

# No More Spend Down!

*Financial Empowerment for People Receiving  
State and Federal Means Tested Benefits*

**Presented by:**

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ABLE State Plan Network Executive Committee  
Director, Maryland ABLE

 **ABLE** today.

 **ABLE SAVINGS  
PLANS NETWORK**



## 2023 Home and Community-Based Services Conference

# Overview of This Session

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**Speaking the Same Language**

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**Understanding ABLE Accounts**

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**Entity as Authorized Legal Representative**

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**Role as a Provider and Employer**

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# Speaking the Same Language

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## *What We Say*

1. ABLE
2. ASPN
3. NAST
4. ABLEtoday
5. ALR
6. DEIA
7. QDE
8. SSA
9. SSI
10. SSDI
11. IRS
12. SHRM
13. ODEP

## *What It Means*

1. Achieving a Better Life Experience
2. ABLE State Plan Network
3. National Association of State Treasurer's
4. Marketing and Outreach Arm of ASPN
5. Authorized Legal Representative
6. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility
7. Qualified disability Expense
8. Social Security Administration
9. Supplemental Security Income
10. Social Security Disability Insurance
11. Internal Revenue Service
12. Society Human Resource Management
13. Office of Disability Employment Policy

*ABLE Accounts are a game changer for  
financial empowerment and  
community inclusion*



# ***IMAGINE... If People with Disabilities Could...***



**Save money in their own names –  
and more than just \$2,000**



**Accumulate wealth without losing  
their eligibility for benefits**



**Work without having to “spend down”  
their current or future income**

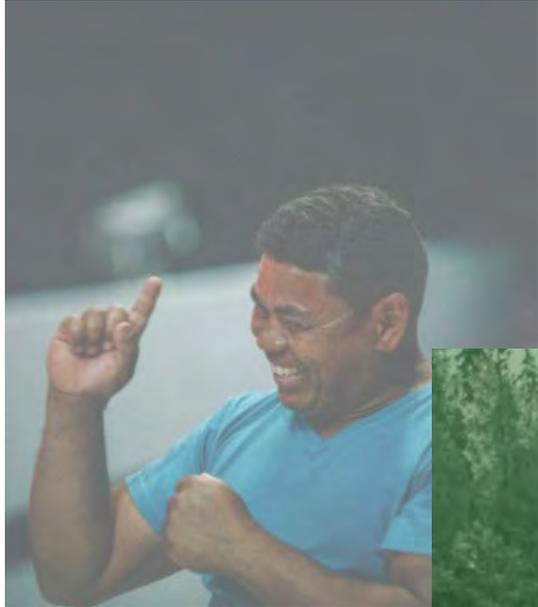
**Move from a  
monthly  
financial plan to a  
lifetime  
financial plan**

**ABLE ACCOUNTS**

***MAKE THESE CHOICES POSSIBLE***

# What is an ABLE Account?

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ABLE accounts are savings and investment tools, built specifically for people with disabilities, that allow them to save money **without impacting public benefits.** ABLE accounts are offered under Section 529A of the U.S. Tax Code.

Man smiling, woman in front of trees in a wheelchair

# Meeting the Challenges as a Services Provider

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## The Challenges

1. \$2,000 asset limit
2. Maintaining eligibility for asset tested programs
3. Providing opportunities for financial learning
4. Managing multiple accounts as a Provider

## A Solution

1. Increases to \$102,000
2. Does not count toward asset limits
3. Features to support learning
4. The Entity as Authorized Legal Representative (ALR) Program

# ABLE Account Basics

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## Eligibility

1

Eligible for SSI or SSDI; or a doctor has provided a certification of disability.

Onset of disability prior to 26th birthday.

## Contributions

2

ABLE Accounts Have Annual Contribution Limits Based On the IRS Gift Tax Exclusion And Employment Status

Annual for 2023 - \$17,000

If Employed up to \$30,590

Limits Based On College Saving Plan Limits By State

## Use of Funds

3

A “Qualified Disability Expense” (QDEs) is anything that relates to the disability and helps maintain or improve health, independence, or quality of life

# Helping People to Achieve Outcomes

**A “Qualified Disability Expense” (QDEs) is anything that relates to the disability and helps maintain or improve health, independence, or quality of life**

 Housing and Rent

 Transportation

 Assistive Technology

 Health & Wellness

 Basic Living Expenses

 Education

 Financial Management

 Legal Fees

# How to Get Money Out of an ABLÉ Account

CHECKBOOKS



THIRD PARTY CHECKS

DEBIT/PREPAID CARDS



BANK TRANSFER

DIFFERENT PROGRAMS HAVE VARIOUS OPTIONS

# ABLE Accounts Offer Multiple Choices for How to Save and Invest



CHECKING/  
SAVINGS

INVESTMENTS

One option or spread the money  
across multiple options

Choose from:

- (a) Checking and savings options**  
- FDIC insured
- (b) Market-based investment options**  
- stocks, bonds, etc.

