



**MEFA | attainable™**  
**THE ABLE SAVINGS PLAN**

Offered by MEFA and managed by Fidelity Investments

**MEFA™**



# 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
- Additional provisions and expansions have been made to the act continually since it's adoption.

[See the bill on congress.gov](https://www.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, the ABLE program is called the Attainable<sup>®</sup> Savings Plan
- Attainable<sup>®</sup> was launched in 2017
- MEFA is the state sponsor
- Fidelity Investments is the program manager

**MEFA**<sup>™</sup>



# Who is Eligible for an Attainable<sup>®</sup> Account?

- Individuals are eligible for an Attainable<sup>®</sup> account if the onset of disability occurred before the individual turned 46 years old (regardless of current age), and the individual:
  - Is eligible to receive SSI or SSDI due to their disability
    - Disability should be considered “marked and severe,” which is an SSA term which indicates that it is an impairment that causes serious, significant limitations in a person's ability to perform basic work or age-appropriate activities, lasting at least 12 months or expected to result in death, and meets or functionally equals the criteria of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) listings of impairments.

## AND/OR

- Self-certifies as meeting requirements, 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 conditions that primarily include certain cancers, adult brain disorders, and a number of rare disorders that affect children

## AND/OR

- This individual is blind
  - Meaning that they have 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

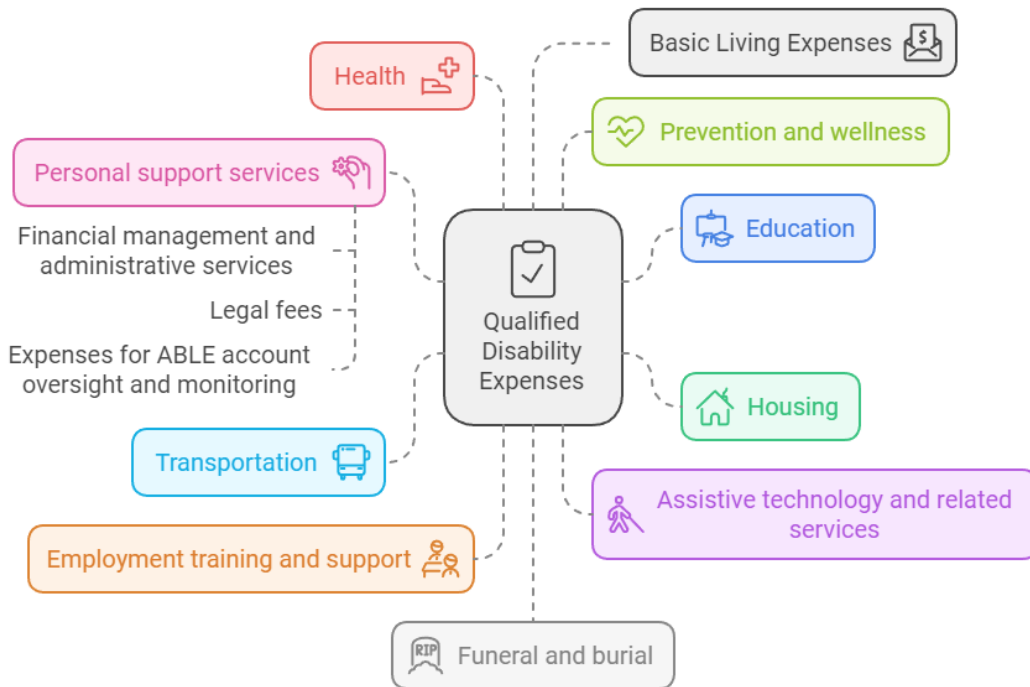


# Benefits of an Attainable<sup>®</sup> Account

- Funds in Attainable<sup>®</sup> Accounts are not counted against federal benefits such as:
  - SSI
  - HUD
    - *Including HUD-VASH*  
*(Veterans Affairs Supported Housing)*
  - SNAP
  - FAFSA
  - VA Pension
- Attainable<sup>®</sup> accounts allow the account owner or beneficiary to save above the current \$2,000 SSI asset limit.
- Family & friends can also contribute to an Attainable<sup>®</sup> account.
- Beneficiaries have immediate access to funds for their needs.
- Accounts provide individuals with disabilities:
  - Financial independence
  - Multiple tax benefits
  - The ability to save for needs and emergencies without penalty



# Qualified Disability Expenses for Attainable<sup>®</sup> Accounts



- QDE (Qualified Disability Expense)
  - Was incurred at a time the individual was eligible for an ABLA account
  - Relates to the disability
  - 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 ABLÉ 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<sup>®</sup> accounts can be opened by a “Person with Signature Authority” (PSA):

- 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<sup>®</sup> 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.

