
A Profile of ABLE New Mexico Account Owners

The State Treasurer's Office is proud to be the agency that administers the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) savings program within New Mexico. You may have wondered about the people we serve. While account holders run the gamut, we do have an "average" participant. This person is living with a developmental disability (e.g., Down/fetal alcohol syndrome, cerebral palsy, or autism) and receives SSI (Supplemental

Security Income) due to their disability. They are 40 years old and non-working. Thirty-one percent (31%) of beneficiaries administer their own accounts, holding an average balance of \$6,285. A recent national study revealed that the pre-loadable STABLE card is the preferred method for spending and food is the most common expenditure. McDonald's is the favored restaurant and they are truly lovin' it!

Remember, if you know or meet someone with a disability that was diagnosed before they were 26 years old, tell them or their parents/guardian about ABLE New Mexico. You can refer them to the website (ablenewmexico.com) or ask them to contact me for more information.

Thank you and have a wonderful March!

Heather R. Benavidez,
ABLE New Mexico Coordinator

Advocate for the ABLE Age Adjustment Act (S. 331/H.R. 1219)

By ABLE National Resource Center

What is the ABLE Age Adjustment Act?

The ABLE Age Adjustment Act (S. 331/H.R. 1219) would amend Section 529A(e) of the Internal Revenue Code to increase the eligibility threshold for ABLE accounts for onset of disability from prior to age 26 to prior to age 46. ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) accounts are tax-advantaged accounts that are designed to enable individuals

with disabilities to save and pay for qualified disability expenses.

Previously introduced in the 114th, 115th, and 116th Congresses, the bipartisan ABLE Age Adjustment Act has been reintroduced in the 117th Congress by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA). A House version was also recently reintroduced by Representative Tony Cardenas (D-CA).

Why is an increase in the age of eligibility necessary?

As currently written, the existing ABLE Act prevents otherwise-eligible individuals with disabilities (many of whom spent years advocating for the Act) from realizing the benefits of ABLE accounts. By passing the ABLE Age Adjustment Act, more than 14 million people with disabilities would be allowed to open ABLE

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accounts, nearly doubling the currently eligible population.

Passing this critical legislation will increase the financial security of people across the spectrum of disabilities without jeopardizing their much-needed public benefits.

Why is it important that the ABLÉ Age Adjustment Act be passed this Congress?

There are now over 40 state ABLÉ programs that empower individuals with disabilities, either in their own states or nationwide, to achieve and maintain health, independence and quality of life. However, the long-term sustainability, availability, and affordability of these programs are in doubt without this expansion of eligibility. Data from the National Association of State Treasurers (NAST) in 2017 showed that passage of the ABLÉ Age Adjustment Act is critical for the sustainability of ABLÉ programs. According to the NAST's Sustainability

Report, the "age increase legislation...will be paramount to achieving ABLÉ sustainability..."

How can you help?

Advocates should reach out to each of their two U.S. Senators and their member of the U.S. House of Representatives and urge them to cosponsor the ABLÉ Age Adjustment Act, S. 331 in the Senate, and H.R. 1219 in the House. Members of Congress need to hear that it is imperative that the legislation be enacted immediately both to bolster the national viability of state ABLÉ programs and to dramatically expand the reach and benefit of ABLÉ accounts to individuals who experience disability for the first time before the age of 46.

The Honorable Martin Heinrich, U.S. Senator

303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-5521
<https://www.heinrich.senate.gov/contact>

The Honorable Ben Ray Luján, U.S. Senator

B40C Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-6621
<https://www.lujan.senate.gov>

The Honorable Debra Haaland, 1st Congressional District

1421 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-6316
<https://haaland.house.gov/contact>

The Honorable Yvette Herrell, 2nd Congressional District

1305 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2365
<https://herrell.house.gov/contact>

The Honorable Teresa Leger Fernandez, 3rd Congressional District

1432 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-6190
<https://fernandez.house.gov/contact> ✚

