



State of Connecticut
Office of the Treasurer

SHAWN T. WOODEN
TREASURER

December 31, 2019

The Honorable John W. Fonfara
The Honorable Jason Rojas
Co-Chairs, Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3700

The Honorable Mary Abrams
The Honorable Jonathan Steinberg
Co-Chairs, Public Health Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3000
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Re: *Annual Report of the Achieving A Better Life Experience ("ABLE") Trust for Fiscal Year 2019*

Dear Mesdames and Messrs:

In accordance with the provisions of Section 3-39 k(e) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Office of the Treasurer hereby submits this *Annual Report of the Achieving a Better Life Experience ("ABLE") Trust* to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance and public health.

Background

In 2014, the U.S. Congress passed the ABLA Act, a framework that would allow persons with disabilities who are on Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") to amass assets without putting benefits at risk. The Act created 529(a) accounts as a subset of the 529 college savings program. Many of the tax advantages offered through 529 accounts are available in ABLA 529(a) accounts, including exempting investment earnings from federal and state income taxes. This federal legislation required states to enact their own statutory frameworks for establishing programs for their respective state residents.

Accordingly, in 2015, Connecticut passed Public Act 15-80, *An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Program Review and Investigations Committee Concerning the Federal Achieving A Better Life Experience Act* ("Public Act"). Mirroring the federal legislation, it allows families to accumulate assets for expenses without affecting state and federally mandated maximums to qualify for government services. The Public Act designated the State Treasurer as Trustee of the ABLA program with responsibility to establish a federally qualified ABLA program and administer individual ABLA accounts.

Status of Connecticut's ABLE Program

In April of 2017, a request for information ("RFI") was issued to research the ABLE marketplace and to better understand the options for implementing a program for people with disabilities and their families in Connecticut. The results of the RFI showed that the most cost effective, expedient way to implement an ABLE program in Connecticut would be to partner with another state or states that have already established ABLE programs.

In March of 2019, the Office of the Treasurer, convened an internal working group to assess the status of the project and to develop a plan for completion. The team reviewed the RFI responses and worked with the National Association of State Treasurers ("NAST") to research best practices. A request for proposal ("RFP") and project timeline was developed in November of 2019.

The RFP to solicit proposals to assist the State of Connecticut with the implementation of a federally qualified ABLE program was issued in December 2019. The services requested in this RFP included program administration, customer service and recordkeeping, investment management options, marketing, distribution and implementation assistance.

Responses to the RFP are due on February 3, 2020 with a goal of completing contract negotiations in March of 2020. The Connecticut ABLE launch is tentatively scheduled for the summer of 2020.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn T. Wooden
State Treasurer