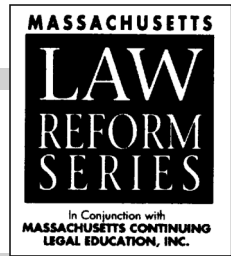


# Basic Public Benefits Advocacy Trainings



MCLE and the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI) are collaborating to make annual basic public benefits advocacy training more accessible to the many public and private sector individuals and lawyers who assist Massachusetts residents in qualifying for and receiving public benefits. Detailed materials are distributed at each training.

## 1 Assisting Families Experiencing Homelessness

Thursday, September 13, 2018  
9:30 am–2:30 pm; 4 Credits  
Program No. 2190041P01

This program focuses on strategies to assist families experiencing homelessness in accessing and retaining shelter, short-term housing, and services from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Trainers provide an overview of the Emergency Assistance (EA) shelter and services program, including current restrictions on access to EA shelter. The training also includes advocacy tips regarding the range of issues facing families at-risk, or who are experiencing homelessness as they seek access to EA shelter and the HomeBASE program. The training includes an overview of the system, the application process, denials, terminations, shelter placements, and program requirements. This training is for legal services advocates, lawyers in private practice, social and health services workers, and community activists who want to learn about the nuts-and-bolts of the EA system and the HomeBASE program. Training materials include the most recent edition of the *Emergency Assistance Advocacy Guide: A Guide to Emergency Shelter and Rehousing Services for Homeless Families with Children in Massachusetts*.

## 2 CORI: Basics of the NEW Criminal Justice Reform Law

Monday, October 29, 2018  
9:30 am–2:30 pm; 4 Credits  
Program No. 2190099P01

This seminar provides an overview of criminal justice reform that becomes effective in October 2018, such as related to criminal offender record information (CORI), employment, driver licenses, housing and other collateral consequences. Topics include: changes in the waiting periods for sealing of cases; sealing of newly decriminalized offenses; the new juvenile and adult expungement laws; new chapter 151B anti-discrimination provisions; new negligent applicant screening protections for employers and landlords, and other provisions. We also cover the basics of how to seal and expunge records. Massachusetts keeps “CORI” on every individual who has a criminal case in a Massachusetts state court. CORI is recorded and kept on file even if the underlying case is ultimately dismissed or the accused is found not guilty. CORI is used in screening processes by employers, landlords, government agencies, and others. Clients with criminal records face

barriers to employment, housing, benefits and other opportunities for economic stability. This training is for legal services advocates, lawyers in private practice, social and health services workers, and community activists who want to learn about the new law or get a refresher course on the basics of CORI.

## 3 SSI & SSDI Basics

Wednesday, November 14, 2018  
9:30 am–4:00 pm; 6 Credits  
Program No. 2190040P01

Social Security disability programs continue to be a major source of cash and health benefits for individuals with disabilities. However, dealing with a large federal agency can be daunting and overwhelming, especially for an unrepresented claimant.

The program begins with an overview of the two disability programs administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA), with emphasis on eligibility requirements and procedures, including basic disability eligibility standards and non-disability issues such as income, resources, and non-citizen criteria. An explanation of the recently revised evidence submission and analysis rules begins with the afternoon session followed by overview of the appeals process for disability applications. Concluding the program is a review of certain post-entitlement issues, with special emphasis on continuing disability reviews, work incentives rules, and benefits overpayments. The training is for legal services advocates, lawyers in private practice who are thinking of representing clients before SSA, social and health workers, and community activists.

## 4 New Developments in TAFDC, Massachusetts’ Cash Assistance Program for Families

Thursday, December 13, 2018  
9:30 am–4:00 pm; 5.5 Credits  
Program No. 2190042P01

This training is for legal services advocates, lawyers in private practice, social and health services workers, and community activists who want to learn about TAFDC (Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children)—the cash assistance program for families. The training provides an overview of program rules and information about recent changes. There will also be sessions on applying for TAFDC benefits, keeping TAFDC benefits, and child care.

## 5 SNAP/Food Stamps Advocacy 101

Wednesday, January 16, 2019  
9:30 am–12:30 pm; 3 Credits  
Program No. 2190162P01

The federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly called Food Stamps) remains the first line of defense against hunger for thousands of Massachusetts residents. Families and individuals often struggle with getting their SNAP applications and recertifications approved. Collecting all the required proofs, and having the required phone interview, can be overwhelming for an unrepresented household. Some of the most challenging cases involve the rules for immigrant-headed households as well as the rules impacting certain childless individuals. Special rules also apply to households headed by elders and persons with disability. This SNAP 101 training is designed for participants who need the basic rules and advocacy tips including new legal services and community advocates, lawyers in private practice, and social and health services workers. It begins with an overview of the federal Food Stamp/SNAP program, an update of any changes to SNAP made at the federal and state levels during 2018, and an in-depth look at the nuts and bolts of SNAP eligibility, benefits calculation, on-line tools, trouble shooting, and appeal rights. Training materials include the *2019 Food Stamp/SNAP Advocacy Guide: An Advocate’s Guide to the Food Stamp/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Massachusetts*.

## 6 Utilities—Advocacy for Low-Income Households

Wednesday, January 16, 2019  
1:00 pm–4:00 pm; 3 Credits  
Program No. 2190101P01

This training covers the broad range of topics that arise when low-income households are trying to initiate or protect their utility service, as well as pay their non-utility energy bills (oil, and propane). Topics will include: how to start service and protect service from termination, how to restore terminated service, how to get on the low-income discount rate, payment plans and arrearage management programs, funding sources that help pay utility bills, helping victims of domestic violence and crimes, and advocating for clients at the Department of Public Utilities.

