

ABLE Program Spotlight: ABLEnow & ABLEAmerica

Webinar Transcript

>> MARLENE: Hello, and welcome, everyone, to the National Resource Center's November 29th webinar where we're spotlighting Virginia's ABLEnow and ABLEAmerica programs. We're glad each and every one of you are with us this morning or this afternoon to learn more about Virginia programs the next 60 minutes. When I look at the participants and see the numbers growing each second, it makes me smile. We like to thank our funder for funding the grant for the National Resource Center.

When we host these webinars, it really takes a village. There's a team at the resource center and also ABLEnow and ABLEAmerica so we can bring this together and answer your questions. Before we get started I'll turn this over to Cheyenne Rivers our project coordinator to go over logistics to make sure everyone has a great experience the next hour.

>> CHEYENNE: Thanks so much, Marlene. The audio for today's webinar can be accessed using computer audio or by calling in by phone. If you select computer audio, make sure your speakers are turned on, or your headphones are plugged in. If you don't have sound capabilities on your computer or prefer to listen by phone, dial 1- 929- 205- 6099. The webinar ID is 86791000419. Next slide.

Captioning. Realtime captioning is provided during this webinar. The captions can be found by clicking on the closed captions icon in your Zoom controls at the bottom of the screen. If you don't see captions after clicking the button, alert the host, that's me, Cheyenne, via the chat box and we have a streaming link we put in chat box as another option for captioning. Next slide.

Use the Q&A box to submit any questions you have during the webinar. We will try to answer all the questions. Don't use the chat box for questions. We invite you to explore the ABLE National Resource Center website for your questions and during our archive resources and news letter, visit ABLENRC.org. Next slide.

For technical assistance. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, please use the chat box to send a message to the NDI host, me again. Or you may e-mail info@ABLENRC.org subject line webinar help. This webinar is being recorded and the materials will be placed on the ABLE National Resource Center website along with all other ABLE webinars. Next slide.

>> MARLENE: Thanks, Cheyenne. My name is Marlene and I'm a subject matter expert with the ABLE National Resource Center and National Disability Institute, and I'm so happy to be your facilitator today. You met my teammate, Cheyenne, and also behind the scenes are other members. Laurie and

Brian, they're subject matter experts also with the ABLE National Resource Center and will be answering any questions that come into the Q&A blocks.

Our team works under the outstanding leadership and guidance of Miranda Kennedy, our director, who couldn't be with us today. On the next slide, I have a few items to get through on the agenda before I hand it over to our presenter from ABLEnow.

For the next 60 minutes, we'll be covering two areas ABLE national center resources where you can find answers to your questions and the Virginia ABLEnow ABLEAmerica plan will be featured on our spotlight. For those who have regularly been participating in our webinars, you know that several times per year we feature a specific state plan to help you to learn more about that plan.

ABLEnow and ABLEAmerica will be covering the following. ABLE fundamentals and an advantages, an overview of the direct- sold ABLEnow program. Overview of the advisor sold ABLEAmerica program. A program comparison and questions and answers. I'm going to be quickly sharing information about the ABLE National Resource Center as well as what we do with our Program Spotlights and we'll hand it over to the Virginia programs to present on program features. Then we can go at the end to our questions and answers.

So next slide. The ABLE National Resource Center is a

leading comprehensive source of objective independent information about federal and state related ABLE Programs and activities. And that includes guidance on tax advantaged ABLE savings and best practices. It's our mission and our privilege to be here to educate and promote and support the positive impact that an ABLE account can make on the lives of what we estimate to be currently 8 million eligible Americans with disabilities and their families. Our pioneering work in this area and expertise make us the foremost authority on topics related to achieving a better life experience, ABLE accounts, state ABLE Programs, ABLE related policy development and integration of ABLE and financial capability strategies with people with disabilities into public service delivery systems. Our website is a clearinghouse of information and it can be found at ABLENRC.org.

Next slide. You can find answers to all of your questions at the ABLE National Resource Center website. Again that's ABLENRC.org. Our content rich site includes the following: ABLE frequently asked questions. That would include questions and categories such as eligibility, enrollment, contributions, qualified disability expenses, medical criteria, or other general questions.

