DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT TA CENTER

Grantee Innovation Spotlight
I/DD Waitlist Initiative and ABLE Roadshow

About This Series

The Administration on Disabilities (AoD) Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center (DETAC) *Grantee Innovation Spotlights* showcase innovative practices implemented by AoD grantees to advance competitive, integrated employment and economic outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The *Spotlights* highlight replicable, scalable programs, outcomes, and lessons learned to inform AoD grantees and partners. Visit the DETAC website to access the full collection of *Spotlights*.

Program Overview

In 2023, there were more than 5,100 Kansans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) waiting more than 10 years to receive services through a Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) waiver. In response, the Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities (KCDD) launched the Kansas I/DD Waitlist Initiative in 2024 to connect Kansans waiting for waiver services with financial education, resources, and savings opportunities. KCDD partnered with the Kansas State Treasurer's Office, Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, and Community Developmental Disabilities Organizations (CDDOs) across the state to increase awareness and use of Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) accounts. ABLE accounts allow individuals with disabilities to save and invest for current and future needs, while maintaining eligibility for benefits such as Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income.

About State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (DD Councils)

The 56 DD Councils across the United States and its territories work to:

- Expand access to employment, healthcare, housing, education, and other opportunities for people with I/DD.
- Connect people with I/DD to the resources they need to thrive at home, at work, and in their communities.
- Strengthen the voices of people with I/DD and their families to shape their lives with greater choice and independence.
- Educate decision-makers using research and lived experience to improve outcomes for people with I/DD.

To connect Kansans with disabilities and their families to accessible financial education and resources, KCDD and its partners launched the Kansas ABLE Roadshow, a statewide outreach effort that brought ABLE account education and support directly to communities across Kansas. The initiative included mailers in English and Spanish to more than 5,000 individuals on the I/DD waiver waitlist, presentations to CDDOs, social media promotion, newsletters, and media outreach. Partners also hosted 50 ABLE Roadshow events in public libraries and local communities, including in rural areas, to connect individuals with disabilities, families, and caregivers to financial planning resources and supports. To further expand access, the partnership supplemented in-person outreach with virtual learning sessions where participants could ask questions, receive individualized guidance, and learn how to open and use ABLE accounts. KCDD later expanded these efforts to include financial literacy programming and ABLE account opportunities for foster care youth.

Outcomes and Impact

From April through December 2024, Kansans opened 516 new ABLE accounts, representing a 25 percent increase in enrollment. The initiative also connected individuals and families to disability services, community resources, and financial planning supports. Beyond the statewide mailer that reached over

5,000 individuals on the I/DD waiver waitlist, more than 400 Kansans participated in ABLE Roadshow events, and the Kansas State Treasurer's Office hosted over 100 virtual ABLE education sessions that provided individualized guidance and support. Through these efforts, participants learned how to use ABLE accounts to save for disability-related expenses, build assets, and maintain eligibility for public benefits while pursuing greater financial independence.

ABLE in Action

As an ABLE account holder, **KCDD Vice President of Policy and Programming, Whit Downing**, has used an ABLE account to save for future goals while preserving eligibility for important benefits and supports. Through automatic payroll deposits, Whit is building long-term financial security, offering a real-world example of how ABLE accounts can help individuals achieve greater financial independence without risking access to Medicaid, housing assistance, and other resources.

Recommendations on How to Replicate and Scale in Your State:

Organizations or states seeking to replicate and scale this approach in your state can consider the following strategies:

- Partner with trusted messengers within your state – such as state agencies, state or local service systems, and local community organizations that already serve the target population.
- Engage people with disabilities as leaders, advisors, and decision-makers throughout planning and implementation.
- Use targeted marketing and outreach strategies that work best in your state, such as mailers, local news features, newspaper articles, social media, and community presentations to ensure individuals and families receive timely information about available resources and supports.
- Build sustainability in your state through train-the-trainer models and strategic partnerships that extend the reach of information and resources.
- Adapt program activities to your state in response to participant needs and emerging opportunities, such as expanding to include children and youth in foster care or offering individualized virtual education sessions that can be more tailored to individual circumstances.

Resources

- **Kansas-Specific Resources**
  - KCDD Website and KCDD ABLE Accounts Webpage
  - Kansas State Treasurer's Office ABLE Savings Plan Webpage
- **DD Council Resources**
  - Administration for Community Living (ACL) DD Council Webpage
  - ACL Disability Information & Access Locator (DIAL) Website
  - National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Website
- **ABLE and Financial Planning Resources**
  - U.S. Department of Labor: Secure Your Financial Future Toolkit
  - ABLE National Resource Center
  - ABLE Today

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