

LEGAL INFORMATION and ADVOCACY

As we walk the path of life, we may encounter the occasional thorny legal problem. As we get older, however, our path becomes increasingly complicated by a briar patch of legal issues.

The goal of the Program is to provide seniors in Montana with fast and easy access to the legal advice, information, and advocacy that they need. In 2004, the Legal Services Developer of Aging Services, a Bureau in the Senior and Long Term Care Division of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, developed the Attorney-Paralegal Program.

This brochure explains the types of services provided by the Legal Services Developer Program.

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LEGAL SERVICES DEVELOPER PROGRAM

THE LEGAL RESOURCE FOR SENIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES



Legal Services Developer Program

LEGAL ACCESS FOR SENIORS

ADVOCACY

The Attorney-Paralegal Program is accessed by contacting your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA).

The AAA provides you with a local advocate to assist you with your legal issues. Your legal advocate will discuss both short- and long-term strategy with you, and help you decide what course is in your best interests. Your advocate will also help you with the other resources in this program, explained below.

Contact your local AAA at
1-800-551-3191

LEGAL ADVICE

The Program attorney and paralegals will provide:

- direct legal advice,
- research, and
- paperwork completion.

The Program strives to provide a quality service with a quick response time, and explain your legal issues and options in plain English,

The program does not provide assistance for family or criminal law.

LEGAL CLINICS

The Program provides legal clinics and training sessions at locations throughout the state.

These clinics can be tailored to professionals, such as nursing home or social service staff, or they can educate the public, such as at community senior centers.

Legal clinics can address a specific topic, such as powers of attorney, or can address broader areas, such as consumer protection.

All legal clinics are focused on the issues facing seniors in our communities.

LEGAL EDUCATION

The Program has developed four types of resources for persons interested in elder law.

- The Legal Service Developer Program provides legal presentations throughout Montana to persons sixty and older emphasizing legal resources, issues, educational materials and events that are available to the public.
- The Legal Guide is a thorough, detailed explanation of elder law for laypersons.
- Single-topic pamphlets explain specific legal issues for the public.
- The Program is in the process of designing user-friendly legal forms for use in a variety of situations.

We appreciate your feedback on what would be helpful for you.

LEGAL RESOURCES

The program collaborates with other statewide programs to resolve legal issues presented by seniors and their families.

PRIVATE ATTORNEY SUPPORT Pro Bono Modest Means

Attorneys have a professional and ethical obligation to provide free or low cost services to persons in need. The Pro Bono Modest Means program will assist with cases to encourage and facilitate private attorney support:

- Factual investigation of and liaison for the case, resulting in a memo detailing relevant facts, evidence and witnesses in the matter.
- Research legal issues resulting in a memorandum, citing cases, and statutory and administrative law.
- Evaluate the merit and feasibility of potential legal action in a case; the alternatives to legal action; and determine the cost-benefit of attorney involvement. These evaluations are performed prior to referring the matter to an attorney.
- Provide ongoing support services for attorneys. Such support includes paralegal services and elder law specialties.