# Key Benefits

01

## Ownership

ABLE accounts are owned by the person with the disability

02

## Opportunity

Financial empowerment and community inclusion

03

## Alternative to Spend Down

An alternative option to “spend down”

04

## Multiple Functions

Short-term spending and long-term savings

05

## Easy To Use

Easy to open, close, and use – similar to a regular bank account

06

## Tax Benefits

Tax-free earnings and state tax deductions / credits

# Entity as ALR

*Managing multiple accounts as a Provider*

# A Look at the Numbers

ACCOUNTS ARE OFFERED THROUGH STATE-RUN ABLE PROGRAMS

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## 46 STATES + DC

Consider your home state's program first for in-state incentives, or research ABLE programs offering nationwide enrollment.



## 144,000+ Total Accounts

There are currently more than 144,000 total ABLE accounts - increasing every day (as of March 31, 2023).

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## Over \$1.39 Billion in Assets Nationwide in ABLE accounts

People with disabilities and those who support them are using ABLE accounts as savings, checking and investments accounts.

*ABLE Data Source: National Association of State Treasurers (NAST)*

TO FIND YOUR STATE'S PROGRAM GO TO: [ABLETODAY.ORG/ABLE -PROGRAMS](https://ABLETODAY.ORG/ABLE-PROGRAMS)

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# Who Can Serve as a Support Person With an ABLÉ Account

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- ❑ People With Disabilities Can Open and Manage Able Accounts
- ❑ An Able Support Person Can Be An Individual or an Organization
- ❑ Supporters Can Manage Multiple Accounts At Once

# Recent Changes in Managing an ABLE Account

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## A. Options for People Who Are Able to Open or Manage their Account On Their Own



- *manage their account on their own;*
- *provide consent for a Power of Attorney; or*
- *choose someone else to open and manage the account for them.*

# People Who Are Not Able to Open or Manage their Account

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## B. Hierarchy for Authorized Representatives:

*1. Power of Attorney*

*2. Conservator*

*3. Guardian*

*4. Spouse*

*5. Parent*

*6. Sibling*

*7. Grandparent*

*8. Representative Payee*



# Why Enroll in the Entity as a Authorized Legal Representative(ALR) Process?

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- Already serving as the manager of many people's assets
- Streamlines the management process
  - Provides an at a glance view of all accounts that the organization manages
  - Ability to obtain aggregate reports regarding all accounts managed by the organization
- Maintains continuity for management

# Consider Becoming an Entity as ALR

- Evaluate your current system for supporting people with ABLE accounts
- Consider how many people in your agency would benefit
- Contact your state ABLE Program to see if this program is offered
- Contact ABLE today if your state does not offer this program

As of April 1, 2023			
Number of plans reported offering this process	Number of organizations participating in the Entity as ALR program nationwide	Number of accounts in the Entity as ALR program nationwide	\$\$ deposited into accounts in this program
21	285	7,999	\$53,236,450

# Role as a Provider *and* Employer

## 2023 Disability Inclusion Pledge



## WHY YOU SHOULD SHARE



ENHANCES  
EXISTING  
BENEFITS

DIFFERENTIATES  
YOUR BENEFIT  
PLAN

INCREASES  
AWARENESS

EDUCATES  
EMPLOYEES

Image of a young woman in a wheelchair working on her laptop

# Why ABLE at Work?

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## **Zero Cost to the Employer**

- Opportunity for employers to promote ABLE accounts to Disability & Caregiver resource groups and all employees

## **Easy to Start**

- ABLE programs do the work for people with disabilities, families and caregivers

## **Retirement Savings**

- Where assets don't count toward benefit eligibility

## **Tax Benefits**

- Barrier Removal Tax Deduction
- The Work Opportunity Tax Credit
- The Disabled Access Tax Credit

## **Broad use**

- Wide range of qualified disability-related expenses

# **EMPLOYER INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE**

ABLE today provides several ways an employer can get involved in helping promote ABLE accounts

## **Partner With ABLE today**

Offer employee education about ABLE accounts  
(i.e., company-wide, ERGs, BRGs, etc.)

