



attainable<sup>®</sup>

# The ABLE Savings Plan

Offered by MEFA and managed by Fidelity Investments

*mefa*<sup>®</sup>



# About MEFA

State authority created by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1982, helping families plan, save, and pay for college and reach financial goals



# 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 investment accounts for eligible individuals with disabilities to be used for qualified disability expenses while still keeping eligibility for federal public benefits

[See the bill on congress.gov](#)

H.R.5771 - Tax Increase Prevention Act of 2014

# MEFA and Fidelity Partnership

- There are 49 active ABLE Programs in the USA
- In Massachusetts, accounts from the ABLE Act are called Attainable® savings accounts
- The Attainable® Savings Plan was launched in 2017
- MEFA is the state sponsor
- Fidelity Investments is the program manager

*mefa*®



# Who is Eligible for an Attainable® Account?

- Individuals are eligible for an Attainable® account if the onset of disability occurred before the individual turned 26 years old (46 years old starting in 2026), regardless of current age, and the individual:
  - Is eligible to receive SSI or SSDI due to their disability
  - Self-certifies as meeting requirements, which requires a diagnosis with functional limitations, such as those in the Social Security Administration's Blue Book (general categories are listed at right) or within the SSA's Compassionate Allowances (CAL)
    - Compassionate Allowances are a way to quickly identify diseases and other medical conditions that, by definition, meet Social Security's standards for disability benefits; these conditions primarily include certain cancers, adult brain disorders, and a number of rare disorders that affect children

## SSA's Blue Book

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# Example of “Self Certification Form” Language

- This individual has a **severe medically determinable impairment** ([https://www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/rulings/di/01/SSR85-28-di-01.html](https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/rulings/di/01/SSR85-28-di-01.html)) that results in marked and severe functional limitations that have lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months and/or can be expected to result in death.

“**Marked and severe functional limitations**” means functional limitations that meet, medically equal, or functionally equal the severity of any listing in appendix 1 of subpart P of 20 CFR part 404 (the “Listing”), but without regard to age. The listing can be found at [ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/cfr20/404/404-app-p01.htm](https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/cfr20/404/404-app-p01.htm) (See list at right).

The level of severity is determined by taking into account the **effect of the individual’s prescribed treatment**.

- This individual is **blind**, meaning that [I have][the beneficiary has] central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of a correcting lens. An eye that is accompanied by a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees shall be considered as having a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less.

## SSA’s Blue Book

### Categories

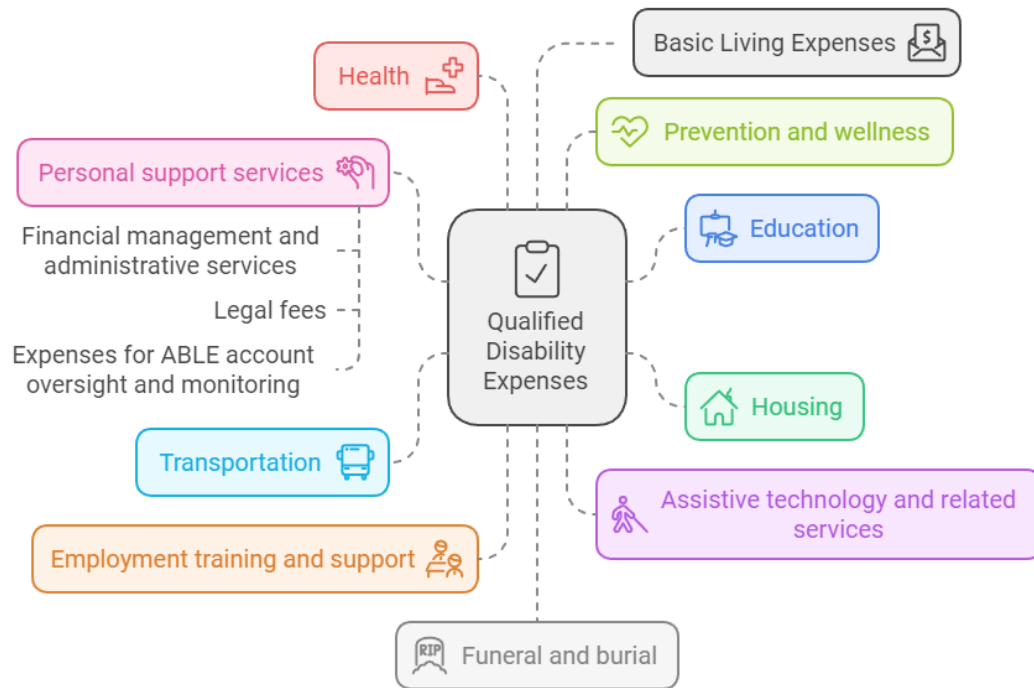
- Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Special Senses and Speech
- Respiratory Disorders
- Cardiovascular System
- Digestive System
- Genitourinary Disorders
- Hematological Disorders
- Skin Disorders
- Endocrine Disorders
- Congenital Disorders that Affect Multiple Body Systems
- Neurological Disorders
- Mental Disorders
- Cancer (Malignant Neoplastic Diseases)
- Immune System Disorders

