

Department of Developmental Services

2/7/2024

Update Regarding ABLER Accounts

Ensuring individuals stay within the asset limits for Medicaid and Waiver programs can prove to be an ongoing challenge. One option that families may want to explore is setting up an ABLER account.

ABLE ACT

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2014 enables individuals with disabilities to save money in tax-advantaged accounts which they can later use for meeting their disability-related needs with limited impact on their eligibility for certain means-tested benefits. They are similar to CHET or 529 accounts except that beneficiaries of ABLER accounts own the account. Eligibility for an ABLER account is open to an individual of any age who has blindness or a disability that occurred before the age of 26. An individual is allowed only one ABLER account and can open an account in any state's ABLER program. The determination of eligibility for an ABLER account is the responsibility of the ABLER program in which an individual seeks to establish the account.

As of 1/1/2024, individuals can contribute up to **\$18,000** annually towards their ABLER account.

Link to ABLER Account process in CT: <https://savewithable.com/ct/home.html>

How does an ABLER Account effect eligibility for DSS Programs?

SNAP*:

- SNAP benefits do not have an asset limit unless the household is elderly (age 60+) or disabled and has income over 200% of federal poverty limit. If so, the asset limit is \$4,250. Otherwise, ABLER Accounts are an excluded asset in the SNAP program.

State CASH programs – State Supplement (SSUP) or State Administered General Assistance (SAGA)* Revised based on Public Act 22-140:

- For SSUP, the first \$100,000 of the ABLER account balance is excluded as an asset. Any balance in excess of the first \$100,000 is counted towards the asset limit.
- For SAGA, all assets in an ABLER account are excluded.

Medicaid*:

- Assets in an ABLER account are excluded.
- Income contributed by the ABLER account owner does not reduce his or her countable income when determining Medicaid, SNAP, SAGA or TFA eligibility.
- Upon death of the designated beneficiary, any funds remaining in the ABLER account, after payment of all outstanding disability expenses, will be reimbursed to the State for Medicaid benefits paid.

**All determinations for benefit program eligibility is subject to Department of Social Services review and interpretation. **

DDS strongly encourages families to work with an ABLER account organization to ensure the account was set up properly.