

# Financial Wellness for People with Disabilities Financial Inclusion 101

Webinar

Presented By  
**Katie Metz and Becky MacDicken**  
January 28, 2026

# Financial Wellness for People with Disabilities Financial Inclusion 101

Inclusive Healthy  
Communities  
NJ Division of Disability Services



# Presenters



**Katie Metz**

Director, Inclusive Financial Strategies  
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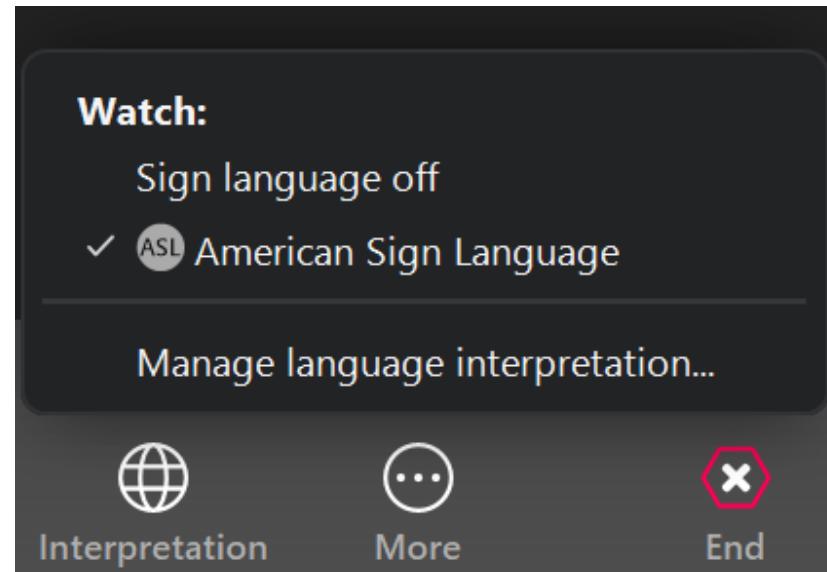


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Director, Financial Empowerment  
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# ASL Interpretation

- ASL interpretation has been arranged for this webinar. There will be two interpreters for this event, and they will switch off periodically.
- To view the ASL interpreter, navigate to the menu bar at the bottom of your screen and click on “Interpretation.” Select “American Sign Language” to view the interpreters in a separate video pane.



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- To call in for audio:
  - Dial: **877-853-5257**
  - The meeting code is **894-4562-4074**
- Real-time human captioning is being provided. The captions can be found by clicking on the “cc” button in the Zoom controls at the bottom of the screen.
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- Please send your questions, concerns and any requests for technical assistance to the NDI Host via the Q&A box.
- Questions will be addressed by the presenter if time allows.
- If your question is not answered during the webinar, you are listening by phone or you are unable to use the Q&A box, please email Kish Pisani [kpisani@ndi-inc.org](mailto:kpisani@ndi-inc.org)
- Please note: This webinar is being recorded, and the materials will be available on the FRC page within 1-2 weeks.

# National Disability Institute (NDI)

NDI is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to building a better financial future for people with disabilities and their families. The first organization committed exclusively to championing economic empowerment, financial education, asset development and financial stability for all persons with disabilities for the past 20 years.



## What we do:

- Build capacity of the field through training and technical assistance
- Drive systems change by implementing models that can be replicated
- Test innovative approaches to financial empowerment
- Lead research to uncover barriers and opportunities
- Advance change through public education and policy development

## POLL QUESTION (1)

**On a scale of 1 to 4 (1 not familiar at all, 2 slightly familiar, 3 somewhat familiar, 4 very familiar), how familiar are you with the concept of financial inclusion for people with disabilities?**

- 1 – Not familiar at all
- 2 – Slightly familiar
- 3 – Somewhat familiar
- 4 – Very familiar

# Financial Wellness for People with Disabilities: Financial Inclusion 101

Inclusive Healthy  
Communities  
NJ Division of Disability Services



NEW JERSEY **HUMAN SERVICES**



# Agenda

- New Jersey disability statistics
- Proper goals of the ADA
- Defining terms – financial inclusion, financial wellness, financial education, and financial capability
- Financial capability indicators
- Training opportunities