On the menu bar under "about," you can learn more

about - - or learn more from ABLE account owners and family members and how they are using their ABLE accounts or contributing to a family member's financial security through the account.

If you prefer, you can listen to their stories through our Podcast series. We recently added more on using ABLE accounts. They were in the category of self-employment, but you'll find them on a variety of other topics also. Financial independence, employment, building a financial future, ABLE benefits and so on. We post webinars and past webinars on our website and they're available for you 24/7. Because we realized you may have missed a webinar or may choose to listen again to a webinar you participated in. This is where you find the state spotlight webinars including this webinar within about two weeks.

You'll also find our bimonthly newsletter, the Achievable newsletter that keeps you up to date with current news and sign up for the past editions on our website. We also have ABLE state comparison tools to help you compare and contrast the upper 45 state ABLE Programs available to you. There's an option to download a file which contains all of the plans, if there's something specific you are looking for.

We also have ABLE tool kits. We have a variety of tool kits. A tool kit geared specifically to service

providers. We have another specifically targeting employers and have BIPOC outreach tool kit. And the newest tool, the ABLE decision guide series.

Next slide. On this slide, you can see on the right-hand side, the ABLE decision guide series. ABLE decision guides are a series of step to step guides on key ABLE topics that provide multiple ways to outcomes. There's a guide on selecting and opening an ABLE, managing ABLE accounts, finding funds to save, determining whether something is an expense, working with people with disabilities. The newest guide, Ready and ABLE to Work and Save.

Next slide. At this point, I would like to introduce the ABLE spot light of ABLE now and ABLEAmerica. We have a lot of webinars to lay the foundation and basic understanding of ABLE and hope you accessed some of this material in the past so you have a baseline of understanding. Some basics will be covered here but this is meant to be a deeper dive where the state ABLE Programs which may be part of a multi-state collaboration or individual state program, have an opportunity to provide program specific details, do a little bit of a deeper dive on what the specific program looks like, features, what they have to offer, as well as general guidance and best practices for those programs.

The spot lights cover concepts related to investing and saving, a topic that many people with disabilities might be very new to especially the opportunity to invest and save above that \$2,000 resource limit for an individual. And really we want to offer programs and opportunities to share information with you to make the most of your ABLE accounts have a better understanding what they look like or opening an ABLE account for the first time. You can find a link to all our webinars under resources at the ABLE National Resource Center website. Click on the webinars and it will bring up the spotlights and other webinars broken down by topic. You can break them down that way in search for what you need.

Excuse me. Or you can search by date. This is also where you find upcoming webinars and you can register for upcoming webinars. So with that, I would like to offer a warm welcome to Brittany Bullock. Brittany is a senior marketing associate with the Virginia ABLEnow program, the first state in the country to pass state ABLE legislation after the federal be ABLE act was passed. You'll learn a lot and are in great hands. Brittany, take it away.

>> BRITTANY: Thank you so much, Marlene. And thank you so much, Cheyenne, for this great opportunity. So, again, I work for Virginia 529 and we have an independent Virginia state agency that administers the national ABLEnow

and ABLEAmerica programs. I'm in Richmond Virginia so we're on the East Coast. Virginia is a bit the case in the ABLE world in that our state sponsors two ABLE Programs. ABLEnow and ABLEAmerica.

In this presentation, I'll walk you through the basics of both programs, but again, like Marlene mentioned, I'm going to take a deeper dive on their similarities and differences and then we'll close out with highlights of our direct- sold ABLEnow program. You may know Virginia is full of history and home to several of Americas Founding Fathers. But like Marlene mentioned, we're also known of the birthplace of ABLE accounts.

So we're proud that idea for the ABLE accounts, or the ABLE Act came from a group of parents in northern Virginia. And the ABLE act of 2014 was named for the late Virginian who advocated for this change, and his name was Steven Beck, Jr. In 2015, Virginia became the first state in the country to pass ABLE legislation after the federal ABLE statute passed and this legislation authorized development of our two ABLE programs. Next slide, please.

So what is ABLEnow? ABLEnow is the largest, independent direct- sold ABLE savings program in the country. ABLEnow opened in December of 2016, and we will actually be celebrating the program's sixth anniversary in just a few weeks. Today, ABLEnow has more than 13,000

account owners and just about 91 million in assets under management. The average account size is about \$7,000 and almost half our ABLEnow accounts are open by the eligible individual themselves.