## **Onboarding Process**

Include ABLE accounts as part of your HR  
department onboarding process

## **Offer Direct Deposits to ABLE Accounts**

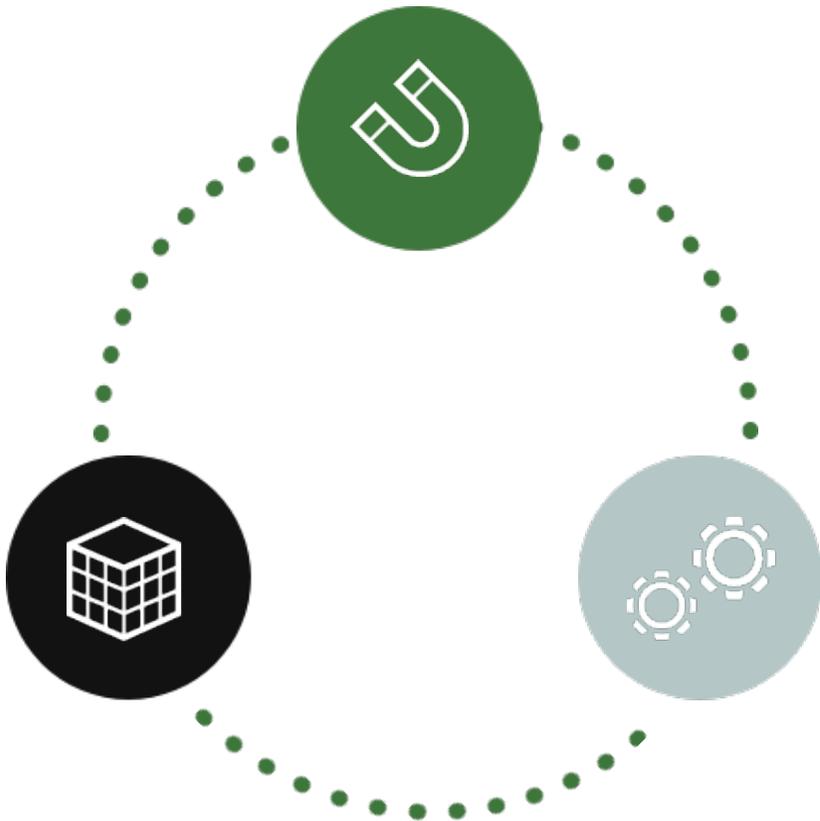
For employees with disabilities  
and their caregivers

## **Matching / Contributing**

Employers who want to go a step further can  
contribute to the ABLE account

# Next Steps

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## RESEARCH ABLE PROGRAMS

Research ABLE Programs via the **ABLE today** website, [abletoday.org](https://abletoday.org)

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## SPREAD THE WORD

Help us spread the word! Share via email, social media, and with your network

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## REQUEST A PRESENTATION

Reach out via [sara@abletoday.org](mailto:sara@abletoday.org) and let us know if you would like a group presentation

# ABLE today Resources

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## To Learn More, Visit:



[abletoday.org/videos](https://abletoday.org/videos)



[abletoday.org/federal-benefits](https://abletoday.org/federal-benefits)



[abletoday.org/able-programs](https://abletoday.org/able-programs)



# 2023 Disability Inclusion Pledge



## Why #PledgeInclusion?

By promoting diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible workplaces for people with disabilities, HR professionals can lead the discussion on this critical topic and benefit from the skills and talents of workers with disabilities while directly contributing to major long-term business objectives, including:

- Low turnover rates, medical expenses, and time off for people with disabilities compared to employees without disabilities
- More innovative, diverse, and inclusive workplaces
- Building a more skilled workforce
- Comprehensive DEIA strategies
- Reaching a large untapped talent pool
- Opportunities for federal and state tax incentives

**[www.abletoday.org/for-employers](http://www.abletoday.org/for-employers)**

# Contact Us

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# ABLETODAY.org



ABLE today  is part of the NAST Foundation

campaign to promote ABLER accounts, financial empowerment, and community inclusion for people with disabilities.

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**Thank you!**



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