

# 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 2025 Program Schedule

### 1. Elder Benefits Programs

**Boston & Live Webcast**—Thursday, April 17, 2025, 9:30 am–4:00 pm (2250057P01 / 2250057WBC)

**Rebroadcasts**—Friday, May 2, 2025, 9:30 am–4:00 pm (2250057RB1); Monday, May 12, 2025, 9:30 am–4:00 pm (2250057RB2)

Earn up to 5 CLE credits

### 2. Immigrants & Public Benefits

**Boston & Live Webcast**—Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 9:30 am–3:00 pm (2250055P01 / 2250055WBC)

**Rebroadcasts**—Thursday, April 3, 2025, 9:30 am–3:00 pm (2250055RB1); Friday, April 11, 2025, 9:30 am–3:00 pm (2250055RB2)

Earn up to 4 CLE credits

### 3. Income Maximization

**Boston & Live Webcast**—Tuesday, May 6, 2025, 9:00 am–1:00 pm (2250058P01 / 22500458WBC)

**Rebroadcasts**—Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 12:00 pm–4:00 pm (2250058RB1); Thursday, May 29, 2025, 10:00 am–2:00 pm (2250058RB2)

Earn up to 3 CLE credits

### 4. State & Federal Veterans' Benefits

**Boston & Live Webcast**—Tuesday, April 8, 2025, 9:30 am–3:30 pm (2250056P01 / 2250056WBC)

**Rebroadcasts**—Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 9:30 am–3:30 pm (2250056RB1); Thursday, May 1, 2025, 9:30 am–3:30 pm (2250056RB2)

Earn up to 5 CLE credits

### 5. Tax Benefits for Massachusetts Families

**Boston & Live Webcast**—Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 9:30 am–12:30 pm (2250269P01 / 2250269WBC)

**Rebroadcasts**—Thursday, Wednesday, March 26, 2025, 2:00 pm–5:00 pm (2250269RB1); Thursday, April 3, 2025, 9:30 am–12:30 pm (2250269RB2)

Earn up to 3 CLE credits

### 6. Tenants' Rights

**Boston & Live Webcast**—Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 9:30 am–3:30 pm (2250083P01 / 2250083WBC)

**Rebroadcasts**—Thursday, May 22, 2025, 9:30 am–3:30 pm (2250083RB1); Friday, May 30, 2025, 9:30 am–3:30 pm (2250083RB2)

Earn up to 5 CLE credits

### 7. Unemployment Insurance

**Boston & Live Webcast Only**—Thursday, March 6, 2025, 1:00 pm–4:30 pm (2250054P01 / 2250054WBC)

**Rebroadcasts**—Thursday, March 21, 2025, 10:00 am–1:30 pm (2250054RB1); Monday, March 31, 2025, 12:00 pm–3:30 pm (2250054RB2)

Earn up to 3 CLE credits

#### **Tuition** *each program*

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

► See next pages for program details.

# March–August 2025 Program Details

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## 1. Elder Benefits Programs

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 L. Bardetti, Esq., *South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Hyannis*  
Rachel S. Brown, Esq., *Community Legal Aid, Worcester*  
Deborah L. Filler, Esq., *Cambridge & Somerville Legal Services, Cambridge*  
Shannon K. Turner, *Home Care Program Coordinator, Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
Svetlana Uimenkova, Esq., *Disability Law Center, Inc., Boston*

## 2. Immigrants & Public Benefits

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

Jeanne Funk, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston, Chair*  
Patricia J. Baker, *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*  
Mark Martinez, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*  
Naomi A. Meyer, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*  
Andrea M. Park, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*  
Victoria Pulos, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*

## 3. Income Maximization

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 Law School, Jamaica Plain, Chair*  
Betsy Gwin, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*  
Marion Hohn, Esq., *Central West Justice Center, Springfield*

## 4. State & Federal Veterans' Benefits

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 basic application process, eligibility rules for veterans (military discharge status, financial eligibility, disqualifying conditions, refund status), and the disability requirements for benefits are addressed, along with the basics of filing an appeal and upgrading a less than honorable discharge.

### Faculty

Anna Schleelein Richardson, Esq., *Veterans Legal Services, Boston*  
Steven J. Connor, *Central Hampshire Veterans Services, Northampton*  
Lynette Gabrila, *Wachusett Veterans' Services District, Gardner*  
Betsy Gwin, Esq., *Veterans Legal Clinic, Harvard Law School, Cambridge*  
Dana Montalto, Esq., *Veterans Legal Clinic, Harvard Law School, Cambridge*  
Scott Pitta, Esq., *Office of the Veteran Advocate, Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

## 5. Tax Benefits for Massachusetts Families

This program explores tax credits available to low-income individuals and families, including pandemic-related credits and state renter credits, while highlighting free tax preparation resources in the Commonwealth. It is ideal for human services professionals, legal aid workers, tax volunteers, and advocates for vulnerable populations.

### Faculty

Luz A. Arevalo, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston, Chair*

Michael Carballeira, *Director, Collections Contact Center, Department of Revenue, Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

Angela Divaris, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*

Mireille Themo Eastman, Esq., *Legal Division, Department of Revenue, Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

Mel Jiganti, Esq., *Northeast Justice Center, Lynn*

Audrey A. Patten, Esq., *Harvard Law School, Cambridge*

## 6. Tenants' Rights

This training is for community and lay advocates, mediators, housing and legal advocates, and others interested in gaining a better understanding of tenants' rights in Massachusetts. The training focuses on evictions, getting repairs made, rents, and housing discrimination. 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 [Legal Tactics: Tenants' Rights in Massachusetts](#).

### Faculty

Annette R. Duke, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston, Chair*

## 7. Unemployment Insurance

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, Chair*

Stephanie Herron Rice, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*

Emma G. Hornsby, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*

Isabel Lickey, *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*

Rory C. Macaneney, Esq., *Community Legal Aid / Worcester County, Fitchburg*

Michael J. Morelli, *Community Legal Aid / Berkshire County, Pittsfield*

Melissa A. Pomfred, Esq., *Pomfred Law Offices, PLLC, Franklin*

Enock Rodriguez, *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*

Hannah Morgan Yasuko Tanabe, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*

Sandra Tavaréz, *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*

◀Additional Programs Available On Demand▶

Visit [www.mcle.org/main/MLRI](http://www.mcle.org/main/MLRI)