Although ABLEnow is sponsored by the Commonwealth of Virginia, it's available nationwide to eligible U.S. citizens and legal U.S. residents regardless of that state residency. Today we do actually have ABLE accounts in all 50 states and later in the presentation, we'll review some of the advantages of the ABLEnow program, including the industry's first mobile app which helps customers manage their accounts and improve accessibility.

As mentioned before, ABLEnow is administered by Virginia 529 and just a note, Virginia 529 is an independent state agency that runs the largest college savings plan in the country. We've been helping individuals and families dream, save and achieve for over 25 years. And with ABLEnow, our mission has become even more inclusive.

Next slide. Like I mentioned in the beginning, we offer the nation's online advisor sole program. And this is ABLEAmerica. ABLEAmerica is the first and only ABLE Program available through financial professional and this program opened back in July of 2018. Today, ABLEAmerica has more than \$24 million in assets under management. The average account size for ABLEAmerica is around \$11,500, we're just

the highest of any ABLE Program in the country.

ABLEAmerica is distributed by a capital group, home of American funds and they're one of the oldest and largest mutual fund companies in the country. ABLEAmerica like ABLEnow is open to eligible individuals in all 50 states. Like other ABLE programs, ABLEAmerica is governed by the rules and requirements established by the ABLE Act such as who is eligible, how much you can save and things like that.

Now a financial professional can give advice and help you build a plan, tailored to your needs. To open an ABLE American account, an individual will contact a financial professional if interested in learning more or if they want to open an ABLEAmerica account. Next slide.

Let's take a moment to do a deep dive and to compare these two Virginia sponsored programs. First let's look at some of the similarities of these two programs. The ABLE act established rules and requirements for all ABLE requirements including ABLEnow and ABLEAmerica. So the fundamentals are the same.

Both these programs offer national enrollment. This means these accounts are available to eligible individuals in any state. And if you relocate, your account can come with you. You do not have to transfer your account. Both of those programs allow for you to save and invest while maintaining certain public benefits such as SSI or Medicaid.

Both offer the same taxed advantage so earnings on your investments grow tax free and never taxed when qualified for a disability expense. And some customers may be eligible for the save's tax credit and state tax advantages. Both programs have the same annual contribution limit which is \$16,000 this year, 2022. But will be increasing to \$17,000 come January 1st of 2023.

And then both programs follow the same rules in how funds can be used. Those qualified disability expenses. Let's take a look at. So differences of these programs. There are nuanced differences between ABLEAmerica and ABLEnow. The first is how you open your account.

As the direct- sold program, you open and manage your ABLEnow account online through our website, ABLEnow.com. ABLEAmerica is sold through a professional. You always have someone to help. People find financial planning overwhelming which is where an advisor comes in to help you choose the right investments and keep your goals on track. With ABLEnow you go to our website. With ABLEAmerica you work with that financial professional. Preponderance ABLEnow offers five investment offers that includes FDIC deposit account. And options include a fidelity money market portfolio and selection of highly rated van guard life strategy funds.

Whereas with ABLEAmerica, they'll offer seven investment options and they'll all be American funds

investment options. Account management tools. Among ABLE programs, ABLEnow is the leading way with resources to use and manage your account. All ABLEnow customers receive an ABLE now credit card at no additional cost. At this time, ABLE America does not offer a card or robust DIY tools since you'll work with your financial professional to set up and manage your account. If you relocate, your account can come with you, too.

Just a quick note. If you are looking to save for the long term, or looking to save for a large purchase, ABLEAmerica could be a good option because they're going to be more designed to help you save for the long term compared to the ABLEnow program.

Another difference are the minimum deposits. ABLEnow doesn't have a set minimum deposit. So you can open the account and not be required to add funds immediately. The initial deposit to an ABLEAmerica account is \$200 and \$50 minimum for subsequent investment. And the fee structure. ABLE accounts are designed to be used as financially accessible as possible. But we often are asked about cost of these programs.

