

Spring/Summer Forum – June 21, 2018

8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

MassHousing, One Beacon Street, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Forum Handouts

AGENDA

- 8:30 – 9:00 **Registration/Networking/Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00 – 9:10 **Welcome**
Paul Horwitz, *Community Affairs Specialist*, FDIC
- 9:10 – 10:25 **Disability in MA – Framing the Issues and Taking Action**
Jessica Doonan, *Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities*, City of Boston
Lori Siedman, *Lead Independent Living Specialist of Greater Boston*, DEAF, Inc.
Mimi Turchinetz, *Director, Boston Tax Help Coalition, and Assistant Deputy*, City of Boston
Office of Financial Empowerment
- 10:25 – 10:40 **Break**
- 10:40 – 11:05 **Training and Employment**
Rick Laferriere, *Lead Manager, Workforce Initiatives*, CVS Health
Madeline Wenzel, *Jewish Vocational Services*
- 11:05 – 11:35 **ADA Compliance – Prevention and Opportunities**
David D'Arcangelo, *Director*, Massachusetts Office on Disability
- 11:35 – 12:00 **ABLE Act Update**
Julie Shields-Rutyna, *Director of College Planning*, MEFA
- 12:00 – 12:20 **Open Discussion**
- 12:20 – 12:30 **Wrap-Up**
- 12:30 **Adjourn**

Speaker Biographies -- BAEI Forum June 21, 2018



- ***Disability in MA – Framing the Issue and Taking Action***

Jessica Doonan

Jessica Doonan is the Chief of Staff for the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities. In this role, she assists the Commission in reducing barriers for people with disabilities within the City of Boston. She advises on communication access and serves on the Boston Deaf Tax Task Force, which provides free tax preparation to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Additionally, she also oversees all day-to-day operations of internal programs run by the Commission, including the Accessible Parking Program and PCA Parking Permit Program. Previous to her role at the Commission, Jessica served as the Assistant to the President of National Braille Press, a nonprofit braille publishing house in Boston dedicated to the production and advocacy of braille.

Jessica received her undergraduate degree from Northeastern University in Theater and American Sign Language. She currently resides in Jamaica Plain and is working on a Master's degree in Global Inclusion and Social Development at the University of Massachusetts Boston, with a focus on Human Rights and Disability.

Lori Siedman

Lori Siedman is a 2011 graduate of Salem State College's Social Work Program. She is the Lead Independent Living Specialist for Greater Boston at DEAF, Inc. She has been with DEAF, Inc. since 2005, and in her current position provides direct consumer services, program supervision, outreach and planning.

Lori has been the coordinator to prepare for tax days for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened and DeafBlind individuals for 13 years, including 4 years working with Boston Tax Taskforce.

Mimi Turchinetz

Mimi Turchinetz is the Assistant Deputy Director of Mayor Marty Walsh's newly created Office of Financial Empowerment and the Director of the Boston Tax Help Coalition, formerly the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Coalition. An attorney who received her Juris Doctor from the New England School of Law and a BA from University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Ms. Turchinetz is a longtime community advocate and economic justice professional who is committed to equity and empowerment.

Attorney Turchinetz has served the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as an Assistant District Attorney in Suffolk County and Staff Counsel to the Massachusetts Senate for the Joint-Committee

on Insurance. She was appointed by Governor Deval Patrick to serve as a Commissioner on the Massachusetts Asset Development Commission.

As the Director of the Boston Tax Help Coalition she has guided a partnership of community-based organizations and non-profits, members of the business community, federal regulators, and government agencies since 2001. Since its founding, the tax coalition has prepared more than 125,000 free tax returns, generated more than \$200 million in tax refunds and credits, and recruited and trained thousands of volunteers. Her vision of financial empowerment includes a world that is fully inclusive, promotes access and agency for all, and is truly democratic.

She is a Board member of Mothers for Justice and Equality and the President of the Board of Directors of the Southwest Boston Community Development Corporation.

- ***Training and Employment***

Rick Laferriere

Rick Laferriere is Lead Manager of Workforce Initiatives at CVS Health and a strong advocate for diverse and inclusive talent pipelines through innovative community partnerships. Rick leads a unique team whose purpose is to help people on their path to better health by cultivating partnerships and developing programs that attract and equip talent from the communities we serve for dynamic and rewarding careers at CVS Health. Across New England, these partnerships have yielded strong and successful outcomes as a leading employer in award-winning programs with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and Jewish Vocational Service in Boston. Rick shares his experience as a workforce professional on the employer side by serving on 3 workforce boards in the New England area and on several advisory councils.

A native of Boston's North Shore, Rick is an alumnus of Boston College with a degree in Economics and has held a number of roles in his 25 years with CVS Health, including having started his career at a local CVS pharmacy store in high school

Madeline Wenzel

Madeline Wenzel has been working in the disability field for over fifteen years. She is currently the Director of Community Engagement and Disability Services at JVS in Boston where she oversees all of the disability programming. As Director, she worked with partners to design a new program model of vocational training for young adults with a disability called *the Transitions to Work program*. The program has received several awards including the 2016 Program of the Year Award from the International Association of Jewish Vocational Services. Madeline serves on many disability committees focused on enhancing services to people with disabilities in the Boston Community. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology.

