

The ALERT



The Legal Aid Society
of Cleveland
Since 1905

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Web site:
www.lasclev.org

Northeast Ohio Launches the Aging and Disability Resource Network



The Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA) has formally launched the **Aging and Disability Resource Network (ADRN)** in its five county service area of Medina, Lake, Geauga, Lorain and

Cuyahoga counties. This Network is composed of a group of offices on aging and non-profit organizations with professional staff who can guide older adults, caregivers and persons with disabilities to services that support independence.

“The ADRN is the starting point for answers to questions about available community services and supports that can help when the independence of an older adult or person with a disability is challenged” says Ronald Hill, CEO of the WRAAA. “Ohio’s long-term care network is complex and fragmented. Figuring out how to obtain long-term services and supports can be confusing and difficult to navigate. The ADRN provides a new system that offers Northeast Ohio residents a single, consistent, reliable way to access an array of services by making one phone call.”

Northeast Ohio’s ADRN is coordinated by the WRAAA. The Agency developed a collaborative system among 16 local organizations that are all now functioning as one single system in an effort to provide information, seamless referral and assistance. The ADRN also provides Benefits Assistance service and Options Counseling. The Benefits Assistance service connects individuals to a Benefits Specialist who will screen for eligibility to receive public benefits and help guide them through the application process. Options Counseling is a service that allows

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older adults, persons with disabilities and caregivers the opportunity to talk with an Options Counselor about community services and supports to fit their needs and preferences; and guide them through what can be a difficult and complicated decision-making process.

Accessing the ADRN is easy. There is a local toll-free number that connects people to professionals who will help identify available public benefits and community-

based services. These professionals are trained to present an array of options, creating choices individuals may not have known existed and then following up to ensure the individual secured the supports they needed. ADRN staff recognizes that everyone's situation is unique and requires personal attention to make certain that all of their needs are met. Anyone, regardless of age, income level or care giving role can contact the ADRN by calling 1.855.585.ADRN (2376).

The Social Security Administration May Have to Pay Back Benefits Stopped or Denied Because of Probation or Parole Arrest Warrants

For millions of seniors, Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is their only income. In the past, the Social Security Administration (SSA) could stop paying benefits to someone who had a warrant for a parole or probation violation. The SSA did not look at whether the person actually violated parole or probation. In many cases, the warrant was based on a minor violation or something easily resolved.

A national class action lawsuit stopped the SSA from continuing this practice. In a case in New York, *Clark v. Astrue*, the Court created a nationwide group of people who were affected by the SSA's practice. This group may now get money paid back to them.

Everyone in the United States who could not get Social Security or SSI benefits because of a parole or probation warrant on or after October 29, 2006, is protected by this case. According to the National Senior Citizens Law Center tens of thousands of people could be affected. The amount of money owed to this group may be hundreds of millions of dollars.

If you applied for Social Security or SSI benefits on or after October 29, 2006, and are waiting for a decision, you cannot be denied benefits based only on a probation or parole warrant.

If you applied for Social Security or SSI benefits and were denied benefits on or after October 29, 2006, or benefits were stopped on or after October 29, 2006, based on a probation or parole warrant, you may now be able to get benefits or have benefits paid back to you. If you believe this new rule applies to you, contact the SSA and give them your current address so you receive notice if you are owed money.

You can call the Social Security Administration at:

1.800.772.1213

TTY users should call 1.800.325.0778

Ohio's New Law for Powers of Attorney

Ohio law related to Power of Attorney (POA) documents changed as of March 22, 2012. The old law was replaced with a new law called The Uniform Power of Attorney Act (UPOAA). This new law helps Ohioans because Ohio laws about POAs will now be similar to the law in many other states.

The new law (UPOAA) has four parts. The first part states the rules for creating and using a power of attorney. The second part defines the authority that can be given to an agent in a POA document. The third part provides a sample form people can use who want to create a POA for property. The fourth part deals with other laws and powers of attorney that were created before the law changed.

The new law provides that a power of attorney created

under the UPOAA is “durable” unless the document states otherwise. “Durable” means the POA is effective even if the person who creates it becomes incapacitated. If you do not want your POA to be effective if you become incapacitated, then you must say so in the POA document. The new law also provides that a POA is effective when executed unless it specifically says that it becomes effective at a future date or when a future event occurs.

This change in the law is a good reminder to review your documents and make sure your affairs are in order. If you have a POA created before March 22, 2012, it is valid as long as it met the requirements of Ohio law at the time you created it. If you do not have a POA, now would be a good time to create one.



Legal Aid helps low-income seniors with POAs, health care directives, and wills.

Call 1.888.817.3777 to speak with an Intake Specialist at Legal Aid about getting help creating these documents.

Preventive Services Covered By Medicare

Medicare is a national health insurance program for people ages 65+ and younger people with certain disabilities.

The 2011 Affordable Care Act expands the list of preventive care services you can get for free. Medicare recipients can now receive annual wellness visits to their

doctor, flu shots and tests like prostate cancer screenings and mammograms.

When you become eligible for Medicare Part B (outpatient insurance), you can get a Welcome to Medicare Preventive Visit. Your doctor will review your medical history and plan your preventive care needs.

After this first consultation, you can see your doctor for an Annual Wellness Visit every year.