# Benefits of an Attainable® Account

- Attainable® accounts allow the account owner or beneficiary to save above the former \$2,000 SSI asset limit without affecting federal benefits
- Family & friends can also contribute to an Attainable® account
- Beneficiaries have immediate access to funds
- Accounts provide individuals with disabilities:
  - Financial independence
  - Multiple tax benefits



# Qualified Disability Expenses for Attainable® Accounts



- QDEs (Qualified Disability Expenses)
  - It was incurred at a time the individual was eligible for an ABE account
  - It relates to the disability
  - It helps to maintain or improve health, independence, or quality of life
  - Should be broadly understood
  - Should not be limited to expenses for which there is a medical necessity

**Food** is a qualified disability expense and includes groceries, food delivery, restaurant meals, takeout, and more



# Housing Expenses

**Housing expenses for an ABLE account are similar to household costs for in-kind support and maintenance purposes**



Mortgage & House Down Payment  
(Including property insurance required by the mortgage holder)



Rent Payments including  
First, Last, and Security



Real Property  
Taxes



Heating fuel, Gas, Electricity,  
Water, and Sewer



Garbage  
Removal

# Who Can Open an Account?

Attainable® accounts can be opened by:

- Individual with the disability
- Person with Power of Attorney
- Legal Guardian
- Spouse
- Parent
- Sibling
- Grandparent
- Rep Payee

*This is a hierarchy. People who open an account must certify that there is not anyone above them in the hierarchy willing and able to establish the account.*

*Always consider the beneficiary to be the owner of the Attainable® account, regardless of whether someone else has signature authority over it.*

# Person with Signature Authority (PSA) Document Requirements

The beneficiary may select any U.S resident who is 18 or older and has a Social Security number as PSA; however, if the beneficiary does not have legal capacity or is otherwise unable to establish and manage an account, the PSA must certify there is no other person willing or able to do so with higher priority in accordance with the following PSA hierarchy order.

1. Individual with the disability
  - a. ABLE accounts can be opened by an individual with themselves as beneficiary if they choose to manage the account on their own
2. Power of Attorney (POA)\*
  - a. Must have a copy of the attorney-drafted POA documentation; Fidelity only accepts Durable Power of Attorney Paperwork
3. Conservator or Legal Guardian\*
  - a. Must have a copy of the court document appointing conservators or guardians, certified and presented to Fidelity before the expiration date indicated on the court document
4. Spouse
5. Parent
6. Sibling
7. Grandparent
8. Representative Payee\*
  - a. Must have a copy of SSA documentation granting Representative Payee status
  - b. If representative payee is an entity, additional documentation is required to verify the organization

\*Must include legal paperwork assigning individual this designation; no paperwork is required for spouse, parent, sibling, or grandparent

The Attainable Savings Plan is offered by the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority and managed by Fidelity Investments. Qualified ABLE programs offered by other states may provide their residents or taxpayers with state tax advantages or other state benefits. You should consider whether your home state offers its residents or taxpayers state tax advantages or benefits that are only available for investing in that state's ABLE program before making an investment in the Attainable Savings Plan.