# 2023 New Jersey Disability Statistics

- 11% of overall population report a disability;
- 8.2% of working-age adult population (age 16 – 64) have a disability;
- 28.7% of adults are employed compared to 68.9% of those without a disability;
- Median household income with a disability \$86,700 without a disability \$119,700;
- 19% of people with a disability live in poverty;
- 14% receive Supplemental Security Income (age 21- 64)

[www.Census.gov](http://www.Census.gov)

[Best and Worst States for People With Disabilities](#)

# New Jersey – Prevalence of Disabilities for Working-Age Adults

<b>Disability Type</b>	<b>Estimate (%)</b>	<b>Estimate (#)</b>
Any Disability	8.10%	454,600
Visual Disability	1.90%	105,982
Hearing Disability	1.30%	74,035
Ambulatory Disability	3.00%	171,034
Cognitive Disability	3.70%	209,986
Self-Care Disability	1.30%	76,815
Independent Living Disability	3.20%	169,147

US Census.gov [www.Census.gov](http://www.Census.gov)

# Households headed by working-age persons with disability...

- The use of Alternative Financial Services (AFS) for transactions such as check cashing, money orders and remittances has declined between 2013 and 2017. Yet those households with disabilities continue to be more likely to use these services. Households with a disability use AFS for transactions at a 28% rate, compared with 19% of those without a disability.
- Only 39% of households with a disability save for unexpected expenses compared to 63% of those without disabilities. Among those who saved, households with a disability were much more likely to save at home or with family or friends (18% versus 10%) rather than in a savings or checking account.

# The Promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 1990

“...the Nation's proper goals regarding individuals with disabilities are to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and **economic self-sufficiency** for such individuals...”

## Poll Question (2)

**Q. Which ADA goal is most closely connected to financial inclusion?**

- a) Medical treatment
- b) Charity and assistance
- c) Independent living and economic self-sufficiency
- d) Education only

# Financial Inclusion slide 1 of 2

Financial inclusion is the availability and equality of opportunities to access a full range of useful financial services that can help a person meet their financial goals and plan for their future.