- ***ADA Compliance – Prevention and Opportunities***

David D’Arcangelo



Diagnosed with a rare eye disease that left him legally blind at a young age, David D’Arcangelo has built successful careers in both the public and private sectors during his past two decades of public service.

David now serves the Baker-Polito Administration as the Director of the Massachusetts Office On Disability, where he is working to bring about full and equal participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life. David has previous experience in government, which includes serving in the Administrations of four Governors, the Massachusetts State Legislature and being elected as City Councilor At-Large in Malden.

Outside of government, David founded and served as Managing Director of Arc Angel Communications, a public relations and social media firm. Prior to that, David was the Chief Communications Officer for M&L Transit Systems, Inc. and the Regional Development Manager for the nation’s largest affordable housing senior living rental Coop, CSI Support & Development Services.

David has served in many other charitable and leadership positions, including being Past President of the Malden Rotary Club, serving on the Board of Directors for the Arc of Middlesex East, the Board of Directors for Tailored for Success, the Board of Directors for Resource Partnership and a member of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Rehabilitation Council where he also served as Chair.

David also has tremendous experience with ensuring that our democratic process is open and accessible to all. He has served the City of Boston as an Election Officer and has overseen election activities from all three positions as a Warden, Clerk and Inspector to ensure that our elections are run fairly.

David is 45 and lives in Malden with his wife of 19 years Lisa and his daughter, who is disabled and on the Autism Spectrum. He is a 1996 graduate of Suffolk University, where he previously served as an adjunct faculty member in the Communications and Journalism Department.

- ***ABLE Act Update***

Julie Shields-Rutyna



Julie Shields-Rutyna is Director of College Planning and Education at the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA). She provides expertise related to saving, planning and paying for college to families, colleges and universities, and other organizations around the state. From 2003-2007 Julie coordinated the College Board's financial aid activities in the New England region.

She previously worked for Nellie Mae and American Express Educational Loans. She also worked for 13 years in financial aid at Harvard University where she was Director of Financial Aid at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her professional positions have given her the opportunity to present to varied audiences throughout the New England region. She holds degrees from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst and the Harvard Graduate School of Education in Cambridge.

Disability in MA

Framing the issues and Taking Action

Jessica Doonan, Lori Siedman & Mimi Turchinetz

Introductions

1. Jessica Doonan

- Chief of Staff, City of Boston Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities
- Advises on communication access and serves on the Boston Deaf Tax Task Force
- Degree from Northeastern University in American Sign Language

2. Mimi Turchinetz, Esq

- Assistant Deputy Director, Office of Financial Empowerment
- Director, Boston Tax Help Coalition
- Creates and implements programs and initiatives to impact economic disparities

3. Lori Siedman

- Lead Independent Living Specialist for Greater Boston at DEAF, Inc.
- Provides direct consumer services, program supervision, outreach and planning
- Coordinator to prepare for tax days for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened and DeafBlind individuals for 13 years, including 4 years working with Boston Tax Taskforce

Agenda

- Disability Statistics Nationally and Locally
- Legal Obligations
- What does this mean?
- Financial Inclusion for the disability community
- Successful Models of Inclusion
- Disability Work Group, Boston Tax Help Coalition and ASL Tax Days
- Deaf Culture and Awareness
- Experiences from the Field
- Tips for Successful Inclusion Integration

Objectives

- To raise awareness on how to improve financial capability and banking opportunities in the financial mainstream for Americans with disabilities, as well as the Deaf community.
- To learn effective strategies, models and action steps that can be taken to improve accessibility of financial services to individuals with disabilities.
- To learn trusted resources in Massachusetts and promising practices both locally as well as nationally that can expand equal opportunities and accessibility to financial services to more Americans with disabilities.

Who are we Talking About Nationally

- Age distribution of Disability in the US
 - Under 5: 0.7%
 - Ages 5-17: 5.6%
 - Ages 18-64: 10.6%
 - Ages 65 and over: 35.2%
- Median Earnings of People Ages 16 and over
 - People without disabilities: \$32,479
 - People with disabilities: \$22,047
- Employment Rates
 - Deaf/Hard of Hearing: 51.7%
 - Blind/low vision: 43.5%
 - Independent living disabilities: 17.0%
 - Self-care disabilities: 15.5%

Disability Community in Boston

- Total number of City residents ages 5 and up: 623,355
- City residents having at least one disability: 84,287 (12.8%)
 - Self Care: 2.8%
 - Deaf/Hard of Hearing: 2.8%
 - Vision: 2.6%
 - Independent living: 5.1%
 - Cognitive: 5.8%
 - Ambulatory: 6.9%