Units of the portfolios are municipal fund securities and are subject to market fluctuation and volatility. You may have a gain or loss when you sell your units.

Please carefully consider the Attainable Savings Plan's investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses before investing. For this and other information, contact Fidelity for a free Disclosure Document or view one online. Read it carefully before you invest or send money.

Fidelity does not provide legal or tax advice. The information herein is general in nature and should not be considered legal or tax advice. Consult an attorney or tax professional regarding your specific situation.

Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC, Member NYSE, SIPC, 900 Salem Street, Smithfield, RI 02917

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# Attainable® Account Specifics

- **Contribution limits have increased in 2025**
  - Total annual contribution cannot exceed **\$19,000**
  - If employed, the beneficiary may contribute up to an additional **\$15,060** each year from earnings due to the *ABLE To Work Act*
    - You can contribute up to the LESSER of the account owner's gross income for the taxable year or the federal poverty level (FPL)
    - You cannot contribute this extra amount if participating in a retirement account from your employer
- Up to **\$100,000** in savings within an ABLE account is disregarded as a resource and will NOT affect Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Account balance cannot be added to once it exceeds **\$500,000**. Any amount of ABLE savings up to the plan limit will NOT affect eligibility for:
  - Social Security and Disability Insurance (SSDI)
  - Housing Assistance – Housing and Urban Development programs (HUD)
  - Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
  - Medicare Parts A, B, C, or D, Medicare Savings Programs, and Extra Help
  - Any type of Medicaid benefit including Medicaid waiver services
- No annual account maintenance fee
- Attainable® accounts are investment accounts
  - Investment fees vary based on the investment portfolio and range from 0.20% to 0.86% of assets



# At Home and Reducing “Spend Downs”

- Without the ABLE Act, individuals were only allowed to have \$2,000 in assets for all expenses. Savings were discouraged, and unexpected income or routine savings could easily exceed the limit.
  - This necessitated a “spend down,” where money had to be spent to get assets under \$2,000 to preserve benefits.
- Attainable® provides the opportunity for individuals to save for larger expenses without fear.
- Attainable® also provides a place to move funds so that forced spending isn’t necessary.
- Attainable® allows an individual to save.



# Education Expenses

Education expenses include:

- Tuition
- Textbooks
- Assistive technology
- 1-on-1 assistance
- Supports that were previously provided in high school
- Attainable® can be used to provide opportunities for education equity



# Attainable® and Employment

- Due to SSI asset and income limitations many individuals limit themselves to a 20-25-hour work week
- Attainable® can help someone in a trial of working full time:
  - Save up the necessary funds to cover your needs (rent, food, etc.) for 3-4 months
  - Start working full time; your SSI will be suspended
  - If working full time doesn't work out, your savings will cover your expenses while SSI is re-established
  - If SSI is re-started within 12 months of suspending it, you can restart without issue; consult a benefits counselor to make sure this is accurate for your circumstances
- Attainable® can offer a path to independence