For most preventive care, you'll usually pay nothing out of pocket if you have original Medicare and see providers who accept assignments. "Accepting assignments" means that they accept Medicare's approved amount as full payment for a service. However, you may have to pay a deductible or coinsurance if your doctor has to do further tests or procedures.

Medicare completely covers certain other preventive care services for patients who have certain risk factors for disease. This applies to such services as diabetes screenings,

bone mass measurements and testing for glaucoma.

There are new preventive care services offered by Medicare since the fall of 2011. New services include screenings for depression, misuse of alcohol and obesity. There is also dietary counseling for people who are overweight and a cardiovascular risk reduction visit for combating heart disease.

Starting in 2012, if you're in a Medicare Advantage plan, your plan can't charge you for preventive care services that are free for people with original Medicare. You are, however, required to see network providers within the plan.

You can learn more about Medicare's preventive services by visiting www.medicare.gov. You can also call 1.800.MEDICARE (1.800.633.4227). TTY users should call 1.877.486.2048.

FREE LEGAL ADVICE

2012 Brief Advice and Referral Clinics • Civil Matters Only (*Not Criminal*)

First-come, first-served. Bring important papers with you! Questions?
Call 216.687.1900 or visit www.lasclev.org for updated clinic listing.

SATURDAY, APRIL 21
Naturalization Info Clinic
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Information and help for those seeking citizenship only
Legal Aid's Cleveland Office
1223 West Sixth Street
Cleveland

SATURDAY, APRIL 21
Assistance for Drivers with Suspended Licenses
10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Maple Heights Senior Center
15901 Libby Road
Maple Heights

TUESDAY, APRIL 24
General Clinic with Elder Law Focus
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Salvation Army
716 Broad Street
Elyria
Appointment Preferred

TUESDAY, APRIL 24
General Clinic with Elder Law Focus
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
St. Mary's Church
242 North State Street
Painesville

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25
Wills and Advance Directives Clinic
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Legal Aid's Cleveland Office
1223 West Sixth Street
Cleveland

SATURDAY, APRIL 28
9:45 am - 11:45 am
West Side Catholic Center
3135 Lorain Avenue
Cleveland

SATURDAY, MAY 5
9:45 am - 11:45 am
Cleveland Clinic's Stephanie Tubbs Jones Health Center
13944 Euclid Avenue
East Cleveland

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
American Legion
1804 West 19th Street
Ashtabula

**Attorneys available for brief advice and referral only. Clinic attorneys do NOT represent you. If you need legal representation you may be referred to The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland or another service provider.*

Benefits Check-Up

Benefits Check-ups provide seniors with information about help that may be available to pay some bills. A Benefits Check-up will let you know if you can get help paying Medicare premiums, prescription costs, heating bills, phone bills and other expenses. You might also learn about nutrition and food stamp programs, property tax relief, home energy assistance programs and senior employment programs. Many government programs help adults 55 and older with these issues.

A Benefits Check-up is free and safe. You will have to provide some information about your income and background. In most cases, you do not have to provide identifying information, such as your Social Security number. If you complete a Benefits Check-up, you will receive a confidential report in the mail. The report lists the help you can get and how to apply for it.

You can ask for a Benefits Check-up at many places. Call 2-1-1 for a location close to you.

In Cuyahoga County, volunteers with the Department of Senior & Adult Services work with seniors in various communities. If you want to make an appointment, receive an application by mail, or complete a telephone screening, call the Intake Line at 216.420.6840.

In Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties, seniors can also ask for a Benefits Check-up by calling the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA's) ADRN line at 1.855.585.ADRN (2376).

In Ashtabula, seniors should call Area Agency on Aging at 1.800.686.7367.

Seniors who speak a language other than English can call Asian Services in Action, Inc. at 216.881.0330. Bilingual counselors can provide brochures in Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Spanish and English.

Seniors can do a Benefits Check-up online. A trusted friend or relative, even someone who lives out of town, can help you do this. If you live in Cuyahoga County, use the online form at <http://dsas.cuyahogacounty.us/en-US/benefits-checkup.aspx>. For anywhere in Ohio, use <http://www.benefitscheckup.org>.

If you want information on whether you qualify for help with property taxes, water and sewer bills, local phone services, prescription drugs, and other expenses, call one of the numbers listed above to ask for a Benefits Check-up.





The
Legal Aid Society
of Cleveland
Since 1905

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Cleveland, OH 44113

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland offers free legal services to low-income seniors.

For help from Legal Aid,
call 216.687.1900 or
888.817.3777.



If you qualify for our services and we have the resources to assist you, we will either give you advice or educational information to help you with the next steps in the legal process, refer you to a volunteer attorney, or represent you in your legal matter.

You may need to meet with an attorney. If you are unable to come to a Legal Aid office, an attorney can arrange to meet you at a senior citizen center or some other office near your home.

Visit Legal Aid's new web site at www.lasclev.org.



This newsletter is meant to give you general information and not to give you specific legal advice. This information cannot take the place of advice from a lawyer. Each case is different and needs individual legal advice. You should contact a lawyer if you need representation or if you have questions.

If you have a communications limitation, contact us through the Ohio Relay Service. Interpretation services are available so that anyone can communicate with us in his or her dominant and/or preferable language.

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