ABLE Online Demonstration YouTube Video

<https://youtu.be/kcDx0en7khc>

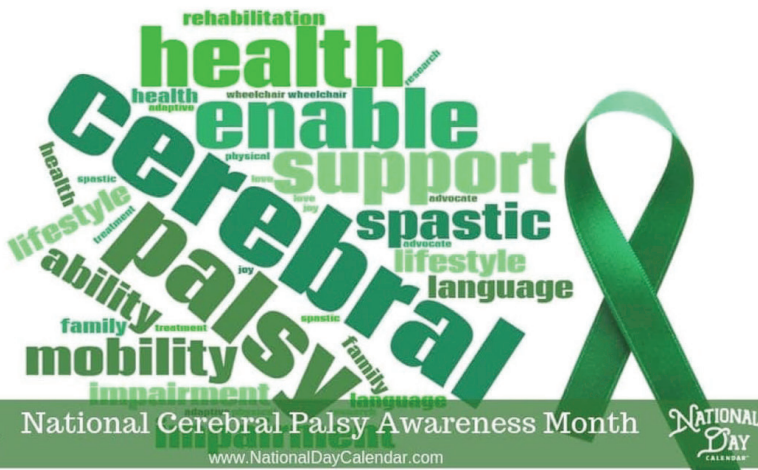


You can email
Ronn at
info@ABLEreport.com

ABLE New Mexico Presentation Available

Do you know a person or an organization who would be interested in an ABLÉ New Mexico presentation? For more information, contact:

Heather Benavidez at
(505) 639-3525 or heather.benavidez@state.nm.us



National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month in March 2021 brings attention to a group of disorders usually diagnosed in early childhood.

There are different forms of cerebral palsy (CP). A physician determines the kind of movement disorder based on the extent, type, and location of the child's abnormalities. The disability can occur during development in the womb, but it can also occur during birth. Diagnosis may be delayed as parents begin to notice missed milestones.

CP is a lifelong condition. Children and adults with CP may require a range of care. While there is no cure, there are many therapies and adaptive strategies to support someone with CP throughout their life. Speech devices make it possible for someone with CP to speak independently. Electric wheelchairs provide mobility. However, accessibility is still an issue in some areas of the country.

Improved awareness—through advocacy, research, and education—breaks down the barriers many with CP face.

Several groups promote National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month including [Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare](#) and [cerebralpalsynewstoday.com](#).

- Wear green in support of Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month. Green represents new growth and inspires a renewed life.
- Learn more about CP or donate. Visit cerebralpalsynewstoday.com to learn more.
- Use the hashtag #CerebralPalsyAwarenessMonth to share your experiences on social media. ✚

ABLE New Mexico YouTube Video

"Saving for the Future of Your Child with a Disability"

<https://youtu.be/5KzieaoyKSQ>

SAY HELLO TO

Our New Home!

5130 Masthead Street NE

The Arc New Mexico

Beginning March 15

The Arc New Mexico

The Center for Self-Advocacy's "Keep In Touch" Meetings

Each week the Spring 2021 Virtual Zoom Hangouts will have a different theme, but participants are welcome to bring any topic to discuss or just hang out!

- Tuesday, March 23: Virtual Tours

- Tuesday, March 30: Trivial! Join us Tuesdays via Zoom, 1 pm to 4 pm:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85630190865>

Participants are welcome to join the meeting at any time and leave whenever they'd like.

For more information, please contact Daniel Ekman, (505) 670-5698 or Daniel.Ekman@state.nm.us. ✚

ABQ People First's Wacky Wednesday

We're excited to see you this Wacky Wednesday at 10:30 am via Zoom. Are there any activities or talents you would like to share with us? Music, dancing, arts and crafts, photography, science, games, cooking...

Join us at <https://zoom.us/j/777552491> or Zoom meeting number 777552491. Or call in: (669) 900-6833, meeting 777552491.

Please invite your friends who may want to join us.



BEST BUDDIES® FRIENDSHIP WALK

Save the Date

2021 Best Buddies Friendship Walk

Saturday, April 24, 2:30-3:00 pm

Hosted on New Mexico's CW

Learn More & Register at

<https://www.bestbuddiesfriendshipwalk.org/newmexico/>

Want to be featured in the televised Friendship Walk? Here's how:

Step #1: Register for the Walk. To be featured in the televised special, you have to be registered for the event first! It's totally free to sign up and takes 2 minutes. Register at <https://www.bestbuddiesfriendshipwalk.org/newmexico/register/>

Step #2: Record a 10-30 second video. We want to see you walking, whether it's with members of your team, friends and family, or even by yourself. You can be walking, dancing, and/or letting us know why you're walking for friendship and inclusion—just have fun with it! If you're using a phone, make sure your video is recorded horizontally. Submit your video to me by Friday, March 19, at NathanReiman@bestbuddies.org.

Step #3: Fundraise as you're able. The Friendship Walk is totally free to join, but it is

also our largest fundraiser of the year. Every dollar raised helps sustain and grow our Best Buddies programs across New Mexico. We even created a brand new incentive plan to honor our walkers who go above and beyond! Visit <https://www.bestbuddiesfriendshipwalk.org/newmexico/walker-tips-tools/>

Step #4: Tune in! We're so excited for this one-of-a-kind event, and we hope you'll join us on April 24. Celebrate inclusion and see yourself and other Best Buddies supporters from across the state on TV!