With the ABLE now account there's a service fee of \$39 a year payable at \$3.25 per month. The monthly service fee is waived if you maintain an average daily balance of \$10,000 in the ABLEnow deposit account. There are asset

based fees depending on your investment selection if you decide to invest some of your funds.

Now, with the advisor sold program, ABLEAmerica, the account service fee is waived indefinitely which makes it one of the more competitive priced ABLE programs out there if you compare those programs apples to apples. Asset based fees range based on investment selections. So just like the ABLEnow program. Next slide, please.

So what are the advantages of saving in an ABLEnow account? Again, you are well aware that ABLE accounts are designed to help you save beyond asset limitations. Just very quickly, I'll cover that information again. But generally funds in an ABLEnow account are disregarded when determining eligibility for certain programs such as Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income.

A quick summary for SSI benefits, an account balance up to, and including \$100,000 is disregarded. And money in an ABLEnow account in excess of \$100,000 would be considered an asset and may cause those SSI benefits to be reduced or suspended. There's no impact to Medicaid benefits regardless of how much money is in the ABLEnow account.

I do want to make a note that it is - - I'm sure you're all aware of the Medicaid pay back or Medicaid claw back. So for individuals outside of the state of Virginia, you may want to just contact your state, see what their

stance is on that Medicaid pay back provision. For individuals who live here in the state of Virginia, the general assembly actually passed legislation to prohibit the state from pursuing that Medicaid recovery claim against the ABLEnow or ABLEAmerica accounts for Virginia residents.

The next advantage is that you can save with the help of others. So anyone can contribute to an ABLEnow account including the account owner, family and friends. And making a gift contribution is very easy. ABLEnow offers a convenient way where people can make gift contributions directly into an ABLEnow account. And with direct deposit, a paycheck, social security income or other reoccurring electronic payments are also be automatically deposited into the accounts.

The third advantage, say an account is designed for your unique needs. ABLEnow accounts are flexible and low cost to maintain. We already talked about fees associated with the ABLEnow and ABLEAmerica accounts. You can manage your account any time anywhere with accessible online tools in our mobile app. And you can pay for the qualified disability expenses with your ABLEnow card and again that's available to all account holders at no additional cost.

And then finally, another advantage is that you can save tax free earnings on investments in an ABLEnow account. Again, they'll grow tax free and are never taxed when used

for qualified disability expense. Like I mentioned before, ABLEnow contributions may qualify for the saver's tax credit if the account owner is eligible. And there are state tax benefits for Virginia residents with the ABLEnow program and ABLEAmerica.

Next slide, please. For the rest of the presentation, we are going to mostly focus on the direct- sold program, ABLEnow, and share a bit more about the investment options and account management.

ABLEnow makes it very easy to save and invest at your own pace. And here's how that is going to work. So the first \$2,000 in your ABLEnow account is automatically allocated to the FDIC insured ABLEnow deposit account, which is linked directly to your ABLEnow card. You can decide to continue saving your contributions in this deposit account. Once the balance of the ABLEnow deposit account exceeds \$2,000, you have the option to invest those additional contributions into one or more of the investment portfolios you see listed here.

Again, there's an aggressive growth, moderate growth, conservative income and money market. And so the money market is that fidelity investment I mentioned, and the rest are Vanguard life strategy.

So to go over that again before we move on. Again, that first \$2,000 saved in your ABLEnow account are linked

directly to that ABLEnow card that you will receive. So we call that the deposit account. And then those balances over \$2,000, you have the option to invest those additional contributions into one of the four investment portfolios you see listed here.

And it's optional. So some families may decide to keep the funds in the deposit account. And some may decide to invest those funds for future purchase or to have some savings and investment. Next slide, please.

So we often hear from ABLEnow customers about how much they appreciate the tools and resources built into the ABLEnow program. And ABLEnow makes it very easy to access your account 24/7 with an online consumer portal. The ABLEnow mobile app is available on the Apple app store and Google Play store. This is another great way to check your account on the go.

When you are using the portal or the app, customers can check available balances. You can make a contribution or pay for those qualified disability expenses. You can upload a receipt to organize and track those qualified disability expenses. You can view account statements, customize notifications, and reach out to customer service if you needed some assistance.