Americans with Disabilities Act

- Federal Legislation signed in 1990
- Covers many different areas:
 - Title I: Employment
 - Title II: State and Local Governments
 - Title III: Public Accommodations and Commercial Facilities
- Effective Communication
- Reasonable Accommodations



Financial Inclusion for the Disability Community

- Disability: Deaf, blind, wheelchair, mental health, cognitive, etc.
- Higher levels of poverty
- Limited access to information
- Barriers to access (Physical space, communication access, etc)
- Long history of mistreatment and negligence in banking and financial services, results in mistrust and possibly indifference

Successful Financial Inclusion Models

- Boston Tax Help Coalition (BTHC) Disability Work Group
- Provision of Reasonable Accommodation across BTHC Footprint
- Bank of America participation and BofA Disability Affinity Group
- The Boston Foundation has provided generous financial support
- ASL Task Force
- Successes over several years
- ASL Asset Building Summit in preliminary planning stage
- Results
- Ongoing Challenges

Boston Tax Help Coalition and Disability Inclusion

- Commitment to providing equal access and full inclusion for all
- Coalition joined with National Disability Institute, IRS and other partners in 2005 to pilot Disability Working Group and build and implement inclusion strategy into “VITA” (volunteer income tax assistance)
- Volunteers and staff trained on “People First “ and Disability Awareness
- Some accommodation provided at tax sites but more to be done
- In 2018, 13,000 taxpayers served with free tax and asset building services
- 10-12% of Coalition taxpayers self report a disability annually
- \$25 million in refunds and credits returned to taxpayers

Models of Financial Inclusion

- Bank Of America Disability Affinity Group
- Braille ATMs
- BofA Financial Education training at Deaf Inc in 2017
- ASL Task Force: successful partnership between BTHC, NDI, Deaf Inc and Mayor's Commission for People with Disabilities
- Taxes in American Sign Language at Deaf Inc and Urban Edge since 2015
- 2-3 Tax Days provided annually, 150 returns completed
- All taxpayers served with volunteers assisted by ASL Interpreters
- So much more to do to provide full inclusion

Next Options for ASL Task Force

- New grant received from the Boston Foundation
- Expansion of ASL strategy for financial inclusion in 2018/2019
- ASL Tax Days to double, increase from 3 to 6 Tax Days at Deaf Inc, serving 100 d/Deaf/HoH taxpayers
- Goal is to serve 1,872 taxpayers living with a disability
- Bilingual ASL Ambassador to be hired
- Asset Building Summit planned for 2018, 100 participants, 3-4 workshops
- Summit to be fully accessible for ASL community
- Banking community invited to participate in planning and delivery

Diving Deeper: Deaf Culture and Awareness

- Language Diversity

- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Visual Gesture/Pictures
- Spoken Language/Oral
- Written English
- Simultaneous Communication (Sim Comm)

- Based on Background

- Where a person is from
- How they were raised (Family dynamics, schooling etc.)
- Education



Experience From the Field

- Drive-thru bank windows
- Lobby atmosphere
- Teller windows
- Phone access
- Internet access
- Complicated phone apps

Tips for Successful Inclusion Integration

- **Patience and Flexibility**
 - May have to explain in different ways
 - What works for one person may not work for everyone
 - No Assumptions, ask first!
- **Quiet room**
- **Lighting**
- **Interpreters**
 - Requesting interpreters
 - Speak directly to consumer
 - Added layer of communication = more time
- **Others (VRI, VRS, CART)**



Other Communication Options

- VRI: Video Remote Interpreting
- VRS: Video Relay Services
- CART: Communication Access Realtime Translation
- TTY: Teletypewriter/Text telephone
- ALD: Assistive Listening Device



Questions?



Contact Us

- *Jessica Doonan*
Jessica.doonan@boston.gov
- *Lori Siedman*
lsiedman@deafinonline.org
- *Mimi Turchinetz, Esq*
mimi.turchinetz@boston.gov



BAEI Spring/Summer Forum

CVS Health & JVS Boston partnership

June 21, 2018

Presenters

- **Madeline Wenzel – *Jewish Vocational Service, Director of Community Engagement and Disability Services at JVS-Boston***
- **Rick Laferriere – *CVS Health, Lead Manager, Workforce Initiatives***

Why Transitions to Work?