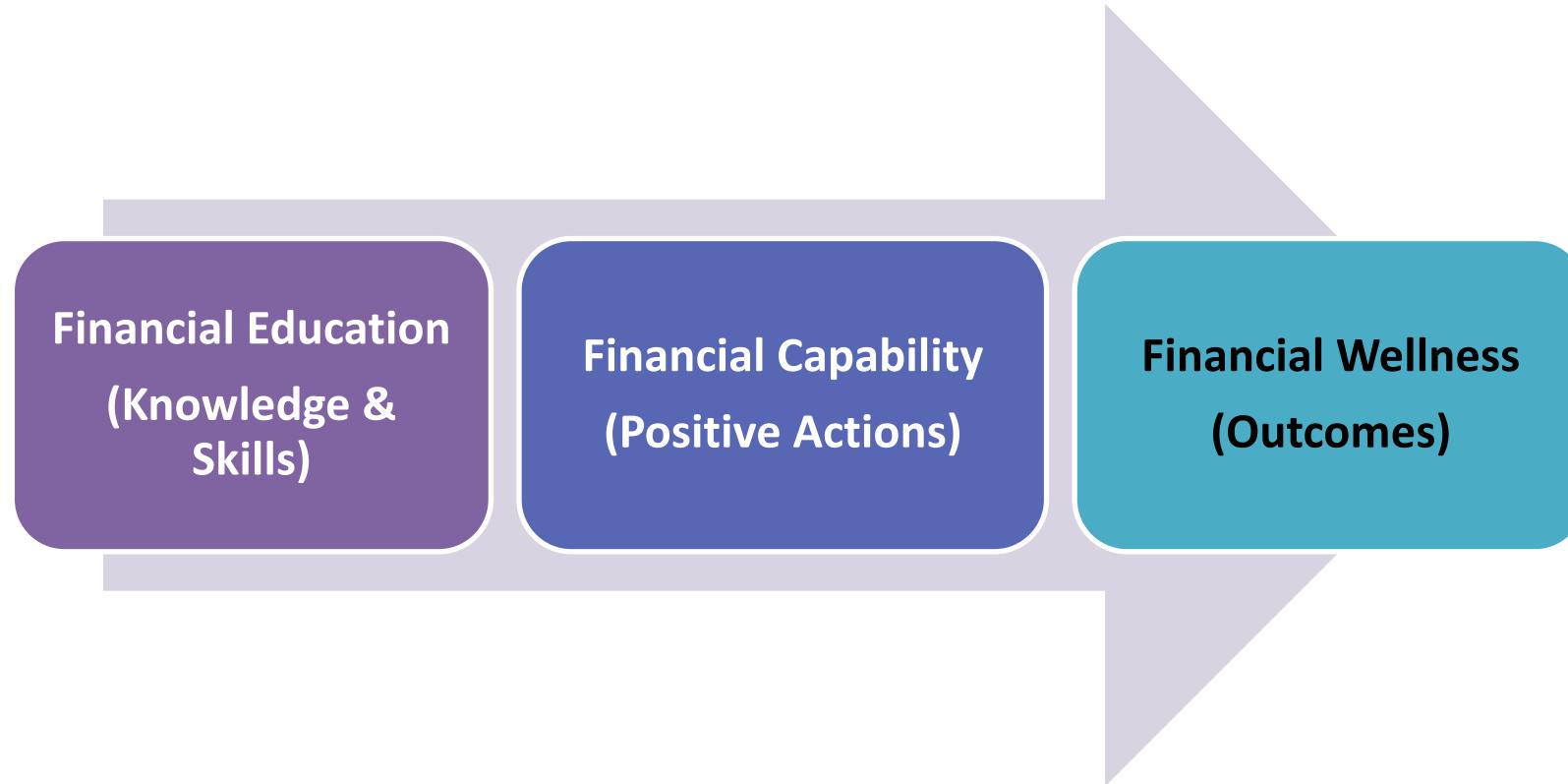
# Financial Inclusion slide 2 of 2

For persons with disabilities, each part of this definition has broader implications. For example ...

- Access to financial products, program and services that are usable, appropriate and secure;
- Access to protected savings opportunities, such as an ABLE account or Special Needs and/or Pooled Trusts;
- Access to financial coaching/counseling programs that understand the complexities of the disability service system, including public benefit programs and resource limits.

1. Center for Financial Inclusion, ACCION

# Financial Education vs. Financial Capability vs. Financial Wellness



# NJ Financial Education

- Personal Financial Literacy / School Studies
- To support the path towards postsecondary success, students require opportunities to understand and develop both career awareness and personal financial literacy.
- New Jersey students will acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to achieve personal success and will help a person find and maintain financial wellness.
- Money management includes examining various aspects of budgeting, building and maintaining a credit profile, loan and debt planning, identifying and managing potential risks and investments, and understanding various insurance options.
- Instructional Resources: [New Jersey Student Learning Standards](#)

# Financial Capability

- Combination of knowledge and skills to inform financial decisions and behaviors. The opportunity to improve financial wellness and manage their financial resources effectively.
- For persons with disabilities there are additional considerations to ensure individuals have the opportunity to learn about their right to education and training that leads to productive, competitive integrated employment. This includes their right to free benefits counseling services to help them manage public benefits.
- People benefit from exposure to opportunities to learn the fundamentals of money management. They need opportunities to practice and advance their money management skills.
- Money management includes learning sound steps towards increasing income, growing savings through investing and developing long-term assets and resources.

# Financial Capability and Rights

- Financial capability is defined as "the ability to manage financial resources effectively."
- People need opportunities to practice and develop skills towards managing their money effectively. They have the right to:
  - Know what their income is;
  - What monthly expenses do they have;
  - Know where they can save money regularly;
  - Learn to read their monthly statements;
  - Calculate the total costs of using credit to secure assets.

# Desired Behavior / Actions

Financial decisions are based on good information and actions driven by positive financial goals.

- **Earn Money:** Individuals work to their full potential and utilize available employer benefits and work incentives.
- **Use their Money:** Individuals budget to meet their needs, **pay bills on time**, attain their goals, utilize affordable financial products. **Spend less than monthly income.**
- **Save their Money:** Individuals pay themselves first, have emergency funds, and use matched savings programs and other protected savings opportunities to build assets. **Have easy access to liquid savings. Have savings for long term goals to plan for their future.**
- **Protect their Money:** Individuals access and use available insurance options to protect the money they have. Work and invest to earn more. Use credit wisely, pay credit timely and build a good credit score.
- **Understand their Money:** Individuals build their knowledge of money, connect with trusted entities for advice, and use available resources and supports.

