

Introduction

January 2025



Welcome! This section provides an introduction on the importance of financial wellness for people with disabilities and demonstrates how this curriculum can assist in delivering relevant information to individuals, family members and service professionals.

Objectives

- Provide an overview of the training.
- Define the importance of discussing financial capability strategies with individuals.
- Define and identify the key components of financial education, financial capability and financial wellness.
- Provide an overview of National Disability Institute's five key strategies to financial wellness.
- Provide strategies on how to use the curriculum and on coaching techniques, both one-on-one and in a group setting.

INTRODUCTION

FACILITATOR PREPARATION



Facilitator Preparation

Prior to this workshop, the facilitator should:

- Read [Financial Capability of Adults with Disabilities: Findings from the FINRA Investor Education Foundation National Financial Capability Study: nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/reports/ndi-finra-report-2017/](https://nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/reports/ndi-finra-report-2017/)
- Read the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's (CFPB) report on [Financial well-being: The goal of financial education: files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201501_cfpb_report_financial-well-being.pdf](https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201501_cfpb_report_financial-well-being.pdf).
- Read [Financial Health of People with Disabilities report of 2023](#).
- Review [National Disability Institute's website: NationalDisabilityInstitute.org](https://NationalDisabilityInstitute.org).
- Review PowerPoint presentation for Introduction.
- Complete all activities to familiarize yourself with each task.
- Identify and invite a guest speaker for the Making Connections in YourCommunity segment.

Gather

- Laptop and LCD projector
- Sign-in sheet
- Easel pad and easel
- Markers
- PowerPoint presentation (*Make copies* if you would like to distribute to attendees.*)
- Agenda (*Make copies if you would like to distribute to attendees.*)
- Activities (*Make copies of activity handouts.*)
- Homework assignment (*Make copies.*)
- Evaluation (*Make copies.*)

** Don't forget large print copies, in size 20 font, if requested.*

INTRODUCTION

PRE- AND POST-TEST EVALUATION



Location of session: _____

Date of session: _____










Trainers: _____

Participant type (please check one): Person with a developmental disability
 Parent
 Other, please specify _____

Participant name (optional): _____

Please complete this section BEFORE the beginning of this training session.










1. How much do you know about the following topics?

	I don't know anything about this.	I know a little about this.	know a lot about this.
a. What financial wellness means			
b. Financial wellness strategies			
c. Impact of poverty on people with disabilities			












The remainder of the form will be completed at the end of this training.

2. How much do you know about the following topics?

	I don't know anything about this.	I know a little about this.	I know a lot about this.
a. What financial wellness means			
b. Financial wellness strategies			
c. Impact of poverty of people with disabilities			

3. Please tell us how you felt about the following parts of the training.

	It was OK.	It was really good.	It was great.
a. The information that I learned			
b. The way the training was organized			
c. The activities			

What is one thing you learned today?

Based on what you learned today, what is one thing that you are going to do to take more control of your money? _____

I would recommend this training to others. __ yes __ no __ maybe

Thank you for your feedback!

INTRODUCTION AGENDA



Introduction.....15 Minutes

Overview, Purpose and Expected Outcomes.....10 Minutes

PowerPoint Presentation.....30 Minutes

- What Does Financial Wellness Mean?
- Overview of NDI's Five Key Strategies

BREAK.....15 Minutes

American Dream Exercise.....30 Minutes

Resources.....10 Minutes

- Making Connections in Your Communities

Homework Assignment and Wrap-up.....10 Minutes

Evaluation and Closing.....5 Minutes

REMINDER: Please distribute Part One of the Evaluation during the introduction. Be sure to have the participants complete the second half of the evaluation at the end of the session.

INTRODUCTION SCRIPT FOR TRAINER



Introduction (15 Minutes)

Script for Trainer (corresponding PowerPoint Presentation Introduction)

My name is _____. Welcome to our Financial Wellness Training.

