



2015 Public Benefits Conference

April 23-24

Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency– Harrisburg, PA

Thursday, April 23

8:15 am – 9:25 am **CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

9:25 am – 9:30 am **WELCOMING REMARKS**

9:30 am – 11:00 am **Hearing Advocacy: Cross Examination and Other Trial Skills) 1.5 CLE**

[John Whitelaw, Richard Weishaupt –Community Legal Services](#)

This session will use a special mock hearing videotape to allow participants to improve their direct and cross examination skills in Social Security hearings. Particular attention will be placed on questioning Vocational Experts and Medical Advisors as well as the claimant and other witnesses. Although primarily focused on disability hearings, other advocates who do administrative hearings will benefit from the presentation.

11:00 am – 12:00 pm **Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Public Benefits Practices 1.0 CLE-Ethics**

[Richard Weishaupt –Community Legal Services, Phil Rosenthal-Legal Aid of SE PA](#)

This session will present an overview of immigrant eligibility for Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, and SSI. This area is challenging because the rules defining immigrant eligibility are different for each program. In this session we will review the various types of immigration status that meet citizenship/immigration status eligibility criteria for each program. We will also look at LSC rules specifying the types of immigration status that qualify an immigrant for legal services. We will note whether persons with statuses that allow them to be served by LSC funded programs are eligible for benefits and, if so, which ones.

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm **LUNCH-CAUSE-PA BREAKOUT SESSION**

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm **Accessing LIHEAP for Maximum Client Benefit 1.0 CLE**

[Harry Geller-Co-Director, PA Utility Law Project, Maripat Pileggi-Community Legal Services, Minta Livengood-CAUSE-PA, Laurel Legal Services](#)

This session will review the 2014-2015 LIHEAP and the lessons learned to enable advocates to achieve a greater and fuller scope of the potential benefits for each client.

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm **Immigrant Rights to Public Benefits 1.0 CLE**

[Peter Zurlieh – Community Justice Project, Maripat Pileggi, Community Legal Services](#)

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3:00 pm - 3:15 pm **BREAK**

3:15 pm – 4:45 pm **Challenges and Opportunities in the TANF Program (including related SNAP topics) 1.5 CLE**

[Peter Zurlieh – Community Justice Project, Louise Hayes-Community Legal Services, Rochelle Jackson-Just Harvest, Neighborhood Legal Services Association, Sheila Forrester, Success Against All Odds](#)

The TANF and SNAP programs have great potential for helping low-income parents to get training and good jobs. Unfortunately, they rarely do so, and often the rules of these programs even prevent parents from moving forward. The first part of this two-part session will look at welfare-to-work requirements and programs for both TANF and SNAP-only participants. We will discuss strategies to help clients access the services they need to get good jobs and advance in them. The second part of the session will focus on the applicant job search requirement and the threat of work sanctions. We will also discuss the January 2016 revival in much of the state of the SNAP rule limiting eligibility for “Able Bodied Adults without Dependents” (ABAWDS).

4:45 pm

ADJOURN FOR THE DAY – DINNER ON YOUR OWN

Friday, April 24

8:30 am – 9:30 am

BREAKFAST

9:30 am -10:30 am

An Overview of the Current State of Utility Universal Service Programs 1.0 CLE

[Liz Marx-PA Utility Law Project, Thu Tran-Community Legal Services, Linda Bergman-CAUSE-PA, Southwestern PA Legal Services](#)

Universal service programs across the state provide critical benefits to low income utility customers, and are essential in assisting clients to secure and maintain safe and affordable utility service and, in turn, housing. This workshop will present an overview of the various assistance programs, discuss how these programs interrelate, and provide practical tips and tools for how to assist clients to enroll in the programs and maximize benefits. Presenters will also discuss the impact that recent changes to the electric and gas markets and amendments to the collection and termination statute will have on the delivery of universal service benefits.

10:30 am – 10:45 am

BREAK

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

Medicaid & MAGI – Understanding the New Tax-Based Income-Counting Rules 1.5 CLE

[Kyle Fisher – PA Health Law Project](#)

Pennsylvania has expanded Medicaid to cover almost all adults with income under 138% FPL. What income counts against this limit? Whose income counts? Caseworkers and advocates alike are struggling to learn the tax-based rules that answer these questions. This session will cover the eligibility criteria for children, pregnant women, and newly eligible adults, with an emphasis on the Modified Adjusted Gross Income household composition and income-counting rules.

12:15 pm – 12:30 pm

BREAK

12:30 pm – 1:30pm

WORKING LUNCH SESSION

Transitioning from Healthy PA to HealthChoices 1.0 CLE

[Kristen Dama-Community Legal Services](#)

This workshop will give you up-to-date information on the new Medicaid expansion program as we move from Healthy PA (the waiver program of the former Administration) to the newer program, HealthChoices, of the current Administration. It is meant to help advocates understand the new program and the complicated movement from one program to another.

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Healthy Horizons; MAWD; Waiver Programs – Yes, We Still Need To Know This 1.0 CLE

[John Whitelaw-Community Legal Services](#)

While Medicaid Expansion has dramatically increased eligibility for health insurance, a significant number of our clients will not be able to take advantage of the expanded coverage. In this session, we will discuss three MA Programs that remain critical for our clients: Healthy Horizons; MAWD; and Waiver Services. We will go over basic eligibility rules and what individuals need this coverage.

2:30 pm

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