ABLEnow offers enrollment options for eligible individuals and their authorized representatives. There's

also a new option for organizations to open and manage multiple ABLEnow accounts on behalf of the ABLE eligible clients. So that is a new feature that we added - - or that was added back in August.

And then the ABLEnow debit card is available to all account owners at no additional cost. And it's an easy way to pay for these qualified disability expenses.

Finally, we wanted to highlight the ABLEnow takes the protection of customer accounts and information very seriously. And recent enhancements add additional layers of security including a two factor authentication. And if you ever need to contact ABLEnow, you are reaching an experienced customer team based right here in the state of Virginia.

Next slide, please. Mentioning customer service, on the side, you'll see that information. And also our website, ABLEnow.com. I'll also take this opportunity to just thank the National ABLE Resource Center for leadership and partnership and spreading the word about ABLE accounts.

Lastly, I just want to say, I can't provide any legal, financial or tax advice, but I'm very happy to answer any questions on the two Virginia National ABLE Programs, ABLEnow and ABLEAmerica. Thank you.

>> MARLENE: Thank you have much, Brittany. That was a lot of great information and I learned a lot of new things

about ABLEnow and ABLEAmerica. We've gotten some questions that came into the Q&A box. And I wondered if you could answer a couple of questions and share the answers with our audience. If someone is deciding on whether they should open an ABLEnow account or ABLEAmerica account, since they are both Virginia plans, could they have one of each?

>> BRITTANY: You can only have one ABLE account. So, again, ABLEnow and ABLEAmerica both follow the rules and requirements of the ABLE Act. And with the ABLE Act, an individual can only have one ABLE account. So they would have to decide if they want to do the direct- sold ABLEnow or if they would like the assistance of the financial professional and go with the ABLEAmerica program.

The great thing is that you can move funds - - say you do the ABLEnow program, but maybe want that assistance or maybe think that ABLEAmerica will work better for you. You can transfer from that program to the ABLEAmerica program.

>> MARLENE: So you can transfer or roll over the funds from one Virginia plan to the other Virginia plan. And I would assume it's subject to the same rules which are in effect now.

>> BRITTANY: Yes.

>> MARLENE: That's great. Is there any statistics or information about growth of ABLEnow versus like the advisor

sold plan versus the direct- sold plan? The growth on either, or is that something that can be shared with the audience?

>> BRITTANY: I - - that's a very great question. So I know we track growth of the ABLE - - the direct- sold ABLEnow accounts. And typically we work with the individuals at Cap Group or American Funds to collect that data. So I don't have that information on the top of my head, but I can definitely look into that and provide an answer if someone were requesting.

>> MARLENE: Great. And I'm asking that question because we hear so often that the ABLE National Resource Center, there's so many questions about investing and a lot of folks are very unfamiliar with it. It's something new to them because many individuals couldn't save in the past. They receive a means tested benefit so they couldn't save over \$2,000.

Okay. Let's see. Could you expand on, again, whether or not ABLEnow and ABLEAmerica are open nationwide or just to residents of Virginia?

>> BRITTANY: They are both nationwide programs and we do actually have accounts for both programs in all 50 states. So you don't have to be a Virginia resident. Let's say you live in - - let say they live where Miranda is out and decide to open an ABLEnow account. Say they move to

another state, they can still keep their account with us. They do not have to be a Virginia resident for either program.

>> MARLENE: Thank you. There are a lot of questions now especially about the advisor- sold plan. The question is, in the ABLEnow account, can you invest funds in different portfolios?

>> BRITTANY: I believe you can pick more than one portfolio with the direct sold program. And then just those asset based fees would be dependent on that investment portfolio that you choose.

>> MARLENE: Can you split contributions between two portfolios? And how often you rebalances?

>> BRITTANY: That's a very good question. As far as the rebalance question, I would have to double check that for you. But if you're picking more than one portfolio option, similar to our 529 side, you should be able to split those funds between the two portfolios.

>> MARLENE: Great question. You talked about the enhanced security and that's something - - a question did come in to the ABLE resource center because some programs don't have the two factor authentication set up. Someone is asking how they set that up. Is it set up with fifth third bank? Could you extend on that?

>> BRITTANY: They would set it up directly through

our website, and I'm pulling our website up now. So there's not a fee to have it. And I believe with our program you can either use a third party, or go through our website. I'm sorry. I'm pulling up that information.

