**I Am Able IOWA Radio Hour SCRIPT**

**Show Date:** October 30, 2021

**Guest/Topic: Karen Austin, Chief of Staff/State Treasurer’s Office**

**8:59**

**Start music – song 1 – start speaking at 8 sec and then fade**

**ANNA:** This is KHOI, Story City Ames and you are listening to I Am Able IOWA where we discuss the ability in disability.

I’m Anna Magnusson, your host for today. Daniel Heddendorf and Meredith Francom, our co-hosts, are with us through the power of Zoom.

Samantha Edwards, our I Am Able Iowa researcher provides a question to kick-off our show and she wants to know the following:

**Describe something (special) that you saved money to buy.**

* what it was
* how long it took you to save enough money to buy it
* why you wanted to buy this thing
* how you got (or, earned) the money
* and explain how you felt when (or, after) you bought it.

**DANIEL/MEREDITH**: Response

**ANNA**: Daniel, would you please introduce our guest?

**DANIEL**:

Karen Austin serves as the Chief of Staff for State Treasurer Michael Fitzgerald. Karen earned her B.A. degree in sociology and political science from Simpson College in 1990, her Certified Public Managers certification (CPM) in 2008 from Drake University and her MBA from the University of Iowa in 2015. She has worked in the Treasurer’s Office since 1990, was promoted to deputy treasurer in 2003 and chief of staff in 2019.

Karen’s current responsibilities include oversight of all areas of the Treasurer’s Office, including Iowa’s 529 plans and Iowa’s Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) plan. Karen was part of the team that launched College Savings Iowa in 1998, the IAdvisor 529 Plan in 2006, the National ABLE Alliance in 2016, and Iowa’s ABLE plan, IAble, in 2017.

In the national arena, Karen is an active participant in the National Association of State Treasurers (NAST), which includes the College Savings Plans Network. NAST recently awarded Karen the 2021 Chris Allen Memorial Award for Outstanding Advocacy in Public Finance for her service advocating for and advancing NAST priorities such as ABLE programs.

Welcome Karen.

**Meredith/Anna/Daniel Questions for Karen Austin:**

* **Can you share a little bit about yourself? (where you are from, education, family)**
* **What do you like best about working in the Treasurer’s office?**
* **Can you tell us a little bit more about being awarded the 2021 Chris Allen Memorial Award for Outstanding Advocacy in Public Finance?**
* **What is IAble?**
* **Why is there a need for an ABLE account?**
* **What are the benefits of IAble?**
* **What can you use IAble for?**
* **Who is eligible for an IAble account/who can open one?**
* **How can someone open an account?**
* **How can you use the money in an ABLE account?**
* **What are examples of qualified disability expenses?**
* **What happens if you use ABLE funds for something that isn’t a Qualified Disability expense?**
* **Is food a qualified disability expense?**
* **Can a person make a tax-free transfer of funds from an existing 529 college savings account to an ABLE account?**
* **Can you use ABLE account funds for housing and rent?**
* **Can a person have more than one ABLE Account?**
* **Who can contribute money to an ABLE Account?**
* **Will a person lose their SSI eligibility if they open an ABLE account?**
* **Does an ABLE account have any effect on the Medicaid waiver?**
* **Can an individual with a disability work and maintain an ABLE Account?**
* **Can a person open an ABLE account at a local bank?**
* **We’ve heard a lot about recent updates to IAble. Can you walk us through what some of those are?**
* **What happens to the account when the account owner passes away?**
* **Can an inheritance or settlements be deposited in an ABLE account and not be counted as income?**
* **What is the eligibility quiz?**
* **Can you talk about Kyle?**

**Samantha Edwards Questions**

* **Xxx**
* **Xxx**

**ANNA:** If you are just tuning in, you’re listening to I Am Able IOWA and we’re talking with Karen Austin who serves as the Chief of Staff for State Treasurer Michael Fitzgerald

**OUTRO start the music – song 1 (begin speaking at 8 seconds)**

**MEREDITH:** This is KHOI, Story City Ames. You have been listening to I Am Able IOWA. I Am ABLE IOWA airs the first and last Saturday morning of each month at 9 a.m. on KHOI 89.1 FM. You can also hear us streaming live online at KHOIFM.org.

On the Saturdays in the middle of the month, please tune into Insight of the Mind with Julie Saxton who provides valuable information about mental health issues.

**DANIEL:** We invite you to share your comments, questions, and program ideas with us at contact@iamableiowa.com. And if you visit [www.iamableiowa.com](http://www.iamableiowa.com), you will find previous episodes and more information about our program.

I Am Able IOWA is produced by Able Up Iowa headquartered in Ames, Iowa. Able Up Iowa helps people of all abilities become independent by providing solutions to financial needs and empowering them to achieve their financial goals.

**ANNA:** Our I Am Able IOWA music was composed and performed by Sean Ryan. I Am Able IOWA is brought to you by Barbara Wright, Iowa Able Foundation, Curt Sorteberg, and Lynne VanClark. Thank you Samantha Edwards, our I Am Able IOWA researcher for coming up with our opening question as well as the questions for our guest!

Thank you for listening. Until next time this is Anna Magnusson, Daniel Heddendorf, and Meredith Francom saying, “you are able Iowa!”

**9:58**

**END**