

Intermediate ESG Municipal

Marketing communication | As of 31 Dec 2024

- **The Bloomberg 3-15 Year Blend Index, the benchmark for the Intermediate ESG Composite, returned -1.16% during the fourth quarter as its average yield increased by 0.47% to 3.49%.**
- **Allocation attribution by duration detracted, while allocation by rating and sector marginally contributed. Positive credit selection made up the remaining residual.**
- **The investment team continues to favor premium, high quality, call-protected bonds for a core portion of the portfolios to enhance income while implementing credit selection to identify relative value opportunities.**

Market review

As the Fed began cutting rates in the second half of 2024, market expectations for a soft landing gained momentum, and long-term rates moved higher as stronger economic growth was priced into the yield curve. That steepness may attract more long-duration municipal bond demand. We anticipate robust tax-exempt supply due to ongoing infrastructure needs and current refunding volume. We expect another year of supply that could touch \$500 billion as issuers accept the higher-for-longer rate cycle and tap the market in 2025. While supply is expected to remain elevated, demand is expected to increase based on strong fundamentals in the municipal market, continued demand for tax-exempt income and attractive yields. According to the Investment Company Institute, open-end municipal bond funds added \$17.5 billion of net flows after reporting net inflows in 22 of the past 26 weeks ended 12/31/2024. Similarly, municipal ETFs added \$14.2 billion of net flows in the past 26 weeks with only 2 weeks of modest redemptions.

Looking forward, robust revenues and high statutory reserves for state and local governments make municipal credit well-positioned for resiliency even if markets move to a risk-off tone. Many municipal issuers also benefit from broad autonomy as bonds backed by property taxes, dedicated state and local taxes, transportation revenues, tolls or project-specific revenues should remain relatively insulated from federal policy changes. The latest U.S. Census data contains collections through Q3 2024. Total state and local tax collections were up 5.4% compared to the first three quarters of 2023. Property tax collections were up 8.8% compared to the same period last year. Strong growth in property taxes confirms local governments continue to benefit from appreciating property values and a strong demand for housing. States primarily rely on income and sales taxes to fund operations, and both have demonstrated resilience even as revenue growth has returned to historic norms following several years of post-pandemic volatility.

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Portfolio review

Yields across the MMD AAA Benchmark Yield Curve Rates rose by 0.31%, 0.56%, 0.46%, 0.41%, 0.40% and 0.38% on maturities of 1, 5, 10, 15, 20 and 30 years over the quarter. Despite the larger rise in yield in short to intermediate maturities, the duration profiles of longer dated maturities led longer indices to underperform. For instance, the Long (22+) Index, with a starting duration of 8.87 years, returned -1.65% as its average yield increased by 0.30%, while the Short/Intermediate (1-10) Index, with a starting duration of 3.54 years, returned -0.88% as its average yield increased by 0.49%.

The Bloomberg 3-15 Year Blend Index, the benchmark for the Intermediate ESG Composite, produced a total return of -1.16% during the quarter with an increase in market yield of 0.47% and a starting duration of 4.62 years, compared to 5.64 for the Main Index and 5.39 for the Intermediate ESG Composite. The Index benefited from 92% of its ending

exposure being in bonds with durations of less than 8 years. Bonds rated AA/Aa reported the highest total return (-1.13%), while bonds rated AAA/Aaa, with an ending weight of 23%, returned (-1.22%).

The Intermediate ESG Composite lagged against the benchmark slightly in the fourth quarter largely due to its longer duration profile. Allocation attribution rewards cases where the composite was overweight in outperforming segments of the index or underweight in underperforming segments relative to the overall index average. Allocation by duration was the primary detractor as the composite was underweight in bonds with durations of less than 4 years, and overweight in durations of 4 to 8 years. Allocation by Rating and Sector marginally contributed but much of the positive contribution was allocated to credit selection, especially within the 4 to 6 year duration range.

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For more information contact: 800.752.8700 or visit nuveen.com

Minimum investment is \$250,000.

Important information on risk

All investments carry a certain degree of risk, including possible loss of principal, and there is no assurance that an investment will provide positive performance over any period of time. An investment in any municipal portfolio should be made with an understanding of the risks involved in investing in municipal bonds, such as interest rate risk, credit risk, and market risk. The value of the portfolio will fluctuate based on the value of the underlying securities. Please contact a tax advisor regarding the appropriateness of tax-exempt investments in your portfolio. Nuveen is not a tax advisor. If sold prior to maturity, municipal securities are subject to gain/losses based on the level of interest rates, market conditions and the credit quality of the issuer. Income may be subject to the alternative minimum tax (AMT) and/or state and local taxes, based on the investor's state of residence. Income from municipal bonds held by a portfolio could be declared taxable because of unfavorable changes in tax laws, adverse interpretations by the Internal Revenue Service or state tax authorities, or noncompliant conduct of a bond issuer. Some income may be subject to state and local taxes and to the federal alternative minimum tax. Capital gains, if any, are subject to tax. The portfolio will include only holdings deemed consistent with the applicable Environmental Social Governance (ESG) guidelines. As a result, the universe of investments available to the portfolio will be more limited than other portfolios that do not apply such guidelines. ESG criteria risk is the risk that because the portfolio's ESG criteria exclude securities of certain issuers for nonfinancial reasons, the portfolio may forgo some market opportunities available to portfolios that do not use these criteria.

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Glossary

The **Bloomberg Municipal Bond Index** covers the USD denominated long-term tax-exempt bond market. The index has four main sectors: state and local general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, insured bonds, and prerefunded bonds. The 7-year Index consists of bonds from the Municipal Bond Index with maturities of approximately 7 years. Bonds in the Long Index mature in 22 years or longer. The **Bloomberg 3-15 Year Blend Municipal Bond Index** is an unmanaged index composed of investment-grade municipal securities ranging from 2 and 17 years in maturity. **It is not possible to invest directly in an index.** Clients should consult their financial professionals regarding unknown financial terms and concepts.

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