally lead to greater total returns over the investment cycle. Given that the strategy is over-weight to credit, it will tend to underperform in risk-off scenarios such as 2008. In low interest rate environments such as today, excess returns from 80 extra basis points of yield could be significant given the comparable risk profile. Ultimately, investors will continue to demand fixed income in order to generate income and help mitigate the [volatility](#) of their equity investments. In our view, while many see the Agg as the barometer of their bond portfolio, we believe that the investment approach and rationale can be enhanced. By decreasing allocations to U.S. Treasuries and overweighting exposure to [investment-grade](#) securities, investors can potentially boost the income potential and total return profile of their fixed income portfolio.

<sup>1</sup>Based on the [S&P 500 Index](#). Source: Bloomberg, as of 1/20/16. <sup>2</sup>Source: Barclays, as of 1/20/16. <sup>3</sup>Source: Barclays, as of 1/20/16.

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Fixed income investments are subject to interest rate risk; their value will normally decline as interest rates rise. In addition, when interest rates fall, income may decline. Fixed income investments are also subject to credit risk, the risk that the issuer of a bond will fail to pay interest and principal in a timely manner or that negative perceptions of the issuer's ability to make such payments will cause the price of that bond to decline.

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You cannot invest directly in an index.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Interest rates** : The rate at which interest is paid by a borrower for the use of money.

**Barclays U.S. Aggregate Bond Index, 1-3 Year** : This index is the 1-3 Yr component of the U.S. Aggregate index.

**Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Aggregate Enhanced Yield Index** : a constrained, rules-based approach that reweights the sector, maturity, and credit quality of the Barclays U.S. Aggregate Index across various sub-components in order to enhance yield.

**Credit** : A contractual agreement in which a borrower receives something of value now and agrees to repay the lender at some date in the future.

**Duration** : A measure of a bond's sensitivity to changes in interest rates. The weighted average accounts for the various durations of the bonds purchased as well as the proportion of the total government bond portfolio that they make up.

**Basis point** : 1/100th of 1 percent.

**Mortgage-backed securities** : Fixed income securities that are composed of multiple underlying mortgages.

**Volatility** : A measure of the dispersion of actual returns around a particular average level.&nbsp;.

**Investment grade** : An investment grade is a rating that signifies a municipal or corporate bond presents a relatively low risk of default.

**S&P 500 Index** : Market capitalization-weighted benchmark of 500 stocks selected by the Standard and Poor's Index Committee designed to represent the performance of the leading industries in the United States economy.