Labor Force Participation

68.7%

People without disabilities

21.2%

People with disabilities

Unemployment Rate

3.9%

People without disabilities

7.5%

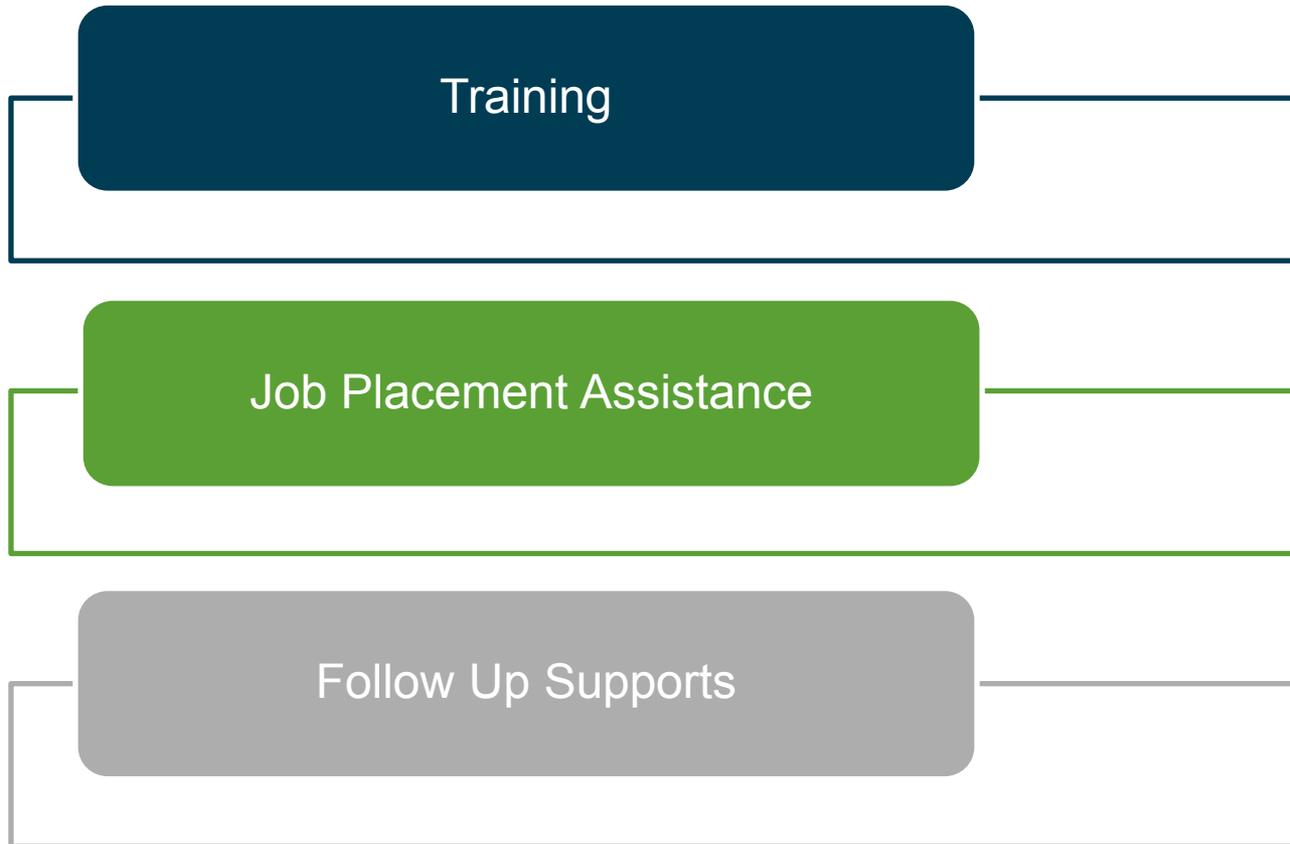
People with disabilities

Source: 2017 Disability Employment Statistics

Transitions to Work – Goals and Objectives

- Offer training focused on skills needed to perform job functions.
- Teach general work skills that are transferrable.
- Integrate services/candidates at training employer site.
- Employment opportunities through strong partnerships with employers.
- Competitive and integrated employment opportunities.
- Employment and internships by matching individual's skills with employer needs.
- Support to participants and employers to ensure long term job success.