[FHN Survey](#)

# Financial Capability Indicators for People with Disabilities

- NDI has created *Financial Capability Indicators for People with Disabilities* to identify and address the unique needs of this population.
- Each indicator provides action steps to complete and outcomes to measure personal achievement.

# Financial Capability Indicators for Persons with Disabilities

1. Set and achieve one or more financial goals.
2. Increase income.
3. Access and manage public benefits and work support programs.
4. Manage affordable health coverage.
5. Manage monthly expenses and debts.
6. Develop and manage credit appropriately.
7. Select and manage financial products and services.
8. Plan and save for the future.
9. Increase financial knowledge and make informed decisions regarding one's financial well-being.
10. Identify and connect with trusted sources for advice.

# #1 - Set And Achieve Financial Goals

- Individual goals are a cornerstone of financial counseling and coaching.
- **Opportunity:** Include financial goals in service plans
- **Positive Outcome:** Individual changed their financial habits to achieve their financial goals.

## #2 – Increase Income

- Having a job provides a stable, predictable source of income, and financial security to pay for necessities.
- Yet, individuals with disabilities continue to face substantial barriers to securing employment and reaching their full potential in the workplace.
- SSA encourages people with disabilities to work to their fullest ability. SSA work supports help beneficiaries keep their benefits, save more money, and keep their health care coverage.

**Opportunity:** Utilize individual budgets and financial goals to ensure financial needs are met with earned income.

**Positive Outcome:** Individual increased their hours at work/earned income to meet their monthly expenses and save for their future self.

## #3 - Access And Manage Public Benefits And Work Support Programs

- The use of public benefits (such as HUD, Li-HEAP, Family Care/Medicaid, Medicare, SSI/SSDI, SNAP, TANF etc.) can create a safety net for individuals with disabilities.
- **Opportunity:** Connect job seekers and workers to benefit planners to ensure they are maximizing their use of work supports.
- **Positive Outcome:** Individual's total income and ability to save increased by knowing about and using work supports.

## #4 - Manage Affordable Health Coverage

For individuals with disabilities, access to healthcare is important to maintaining financial capability.

**Opportunity:** Support individuals in making informed decisions regarding healthcare choices and by blending public and private health coverage (i.e. Medicaid, Medicare, Marketplace insurance and/or employer-based insurance, as appropriate).

**Positive Outcomes:** Individual increases access to healthcare while reducing deductibles and potential for medical debt.

## #5 - Manage Monthly Expenses And Debts

In July 2022, 42% of New Jerseyans indicated they found it somewhat or very difficult to pay household expenses such as food, mortgages, or medical expenses in the past week. In the May 2023 poll, that number rose to 48%, meaning nearly half of all New Jersey residents are experiencing difficulties paying their bills.

**Opportunity:** Include information and tools to manage monthly expenses and pay down debts.

**Positive Outcome:** Individual uses a spending diary to track spending behavior and creates a monthly spending plan helps them meet their needs, wants and financial goals.

## #6 - Manage Credit

- Credit has become an indicator of responsibility in the workplace, in rental housing and in the loan market. Many individuals with disabilities are discouraged from engaging in credit opportunities for fear of predatory practices, thus making them credit invisible.
- **Opportunity:** Connect individuals to programs that report rent and utility payments to credit bureaus to establish credit.
- **Positive Outcome:** Individual establishes a credit score, improving their employment and living options.

# NJ Employer Use of Credit Reports

- Generally, employers will look at your credit report as part of an employment background check. If you're turned down for a job because of something in your credit report, they must notify you.
- Employers must obtain a job applicant's written consent to access their credit report and provide specific notices before taking adverse action based on the credit information, aligning with the [Fair Credit Reporting Act](#) (FCRA).
- People need to take steps to improve their credit to further their careers and reduce expenses when borrowing for necessary items like securing reliable private transportation, (purchasing a vehicle) or when purchasing a home.
- People who receive SSI and Medicaid are allowed one vehicle they use for transportation and one home that they live in.