>> MARLENE: But it's on your website?

>> BRITTANY: Yes.

>> MARLENE: They can find that information on the website?

>> BRITTANY: Yes.

>> MARLENE: Okay, great. I'm assuming it would be in the disclosure document also?

>> BRITTANY: It's a newer feature. It should be.

Let's see. Let's see if it's on here. Again, the website is ABLEnow.com. I am looking. I don't see it right off the top of here, but we do have it. There's no - - I know there's no fee for having that because we have the same feature on our 529 site as well.

>> MARLENE: Someone is asking about the annual contribution limit. Is that annual contribution limit a limit for your state? Is it nationwide? And they wanted to know whether or not that limit is \$17,000 for next year.

>> BRITTANY: Yes. So that limit - - the contribution limit is the same across all ABLE programs because that is going to be a requirement by the ABLE act or part of those rules and regulations. So, yes, it's \$16,000 for 2022. So

just a few more weeks of that \$16,000 limit. And then in 2023, that limit will increase to \$17,000.

The ABLE contribution limits are tied in with the gift tax. So if that gift tax ever goes up, you'll see the increase of ABLE contribution limits go up as well.

>> MARLENE: Okay. Now there's a question, how is ABLEnow related to the Virginia 529 college savings plan?

>> BRITTANY: Yeah. So Virginia 529 is the parent company. So when Virginia passed the ABLE Act in 2015, they decided that Virginia 529 would be a great program to administer and run the ABLEnow program. Like I mentioned, Virginia 529 has been helping families dream, save and achieve with those college savings accounts for over 25 years. So adding in that ABLE, those disability savings, expanded our mission and made us more inclusive. But some view ABLE accounts as 529A account, which gets into tax lingo, which we won't go into too much but it ties in that way also.

>> MARLENE: Thank you. Someone is asking, they're over 50 years of age. Are they eligible to open an ABLE account?

>> BRITTANY: That's a really great question. For those listening on the call, you may or may not know but with the ABLE accounts, the ABLE rules and regulations, there's an eligibility requirement. On set of a disability

has to be prior to age 26. So if you're over 50, but say you were born with your disability or developed your disability prior to age 26, you would still be eligible to open an ABLEnow account.

There is the ABLE age adjustment act that we are advocating for and pushing for, and that would raise that eligibility age from 26 to 46.

>> MARLENE: Thank you. On raising the age from 26 to 46, from what I understand, there should be a vote by the third week of December on that.

>> BRITTANY: That's what I'm hearing, too. And I'm like - -

>> MARLENE: Fingers crossed.

>> BRITTANY: I know. I know.

>> MARLENE: Where can I - - I'm sorry. Can you speak a little about eligible distributions? I think what they're talking about are qualified disability expenses.

>> BRITTANY: Yes, absolutely. Again, to kind of retouch on that. The eligible disability expenses, a lot of the programs keep the categories very broad because every individual's going to have a different need. But the key rule or key thing to think about is if the expense is going towards the individual's disability and helping to maintain their health, independence, and quality of life. So those categories can be daily living expenses, housing, education,

training, assistive technology, medical expenses. Different things like that.

Again, as long as it's going towards the individual's disability in helping to maintain their health, independence and quality of life, it would be considered an eligible disability expense.

>> MARLENE: Right. And I want to mention we have a great decision guide on qualified disability expenses if you visit the ABLE National Resource Center website. It talks about the categories, Brittany, that you talked about and gives some examples. And throughout our website, we try to give examples. But as you said, a qualified expense must relate to that person's independence quality of life and benefit that person. In connection with qualified disability expenses, someone is asking in the ABLEAmerica account, can you request a check if needed.

>> BRITTANY: With ABLEAmerica, there's not a card with the program just yet. So with ABLEAmerica, those with draws would either be a check or probably a direct deposit into a checking or savings account.

>> MARLENE: Okay. Question from a grandparent. Can they set up an account if they are not the official guardian of a child? Great question.

