

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
Achieving a Better Life Experience Program Committee

Thursday, September 25, 2025, at 10:30 AM
Victory Building Conference Room, Suite 275, Little Rock, AR 72201

A meeting of the Arkansas Achieving a Better Life Experience Program Committee (“ABLE Committee”) was held on Tuesday, June 17, 2025, at 10:30 AM in the Victory Building Conference Room, Suite 275 and via Zoom virtual meeting. Present at the meeting were Treasurer of State John Thurston; Nathan Winter (Designee for 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); Chris Scott, Acting Director, 529 Programs and Financial Education; Kim Shockley and Johnny Saldana with Ascensus College Savings; and other staff from the Treasurer of State’s Office.

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

Treasurer Thurston called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM. He then presented for approval minutes of the June 17, 2025, meeting. Kristie Hayes made a motion to approve the minutes, Nathan Winter seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

Chris Scott presented the revised Program Rules for approval, highlighting necessary changes to reflect laws passed during the most recent legislative session. Deputy Commissioner Winter moved for approval, Kristie Hayes seconded the motion, and the revised Program Rules were approved.

In his director’s report, Chris Scott reviewed that the ABLE program’s recent outreach included reading to children and sharing resources through its Achieve Community Alliance partnership, sponsoring the Disabled American Veterans Big Bass Tournament with a radio interview to boost awareness ahead of the January 1 ABLE Age Adjustment Act, and participating in ArcBest’s first ERG Neurodivergent Benefits Fair. Upcoming efforts will focus on Disability Employment Awareness Month, open enrollment periods, and early messaging around the Age Adjustment. Federally, the newly enacted “One Big Beautiful Bill” makes ABLE-to-Work contributions, Saver’s Credit eligibility for ABLE contributions, and tax-free 529-to-ABLE rollovers permanent beginning January 1, 2026.

Kim Shockley reported on the Arkansas ABLE Plan assets, contributions, distributions, and account statistics. Mrs. Shockley summarized that the plan currently has 1,145 funded accounts with over \$8.5 Million in assets, over 60% of those allocated towards the conservative and checking account options, and that nearly half of account owners are eligible to receive SSI.

Mr. Scott advised that considering the requirement of shared investment offerings within the National ABLE Alliance states and the restrictions imposed by Act 937, the Arkansas ABLE program may need to exit the National ABLE Alliance. He clarified that the office would need the committee’s approval to move forward with any necessary next steps in a procurement or negotiation process to identify necessary vendor relationships to keep the program in compliance with Act 937. Deputy Commissioner Winter made a motion to proceed with any necessary next steps, Kristie Hayes seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

There being no further business, Treasurer Thurston moved to adjourn the meeting, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Scott, Acting Director of 529 Programs and Financial Education