

NORTHERN FUNDS

Tax-Exempt Fund



Summary Prospectus | July 31, 2018
(as revised October 23, 2018)

Ticker: NOTEX

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 July 31, 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 to provide a high level of current income exempt from regular federal income tax by investing in municipal instruments.

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)

Management Fees	0.43%
Other Expenses	0.05%
Transfer Agent Fees	0.02%
Other Operating Expenses	0.03%
Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses ⁽¹⁾	0.01%
Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses⁽²⁾	0.49%
Expense Reimbursement ⁽³⁾	(0.03)%
Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses After Expense Reimbursement⁽²⁾	0.46%

⁽¹⁾ 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.

⁽²⁾ 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.

⁽³⁾ Northern Trust Investments, Inc. 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 0.45%. The "Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses After Expense Reimbursement" may be higher than the contractual limitation as a result of the excepted expenses, including but not limited to Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses, that are not reimbursed. This contractual limitation may not be terminated before July 31, 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
\$47	\$154	\$271	\$613

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 103.25% of the average value of its portfolio.

PRINCIPAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

In seeking high current income exempt from regular federal income tax, the Fund may invest in a broad range of municipal instruments. A municipal instrument is a fixed-income obligation issued by a state, territory or possession of the United States (including the District of Columbia) or a political subdivision, agency or instrumentality thereof. Interest income received by holders of municipal instruments is often exempt from the federal income tax and from the income tax of the state in which they are issued, although municipal instruments issued for certain purposes may not be tax-exempt. The municipal instruments in which the Fund invests may include:

- General obligation bonds secured by the issuer's full faith, credit and taxing power;
- Revenue obligation bonds payable from the revenues derived from a particular facility or class of facilities;
- Industrial development bonds;
- Moral obligation bonds;
- Tax-exempt derivative instruments;
- Stand-by commitments; and

- Municipal instruments backed by letters of credit, insurance or other forms of credit enhancement issued by domestic or foreign banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions.

The Fund primarily invests in investment grade debt obligations (i.e., obligations rated within the top four rating categories by a Nationally Recognized Statistical Rating Organization (“NRSRO”) or of comparable quality as determined by the Fund’s investment adviser). However, it may invest to a limited extent in obligations that are rated below-investment grade (commonly referred to as “junk bonds”).

Except in extraordinary circumstances, at least 80% of the Fund’s net assets will be invested in debt instruments that pay interest that is exempt from regular federal income tax. Alternative minimum tax (“AMT”) obligations (also known as “private activity bonds”), which pay interest that may be treated as an item of tax preference to shareholders under the federal AMT, will not be deemed to be eligible debt instruments for the purposes of determining whether the Fund meets this policy. For shareholders subject to AMT, a limited portion of the Fund’s dividends may be subject to federal tax.

During temporary defensive periods, all or any portion of the Fund’s assets may be held uninvested or invested in AMT obligations and taxable instruments. The Fund may not achieve its investment objective when this temporary defensive strategy is used.

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 general obligation bonds and revenue obligation bonds) that the Fund’s investment adviser believes will provide a favorable return in light of these risks.

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

In seeking to achieve its investment objective, the Fund may make significant investments in structured securities and also may invest, to a lesser extent, in futures contracts, options and swaps, all of which are considered to be derivative instruments, for both hedging and non-hedging purposes.

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

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.

GEOGRAPHIC AND SECTOR RISK is the risk that if the Fund invests a significant portion of its total assets in certain issuers within the same state, geographic region or economic sector, an adverse economic, business or political development affecting that state, region or sector may affect the value of the Fund’s investments more than if its investments were not so concentrated in such geographic region or economic sector.

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.

LIQUIDITY RISK is the risk that the Fund will not be able to pay redemption proceeds in a timely manner because of unusual market conditions, an unusually high volume of redemption requests, legal restrictions impairing its ability to sell particular securities or close derivative positions at an advantageous market price or other reasons. Certain securities may be less liquid than others, which may make them difficult or impossible to sell at the time and the price that the Fund would like and the Fund may have to lower the price, sell other securities instead or forgo an investment opportunity. In addition, less liquid securities may be more difficult to value and markets may become less liquid when there are fewer interested buyers or sellers or when dealers are unwilling or unable to make a market for certain securities. Recently, dealers have generally been less willing to make markets for fixed income securities. All of these risks may increase during periods of market turmoil and could have a negative effect on the Fund’s performance.

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.

