



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
ACHIEVING A BETTER LIFE EXPERIENCE ACT



WI FACET: ABLE Presentation

Wednesday, September 7th, 2022 - Noon CT

ABLE National Resource Center is funded through a grant from Prudential

Presenters

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ACHIEVING A BETTER LIFE EXPERIENCE (ABLE)



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ABLE Legislation and Financial Independence

Millions of individuals with disabilities and their families receive and depend on a variety of public benefits for income, healthcare, food and housing assistance. Many benefit programs require limited income and/or less than \$2,000 in resources.

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act, signed into law December 19, 2014, creates tax-advantaged ABLE savings accounts for eligible individuals with disabilities, allowing 8 million people with disabilities to save more than the \$2,000 resource limit.



What is an ABLE Account?

The ABLE Act allows states to create a 529(A) ABLE account for ABLE eligible individuals who have a disability that began before age 26 to:

- Save and invest money in a tax-exempt account
- Use the funds in the ABLE account for qualified disability expenses, and
- Maintain eligibility for federally funded public benefits.

ABLE Decision Guide: [Am I ABLE Eligible?](#)



Why the Need for an ABLE Account?

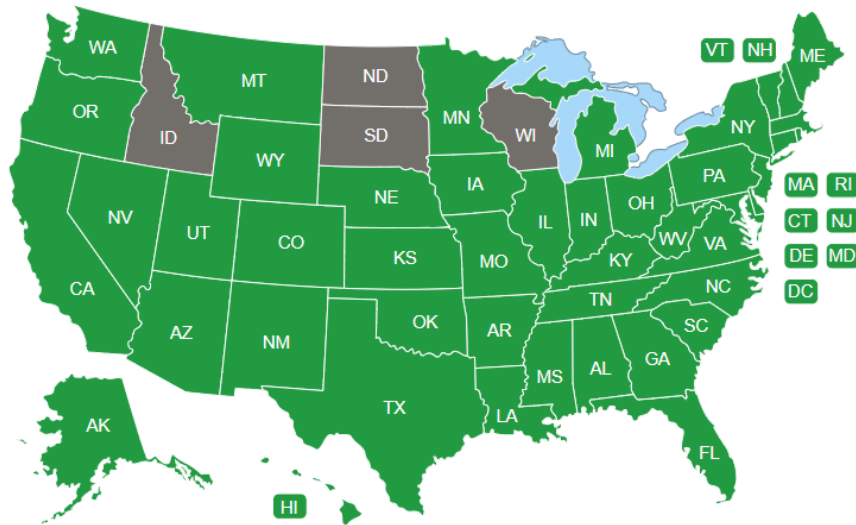
- An ABLE account allows a person to save over the \$2,000 resource limit and stay eligible for means-tested benefits.
- People who do not receive a public benefit may also qualify to open an ABLE account.
- ABLE account savings can be used for qualified disability expenses,
- ABLE savings is a supplement and does not replace benefits such as food, housing, income or employment assistance.

ABLE Decision Guide: [Understanding ABLE Savings and Public Benefits](#)



State ABLE Programs

- There are over 45 state ABLE programs from which to choose.
- If you are ABLE eligible, you can open one ABLE account in any state that has an ABLE program that accepts outside residents.
- [ABLE Program Comparison Tool](#)



How Do I Open and Manage an ABLER Account?

- Most ABLER accounts are opened online; you can contact specific ABLER plans for alternatives if needed.
- Once the account is open, the account owner – the person with a disability - can choose to allow others to access various levels of information about the account and/or to take specified actions on the account.

ABLE Decision Guides:

- [“Selecting and Opening an ABLER Account”](#)
- [“Managing Your ABLER Account”](#)



Contributions into an ABLÉ Account

- Annual total of \$16,000 can be contributed into the ABLÉ account by the person with a disability and from:
 - Friends and Family
 - Special Needs / Pooled Trust
 - 529 college savings rollover
- In addition, an ABLÉ Account Owner who works and does NOT participate in an employer sponsored retirement plan may contribute up to an additional \$12,880 from their earnings within a calendar year in the continental U.S.

ABLE Decision Guide [“Finding Funds to Save in an ABLÉ Account”](#)



Qualified Disability Expenses (QDEs)

- **ABLE funds may be used to pay for items or services that:**
 - Relate to the beneficiary's blindness or disability
 - Are for the benefit of that beneficiary
 - Relate to maintaining or improving his/her health, independence or quality of life
- **QDEs should be broadly understood and are not limited to:**
 - Expenses for which there is a medical necessity, or
 - Expenses that provide no benefits to others in addition to the benefit to the beneficiary

ABLE Decision Guide: [Determining Whether Something is a QDE](#)



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ABLE National Resource Center

The [ABLE National Resource Center](#) (ABLE NRC) is the leading, comprehensive source of objective, independent information about federal- and state-related ABLE programs and activities, including guidance on tax-advantaged 529A (ABLE) savings accounts.

Our mission is to educate, promote and support the positive impact ABLE can make on the lives of millions of Americans with disabilities and their families.



ABLE National Resource Center

Visit ABLE NRC's website at www.ablenrc.org for:

- [ABLE Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [ABLE Decision Guides](#)
- [#ABLEtoSave Podcasts](#)
- [ABLE Webinars](#)
- [AchievABLE Newsletter](#)
- [ABLE State Comparison Tool](#)
- [ABLE Program Spotlights](#)
- [ABLE Toolkits](#)



ABLE Decision Guide Series



ABLE Decision Guide Series

- A series of step-by-step guides on key ABLE topics that provide multiple pathways to outcomes.
- Guides help increase ABLE understanding and assist in effective decision making.