While the Walk this year will look a little different, our goal will always remain the same: inclusion for all across New Mexico. Thank you for helping us get a step closer to reaching this goal.

For more information, please contact Nathan Reiman, Director, State Operations & Programs, at NathanReiman@bestbuddies.org. ✚

16TH ANNUAL FAMILY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

APRIL 7-9, 2021

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO



Parents Reaching Out

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE APRIL 7, 2021

Parents Reaching Out is excited to announce that the Family Leadership Conference will be held virtually this year at no cost to families. This conference will provide learning opportunities for families and professionals! The Family Leadership Conference will help families improve their skills in advocating for their children and in impacting the systems that affect them.

Opening Keynote: The Essential Elements of Differentiated Instruction

Keynote speaker **Dr. Richard A. Villa** is President of Bayridge Consortium, Inc. His



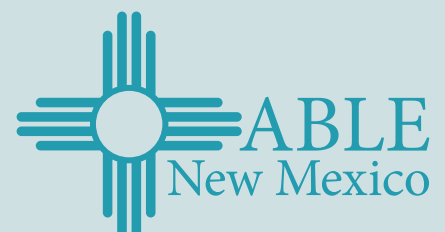
primary field of expertise is the development of administrative and instructional support systems for educating all students within general education settings. Dr. Villa is recognized as an educational leader who motivates and works collaboratively with others to implement current and emerging exemplary educational practices. In the school districts where he has worked and consulted, his efforts have resulted in the inclusion of children with intensive cognitive, physical, and emotional challenges as full members of the general education community. Dr. Villa has been a classroom teacher, special education administrator, pupil personnel services director, and director of instructional services, and has authored 29 books and more than 100 articles and chapters. Known for his enthusiastic, humorous style, Dr. Villa has presented at international, national, and state educational conferences and has provided technical assistance to departments of education in

the United States, Canada, Vietnam, and Honduras and to university personnel, public school systems, and parent and advocacy organizations. Additional information about Dr. Villa can be found at his website, ravillabayridge.com.

For More Information

For additional information, visit the website at <https://parentsreachingout.org/familyleadershipconference/> or contact Belinda Vigil at bvigil@parentsreachingout.org or (505) 247-0192. ✚

ABLE
New Mexico
Now Has
711
Active Accounts.
Go, New Mexico!





Announcing
The Moving Forward Annual Conference & Self-Advocate Summit 2021
Moving Forward Together Through Innovation, Advocacy & Collaboration

A Virtual Event: Wednesdays June 9, 16, 23, 30

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

Due to the ongoing concerns with the COVID-19 pandemic and the limitation of vaccines, the Moving Forward conference will be a virtual event this year.

In collaboration with the Developmental Disability Planning Council and the Center for Self-Advocacy, the Arc NM is seeking proposals from self-advocates, families, service providers and other professionals, educators, and others for the 2021 conference related to the conference theme: ***Moving Forward Together: Innovation, Advocacy and Collaboration.***

The world we knew just a year ago no longer exists. People with disabilities, providers and families who provide support, and others have had to adjust to the new way of living, working, and making ends meet with the impact of a public health crisis. Yet the community has remained resilient and have become creative in their advocacy and more collaborative in getting through daily routines.

Understanding that **we are in this together**, we are seeking proposals for presentations on topics related to life experiences of people with disabilities; not only how the impact of a health crisis has changed their lives or business practices, but what have we learned, what innovative things are we doing to mitigate isolation, how are we continuing to advocate, and how are we collaborating to share ideas and support for people with disabilities.

Topics may include:

- Creative strategies on coping with isolation during a pandemic;
- How self-advocacy can empower people with disabilities to reclaim access and independence;
- How disability has impacted access to healthcare today;
- How policies have affected waiver programs;
- What is the importance of employment and inclusion now?

Specific content areas include the following:

- Early intervention services
- Transitioning back to community activities
- Behavioral supports & individual supports
- Healthcare for all ages
- Caregiving and Direct Support
- Parents/Family interaction
- Policy or Legal considerations
- Education
- Employment & Job training
- Self-determination, advocacy, and leadership
- Spirituality
- Sexuality
- Housing concerns
- End-of-Life considerations



We anticipate the virtual platform will provide for more flexibility in time and access to the sessions. Sessions will be allowed up to 90 minutes plus 30 minutes for Q&A. Proposals for sessions including more than one presentation should discuss how the presentations are linked to each other around a common theme regarding people with disabilities and should be submitted as one document by the proposed session moderator or lead presenter. A variety of session types will be considered.