MUNICIPAL MARKET VOLATILITY RISK is the risk that the Fund may be adversely affected by the volatile municipal market. The increased presence of nontraditional participants (such as proprietary trading desks of investment banks and hedge funds) or the absence of traditional participants (such as individuals, insurance companies, banks and life insurance companies) in the municipal markets may lead to greater volatility in the markets because non-traditional participants may trade more frequently or in greater volume. The municipal market can be significantly affected by adverse tax, legislative, or political changes and the financial condition of the issuers of municipal securities. In recent years an increasing number of municipal issuers have defaulted on obligations, been downgraded or commenced insolvency proceedings. Municipalities continue to experience difficulties in the current economic and political environment.

MUNICIPAL SECURITIES RISK is the risk that municipal securities may be subject to credit/default risk, interest rate risk, liquidity risk and certain additional risks. The Fund may be more sensitive to adverse economic, business or political developments if it invests more than 25% of its assets in the debt securities of similar projects, (such as those relating to education, health care, housing, transportation, and utilities), industrial development bonds, or in particular types of municipal securities (such as general obligation bonds, private activity bonds and moral obligation bonds). The secondary market for municipal obligations also tends to be less well-developed and less liquid than many other securities markets, which may limit the Fund's ability to sell its municipal obligations at attractive prices.

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. For the last fiscal year, the annual portfolio turnover rate of the Fund exceeded 100%.

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.

STRUCTURED SECURITIES RISK is the risk that loss may result from the Fund's investments in structured securities. Structured securities may be more volatile, less liquid and more difficult to price accurately than less complex securities due to their derivative nature. As a result, investments in structured securities may adversely affect the Fund's net asset value. In some cases it is possible that the Fund may suffer a total loss on its investment in a structured security.

TAX RISK is the risk that future legislative or administrative changes, court decisions or noncompliant conduct by issuers may materially affect the value of municipal instruments, the ability of the Fund to pay tax-exempt dividends, or may

otherwise prevent the Fund from realizing the full current benefit of the tax-exempt status of such securities. Any such change could affect the value of an investment in the Fund.

VALUATION RISK is the risk that the sale price the Fund could receive for a portfolio security may differ from the Fund's valuation of the security, particularly for securities that trade in low volume or volatile markets or that are valued using a fair value methodology. In addition, the value of the securities in the Fund's portfolio may change on days when shareholders will not be able to purchase or sell the Fund's shares.

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.

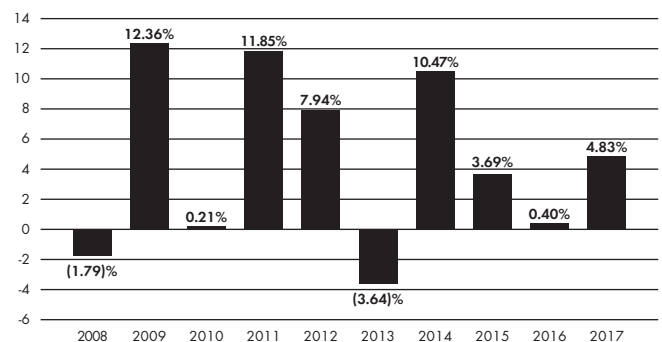
FUND PERFORMANCE

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 (0.48)%. For the periods shown in the bar chart above, the highest quarterly return was 7.15% in the third quarter of 2009, and the lowest quarterly return was (5.73)% in the fourth quarter of 2010.

AVERAGE ANNUAL TOTAL RETURN

(For the periods ended December 31, 2017)

	Inception Date	1-Year	5-Year	10-Year	Since Inception
Tax-Exempt Fund	4/1/94				
Returns before taxes		4.83%	3.04%	4.49%	5.04%
Returns after taxes on distributions		4.82%	2.92%	4.29%	4.80%
Returns after taxes on distributions and sale of Fund shares		4.11%	3.04%	4.23%	4.77%
Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Municipal Index (reflects no deduction for fees, expenses, or taxes)		5.45%	3.02%	4.46%	5.34%

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 MANAGERS. Northern Trust Investments, Inc., a subsidiary of Northern Trust Corporation, serves as the investment adviser of the Tax-Exempt Fund. Timothy T. A. McGregor, Senior Vice President of Northern Trust Investments, Inc. and Frederick A. Azar, Vice President of Northern Trust Investments, Inc., have been managers of the Fund since November 1998 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 affiliate) 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 may be taxable as ordinary income or capital gains. However, the Fund anticipates that substantially all of its income dividends will be "exempt interest dividends" that are generally exempt from regular federal income tax. In certain instances, dividends paid by the Fund, while exempt from regular federal income tax, may be subject to the federal AMT. State and local income taxes may apply to all or a portion of exempt-interest dividends paid by the Fund. Tax-exempt institutions, IRAs and other tax advantaged retirement accounts will not gain an additional benefit through investment in the Fund because such investors are already tax-exempt.

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.