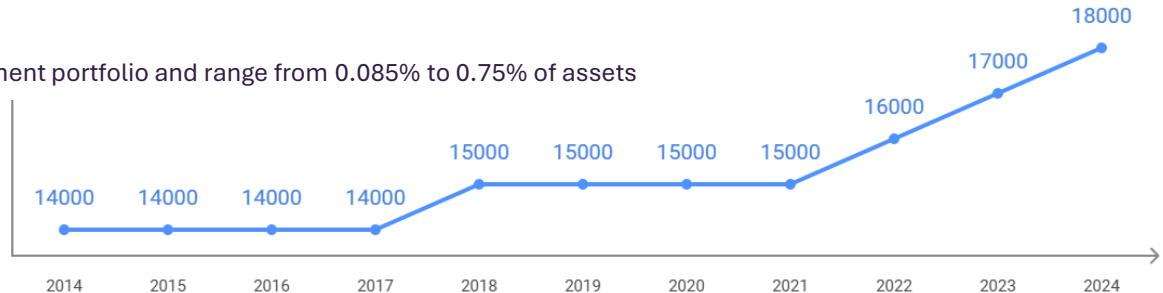
Please carefully consider the Attainable Savings Plan's investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses before investing. For this and other information, contact Fidelity for a free Disclosure Document or view one online. Read it carefully before you invest or send money.

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  
1169182.1.0

# Attainable<sup>®</sup> Account Specifics

- **Contribution limits have increased in 2026**
  - Total annual contribution cannot exceed **\$20,000**
  - If employed, the beneficiary may contribute up to an additional **\$15,650** 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 ABLÉ 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 ABLÉ savings up to the plan limit will NOT affect eligibility for:
  - Social Security and Disability Insurance (SSDI)
  - Housing Assistance – Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs
  - 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<sup>®</sup> accounts are investment accounts
  - Investment fees vary based on the investment portfolio and range from 0.085% to 0.75% of assets



# At Home and Reducing “Spend Downs”

- Before the ABLE Act, individuals were only allowed to have \$2,000 in assets (reviewed monthly) for all expenses. Savings were discouraged, and unexpected income or routine savings could easily exceed the limit. This would necessitate 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

Attainable® accounts can be used for education expenses, including:

- Tuition
- Textbooks
- Assistive technology
- 1-on-1 assistance
- Trade school

Supports provided in high school are often initiated by staff. In college, these supports need to be initiated and advocated for by the individual.

Attainable® can be used to provide opportunities for education equity



# Other QDE Examples:

## Employment Expenses

- Job-related training
- Tools
- Certifications
- Uniforms
- Coaching
- Start-up fees
- Moving expenses

## Health, Prevention, and Wellness Expenses

- Health insurance
- Mental health services
- Medical, vision, and dental expenses
- Habilitation and rehabilitation services
- Durable medical equipment
- Therapy
- Personal assistance
- Respite care
- Long-term services
- Nutritional management
- Communication services

