

Basic Public Benefits Advocacy Trainings

MCLE, the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI), and other Massachusetts legal services programs collaborate to provide annual basic public benefits advocacy training events for the many public and private sector lawyers and community advocates who assist Massachusetts residents to qualify for and receive public benefits.



March–August 2024 Programs

1. Unemployment Insurance

Boston & Live Webcast—Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 1:00 pm–4:30 pm (2240130P01 / 2240130WBC)
Rebroadcasts—Thursday, March 21, 2024, 1:00 pm–4:30 pm (2240130RB1); Friday, March 29, 2024, 9:30 am–1:00 pm (2240130RB2)
Earn up to 3.5 CLE credits

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 *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.

Faculty
Jason Salgado, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*
Emma Hornsby, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*
Rory C. Macaneney, Esq., *Community Legal Aid/Worcester County, Fitchburg*
Michael Morelli, *Community Legal Aid/Berkshire County, Pittsfield*
Melissa A. Pomfred, Esq., *Pomfred Law Offices, PLLC, Franklin*

2. Immigrants and Public Benefits

Boston & Live Webcast—Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 9:30 am–3:00 pm (2240132P01 / 2240132WBC)
Rebroadcasts—Thursday, April 11, 2024, 9:30 am–3:00 pm (2240132RB1); Friday, April 19, 2024, 9:30 am–3:00 pm (2240132RB2)
Earn up to 4.5 CLE credits

This all-day training offers the nuts-and-bolts on how immigration status affects eligibility for state and federal public benefits. In the morning, you get an overview of how immigrants obtain legal status, how to read immigration documents in order to understand a person's legal status, and updates on any new immigration statuses, or other federal developments affecting access to benefits. You also learn from health law experts about MassHealth and other subsidized health care programs available to immigrants and their dependents. In the afternoon, you hear from benefits experts about other public benefits potentially available to low-income legal immigrants including: state and federal subsidized housing programs, emergency shelter, cash assistance (TAFDC and EAEDC) and the federal SNAP and child nutrition programs.

Faculty
Victoria Pulos, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*
Pat Baker, *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*
Naomi Meyers, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*
Mario Paredes, Esq., *Policy Advisor, Boston Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement, Boston*
Andrea M. Park, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*

3. State & Federal Veterans' Benefits

Boston & Live Webcast—Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 9:30 am–3:30 pm (2240133P01 / 2240133WBC)
Rebroadcasts—Thursday, April 25, 2024, 9:30 am–3:30 pm (2240133RB1); Friday, May 3, 2024, 9:30am–3:30 pm (2240133RB2)
Earn up to 5 CLE credits

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 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.

Faculty

Anna Schleelein Richardson, Esq., *Veterans Legal Services, Boston*
Steven Connor, *Central Hampshire Veterans Services, Northampton*
Betsy Gwin, Esq., *Veterans Legal Clinic, Harvard Law School, Cambridge*
Dana Montalto, Esq., *Veterans Legal Clinic, Harvard Law School, Cambridge*
Scott Pitta, Esq., *Veterans Legal Services, Boston*

4. Elder Benefits Programs

Boston & Live Webcast—Tuesday, April 30, 2024, 9:30 am–4:00 pm (2240134P01 / 2240134WBC)

Rebroadcasts—Wednesday, May 15, 2024, 9:30 am–4:00 pm (2240134RB1); Thursday, May 23, 2024, 9:30 am–4:00 pm (2240134RB2)

Earn up to 5.5 CLE credits

Due in part to the high cost of living, older adults in Massachusetts have the second lowest levels of economic security in the nation. This training provides an overview of the key public benefits programs to help older adults meet their basic needs. Experts review the basic eligibility rules for cash benefit programs like SSI and Social Security Insurance benefits, home-based care services from the Office of Elder Affairs, and health care programs like Medicare and MassHealth. It also provides a brief summary of other public benefits available to older adults in Massachusetts.

Faculty

Kate Symmonds, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*
Majda Abbas, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*
Andrew Bardetti, Esq., *South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Hyannis*
Rachel S. Brown, Esq., *Community Legal Aid, Worcester*
Betsey Crimmins, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*
Shannon Philbrick, *Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Boston*
Svetlana Uimenkova, Esq., *Disability Law Center, Boston*

5. Income Maximization

Boston & Live Webcast—Thursday, May 2, 2024, 9:00 am–1:00 pm (2240131P01 / 2240131WBC)

Rebroadcasts—Friday, May 17, 2024, 9:00 am–1:00 pm (2240131RB1); Tuesday, May 28, 2024, 12:00 pm–4:00 pm (2240131RB2)

Earn up to 3.5 CLE credits

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. This training is designed as an overview of benefits. The subject areas are quite broad. 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.

Faculty

Julie McCormack, *Legal Services Center of Harvard, Cambridge*
Betsy Gwin, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*
Gina Plata-Nino, Esq., *Food & Research Action Center, Washington, DC*

Recent Trainings Available On Demand

See www.mcle.org/main/mlri for details.

- ❖ Assisting Families Experiencing Homelessness, recorded October 3, 2023 (2240071WBA)
- ❖ CORI Basics: Criminal Record Sealing, Expungement & Related Issues, recorded October 17, 2023 (2240072WBA)
- ❖ SSI & SSDI Basics. Recorded November 8, 2023 (2240075WBA)
- ❖ Overview of the TAFDC Program, recorded December 4, 2023 (2240100WBA)
- ❖ Utilities: Advocacy for Low-Income Households in Massachusetts, recorded January 18, 2024 (2240077WBA)
- ❖ SNAP/Food Stamps Advocacy 101, recorded January 24, 2024 (2240073WBA)
- ❖ Tenants' Rights, recorded February 28, 2024 (2240078WBA, available after March 22, 2024)
- ❖ Health Care Access Programs, recorded February 29, 2024 (2240081WBA, available after March 25, 2024)

Tuition *each program*

- \$35 Legal Services Attorneys and Non Lawyer Advocates
- \$125 All Others