Transitions to Work – Program Model

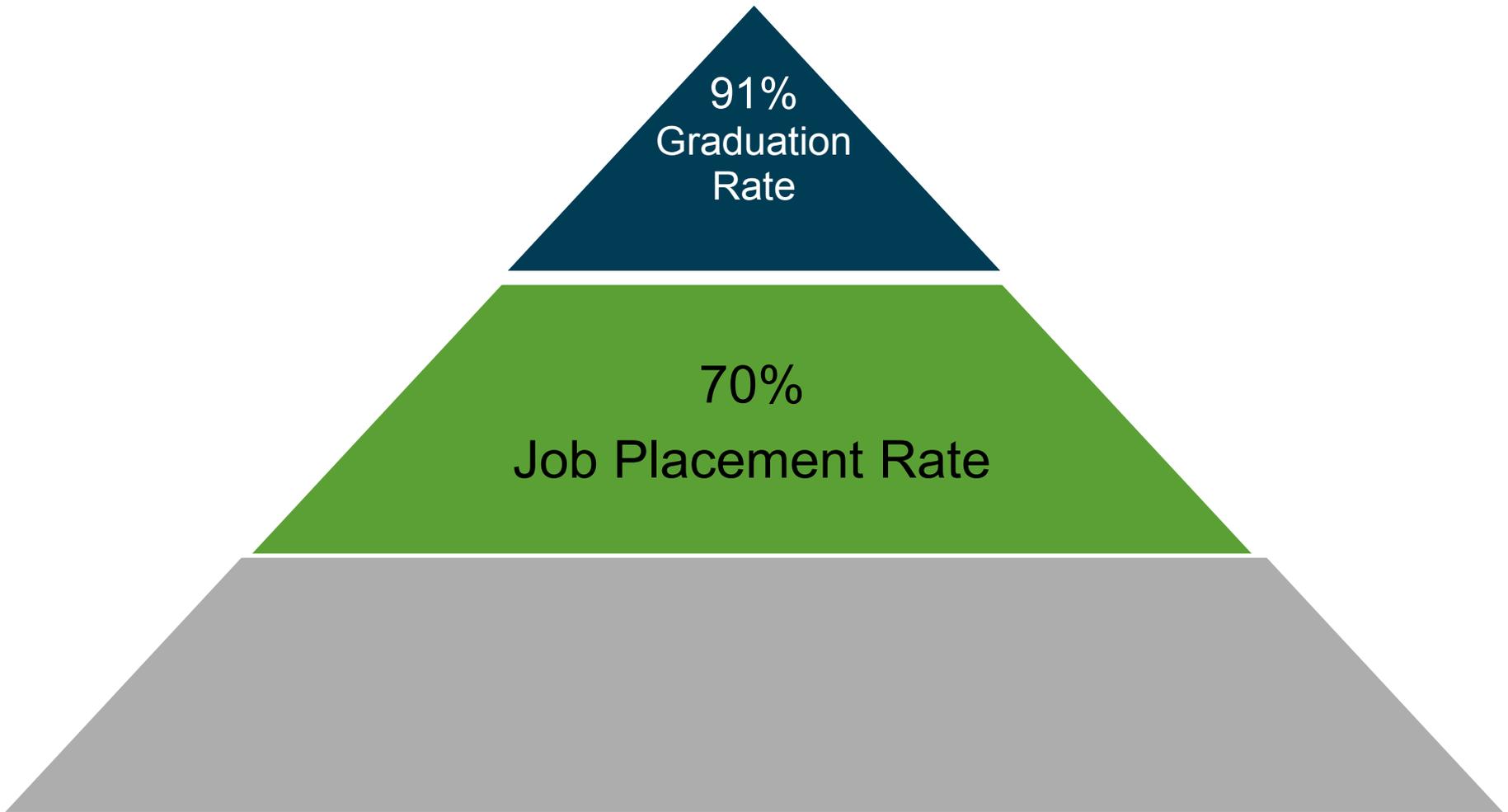


Transitions to Work – Changing Business Culture

- **Build relationships with businesses as training and hiring partners.**
- **Educate corporate leaders about inclusive hiring.**
- **Create win/win referrals of graduates to employers.**
- **Ongoing support and connection to employers.**
- **Relationship-building and successful placements create culture change.**
- **More than 75 businesses are employer training and/or and hiring partners.**



Transitions to Work – Statistics



CVS Health – Our Workforce Initiatives team

- **Team of 26 dedicated CVS Health colleagues, supported by consultants, working under the CVS Health Workforce Strategies and Diversity Management umbrella.**
- **Enable CVS Health’s purpose of “helping people on their path to better health” by developing innovative pipelines that deliver diverse talent to CVS Health.**
- **Results in strong loyalty with our community partners, our customers, and our clients.**

CVS Health – Why We Do This

- **CVS Health in search of great talent and can't do it alone.**
- **Critical to us as a healthcare company that we reflect the communities we serve.**
- **Inclusive hiring practices are good for our company culture and identity.**
- **Our business is stronger.**
- **It gives us a competitive advantage and we find great employees!**

CVS Health & TTW – Why This Works

- The people
- The deep relationship employer partner
- The robust program
- The ability to customize the program to employer needs through input
- The track record of success
- Post-hire support

CVS Health – The Business Case

Qualitative Benefits

Internal view:

- A solution to many business imperatives
- A diverse, inclusive pipeline of sustainable talent
- A trusted and reliable source of talent

External view:

- A champion of public-private partnership
- An employer that cares about the community
- An employer of choice

