

Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE)

What is ABLE?

ABLE or ABLEnow is a nationally qualified ABLE savings program offered nationally by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Virginia529 administers ABLEnow. ABLEnow accounts give qualified and enrolled individuals the opportunity to invest and grow savings tax-free, without endangering eligibility for most means-tested benefits.

Funds in an ABLEnow account are disregarded when determining eligibility for means-tested benefits programs such as Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). There is no limit on the amount someone can save if they're receiving Medicaid with no tie into SSI. For those receiving SSI, the ABLEnow account limit currently is \$100,000. SSI benefits will be ceased if the ABLE account's balance exceeds the limit until such time the resources are spent down below \$100,000.

Who Qualifies for ABLE?

ABLEnow accounts are available to individuals who became disabled before age 26. **Individuals older than 26 years of age can still qualify for an ABLEnow account, provided their disability began before that.** An individual does not have to be receiving Social Security Disability or Supplemental Security Income to be eligible for an ABLEnow account; individuals with a physician's statement verifying disability and age of onset may also meet the criteria for an ABLEnow account.

Money in ABLEnow accounts may be used to pay for qualified disability expenses, which cover a broad range of expenses to help the person with a disability – the Eligible Individual - maintain or improve their health, independence, or quality of life. An expense is "qualified" if incurred when the client was considered eligible for an ABLEnow account.

Examples of Qualified Expenses

- Transportation

- Assistive Technology
- Education
- Housing
- Healthcare

Who Can Contribute to ABLE Accounts?

- The eligible individual
- Family
- Friends

The current contribution limit to an ABLE account is \$18,000 annually as of 2024.

Enrollment Procedures

An individual can open an ABLE account online at www.able-now.com or by calling 1-844-669-2253. The client will receive an ABLE Now VISA debit card to be used at an ATM or anywhere VISA is accepted. Once enrollment in the ABLE account is approved, the enrollee should report this to their claims representatives at the Department of Social Services and the Social Security Administration.

****NOTE:** ABLE is a resource exclusion, not an income exclusion. Beneficiaries must still meet all income and other eligibility criteria to remain eligible for benefits.**

This article was contributed by Michael Klinger, Work Incentives Specialist for the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. For more information on any other benefits related questions, contact Michael Klinger at 434-989-5782 or Michael.klinger@dars.virginia.gov.

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