>> BRITTANY: Yes. That is a great, great question. So with the ABLEnow program, so the family members - - we have

individuals who can open accounts as authorized representatives. And family members were actually expanded. Originally it was mom, dad or legal guardian. So now parents, grandparents, sibling and spouses can open an ABLEnow account as an authorized representative without having to have like the guardianship or that legal documentation. There's an order of priority. And that order of priority, I believe, it's the parent - - I want to say it's the parent, sibling, spouse and then grandparent. But the order of priority is just saying the other individuals have to be willing or able to open and manage the account. If not, you are more than welcome to open and manage that account for the individual. Very good question.

>> MARLENE: Very good question. And I think some of that information you'll find in the disclosure documents of the ABLE Program. The disclosure documents are all posted to the individual states ABLE Program site. You can find it there or go to our comparison tools and on our comparison tools we house the plans as well, the disclosure documents as well.

Someone is asking whether or not they can contribute \$16,000 before the end of this year and then on January 1st contribute \$17,000? Can they do that?

>> BRITTANY: Yes. So it's a year by year. It's not like a rolling year. It's January 1st, that limit will

restart. So keep in mind, however, those annual contribution limits. But, yes, you could decide to do that if you wanted to.

>> MARLENE: Someone is asking, has the contribution limit ever been raised? As you were saying, Brittany, it has. In most years it has increased and you said - -

>> BRITTANY: The gift tax, yes. When ABLE accounts first started, I believe the annual contribution limit was \$14,000. And then it went up to \$15,000. This year, 2022, it was 16, and then in January it will go up to 17. So we have seen some increases across the board since the ABLE accounts were established.

>> MARLENE: And I think one or two more questions. If you have a uniform gift to minor's act account, can you roll that over into an ABLE account? And if it's over \$17,000, and can you roll it over?

>> BRITTANY: That's a very good question. Marlene, can you actually e-mail me the person who asked me that question if possible because I can look into that. I unfortunately don't know. I know that you can do that on the 529 side. I'm not sure if you can do it on the ABLE side. I will definitely double check for you.

If it's over the annual contribution limit, you're only going to be able to transfer over that annual contribution limit amount. So you would have to kind of be

cognizant of the amount that you are transferring into the account. With the ABLEnow program, we do have some things set in place where if anything exceeds that annual contribution limit, we'll actually kick it back to the account owner or the person whose made that contribution.

>> MARLENE: Thank you. We've gotten a lot of questions answered. There's a whole lot more. Laurie, are there any questions that you think we should target right now? Any common questions? Although, I do see something now that's asking, how often we update the comparison tool. Laurie, would you like to answer that?

>> LAURIE: Sure. Thank you, Marlene. This is Laurie. So each year we ask the ABLE plans to submit updated information to the ABLE NRC so we can post that information in our comparison tools and we made that request twice this year and the plans can always send us any changes in their plan information. Just this week I updated the information for about 15 plans. So I welcome everyone to explore the ABLE National Resource Center website and see the program updates. And so we do have some questions around guardianships.

If a person needs someone to help them manage their funds, and there's a guardianship, what type of documentation do you require?

>> BRITTANY: So if you are going to open the account

as a guardian or power of attorney, care Care representative, we're going to send you a secure link where you can upload the required documentation. Each situation is a little bit different so I'm not quite sure what information or documentation they're going to request. But when they send you that link, that secure information, they'll let you know what documentation they need, or proof of documentation. You'll upload that and then they'll have that with the ABLEnow account.

So I'm sorry I can't give the direct answer, but just know that our custodian bank, PNC, will reach out you to with a secure link and let you know what documentation you may need. There may also be information when you go through the application process that will also let you know what information you may need for - - we call them authorized representatives for those specific individuals or cases.

>> MARLENE: Okay. Is there anything else, Laurie?

>> LAURIE: One person is asking, for those who do not receive SSI benefits, what is the maximum amount a person could save in ABLEnow or the ABLEAmerica fund?

>> BRITTANY: So the annual - - that's a great, great question. We don't actually get that question a lot. I know we're getting close to time, but I'll take that a step back very quickly. Another eligible requirement for ABLE accounts is the individual has to be or can be eligible to receive

SSI or SSDI based on blindness or disability or self- certify through a physician. We have a physician form on our website if individuals want to self- certify.