## #7 - Select And Manage Financial Products And Services

**Opportunity:** Receipt of earnings or public benefits prompt review of banking and pre-paid card services to choose most affordable financial service.

**Positive Outcome:** Individual saves money by avoiding payday loan services and overdraft fees.

## **FDIC National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households:**

- Unbanked Households: Working-age households with disabilities continue to face higher unbanked rates, comprising 21.5 percent of all unbanked households in 2023, down from 26.9 percent in 2021.
- Long-Term Decline: Between 2009 and 2023, the unbanked rate for working-age people with disabilities fell from 18.3 percent to 11.2 percent – a 38.8 percent reduction.
- Remaining Barriers: Households with disabilities are still three times as likely to be unbanked and two-fifths more likely to be underbanked. They are also one-fifth less likely to use mobile banking as their primary banking method and more than twice as likely to lack mainstream credit access.

## #8 - Plan And Save For The Future

Individuals are often discouraged from participating in savings opportunities for fear of loss of current or future eligibility of means-tested public benefits.

**Opportunity:** Employment and service providers encourage individuals to save for their future needs.

**Positive Outcome:** Individual saves a portion of income regularly. For example, an ABLE account may be a protected savings and investment option for a PWD.

\*\*403(b) and 401(k) Plans may be an option depending on employer, but remember these are counted as assets and disbursements are countable income for means-tested benefits.

## Poll Question (3)

Q. Which savings option may allow people with disabilities to save without affecting certain benefits?

- a) Traditional savings account
- b) Credit union account
- c) ABLE account
- d) Career Counseling
- e) None of the above

## **#9 - Increase Financial Knowledge and the Ability to Make Informed Decisions**

Many people with disabilities have never managed their own money.

**Opportunity:** Financial education is a required component in NJ schools before graduation and could be provided through transition services and employment programs.

**Positive Outcome:** Individual completes a financial education class to improve their ability to make financial decisions.

## #10 - Identify and Connect With Trusted Sources for Advice

- National Disability Institute reports that 36 percent of working-age adults with disabilities are not taught how to manage their finances by their parents or guardians and were not offered financial education from their school or employer.
- **Opportunity:** Form a Circle of Support and include trusted people who the person with the disability chooses to turn to for financial information.
- **Positive Outcome:** Individual meets with a financial counselor / coach to overcome barriers identified in achieving their financial goals.

# Closing Comments

- People with disabilities, their caregivers and service providers need the opportunity to engage in dialogue around ways to help one another learn how to manage money and benefits, save regularly, secure assets and save and invest money for the future.
- This is the 1st in a series of 4 webinars designed to help people begin their journey towards financial wellness.

# Opportunities to Learn More

- **Five Key Strategies to Achieving Financial Wellness**

February 25, 2026 – 1 pm-2 pm EST

- **Review of Benefits from SSA**

March 25, 2026 – 1pm – 2 pm EST

- **Extra Costs of Living with a Disability/ Dispelling Myths**

April 29, 2026 - 1pm – 2pm EST

# Trainer Sessions

## Financial Wellness for People with Disabilities

### Train-the-Trainer Session - Fall 2026!

This **FREE**, three-day train-the-trainer event is designed to provide individuals with disabilities, family members, service professionals and self-advocates an understanding of how individuals with disabilities can become more self-sufficient, less dependent on benefits and build better a financial future that promotes choice and greater community participation.

**Lunch will be provided!**

*Exact dates and location to be determined*

**Fill out an interest form: [NDIINC.Formstack.com/Forms/Fall2026\\_NJ\\_InterestForm](https://NDIINC.Formstack.com/Forms/Fall2026_NJ_InterestForm)**

# Questions

After today's webinar, on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 not familiar at all, 2 slightly familiar, 3 somewhat familiar, 4 very familiar), how familiar are you with the concept of financial inclusion for people with disabilities?

Which strategy do you feel most confident supporting after today?

After today's webinar, how would you rate your understanding of financial inclusion and financial capability?

# Questions?

# Contact Us

If you have any questions on this project or on financial wellness for people with disabilities, please send an email to [bmacdicken@ndi-inc.org](mailto:bmacdicken@ndi-inc.org).

# Financial Wellness for People with Disabilities

## Thank you!

Inclusive Healthy  
Communities  
NJ Division of Disability Services



NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES