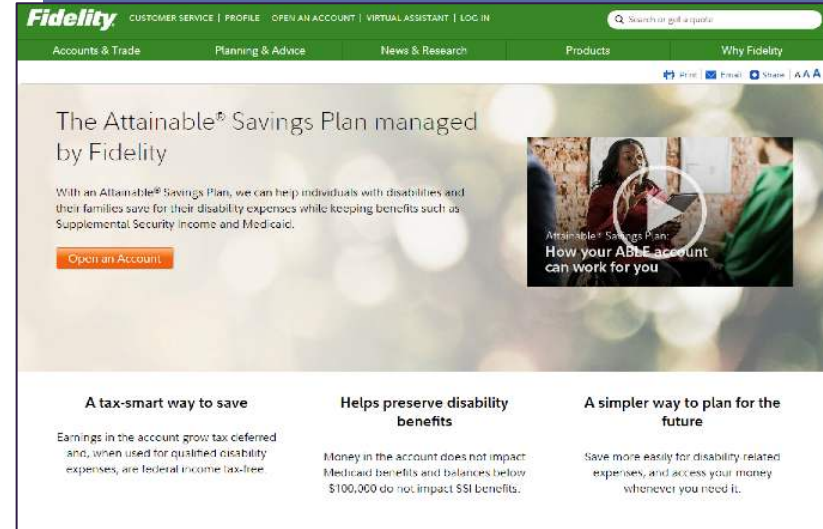
# Using Attainable® Account Funds

- Account holders can set up a *Fidelity Cash Management Account* at the same time as establishing an *Attainable® account*
- Users will still need to transfer funds, but doing so is very simple since the funds stay within the same company
- Cash Management Accounts come with a VISA debit card that can be used at retailers and at any ATM without fees
- Attainable® funds can be transferred to any other bank account
- Once funds leave the account, if they are re-deposited, they will still count toward the annual limit
- Funds withdrawn for housing MUST be used within the same calendar month they are withdrawn
- Because withdrawals from an Attainable® account are an Investment Trade, time should be allowed for the funds to be deposited, generally about 24 hours
- Bonds cannot be directly rolled over into an ABLE account; they will need to be cashed out first



# Steps to Open an Account

1. Visit [fidelity.com/able](https://fidelity.com/able)
2. Review [Fidelity Attainable® Savings Account Disclosure Document](#)
3. Decide how to allocate funds in the account among 9 portfolio options, including a money market portfolio
4. If you are a Rep Payee, the Social Security Administration requires that you must “title” the ABE account to show that the payee has a fiduciary interest in the funds and that the beneficiary owns the funds but has no access to them
5. The SSA recommends that the account be titled in one of the following ways:
  - (Beneficiary’s name) by (payee’s name), representative payee
  - (Payee’s name), representative payee for (beneficiary’s name)



Questions? Fidelity has trained a special division to be able to assist with ABE Accounts

844-458-2253

TTY: 800-544-0118

# Helping Money Work Harder

- Attainable® savings can be invested in professionally managed portfolios that match the beneficiary's savings goals and risk tolerance
- 9 possible portfolios
- 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
- Beneficiaries can change their portfolio twice per calendar year
- Get more information on Fidelity's website

Portfolio	Asset allocation - Stocks	Asset allocation - Bonds	Asset allocation - Short-term
ABLE Money Market Portfolio	0% Stocks	0% Bonds	100% Short-term
ABLE Conservative Income 20% Portfolio	20% Stocks	50% Bonds	30% Short-term
ABLE Income 30% Portfolio	30% Stocks	50% Bonds	20% Short-term
ABLE Moderate Income 40% Portfolio	40% Stocks	45% Bonds	15% Short-term
ABLE Balanced Income 50% Portfolio	50% Stocks	40% Bonds	10% Short-term
ABLE Moderate Growth 60% Portfolio	60% Stocks	35% Bonds	5% Short-term
ABLE Growth 70% Portfolio	70% Stocks	25% Bonds	5% Short-term
ABLE Aggressive Growth 85% Portfolio	85% Stocks	15% Bonds	0% Short-term
ABLE Multi-Asset Index Portfolio	85% Stocks	15% Bonds	0% Short-term

Source: Fidelity 2023

Units of the Portfolios are municipal fund securities and are subject to market fluctuation and volatility. You may have a gain or loss when you sell your Units.

This hypothetical example illustrates the potential value of different regular monthly investments for different periods of time and assumes an average annual return of 6%. Contributions to an Attainable® account must be made with after-tax dollars. This does not reflect an actual investment and does not reflect any taxes, fees, expenses, or inflation. If it did, results would be lower. Returns will vary, and different investments may perform better or worse than this example. Periodic investment plans do not ensure a profit and do not protect against loss in a declining market. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

\*APY: Annual Percentage Yield

# Attainable® Portfolios



Units of the Portfolios are municipal fund securities and are subject to market fluctuation and volatility.  
You may have a gain or loss when you sell your Units.