There will be 10 sessions. Each session will last for two hours. *[Please note that, as the trainer, you have the flexibility to make each session longer or shorter.]*

The purpose of the training is to help you learn more about working, saving and building your financial wellness. We will discuss tools and strategies that you can use to help you make good decisions about your financial life.

We are going to talk about being financially fit and why it is important for us.

Each training session will help you learn about a different strategy to advance your financial wellness, promote choice and increase community participation.

Activity #1

To get started, let's go around the room and have each person introduce themselves. Tell us your name, if you are currently working and something you like to do. For example: My name is _____. I am currently working and I like to go to the movies.

[As each individual provides their answers, the Trainers should create a chart on a large easel pad.]

Conclusion: Trainer will point out common interests among participants and conclude with a positive statement.

“We will get to know each other better during the next 10 sessions as we learn together about a new way of thinking and taking action.”

Overview, Purpose and Expected Outcomes (10 Minutes)

Script for Trainer (corresponding PowerPoint Presentation Introduction)

The **Financial Wellness for People with Disabilities** training program has been developed by National Disability Institute (NDI) for the purpose of promoting financial wellness and fostering greater economic self-sufficiency for persons with disabilities.

Let's spend a few minutes setting a framework for the **Financial Wellness** program.

Passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), in 1990, brought new hope and expectations about the possibilities of full participation in the workplace and community life for millions of individuals with disabilities and their families.

The ADA clearly states the nation's proper goals regarding individuals with disabilities and the need to ensure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and **economic self-sufficiency** for individuals with disabilities.

Decades later, great efforts have been made to advance opportunities related to employment and independent living. However, we have not really focused on "economic self-sufficiency."

Activity #2

What does the term "economic self-sufficiency" mean to you?

[Create a chart with answers on the easel pad.]

Economic self-sufficiency is about making good decisions around working, earning money, using your money wisely and saving and planning for your future. It involves setting goals to advance employment and economic status. It is also about building assets, being financially well and working towards your American Dream.

This training program will introduce you to new strategies to advance your financial wellness and to become less dependent on government benefits.

Today, we will learn more about what financial wellness means and different kinds of strategies to become financially fit.

The next 10 sessions will look more closely at specific financial wellness strategies and provide an understanding of how these programs work in your community and how they could benefit you.

The next 10 sessions will focus on the following:

- Money
- Financial Capability and Access to Financial Services
- Earned Income Tax Credit and Free Tax Preparation Assistance
- Credit Matters
- Housing Choices and Supports
- Social Security Work Supports
- Self-Employment and Public Benefit Work Supports
- Protecting Your Identity
- Getting ABLE-Ready
- Guardianship Rights: Who Is Responsible for What?

This training was developed using the **Self Determination – Building Blocks**.

Self-Determination – Building Blocks

A person has the **FREEDOM** to dream, to make his or her own decisions and to plan his or her own life.

A person has the **AUTHORITY** to control how money is spent for his or her supports.

A person has the **SUPPORT** needed from friends, family and other people the person chooses.

A person takes **RESPONSIBILITY** to do what he or she says he or she will do.

CONFIRMATION – The recognition that individuals themselves drive the design of their long-term services and supports.

It is important that we keep these building blocks in mind, as they will help provide additional direction as we work towards becoming financially fit.

The information in each training session will help you to make informed decisions about saving money and building assets. Good decisions are the result of good planning.

At the end of the 10 sessions, you will have gained new knowledge to plan and make decisions about a better economic future, a better quality of life and more independence.

PowerPoint Presentation (30 Minutes)

What do we know about people with disabilities and poverty?

Beginning in 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau began publishing the [Supplemental Poverty Measure \(SPM\)](#), which extends the official poverty measure by taking account of many of the government programs designed to assist low-income families and individuals that are not included in the official poverty measure. The SPM is produced with the support of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

- The SPM rate in 2022 was 12.4 percent, an increase of 4.6 percentage points from 2021. This is the first increase in the overall SPM poverty rate since 2010.
- The SPM child poverty rate more than doubled, from 5.2 percent in 2021 to 12.4 percent in 2022.
- Social Security continued to be the most important antipoverty program in 2022, moving 28.9 million people out of SPM poverty. Meanwhile, refundable tax credits moved 6.4 million people out of SPM poverty, down from 9.6 million people in.