ABLE Decision Guides:

- [Am I ABLE Eligible?](#)
- [Selecting and Opening an ABLE Account](#)
- [Understanding ABLE Account Savings and Public Benefits](#)
- [Managing an ABLE Account](#)
- [Finding Funds to Save in an ABLE Account](#)
- [Determining Whether Something Is a Qualified Disability Expense](#)
- [ABLE Accounts and Working People with Disabilities](#)





"Because of my ABLE account, I will have a better and more financially secure future."

TAYLOR — ABLE ACCOUNT OWNER



YOU CAN \$AVE. YOU CAN DREAM.

YOU CAN ACHIEVE A BETTER
LIFE EXPERIENCE WITH AN
ABLE ACCOUNT.

JOIN US at ABLE National Resource Center during
#ABLEtoSave month in August to learn how.
Each week we will be sharing our ABLE success
stories and ABLE tools and strategies with you.



SIGN UP NOW to receive
#ABLEtoSave event and resource
notifications: [ablenrc.org](https://www.ablenrc.org)



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[ablenrc.org](https://www.ablenrc.org)

2022 #ABLEtoSave Campaign

www.ablenrc.org/abletosave-2022/

Throughout August, ABLE NRC shared ABLE resources and hosted panels with ABLE account owners and family members, ABLE program administrators and national ABLE subject matter experts.

- Week 1: Welcome to #ABLEtoSave Month Week 2: Becoming an ABLE account owner (August 8th)
- Week 3: Helping a Family Member become an ABLE account owner (August 15th)
- Week 4: Opening and Using Your ABLE account (August 22nd)
- Week 5: ABLE Call to Action – Next Steps to Achieve a Better Life Experience



Help Spread the Word about #ABLEtoSave!

Please share information about ABLE accounts among your friends, family and community groups!

- To receive up-to-date information on ABLE, please subscribe to our [AchievABLE](#) newsletter.
- Connect with us on social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), Tik Tok, and Twitter **@theABLENRC**.
- Follow the #ABLEtoSave Web-Page at ablenrc.org/abletosave-2022/



LEGISLATIVE UPDATES: FEDERAL & STATE



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Federal Legislative Update

ABLE Age Adjustment Act (S. 331 and H.R. 1219)

- Introduced in February 2021 as part of the Enhancing American Retirement Now (EARN) Act.
- Would expand ABLE eligibility by increasing the age of onset of disability from before age 26 to before age 46.
- ABLE-eligible population would expand from 8 million to 14 million people.



Federal Legislative Update

ABLE Age Adjustment Act, continued.

- In June of 2022, the Senate Finance Committee approved amendments to the EARN Act, which included ABLE Age Adjustment.
- As of September 2, 2022, the bill sponsorship was as follows:
 - Senate ([S331](#)): 1 sponsor and [21](#) cosponsors
 - Congress Sponsorship ([HR1219](#)): 1 sponsor and [95](#) cosponsors
- What's Next?
 - Senate Floor – no date



Report: Establishing an ABLE Program for Wisconsin Residents – Background & Research

- In February of 2022, WI Governor Tony Evers signed legislation calling for the Department of Financial Institutions to study and report on the state's options for establishing an ABLE program.
- Report outlines three options: (1) follow the status-quo; (2) establish an independent ABLE plan; (3) establish an ABLE program through an existing ABLE collaboration.
- Report was submitted on September 1, 2022.



State Legislative Update

Background & Research cont.

- To complete this study and make its recommendations, the Department's Office of Financial Capability compiled and reviewed publicly available reports and other sources of data.
- The Office of Financial Capability also spoke with:
 - Representatives from groups that provide education, advocacy, or other support for individuals with disabilities and their families.
 - Individuals interested in opening ABLE accounts in Wisconsin.
 - Representatives from government boards, agencies, and regulatory organizations with relevant subject matter expertise.
 - Advisors who provide financial planning for individuals with disabilities.



State Legislative Update

Report – Key Findings

- Wisconsin has an estimated ABLE-eligible population of 142,150
- Wisconsin is the only state that has neither established an ABLE program nor tasked a public agency or other public body with helping residents open and utilize ABLE accounts.
- Low utilization of ABLE accounts by Wisconsinites relative to other states
 - The Department of Revenue reports that fewer than 300 filers (equivalent to roughly 0.2 percent of the ABLE-eligible population in Wisconsin) claimed an income tax deduction for ABLE account contributions in either 2020 or 2021.



State Legislative Update

“Many people are unaware that ABLE accounts exist. For those who have heard of ABLE accounts, they may find choosing plans from many states confusing and not understand how to establish one. Adults with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities have a lot of things to coordinate and this is another thing that involves a lot of research and work. Is it okay to establish one in another state? No one wants to do something wrong.” - People First Wisconsin

“Many people aren’t aware that they can open an account in another state. And because Wisconsin doesn’t have an ABLE program, there is an overall lack of awareness of the benefits of them and how to start one.” - TMG



State Legislative Update

Report Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** The legislature should create the position of ABLE Officer within the Department of Financial Institutions' Office of Financial Capability.
- **Recommendation 2:** The legislature should authorize the Department of Financial Institutions to establish a qualified ABLE program.
- **Recommendation 3:** The Department of Financial Institutions should establish an ABLE program through an existing ABLE collaboration.



State Legislative Update

What's Next?

- Full Report
 - Will be sent out with post-webinar materials
- Legislative action
 - No timeline

Jessica Wetzel

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Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (DFI)



THANK YOU!



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