# Direct Deposit

- Attainable® accounts are eligible for direct deposit including SSI/SSDI benefit funds
- Direct deposit of a paycheck must stay under the initial \$19,000. If someone wants to contribute the additional \$15,060 allowed by ABLE to Work, it must be deposited manually
- Direct depositing into an Attainable® savings account is just like any other account, requiring a routing number and an account number
- A direct deposit of your work income can be split between an Attainable® account and other bank accounts
- SSI/SSDI can only be deposited into one account. However, an individual may preauthorize a financial institution to transfer funds into other bank accounts including an Attainable® account
- Automatic contributions: Once an Attainable® account is opened, a systematic investment plan may be established with \$15 per month or \$45 per quarter

# Record Keeping

- Payees are responsible for keeping records on how they spent or conserved benefits
- Be sure to keep accurate records of the contributions and subsequent use of the funds provided by your benefits
- If the payee mixes Social Security benefits with other funds that belong to the beneficiary, the payee must maintain a recordkeeping system to differentiate SSA benefits from other funds
- Payees should keep these records for at least 2 years



# Taxes and Fees and Non-Qualified Expenses

## Distributions Subject to Taxation:

- If a withdrawal is made for a non-qualified disability expense, the account owner may be subject to both regular income taxes and a 10% penalty on the earnings from the investment.
- There are two circumstances in which a non-qualified distribution is not subject to the 10% federal penalty tax:
  - Distributions made on or after the death of the beneficiary to the estate or heir or legatee of the beneficiary
  - Distributions constituting the return of excess contributions to the contributor on or before the due date, including any extensions, of the beneficiary's federal tax return for the taxable year in which the excess contribution was made

# Financial Planning Act and Saver's Credit

## **ABLE Financial Planning Act**

- Provided the beneficiary is the same on both accounts (or one beneficiary is a family member of the other), it is allowable to transfer funds from a 529 college savings plan into an ABLE account without incurring any tax or penalty. This program will end on January 1, 2026 and is still subject to the annual contribution limits.

## **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 qualified disability expenses, Attainable® account growth is federal income tax-free

# Third-Party Access

- The PSA (Person with Signature Authority) may grant another individual access to the beneficiary's Attainable® account
- These can include the Registered Investment Adviser (RIA), parent, or Residential Program Manager, etc.
- This is called granting "third-party access"
- The level of access is determined by the beneficiary or PSA and the Attainable® program policies
- Complete an *Account Authority* form on fidelity.com to review the access levels and determine the appropriate level of account access
- Any third-party access will remain in effect until it is revoked or revised by the beneficiary or PSA
- Written notification must be provided to the Program Manager of any desired change to third-party access
- Consult a qualified adviser prior to granting third-party access to an Attainable® account



# Beneficiaries

- The beneficiary or PSA can assign a “Successor Beneficiary” in event of their death who will receive the account balance in their own Attainable® account after all account actions have been completed.
- The beneficiary or PSA can assign someone to receive the funds as part of their estate in event of their death who will receive the account balance after all account actions have been completed. The funds will need to be removed from the ABLE account in this instance before being received.
- After the death of the beneficiary, the account will be restricted for 12 months, during which the account is subject to Medicaid Recapture from any state wherein the beneficiary has lived.

# Consider the Gift of College

The MEFA U.Fund Gift of College Gift Card is a great option for birthdays, holidays, graduations, or other special occasions.



## How it works:

- Available in denominations from \$25 to \$200 at CVS stores across Massachusetts.
- Give the card to an expectant parent, students of all ages, college graduates, parents of young children, or an individual with an ABLE account.
- The recipient visits giftofcollege.com to redeem the card. Card funds can be put toward a college savings account, student loan debt, or an ABLE account.

# Additional Resources

- Attainable® Savings Plan (MEFA): [mefa.org/attainable](https://mefa.org/attainable)
- ABLE National Resource Center: [ablenrc.org/](https://ablenrc.org/)
- Attainable® Savings Plan (Fidelity): [fidelity.com/able](https://fidelity.com/able)
- SSA Spotlight on ABLE Accounts: [ssa.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-able.html](https://ssa.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-able.html)
- MEFA Attainable® email sign-up: [mefa.org/able-registration-form](https://mefa.org/able-registration-form)

# Connect with MEFA on Social Media



# Thank You!

## Questions?



**(800) 449-MEFA (6332)**



**[attainable@mefa.org](mailto:attainable@mefa.org)**

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