**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**Achieving a Better Life Experience Program Committee**

Tuesday, October 18, 2016 at 10:00am

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 Tuesday, October 18, 2016 at 10:00 am in the Victory Building Conference Room, Suite 275. Present at the meeting were Treasurer Dennis Milligan; Grant Wallace with the Treasurer’s Office; AR 529 Assistant Lana Davis; Aspiring Scholars Matching Grant Coordinator & ABLE Director Emma Willis (via teleconference call); Dave Mills Department of Human Services Program Administrator (Designee for Director of Human Services); Joseph Baxter Deputy Commissioner Department of Career Education (Designee for Director of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services of the Department of Career Education and Workforce Development).

Grant Wallace notified the press in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Treasurer Milligan called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

Emma Willis updated that the Arkansas state disability population is a little over 300,000. In other states, there is an average of a 10% uptake with this program. Some states are having issues with accounts interfering with housing benefits. Federal legislation is looking into expanding the age of eligibility. Emma has already reached out to the Social Security Administration in regards to sending the information to their office in order to address the verification of accounts/beneficiaries.

Emma Willis reported rules and regulations need to be established for the Committee to ensure compliance moving forward. Joseph Baxter agreed once the operating procedures for the committee are approved the next focus will be to work on bylaws. Emma Willis will prepare a draft template for the Board to review in the next meeting.

An RFP draft with all services needed for the program to run successfully will be provided at a later date for review and approval of the committee.

Emma Willis stated there are already meetings being requested from several organizations such as: BNY Mellon, Ascensus, and Ohio ABLE to discuss how they can partner with us. Emma will work on preparing presentations and scheduling meetings.

Dave Mills questioned when the program would go live. Grant Wallace responded hopefully by the end of the year. Dave Mills stated the DHS Policy would need to be promulgated for this rule change and may take up to 4-6 months.

The date for the next ABLE meeting will be determined at a later date.

There being no further business, Treasurer Milligan moved to adjourn the meeting and the meeting adjourned at 10:16am.

Respectfully submitted, Emma Willis Director of 529 and Financial Education