- **Typical Sessions** highlight new or emerging research findings, promising new programs or policies, or explore a topic from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- **Panels** are moderated, semi-structured sessions that avoid lengthy formal presentations and focus on moderated discussion and debate.
- **Interactive Training Workshops** are hands-on learning opportunities focused on a particular topical area. Presenters are responsible for providing any training materials they wish to distribute.

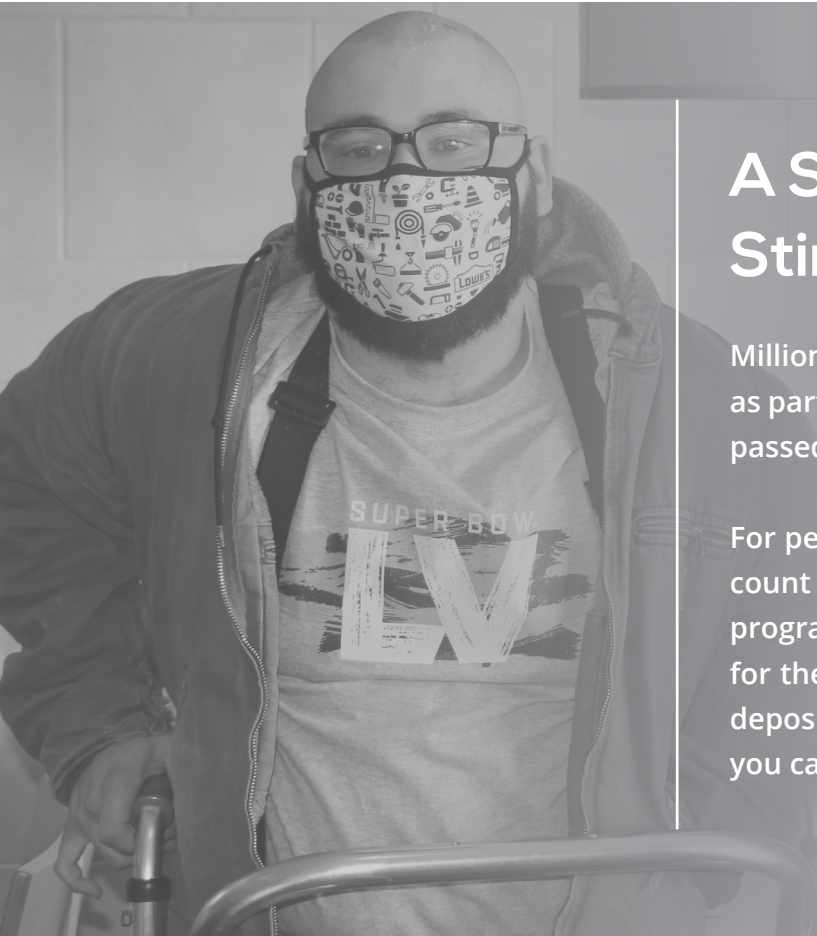
Proposals must use people-first language and include:

- Title of the session;
- List of presenters and affiliation for each, with all presenters/authors identified;
- Contact information (address, phone, e-mail and/or fax) for all presenters;
- A brief (fifty-word max) bio-sketch for each presenter; and
- A description of the session of no more than two hundred words. At least one learning objective (what knowledge or skills will be gained from the session?) should be included in the description(s).

Proposals can be submitted in one of **three ways**.

1. **SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL ON-LINE AT <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>**
2. **SEND YOUR PROPOSAL AS AN ATTACHMENT IN WORD TO: movingforward2021@arcnm.org**
3. **MAIL YOUR PROPOSAL PACKET TO**
The Arc of New Mexico Conference
5130 Masthead St. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109

Proposals due April 9, 2021, 5:00pm



A Safe Place to Save Your Stimulus Funds

Millions of Americans will soon receive stimulus payments as part of an additional federal stimulus package recently passed by the United States Congress.

For people living with disabilities, stimulus funds will not count as a resource for federal means-tested benefit programs, like Medicaid and Social Security Income (SSI), for the first 12 months after the payment is received. By depositing your stimulus payment in a STABLE Account, you can protect the funds and spend them later.

Stimulus funds deposited in a STABLE Account:



For more information or if you have questions, please contact us by phone at: **1-800-439-1653**

or by email at:
team@stableaccount.com.



Do not count as a resource for public benefits eligibility



Can be saved short-term or long-term



Can be spent when needed



Can grow with tax-free investment options

STABLE Accounts are not guaranteed or insured by any state, any state agency or subdivision thereof, or their authorized agents or affiliates. You could lose money by investing in a STABLE Account. Consider investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses before investing. Before you open an account, you should carefully read and understand the STABLE Account Plan Disclosure Statement and Participation Agreement.