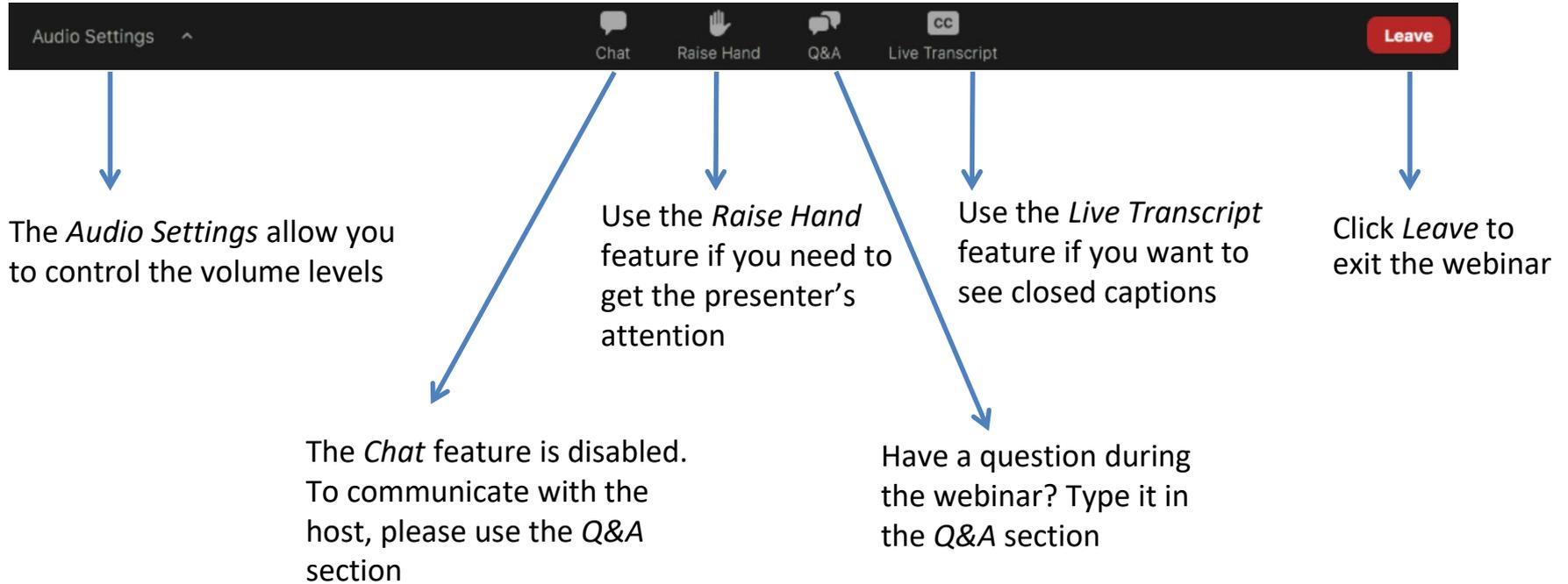




Attainable: The ABLE Savings Plan

Offered by MEFA and managed by Fidelity Investments

How to Participate in This Webinar



Your Presenter Today

Mary Rubenis

Associate Director Attainable Outreach & Education



Mary coordinates educational outreach, strategic partnership- building, and marketing strategy to spread awareness of ABLE accounts and their benefits.

She is passionate about helping families and individuals with disabilities and gives educational trainings on the Attainable Savings Plan to local and national organizations.

About MEFA

Not-for-profit state authority created in 1982 helping families plan, save, and pay for college



MEFA and Fidelity Partnership

The Attainable Savings Plan was launched in 2017. MEFA is the state sponsor and Fidelity Investments in the program manager. MEFA began its partnership with Fidelity in 1999 when it selected Fidelity to serve as the program manager of the U.Fund 529 College Investing Plan. Together MEFA and Fidelity offer expertise in college financing and money management.



What Is the ABLE Act?

The Stephen Beck, Jr. Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act amended the federal tax code in 2014 to add Section 529A. This legislation established ABLE accounts, tax-exempt accounts for eligible individuals with disabilities to be used for qualified disability expenses while still keeping eligibility for federal public benefits.



Who is Eligible for an ABLE Account?

Individuals are eligible if the applicable disability occurred before the individual turned 26 years old and:

- Is eligible to receive SSI or SSDI due to the disability

OR

- Has a condition listed on the Social Security Administration's *List of Compassionate Allowances Conditions*

OR

- Self certifies, which requires a diagnosis of physical or mental impairment that causes “marked and severe functional limitations,” such as conditions in the Social Security Administration’s Blue Book and that have lasted or are expected to last for at least one year.



Qualified Expenses for ABLE Accounts



Health



Housing



Education



Transportation



Assistive Technology Support



Employment Training & Support



Personal Support Services



Basic Living Needs

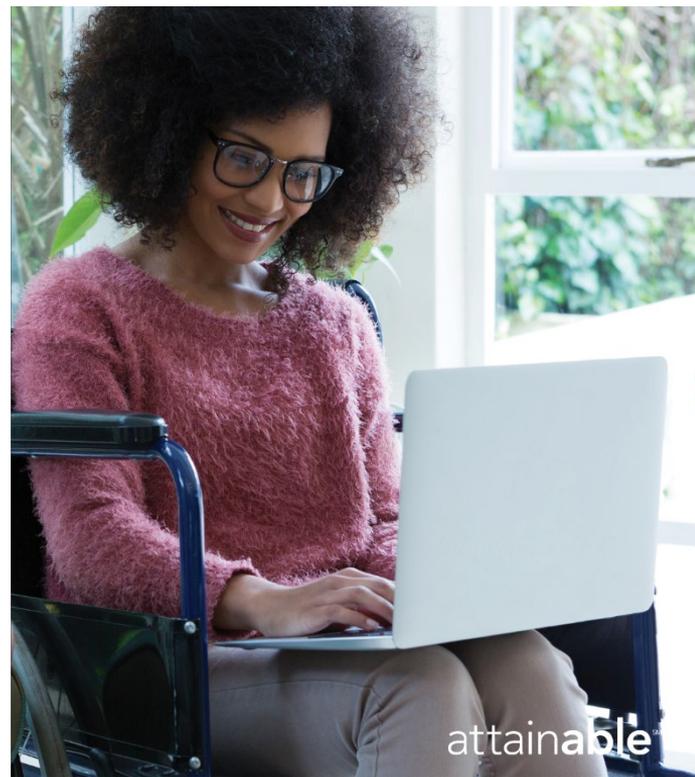
Benefits of an Attainable Account

- Allows the account owner or Beneficiary the ability to save over \$2,000 without affecting federal benefits
- Permits the account to be owned by the individual with the disability
- Anyone can contribute to an Attainable account including family & friends
- Immediate access to funds
- Provides individuals with disabilities:
 - Financial independence
 - Multiple tax benefits



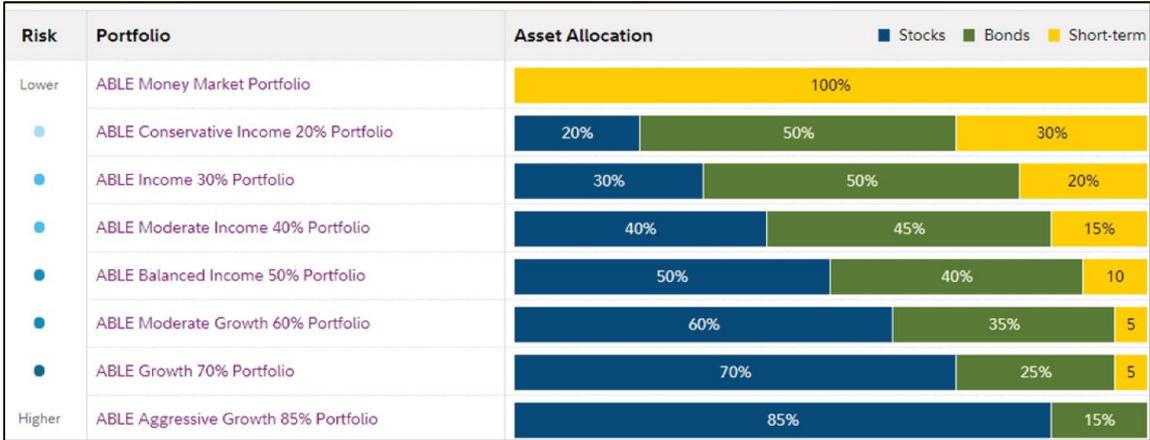
Attainable Account Specifics

- Total annual contribution can not exceed \$15,000
 - If employed, the Beneficiary may add up to \$12,760 more each year from earnings, so the annual contribution increases to \$27,760 (for 2021)
- Maximum account balance can not exceed \$500,000
- SSI is not suspended until account exceeds \$100,000
- No annual account fee



Asset Allocation for Attainable Portfolios

Attainable portfolios that are more conservative (and tend to have lower risk) are at the top of the chart, and more aggressive portfolios that have greater risk but the potential for higher returns are toward the bottom of the chart.



Units of the portfolios are municipal fund securities and are subject to market fluctuation and volatility. Gain or loss may occur when units are sold.

Get more information on [Fidelity's website](#)

Attainable Portfolio Fees

No annual account maintenance fee
Investment fees vary based on your investment portfolio.
Fees range from 0.57% of assets to 0.94% of assets.



2021 Tax Benefits

ABLE Financial Planning Act

Provided that the beneficiary is the same individual on both accounts (or one beneficiary is a family member of the other), it is now allowable to transfer funds from a 529 college savings plan into an ABLE account without incurring any tax or penalty.

Saver's Credit

ABLE account owners who meet certain criteria can receive a [Saver's Credit](#) on their federal taxes for contributions into an ABLE account. Individuals are eligible if they are age 18 or older, not a full-time student, and not claimed as a dependent on another person's tax return.

As long as withdrawals are spent on QDEs, Attainable account growth is federal income tax free

Brian Guay



Additional Resources - Websites

Able National Resource Center: [ablenrc.org](https://www.ablenrc.org)

MEFA: [mefa.org](https://www.mefa.org)

Attainable Savings Plan: [fidelity.com/able](https://www.fidelity.com/able)

Visit [mefa.org/able-registration-form](https://www.mefa.org/able-registration-form) to sign up for updates and information about Attainable



Stay in Touch



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College Navigator

Alexandra Ullrich, BSW

Program Manager, Employment and Transition Services

Easter Seals Massachusetts

**What are we
doing at
Easter Seals?**

Identifying the problem

+

Looking at unmet needs

The creation of our College Navigator program

Challenges Freshman Are Facing

- **Adjusting to independence and freedom**
- **Less institutional support**
- **Weak executive functioning skills**
- **Resistance to change**
- **Lack of knowledge of resources on campus**
- **Navigating accommodation process**
- **Unable to self-advocate**

Personal stories from ESMA clients

- **A young man with ASD**
 - **Specialized instruction in high school**
 - **Unable to advocate for accommodations**
 - **Bullying from his repetitive clarifying questions**
- “Someone to help redirect my focus on the smaller details and someone to provide specialized academic tutoring versus the standard tutoring”**

Personal stories from ESMA clients

- **A young man with Schizophrenia**
- **Curriculum?**
- **Medication caused drowsiness in the morning**
- **Navigating systems**
 - **Example: Forms for exams**

California Dreamin'

- **January, 2018-Our first storied successful student came to us by way of Los Angeles. Adam is a California resident studying cello at Berklee College of Music.**



DDS Pilot Program

- **2018- DDS and Easter Seals created a partnership pilot program to serve 10 of their ASD only clients pursuing higher education in the Northeast region of MA.**
- **2019- Due to the success of the first year pilot program, DDS and Easter Seals increased the capacity in year 2 of the pilot program from 10 to 20 students served. We also now serve both the Northeast and Boston regions.**
- **2020-2021- Building on the success of the first two years, we now have the capacity to serve 30 clients in the Boston and Northeast regions. We also have the capacity to service clients outside of those regions and outside of MA through virtual services.**

What is the College Navigator Program?

- **All services are customized based on the individual needs of the student and tailored to their strengths to help them build lifelong skills.**
- **Helps students build skills beyond the college classroom and into their communities to prepare them to reach their educational and employment goals**
- **We can meet in-person depending on geographic location, offer virtual services to students anywhere, or design a hybrid support plan which incorporates both types of meetings.**

How Do We Help Students?

- **Providing information to students and their families about what to expect as college students, including their rights and the kinds of resources and supports that might be available to them**
- **Connecting students to on and off campus resources and helping them develop their communication and self-advocacy skills**
- **Helping students to develop time-management and planning skills that they will need to be successful in college and in employment**
- **Assisting students with accessing online databases (Blackboard, Moodle etc.)**
- **Supporting students with getting appropriate accommodations**
- **Teaching students new ways to be social: connecting with friends, writing emails/discussion boards, interacting with peers/professors virtually**
- **Facilitating the students need to be more self-directed**

