

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**Achieving a Better Life Experience Program Committee**

Monday, March 17, 2025, at 2:00 PM  
Victory Building Conference Room, Suite 275, Little Rock, AR 72201

A meeting of the Arkansas Achieving a Better Life Experience Program Committee (“Committee”) was held on Monday, March 17, 2025, at 2:00 PM in the Victory Building Conference Room, Suite 275 and via Zoom virtual meeting. Present at the meeting were Arkansas Treasurer of State John Thurston; Bill Huffman, Chief Deputy Treasurer; Ben Ellis, Chief Operations Officer; Kenneth Burleson, Chief Deputy Treasurer & Chief Legal Counsel; Amanda O’Neal, General Counsel & Director of Public Relations; Joseph Baxter, Commissioner, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services; Kristie Hayes, Program Administrator, Arkansas Department of Human Services (Designee for the Secretary of Arkansas Department of Human Services); Fran Jansen, Director of 529 Programs and Financial Education; Chris Scott, Manager, 529 Programs; Kim Shockley and Johnny Saldana with Ascensus College Savings.

The press was notified in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Treasurer Thurston called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM. He then presented for approval minutes of the October 2, 2024, meeting. Joseph Baxter made a motion to approve the minutes, Treasurer Thurston seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

Fran then asked the Committee to approve removing former Treasurer Larry Walther as a signatory on the administrative accounts and adding Treasurer Thruston. Kristie Hayes moved for approval, Commissioner Baxter seconded the motion, and the signatory changes were approved.

In her director’s report, Fran reviewed outreach efforts which included presentations to Achieve Community Alliance leaders across the state, Project Search, DHS Public Guardian office, and ArcBest employees.

Chris reported there were federal legislative efforts to make permanent ABLER account provisions from the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and that there was a bill currently in the Arkansas legislature to adopt the ABLER Age Adjustment Act, changing the age of onset requirement from 26 years to 46 years of age, beginning in 2026. He also reported that the AR ABLER Facebook page had so far accumulated 2,000 content views with a total each of over 1,200, had 143 post interactions, 6 link clicks and has 51 followers.

Next, Kim Shockley reported on the Arkansas ABLER Plan assets, contributions, distributions, and account statistics. She reported that total assets were just over \$2.7 million, with 26% allocated to the checking account option. She also mentioned that the new Money Market Option had launched and has so far accounted for two funded positions from account owners. Kim also reported on various metrics concerning contribution and distribution methods as well as accounts by authorized individual type.

For new business, Fran proposed June dates for the next quarterly meeting.

There being no further business, Treasurer Thurston moved to adjourn the meeting, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Jansen, Director of 529 Programs and Financial Education