

# Addressing the Needs of Americans with Disabilities in Financial Capability Programs

---

## Introduction

Americans with disabilities face significant barriers to financial wellness. They are less likely than those without disabilities to be employed, and more likely to have low incomes, have difficulty making ends meet, have past due medical bills, lack access to emergency funds, use non-bank borrowing methods and have a lower level of financial knowledge.

These findings—described in detail in *Financial Capability of Adults with Disabilities*, a 2017 report by National Disability Institute (NDI) based on the FINRA Investor Education Foundation’s National Financial Capability Study—identify challenges to financial well-being for people with disabilities that go above and beyond the challenges faced by others with similar incomes.

In recent years, public and private sector organizations have developed strategies to help lower-income populations improve their “financial literacy” and “financial capability” in order to better manage their financial lives, build and preserve assets, reduce their economic vulnerability and increase their financial well-being. Generally, these strategies combine elements of financial education with motivation strategies and one-on-one or group support. Most financial capability programs cover key issues – such as budgeting, saving, debt, credit, taxes and financial products – that are important to all populations. However, they often overlook issues specific to people with disabilities. This brief identifies those issues and highlights three innovative financial capability programs that address the specific financial needs and characteristics of people with disabilities.

---

## FINANCIAL WELL-BEING DESCRIBES THE EXTENT TO WHICH A PERSON:

- Has control over day-to-day and month-to-month finances;
- Has the capacity to absorb a financial shock;
- Is on track to meet personal financial goals; and
- Has the financial freedom to make the choices that allow one to enjoy life.

Source: [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 2015](#)

---