Quantitative Benefits

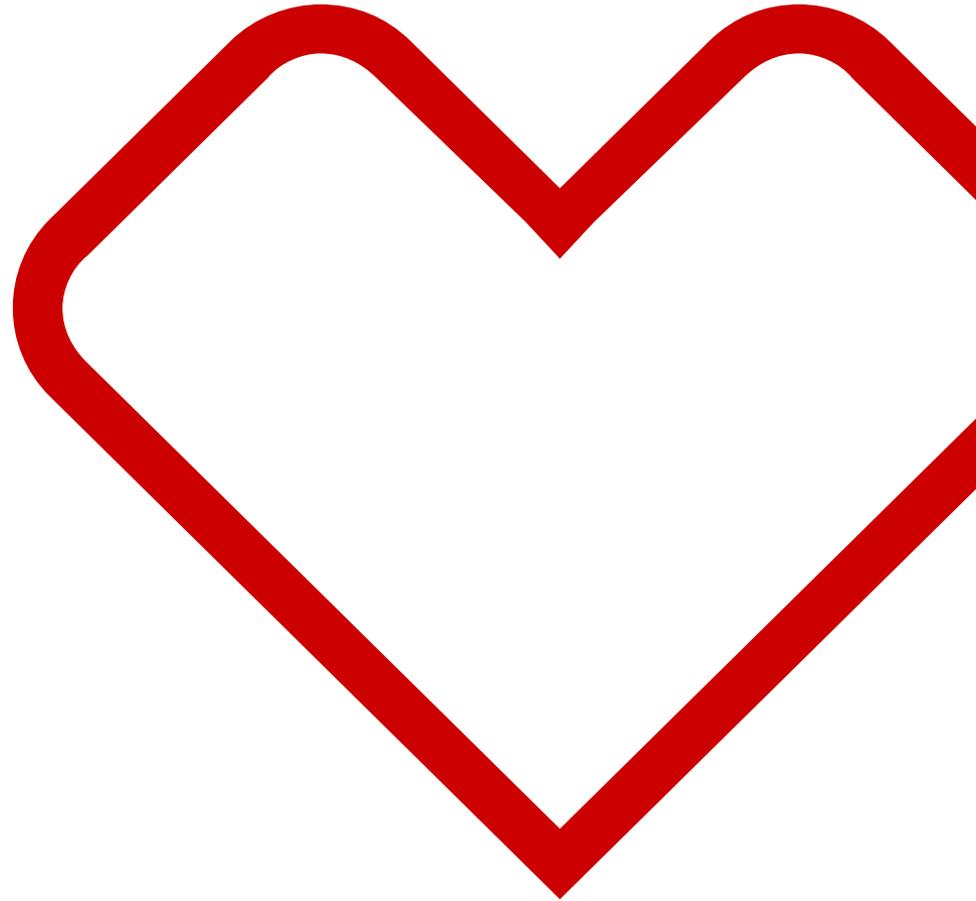
HR

- Retention (+1 year)
- Promotability
- Highly engaged
- Compliance

C-Suite

- Cost reduction
- Monetary incentives
- Value add
- Company reputation

Thank You!



David D’Arcangelo, Director of the **Massachusetts Office On Disability** (“MOD”), spoke about the range of services provided by MOD and gave an informative overview of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

He emphasized his eagerness to meet with businesses and organizations throughout Massachusetts to foster a greater understanding of the range of services MOD provides in order to fulfill its mission:

“...to ensure the full and equal participation of all people with disabilities in all aspects of life by working to advance legal rights, maximum opportunities, supportive services, accommodations, and accessibility in a manner that fosters dignity and self-determination.”

See: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-office-on-disability>



The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) works to ensure the full and equal participation of all people with disabilities in all aspects of life by working to advance legal rights, maximum opportunities, supportive services, accommodations, and accessibility in a manner that fosters dignity and self-determination.

Contact Us

Address

1 Ashburton Place, Room 1305, Boston, MA 02108

[directions](#) →



Phone

Main (617) 727-7440

This line is open from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F. Mass relay: Dial 7-1-1 and connect via main number.

Toll Free (800) 322-2020

This line is open from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F.

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Who we serve

MOD's mission is to ensure that people with disabilities of all ages living or working in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have full and equal participation in all aspects of life.

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attainableSM

The ABLE Savings Plan offered by MEFA
and managed by Fidelity

MEFA and Fidelity Partnership

MEFA is a not-for-profit state authority, not reliant on state or federal appropriations, established under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 15C. MEFA's mission since its founding in 1982 has been to help Massachusetts students and families access and afford higher education and reach financial goals through education programs, tax-advantaged savings plans, low cost loans, and expert guidance.

MEFA and Fidelity Investments

- MEFA selected Fidelity Investments as their 529 program manager in 1999 for the launch of the MEFA U.Fund College Investing Plan, the Massachusetts 529 plan. MEFA and Fidelity together offer best-in-class expertise in college financing and money management.
- In May 2017, MEFA and Fidelity launched the Attainable Savings Plan to help disabled individuals and their families save for disability-related expenses. MEFA is the state sponsor and Fidelity is the program manager.
- Please visit www.mefa.org to learn more about MEFA.

What is an ABLE Account?

- The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act, enacted on December 19, 2014, permits the establishment of ABLE Savings Accounts under Section 529A of the Internal Revenue Code.
- The ABLE Act allows those with disabilities to set up tax-free savings accounts (now known as 529-A accounts) to save for expenses including, but not limited to, the following: education, housing, transportation, employment training, assistive technologies and related services, personal support services, and health and basic living expenses.
- The legislation recognizes the extra and significant costs of living with a disability. It allows savings in an ABLE account to supplement not supplant benefits provided through private insurance, Medicaid, SSI, the beneficiary's employment and other sources.