## Assistive Technology

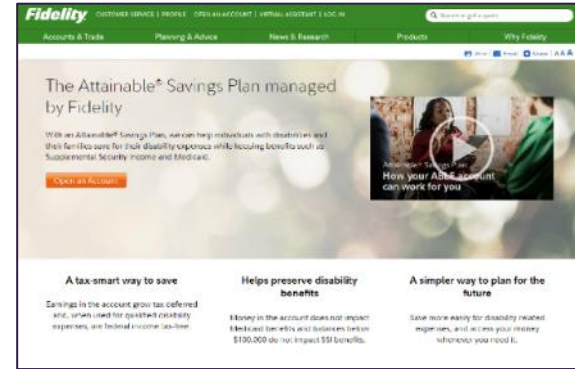
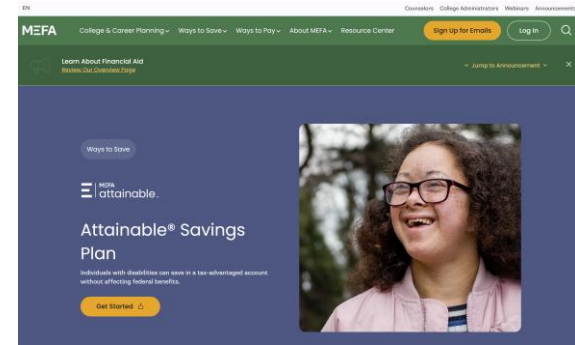
- Hearing aids
- Wheelchairs, transfer devices, and walkers
- Prosthesis
- Screen readers
- Braille keyboards
- Wearable tech
- Accessibility software
- Personal Emergency Response Systems and alert devices
- Memory aids
- Educational software
- Home automation
- AAC devices

# Withdrawing Attainable<sup>®</sup> Account Funds

- Attainable<sup>®</sup> 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<sup>®</sup> account are an Investment Trade, time should be allowed for the funds to be deposited, generally about 24 hours
- Account holders can set up a *Fidelity Cash Management Account* at the same time as establishing an *Attainable<sup>®</sup> 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
- Bonds cannot be directly rolled over into an ABL account; they will need to be cashed out first

# Steps to Open an Account

1. Visit [mefa.org/attainable](https://mefa.org/attainable)
2. Click on *Get Started* to reach [fidelity.com/able](https://fidelity.com/able)
3. Review [Fidelity Attainable® Savings Account Disclosure Document](#)
4. Decide how to allocate funds in the account among 10 portfolio options, including a money market portfolio
5. If you are a Rep Payee, the Social Security Administration requires that you must “title” the ABL 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
6. The SSA recommends that the account be titled in one of the following ways:
  - (Beneficiary’s name) by (Rep 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 ABL Accounts

- **844-458-2253**
- **TTY: 800-544-0118**

# Helping Money Work Harder

- Attainable<sup>®</sup> savings can be invested in professionally managed portfolios that match the beneficiary's savings goals and risk tolerance
- 10 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 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
ABLE 500 Index Portfolio	100% Stocks	0% Bonds	0% Short-term

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<sup>®</sup> 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

# Direct Deposit

- Attainable<sup>®</sup> accounts are eligible for direct deposit including SSI/SSDI benefit funds
- Direct deposit of a paycheck must stay under the initial \$20,000. If someone wants to contribute the additional \$15,650 allowed by ABLE to Work, it must be deposited manually
- Direct depositing into an Attainable<sup>®</sup> 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<sup>®</sup> 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<sup>®</sup> account
- Automatic contributions: Once an Attainable<sup>®</sup> account is opened, a systematic investment plan may be established with \$15 per month or \$45 per quarter

# Record Keeping

- SSI 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 according to the SSA. However, we have seen requests for 3 years from DDS and DMH audits



# 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.

## **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.
- The credit received is currently 10%, 20%, or 50% of contributions up to \$2,000 based on the individual's Adjusted Gross Income (AGI). This will be increasing to \$2,100 in 2027.

## **ABLE Returns and Income Tax:**

- As long as withdrawals are spent on qualified disability expenses, Attainable® account growth is federal income tax-free.

# 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 ABLÉ 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 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, Cumberland Farm, & Stop & Shop stores across MA and on mefa.org
- Give the card to any student, expectant or young parent, college graduate, or individual with an ABLÉ account
- Card funds can be put toward a college savings account, student loan debt, or an ABLÉ account.

# Resources

- Attainable<sup>®</sup> Savings Plan (MEFA): [mefa.org/attainable](https://mefa.org/attainable)
- ABLE National Resource Center: [ablenrc.org/](https://ablenrc.org/)
- Attainable<sup>®</sup> 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<sup>®</sup> 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)**

**MEFA™**