

AoA NEWS

U.S. Administration on Aging

Department of Health and Human Services

For Immediate Release

Friday, September 18, 2009

Contact: AoA Press Office

202- 357-3507



AoA Awards Nearly \$1.1 Million to States to Help Older Americans Access Legal Services

Coordinated Approaches will help older Americans remain Independent

HHS Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee has announced the award of nearly \$1.1 million to eleven states to help at-risk older Americans better access legal services.

These grants, which bring together the aging and legal service delivery systems, will improve states' efforts to protect the independence, health, and financial security of older adults. Many older individuals are facing critical threats to their independence, including the loss of their homes through foreclosure, the destruction of nest eggs through consumer scams and financial exploitation, the risk of elder abuse and challenges in accessing important public benefits.

“As a former elder law attorney, I have seen first hand the value of these programs,” said Assistant Secretary Greenlee. “Effective coordination of legal service delivery systems helps at-risk older adults avoid legal pitfalls that may threaten their independence and direct them to important benefits and protections that can enhance their quality of life.”

Awards of approximately \$100,000 each were made to California, Louisiana, Maine, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah and Vermont to promote the continued development of statewide legal service delivery systems that coordinate efforts of senior legal helplines, legal services providers funded through the Older Americans Act, pro-bono attorneys, law school clinics, and self-help sites to ensure maximum impact from limited resources.

Through the “Model Approaches to Statewide Legal Assistance Systems” (Model Approaches) Program, the Administration on Aging (AoA) assists states in integrating helplines and other low-cost legal assistance mechanisms as critical, permanent, and sustained components of comprehensive legal services delivery programs across the country. The target populations are underserved seniors, with particular emphasis upon low-income, minority, rural, homebound, Native American, and limited-English speaking older individuals.

-More-

The Administration on Aging currently funds 13 Model Approaches projects, six of which are now completing their three-year cycle (Alabama, Idaho, Iowa, Maryland, North Dakota, and Virginia). The remaining seven were recently awarded continuation funding for their third and final year: Connecticut, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania.

Upon completion of the three-year grant period, the Model Approaches projects will present cost-effective examples of well-integrated legal services delivery systems and strategies that increase overall service access for elders. “We expect innovative service delivery models to emerge from these collaborative projects that can be replicated in other states that wish to target scarce resources and increase legal services to seniors in greatest social or economic need,” said Assistant Secretary Greenlee.

More information about AoA services and programs may be found at www.aoa.gov. For more information on AoA’s Legal Services programs, please visit: http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/Elder_Rights/Legal/index.aspx

###

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging (AoA), works with a nationwide network of organizations and service providers to develop a comprehensive and cost-effective system of long-term care that helps elderly individuals maintain their independence and dignity in their homes and communities. For more information about the AoA, please contact: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Washington, D.C. 20201, Phone (202) 401-4541.
AoA Web site: www.aoa.gov E-mail: aoainfo@aoa.gov