[Cornell University Disability Statistics](#) include information regarding the social and economic status of non-institutionalized people with disabilities in the United States, using data from the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS). In 2022, the prevalence of disability in the United States was: **13.4 percent for persons of all ages.**

The percentage of non-institutionalized people with any disability, ages 21-64, all races, regardless of ethnicity, with all education levels in the United States who were employed in 2022 was 28%. The median annual earnings of **people with disabilities who were working full-time/full-year in 2022 was \$50,000.**

The median annual household income of households that include any working age (ages 21-64) people with a disability in the United States in 2022 was \$60,600. **It is estimated that 24.7 percent of non-institutionalized persons aged 21 to 64 years with a disability in the United States were living below the poverty line. The poverty rate for people without a disability was 9.6%.**

Educational Attainment: In 2022, the percentage of working-age people with disabilities in the United States: with only a high school diploma or equivalent was 33.5 percent with only some college or an associate degree was 31.9 percent with a bachelor's degree or more was 18.7 percent. The percentage of working-age people with disabilities with a Bachelor's degree or more in the U.S. was 18.7 percent. In 2022, the percentage of working-age people without disabilities with a Bachelor's degree or more in the U.S. was 38.6 percent. **The difference in the percentage with a Bachelor's degree or more between working-age people with and without disabilities was 19.9 percentage points.**

[Statista Research Department](#) reports that U.S. citizens with a professional degree had the highest median household income in 2022, at \$157,800. In comparison, those with less than a 9th grade education made significantly less money, at \$33,830.

Illinois Specific: 12 % of overall Illinois population report a member having a disability

Illinois Household disability stats for 2022 (adults with a disability ages 21-64):

- 9.8 percent of households report having an adult member with a disability;
- employment rate 46%; employment for non-disabled 82%;
- 29% worked full-time/full-year;
- average annual income was \$52,100; no disability \$62,500;
- the poverty rate of working-age people with disabilities was 25%;
- 16% of households receive SSI benefits due to limited income and savings;

Activity #3

What does financial wellness mean to you? *[Create a chart with answers on the easel pad.]*

Suggestions:

- Having control over my own finances
- Having enough money to handle a major expense (expected or unexpected)
- Feeling like I have enough money for the future
- Having everything I need
- Having everything I want
- Having enough money for a good quality of life
- Setting and reaching money goals

What does financial wellness mean?

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau found that for many Americans, financial wellness is when they can fully meet current and ongoing financial obligations, can feel secure in their financial future and are able to make choices that allow them to enjoy life.

Activity #4

What might prevent us from achieving financial wellness?

[Create a chart with answers on the easel pad.]

Eligibility for many public benefits often prohibits people with disabilities from saving money or developing assets. In other words, you have to stay poor to remain eligible. Examples of these public benefits include Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, Food Stamps (SNAP) and housing subsidies that help a person pay rent.

Why is financial wellness important to people with disabilities?

- Financial wellness provides greater independence and financial security.
- Financial wellness allows greater choices in community participation.
- For people with disabilities, financial wellness impacts overall quality of life:
 - It will impact mental and physical health.
 - It will positively impact self-concept and level of community participation.
 - It will change expectations and status with other community stakeholders.

NDI's Five Key Strategies

NDI focuses on the following five key financial stability strategies to help an individual build their financial wellness:

- Public benefits and work supports
- Employment
- Free tax preparation and favorable tax credits
- Financial education/financial coaching
- Asset development



NDI believes that the resources and tools in each of these categories can help an individual move towards financial stability. This holistic approach of accessing tools and resources in each of the five key categories helps provide a framework that enhances an individual's pathway to self-sufficiency. During this session, we will look at each of these five categories in greater detail and provide resources and tools to help you get started.

Before we start to work our way around the circle, it is important to establish a financial goal. Start thinking about a possible goal. We will be doing an activity shortly to help us identify that goal.