Benefits of an ABLA Account

ABLE Savings Accounts are advantageous because they:

- Foster and support the health, independence, and quality of life of individuals with disabilities
- Provide federal and state tax benefits
- Will largely not affect eligibility for SSI, Medicaid, and other public benefits
 - Medicaid is not affected by balances in an Attainable Savings Plan
 - Savings up to \$100,000 will not affect SSI. When account reaches \$100,000, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is suspended but not terminated
 - Prior to the Able Act, eligibility for these public benefits required meeting a means or resource test that limited eligibility to individuals under \$2,000 in assets
- Provides an easy and accessible way to invest and save for qualified disability expenses
- Offer a variety of professionally managed investment options

ABLE Account Eligibility

- A person is considered eligible for an ABLE account if:
 - The applicable disability occurred before the individual turned 26 years old
 - He or she is receiving benefits already under SSI and/or SSDI or if he/she meets Social Security's definition and criteria regarding significant functional limitations and receives a letter of certification from a licensed physician
- No requirement to show documentation regarding the disability to open an account, but must certify and attest on the Attainable account application that you meet and comply with the eligibility requirements as set forth under IRC Section 529A
- In all circumstances, the eligible individual, also known as the beneficiary, is the account owner
- A person with signature authority (PSA) can establish and control an ABLE account for a designated beneficiary who is a minor child, is otherwise incapable, or has chosen not to manage the account



ABLE Financial Planning Act

- Provided that the beneficiary is the same individual on both accounts (or one beneficiary is a family member of the other), it is now allowable to transfer funds from a 529 college savings plan into an ABLE account without incurring any tax or penalty. The funds rolled over from the 529 plan are subject to the annual contribution limit of \$15,000 into an ABLE account. The rollover may originate from any state's 529 plan.

ABLE to Work Act

- The ABLE to Work legislation specifies that ABLE account beneficiaries who work and earn income may now contribute over the annual limit of \$15,000 into their ABLE account. The additional permissible contribution amount equals the lesser of the individual's gross income or the amount equal to the federal poverty line set for one person, currently \$12,060. This additional contribution over \$15,000 is only permitted if the beneficiary is not participating in his or her employer's work retirement plan.

Plan Highlights: The Attainable Savings Plan

- Plan offers a full digital experience
 - Account Opening
 - Account Maintenance
 - Contributions and Distribution
 - Robust product pages and FAQs
- Dedicated Attainable trained phone reps
- Choose from a range of professionally managed investment portfolios
- Access to Fidelity Cash Management Account with debit card, Fidelity BillPay, fee-free ATM access, check writing capabilities, and more

Attainable Plan Features

Total annual contribution = \$15,000 tied directly to the federal gift tax exclusion limit for 2018

Maximum account balance = \$400K



\$100,000 = amount at which Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is suspended but not terminated



Medicaid is not affected by balances in an Attainable Savings Plan



\$50 minimum initial contribution

\$30 minimum account balance

Investment Options: The Attainable Savings Plan

Asset allocation for Attainable portfolios

Attainable portfolios that are more conservative (and tend to have lower risk) are at the top of the chart, and more aggressive portfolios that have greater risk but the potential for higher returns are toward the bottom of the chart.

Risk	Portfolio	Asset Allocation
Lower	ABLE Money Market Portfolio	100% Short-term
	ABLE Conservative Income 20% Portfolio	20% Stocks, 50% Bonds, 30% Short-term
	ABLE Income 30% Portfolio	30% Stocks, 50% Bonds, 20% Short-term
	ABLE Moderate Income 40% Portfolio	40% Stocks, 45% Bonds, 15% Short-term
	ABLE Balanced Income 50% Portfolio	50% Stocks, 40% Bonds, 10% Short-term
	ABLE Moderate Growth 60% Portfolio	60% Stocks, 35% Bonds, 5% Short-term
	ABLE Growth 70% Portfolio	70% Stocks, 25% Bonds, 5% Short-term
Higher	ABLE Aggressive Growth 85% Portfolio	85% Stocks, 15% Bonds

Units of the Portfolios are municipal fund securities and are subject to market fluctuation and volatility. You may have a gain or loss when you sell your Units.

Making Withdrawals from your Attainable Account

- Distributions for qualified disability expenses (i.e. for the benefit of the account owner in maintaining or improving his or her health, independence, or quality of life)
- No explanation is needed to withdraw money from your Attainable account; however, the IRS may ask you to verify that the money was used for a qualified expense, so you should keep records detailing how you're spending that money
- Distributions for non-qualified expenses would be considered a non-qualified withdrawal, and taxes, as well as a potential 10% federal penalty tax, may be owed on earnings associated with the withdrawal
- Non-qualified withdrawals may also impact disability benefits



Spending Habits and Timing Withdrawals

- The Social Security Administration has stated that for many qualified disability expenses, you don't need to spend the money in the same month in which you withdraw it from your Attainable account
- However, for housing related expenses, you must spend the money on the housing expense in the same calendar month in which you withdraw it from your Attainable account
- If these conditions aren't met, the withdrawal may be counted as a resource and could impact SSI benefits
- After the money has been withdrawn (but before it's spent), you can maintain the money in separate account such as a personal checking account or a Fidelity Cash Management Account