Training materials include our widely used book, *Utilities Advocacy for Low-income Households in Massachusetts*. All materials will be available on the NCLC website. This training is designed for anyone working in the field and helping low-income clients with their utility problems. This includes social workers, housing search workers, elder advocates, immigration advocates, domestic violence program staff, community action program staff, and lawyers.

## 7 Tenants' Rights

Tuesday, January 29, 2019  
9:30 am–3:30 pm; 5 Credits  
**Program No. 2190102P01**

This training is for community and lay advocates, mediators, housing and legal advocates, and others interested in having a better understanding of tenants' rights in Massachusetts. The training focuses on tenants' rights before moving in, security deposit and last month's rent issues, getting repairs made, and defending against an eviction. While the eviction process part of the program applies to all tenants, the training focuses primarily on rights of tenants in private housing. Materials include a copy of the new 2017 edition of *Legal Tactics: Tenants' Rights in Massachusetts*.

## 8 Health Care Access Programs

Tuesday, February 12, 2019  
9:30 am–4:00 pm; 5.5 Credits  
**Program No. 2190164P01**

This training is designed to help attendees understand Medicaid and other subsidized health programs available to people under age 65 in Massachusetts. The morning program provides an overview of the eligibility requirements for MassHealth, ConnectorCare and other programs and the process for applying and enrolling in coverage. It also provides an update on any significant changes to health access programs in the prior year. The afternoon program reviews the way MassHealth beneficiaries obtain access to covered services including changes in the delivery of MassHealth services by new Accountable Care Organizations. Trainers also supply troubleshooting tips for resolving common eligibility and access to service problems in MassHealth and the Connector. This training gives outreach workers, social workers, providers, and advocates an up-to-date nuts-and-bolts overview of eligibility issues, and teaches them how to assist their patients and clients in becoming enrolled, maintaining coverage, and using their benefits. The training is designed for new advocates but will also be helpful for experienced advocates looking for a review and update.

## 9 Income Maximization for the Working Poor

Wednesday, February 27, 2019  
9:15 am–3:00 pm; 4.75 Credits  
**Program No. 2190163P01**

This session is an overview focusing on various supplemental benefits and assistance programs which help working families and individuals to maximize their income and reduce their

expenses. The first part is presented in a lecture format and the second part utilizes small break-out groups and case hypotheticals. This training is designed as an overview of benefits. The subject areas are quite broad and this is not an in-depth analysis of any particular program. This training is for new and experienced legal services advocates, lawyers in private practice, social and health services workers, and community activists who want to learn about or get an update on this subject in order to help their clients.

## 10 Unemployment Insurance

Thursday, March 14, 2019  
1:00 pm–4:30 pm; 3.5 Credits  
**Program No. 2190169P01**

Unemployment insurance (UI) is a critical safety net during periods of joblessness. This seminar provides you with the expertise you need to understand the UI system and to help your clients get the UI benefits to which they are legally entitled. Our expert panel guides you through the entire UI system from eligibility criteria to the appeals process. (Unemployed workers often cannot afford to retain professional services in pursuing their claims, so if you are a non-legal services attorney, you can register to assist someone in need of help, and in doing so, qualify for reduced tuition.) Training materials include the most recent edition of the *Unemployment Advocacy Guide: An Advocate's Guide to Unemployment in Massachusetts*. This training is co-sponsored by Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Greater Boston Legal Services, the Volunteer Lawyers Project, and the Labor and Employment Section of the Massachusetts Bar Association.

## 11 Immigrants and Public Benefits

Thursday, March 28, 2019  
9:30 am–4:00 pm; 5.5 Credits  
**Program No. 2190106P01**

This all-day training offers the nuts-and-bolts on how immigration status affects eligibility for benefits for non-citizen immigrants and refugees. The trainers include both immigration lawyers and legal experts in different public benefit programs. It covers basic information about immigrants in Massachusetts, how immigration status affects public benefits in general and an overview of the most commonly seen types of immigration status and documents. It includes up-to-the-minute information about a proposed "public charge" rule that may change how benefits are treated for immigration purposes in the future as well as a "know your rights" session for community organizations to address fears among immigrants whom they serve, and briefly covers language access issues. Experts in different types of benefits focus on the most up-to-date immigrant eligibility rules in specific programs including the TAFDC, EAEDC and SSI cash assistance programs, the SNAP (food stamps) program, MassHealth and other subsidized health programs and state and federal subsidized housing programs. This training is

for legal services advocates, lawyers in private practice, social and health services workers, and community advocates.

## 12 State & Federal Veterans' Benefits

Thursday, April 4, 2019  
9:30 am–2:00 pm; 4.5 Credits  
**Program No. 2190170P01**

This training is for legal services advocates, lawyers in private practice, social and health services workers, veterans, lay advocates, legislative aides, and anyone else who wants to learn about the basics of state and federal veterans' benefits. The training covers state veterans' benefits under M.G.L. c. 115 (administered by the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services), and federal benefits for healthcare, service-connected disability compensation, and non-service-connected pensions (administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs). The session covers the basic application process, eligibility rules for veterans (military discharge status, financial eligibility, disqualifying conditions, refund status), and the disability requirements for benefits. It also covers the basics of filing an appeal and upgrading a less than honorable discharge.

## 13 Elder Benefits Programs

Wednesday, April 10, 2019  
9:30 am–4:00 pm; 5.5 Credits  
**Program No. 2190108P01**

In these hard times, elders in Massachusetts depend on a variety of benefits programs to meet their income and health needs. These include income supplement programs, retirement benefits, home-based care services, and health care programs. This program provides legal services advocates, lawyers, and paralegals in private practice, social and health services workers, and community activists with an overview and basic knowledge of the resources available to elders, with an emphasis on program criteria relevant to elders and how to navigate the complexities across programs.

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