Once an individual establishes their goal, we begin to look at each of the five categories to see which programs and tools that individual is currently accessing and what additional programs and tools are available to help them achieve their goal.

Benefits Planning and Work Supports

The first category is benefits planning and work supports. It is important for us to look at all of the public benefits that an individual currently receives and the public benefits for which they could be eligible. As we look at each of the public benefits, it is important for us to look at the work supports attached to each. You might be wondering, what do you consider public benefits and what do you consider a work support?

- Public benefits are those benefits made available by the federal, state or local government to assist people who need help with food, healthcare, housing and day-to-day expenses.
- When it comes to a work support, they are the supports (a subsidy or service) that lead to an increase in job retention or placement, as well as possible advancement in their employment status. There are a variety of public benefits available to individuals if they qualify.

We will learn more about Benefits Planning and Work Supports in later modules.

Employment

The second category is employment. Once an individual understands benefits planning and work supports, we believe that this leads to better employment outcomes for individuals. We need employment to help us build our wealth.

When we look at employment, we look at full-time, part-time, seasonal, self-employment, competitive, customized and supported employment.

We will learn more about employment in later modules.

Free Tax Preparation Services

The third category to explore that can help an individual achieve their financial goals is free tax preparation services and the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Saver's Credit. Oftentimes, individuals with disabilities may not think that they need to file taxes due to low wages, or they are afraid to receive a refund that would impact their public benefits. As a result, many people with disabilities do not receive the tax refund that could help them pay for expenses.

We will learn more about tax credits and free tax preparation assistance in Module 3.

Financial Education/Financial Coaching

The fourth category is Financial Education. Financial Education is the possession of knowledge and the understanding of financial matters. Financial Coaching is working with a financial coach to assist in achieving financial goals.

We will gain knowledge and understanding of finances that are needed to build financial wellness with each module.

Asset Development

The final category is Asset Development. As we put the other strategies into action, we will open the door for individuals to build and protect their assets to achieve their goals. Assets can include saved money, items purchased and education.

Each of these categories has tools and resources that can help an individual to achieve optimal financial stability and potentially reach their financial goals. In the remaining sessions, we will explore tools and resources for each of these categories.

American Dream Exercise (30 minutes)

Activity #5

Two-part exercise to be led by Facilitator.

For millions of people in this country, the American Dream is owning a home, starting and owning a business or saving income from work to retire with a positive or good quality of life.

[Distribute My American Dream Handout.]

Ask the attendees to answer:

- What is your American Dream? *[Please share your ideas.]*
- What prevents you from achieving your goal? *[Create list of barriers.]*

Although there is no single strategy or solution to overcome these multiple barriers, there are new opportunities that we will learn about together to advance financial wellness and quality of life.

Activity #6

Show videos from NDI's American Dream Video Contest.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-ZvGkNIBFI>

Next Steps

Each session ends with homework assignments. The more you learn and gain knowledge, the better informed you will be to make decisions about a better financial future.

Resources (10 Minutes)

Making Connections in Your Community

Homework Assignment and Wrap-Up (10 Minutes)

1. Identify and write down five things you spend money on and bring those ideas to the next session. Or, the trainer can utilize the Daily Spending Diary to distribute and have students write down their spending for one week.
2. Ask students to bring in pictures or any small items that represent their American Dream.

Evaluation and Closing (5 minutes)

The trainer should thank the participants for participating in today's training and congratulate them on first steps toward improving their financial wellness.

REMINDER: Be sure to have the participants complete the second half of the evaluation and collect.

INTRODUCTION

ACTIVITY – MY AMERICAN DREAM



The American Dream is the belief that, by achieving goals, a person can improve their quality of life. For millions of people in this country, the American Dream is owning a home, starting and owning a business or saving income from work to retire with a positive quality of life.

If you were to improve your quality of life and achieve the American Dream, what would it be? Please share your idea(s) in the space provided below.

My American Dream is to ...

INTRODUCTION HOMEWORK



Day	What did I spend money on today?
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	