



# California

## Able Act

(Achieving a Better Life Experience)

*Presented by*

Statewide Self Advocacy Network



Updated 4/03/18



# This information is from the CalABLE Act Board

- o **THIS IS AN OVERVIEW PRESENTATION....**
- o CalABLE ACT has a Board that is working on how to get things started in California!
- o More information and details will be coming out as things get started.
- o SSAN suggests that **YOU** check out the website <http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/able> to stay up to date on all the details and rules of this exciting opportunity!

# ABLE ACT... What **YOU** should know after this presentation...

- o What the ABLE Act is;
- o How **YOU** qualify for an ABLE Account;
- o How much can **YOU** save in an ABLE Account;
- o What **YOU** can spend the money on from your ABLE Account;
- o How to spend **YOUR** money from your ABLE Account;
- o What are some benefits of an ABLE Account;
- o Where **YOU** open an ABLE Account, and;
- o Resources for **YOU** to get more information.



# What is the ABLE ACT?

- o A federal law that the President signed in 2014;
- o The law says it is to provide a greater financial security to people living with a disability through an ABLE savings account;
- o Each state is able to create tax-advantaged savings accounts for people with disabilities while protecting eligibility for public benefits like SSI, SSDI or Medicaid.



# How do YOU Qualify for an ABLER Account?

- o Must have a disability before the age of 26  
**AND**
- o Meet the eligibility criteria for disability benefits like SSI or SSDI- **OR**
- o Self-certification: been diagnosed by a doctor with a physical or mental disability resulting in severe limitations that is expected to last no less than 12 months.



# How much can YOU save in an ABLER Account?

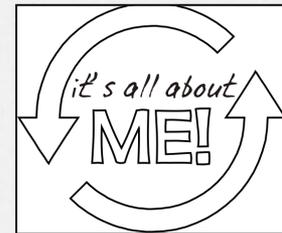
- o Before the ABLER Act, **YOU** could only save \$2,000 each year before impacting your benefits.
- o **YOU** can now save up to \$15,000 each year and up to \$100,000 in total before impacting your SSI benefits.
- o **YOU** can only have ONE ABLER Account.
- o ABLER Accounts are not subject to federal or state income tax



# What can **YOU** spend the money on from your ABLA Account?

The money in an ABLA account MUST be used/spent for certain Qualified Disability Expenses, like:

- o Daily living expenses
- o Education
- o Housing
- o Transportation
- o Help getting and keeping work
- o Health care
- o Assistive technology
- o Legal and Financial Management fees
- o And other expenses that improve or maintain the quality of your life!



# How to Spend YOUR money from YOUR ABLE Account

- o Some ABLE programs offer debit cards and/or prepaid cards
  - o You can use that card to pay for qualifying expenses. You can add a certain amount of money to the card each month
  - o For things like rent: money has to be spent in the same calendar month you withdrew it.
- o It's **YOUR** job to make sure your expense qualifies and to keep records of how use your ABLE account.
- o Don't just hold onto the money **YOU** withdrawal or put it in a normal bank account – if you don't spend the money, it could be counted as a resource for benefits programs.
  - o **EXAMPLE:** if you take \$3,500 out of an ABLE account and put it into a regular checking account instead of spending it, you will go over the resource limit for SSI.
- o As long as the money stays in the ABLE account, it won't affect your benefits, so leave your money there until you need to spend it.

# What are some benefits of an ABLÉ Account?

- o Ability to have money go directly from your bank account to your ABLÉ account.
- o Invite friends and family to contribute to your ABLÉ account.
- o Make online and check deposits
- o Low fees



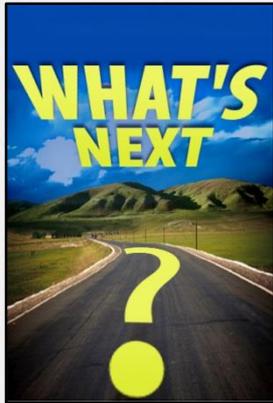
# Where can **YOU** open an ABLE Account?

**YOU** may open an ABLE Account outside the state you live- there are 35 ABLE States- 22 of these are national plans, where you do not have to be a resident of that state to open an ABLE Account. You can go to the ABLE Alliance for Financial Empowerment website:  
<https://www.theablealliance.org/compare-page>  
if they want to compare programs.



***The California Program is in its development phase as and hopes to “go live” in 2018 as a national program!***

# What's NEXT?



- o If the Able Act sounds like something you would like to be part of, talk with your family and/or your service coordinator for support.
- o Learn all you can about the ABLE Act- remember CalABLE is supposed to “go live” in 2018- but you can open an ABLE Account in another state in the meantime.
- o Start Saving for **YOUR** future!



# RESOURCES



Check out these resources for more information:

o [www.treasurer.ca.gov/able](http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/able)



o <http://www.scdd.ca.gov/ssdac>



o [www.disabilityrightsca.org](http://www.disabilityrightsca.org)



o [www.achievingindependence.com/able/](http://www.achievingindependence.com/able/)



o <http://www.ablenrc.org>



# CalABLE FACT SHEET

## CalABLE Providing People With Disabilities Greater Financial Security

### About

CalABLE is a new program that allows people with disabilities to establish a tax-advantaged savings account and save up to \$14,000 per year and up to \$100,000 in total without losing vital public benefits, such as supplemental

security income. Earnings in these accounts are not subject to federal income tax or California state income tax, so long as the earnings are spent on qualified expenses. CalABLE began operations July 1, 2016 and is anticipated to open for business in 2017.



### Who is eligible to open an ABLE account?

An individual who has the onset of a disability before age 26 may qualify by meeting one of the following:



- Is eligible to receive benefits based on disability, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI);
- Has a disability certification, including a copy of the diagnosis signed by a physician.



State Treasurer John Chiang

### What are the benefits of a CalABLE account?

The following features and benefits are being considered by the ABLE Board:

- Ability to contribute automatically through routine deductions from a bank account
- Ability to invite friends and family to contribute directly to an account
- Deposit online or by check
- Low fees
- Diverse investment options



### Timeline for the CalABLE Program



**2013**  
Prior to 2013, a person with a disability receiving support from a public benefit program was not able to save for future needs without fear of losing vital government assistance, such as SSI. Also, any assets counted against them.



**2014**  
President Barack Obama signs the Stephen Beck, Jr. Achieving a Better Life Experience Act.



**2015**  
The California State Legislature passed SB 324 (Fran Pavley) and AB 449 (Jacqui Irwin), supported by State Treasurer John Chiang, which implements the ABLE program in the state.



**JULY 1, 2016**  
CalABLE began operations.



**2017**  
CalABLE expects to be open for business.



### How You Can Help

- ✓ Identification of public agencies and private and nonprofit organizations that work with people with disabilities and their families and can help with outreach and education.
- ✓ Identification of state laws, regulations and public benefit enrollment or eligibility processes that need to be changed and/or updated to ensure there are no conflicts.

### Questions?

For more information on CalABLE, email [calable@treasurer.ca.gov](mailto:calable@treasurer.ca.gov) or call 916-653-1728.

### Connect on Social Media:

Facebook.com/CalABLE  
@CalABLE\_Board



State Treasurer John Chiang

DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE AT: [www.treasurer.ca.gov/able](http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/able)

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# QUESTIONS?



Thank YOU from SSAN