Services offered

- **Develop an action plan for each semester of college**
- **Setting personal schedules (time and organizational management)**
- **In-depth orientation & mobility (ex. Understanding curriculum, selecting classes, etiquette, etc.)**
- **Identify and instruct in use of appropriate assistive technology**
- **Academic redirection and focus**
- **Collaboration with disability services to address disclosure, explanation of accommodations, streamlining processes per semester**
- **Integrate assistive technology into daily routine**

Goals of College Navigator

- **Help identify potential barriers and problem solve around them with college staff**
- **Advocate with the student on identifying their needs and being able to explain them to college staff**
- **Create a supportive environment between the college and student to ensure success**
- **Improve outcomes for students with disabilities completing higher education**

Desired outcomes

- **Lasting higher educational commitment**
- **Social experiences leading to lifelong relationships**
- **Matriculation among peers with and without disabilities contributing to the average norm**
- **Leading to a higher employment potential**

Funding?

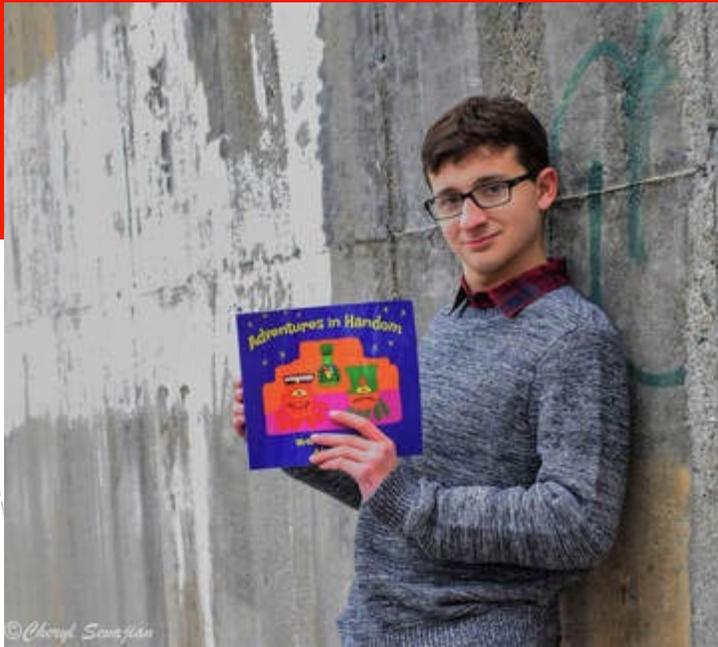
- **Department of Developmental Services funds students with Autism Spectrum Disorder without Intellectual Disability**
- **Private Pay**
 - **ABLE Account funds**
 - **Easter Seals has a 0% interest mini-loan program for up to \$2,000**

Stanley



- **“I liked that Easterseals staff had a friendly face, someone that I could talk to and who could offer me guidance and support on days where the work felt overwhelming.”**
- **“She encouraged me to draft a script that would elaborate on my disability and help my professors understand the challenges that I was facing and useful accommodations.”**

John Miller



- **“What I liked the most about interacting with Easterseals staff was telling them what my plan was for each day of the week, and then telling them what work I had to for each subject... this was a great way for them to check once a week to see my progress through my semester.”**
- **“They gave me different strategies of how to handle my schedule along with homework and free time, they would give a chart to fill out of what my full schedule of a certain day would be like.”**
- **“They encouraged me to try the different strategies for managing my time. Easterseals showed me how to balance doing my homework while also getting some free time in. Not having free time was a big stressor for me previously.”**

Bob Hoyt

“

AT THE TIME OF MY GRADUATION, EASTERSEALS EVEN HELPED ME CONNECT WITH RESOURCES THAT WOULD SUPPORT ME AFTER COLLEGE TO CONTINUE TO BE SUCCESSFUL.



- **“I was first introduced to Easterseals when they assessed what technology and other supports would help me as I prepared for college. That assessment took place when I was a senior in high school. When I received the devices, my Easterseals contact made sure I fully understood how to use them. When I arrived at UMass Lowell, I was introduced to Morgan, an College Navigator, who helped me assess what academic supports I might need to be successful.”**
- **“We focused on my schedule, time management, and discussing stress. At our weekly meetings, we reviewed my classwork schedule, and made any changes in organizing the upcoming week to be better prepared. When necessary, I received assistance in contacting my professors either directly or through email of questions or clarifications of my work.”**
- **“These sessions helped me stay on track to be successful not only in the classroom, but also in my full college experience. I gained confidence in my abilities through the support and guidance of Morgan and the Easterseals program.”**

For More Information Contact:

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