Going back to the question presented. If the individual is not receiving those benefits, the yearly amount still stays in place. So 16 for this year and 17 for next year. The magic number to remember is \$100,000 for those who are receiving benefits. So \$100,000. Anything over that could stop or lower suspend those benefits.

Outside of that, the other balance is 500,000. So individuals not receiving benefits could potentially save up to \$500,000 in an ABLE account because they're not receiving those Supplemental Security Income benefits. Hopefully that answers your question. But the same year benefits still stay in place, but the overall balance would be a little different.

>> MARLENE: Great. Great answer. And I think also, in addition to an ABLE account, some individuals have a special needs trust. Their family or they themselves may have set up a first or third party special needs trust and they could save additional funds in that trust. That trust is considered a person under the IRS rules and the trust can actually contribute money to the ABLE account. So that's pretty great, too. So if someone does come into a large sum of money, they can save it in a trust. And as they use money

in their ABLE accounts, if they're near that limit or surpass that limit, then they can transfer money back into the account.

>> BRITTANY: Yes, and we - - we're not the experts on trust, but we talk about trust and we tell families you can have both and you can utilize both. So in some situations having both may be a necessity. I've worked with families who had a young daughter who had a traumatic brain injury and came into a large lump sum of money. Like Marlene stated, her family set up a trust and ABLEnow account and utilized both those accounts. So, yes, trusts, you can have those in conjunction with ABLE accounts.

And I just want to say, I use the ABLE National Resource Center a lot so I am looking forward to - - I think, Marlene, there's a trust decision guide coming out very soon.

>> MARLENE: There is.

>> BRITTANY: I look forward to sharing that with individuals because we get a lot of questions about trust, special needs trust, when doing our presentations.

>> MARLENE: Along those lines as you said, Brittany, we have a decision guide coming up. Hopefully it will be by the end of this year. It's in the final stages now. We also have a special needs trust and full trust and ABLE account comparison chart and that's on our website. And we worked on

that in conjunction with the special needs alliance. We partnered with them or collaborated with them and we prepared this and it's used so much. It's even on some attorney's website and it's just so helpful to families to know they don't have to choose to have one or the other of the they can have both. And some families will have both. Some will have one or the other. So there's a lot of differences. There's some similarities, but you can have both. Okay.

I think in the interest of time we'll move along and go on to the next slide. Thank you, Brittany, very much.

>> BRITTANY: You're very welcome.

>> MARLENE: And on the next slide, it's not moving.

>> LAURIE: I'm sorry.

>> MARLENE: That's okay, Laurie. We included some of the resources we talked about in the beginning from the National Resource Center. All of those are hyper linked. We will have the PowerPoint presentation within two weeks along with this recording posted to our website. So if you need any of that information, you will find it on our website, the ABLENRC.org.

And most of the information, most of the resources, you will find them under the "resource" link. However if you are looking for stories of our ABLE ambassadors, account owner stories, family member stories, you'll find those

under the menu button at the top of the website under "about," so you would find that there.

On the next slide. Here, we're asking you help spread the word. All of you who have joined us today, we're asking that you get this information out to your contacts, your friends, your family, your organizations, your community groups so that they can share it with anyone who can benefit from the account.

You can also sign up for our news letter. Again it's called the Achievable news letter. It's full of great information, tools, strategies. It comes out bimonthly. We have stories of ABLE ambassadors, ABLE account owners in it, we include links to Podcast or webinars which have just come out. Sometimes there's blogs, there's frequently asked questions. There's a little bit of everything for everyone. And you can continue to participate with us on social media, on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, on Twitter at ABLE NRC so look for us that way.

We want to thank you all today for participating. I want to sincerely thank my team members, and a big thank you to Brittany and for ABLEnow and ABLEAmerica for joining us here today and sharing this valuable information. This recording will be posted to our website. You will secure it through ABLEnow, ABLEAmerica. Take a moment to fill out the post- webinar survey. We appreciate your feedback. We want

to hear from you and want to know is this helpful? Do you have any suggestions? Do you have any ideas?

We appreciate you for being here today and spending this last hour with us, and we hope you have a good rest of your day. And a nice weekend to come. So thank you very much and have a good day.

>> BRITTANY: Thank you, everyone. Have a great day.

[End of webinar]