Account Maintenance and Transfers

- Not permanently disabled? The federal law requires that an annual recertification be submitted to the Attainable Plan stating that the account owner meets the eligible criteria to be an account owner
- Transferring an account? You can only have one ABLE account per eligible individual, but you can move the assets in one ABLE plan to another one with no tax consequences
- Changing beneficiaries? You may transfer all or part of the money from your Attainable account to another person's ABLE account, with no tax consequences, provided that person is eligible for an ABLE account and is a sibling to the original account owner
 - Note: This includes brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, and half-sister

Next Steps

- To find out more about Attainable, and to open an account, visit fidelity.com/attainable
 - Learn about your unique family situation by talking with providers of your benefits.
 - Research special needs or pooled trusts to see if this would also be a good option for you or your family
- Visit <http://www.ablenrc.org/> to learn more about ABLE programs
- Go to <https://www.mefa.org/able-registration-form/> to sign up for updates and information about the Attainable plan

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The Attainable Savings PlanSM managed by Fidelity

With an Attainable Savings PlanSM, we can help disabled individuals and their families save for their disability expenses while keeping benefits such as Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid.

[Open an Account](#)

H Feedback

A tax-smart way to save

Earnings in the account grow tax deferred and, when used for qualified disability expenses, are federal income tax-free.

Helps preserve disability benefits

Money in the account does not impact Medicaid benefits and balances below \$100,000 do not impact SSI benefits.

A simpler way to plan for the future

Save more easily for disability-related expenses, and access your money whenever you need it.

Attainable Savings Plan features

An Attainable account is an easy and accessible way to invest and save for qualified disability expenses.

- Make annual contributions up to \$14,000 for 2017
- Choose from a range of professionally managed investment portfolios
- Use your account to save and pay for qualified disability expenses over the short and long term.

Who is eligible?

Individuals are eligible for an Attainable account if they are already receiving benefits under Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). If not, they may still be eligible if they certify that they are blind or disabled and have a written diagnosis of their condition by a licensed physician. Under all circumstances

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The Attainable Savings PlanSM

MEFA is proud to serve as the state sponsor of Attainable, the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Savings Plan. The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act, enacted on December 19, 2014, permits the establishment of ABLE savings accounts under [Section 529A of the Internal Revenue Code](#). MEFA's Attainable provides a new way of saving for the current and long-term expenses of eligible individuals with disabilities.

The Attainable Savings Plan is advantageous because it:

- Fosters and supports the health, independence, and quality of life of individuals with disabilities
- Offers various investment options
- Provides federal tax benefits
- May be used without affecting other disability-related benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits (up to accounts of \$100,000)
- Professionally managed by Fidelity Investments

[Sign up](#) to receive updates about the Attainable Savings Plan.



QUESTIONS
Call us at (800) 449-MEFA
Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm ET, or email us anytime at info@mefa.org

ABLE
Have you heard of the Attainable Savings PlanSM?
*by Mary Rubenis
January 31, 2018*
The idea for the ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) Act, enacted in late 2014, first began with a group of parents of Down syndrome children sitting around a kitchen...

Mainstream Banking for People With Disabilities:

Some things you might not know

By William O'Donnell, Consumer and Person with a Disability

(Adapted from a presentation given at the December 7, 2016 BAEI Forum)

This Presentation's Purpose

- To shed some light on barriers faced by some people with disabilities in the banking industry
- Discuss current and working solutions that are already in existence, including those that are both low-no cost

(Note: I do not represent/speak on behalf of everyone with a disability.)

What's it like to be a Person With a Disability?

We generally need to choose banking options based on factors outside the financial institution's offered services. The top things most likely considered:

- The institution's website –
 - Is it usable?
 - Can someone use it with the various assistive technologies?
- Does the bank offer an ATM that everyone can use? (This includes both the physical location of the machine, the contrast of the text, and whether or not audio options for visually impaired people exist.)
- Physical layout – is a bank physically accessible, inside and out?
- Customer Service –
 - How sensitive/understanding are the institution's employees towards people with disabilities?
 - Do they use inclusive language when speaking with consumers?
 - If an access barrier is discovered/discussed, are the employees able to assist or point the consumer in the right direction?

Other consideration:

- Financial Institution Location – is there a branch with the previously discussed items close to the consumer?
- Fees - can the consumer afford the monthly fees?
 - (For many consumers especially those on a yearly income of \$10,000 or less, monthly fees or minimum balances are a burden over time.)
 - \$5 or \$10 a month to keep an account opened costs a lot to someone receiving on average \$700.00 each month.
- Literature/information about products and policies – are these types of materials available to all consumers or otherwise explained in an easy-to-understand language/format?

Most people with disabilities obtain accurate information on what works through networks or silos, contrary to the conventional ways most consumers receive information.

In Conclusion

People with disabilities have always faced infrastructural barriers in America.

This is not new information.

The political climate can always help or hinder progress. For example:

- Legislation for tactile currency (something already available across the world) or
- Impact the availability of more accessible ATMS, financial institution websites, etc.