

Section XIV

Legal Services

Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO)

Description:

The Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) works to eliminate discrimination through civil and human rights law enforcement and to establish equal opportunity and justice for all persons through advocacy and education. It is governed by a nine-member volunteer Commission; five members are appointed by the Governor and four members are appointed by the Legislative leadership.

CHRO enforces human rights laws to end illegal discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations and credit transactions. Employment transactions include terms and conditions of employment, compensation by employers and issues related to employment agencies and labor organizations. They may also include issues regarding hiring, classifying, training, promoting, advertising, discharging and laying off. Credit transactions include loans, mortgages or any other credit transaction.

Individuals who feel they have experienced illegal discrimination based upon age, ancestry, color, learning disability, marital status, mental retardation, national origin, physical disability, mental disorder, race, religious creed, sex or sexual orientation can file a complaint with the Commission. Staff at the four regional offices and the fair housing unit in the administrative headquarters, receive, investigate and resolve complaints from individuals who believe they have suffered illegal discrimination.

Eligibility Requirements, Service Areas and Program Year:

Eligibility Requirements:

- Anyone who feels they have been a target of discriminatory conduct may file a complaint with the Commission.
- Complaints must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discrimination.

Service Areas:

Statewide

Program Year:

July 1 – June 30

Contact Information:

Administrative Headquarters:

21 Grand Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Telephone: 860-541-3400 or 800-477-5737
TDD: 860-541-3459
Fax: 860-246-5419
Website: www.state.ct.us/chro

To file a housing complaint contact:

Administrative Headquarters
Fair Housing Unit
Telephone: 860-541-3403
Fax: 860-246-5419

To file complaints related to employment, public accommodations or credit transactions contact the regional office that serves the town in which the alleged discrimination took place.

Capitol Region Office
999 Asylum Avenue, 2nd Floor
Hartford, CT 06105
Telephone: 860-566-7710
Fax: 860-566-1997
TDD: 860-566-7710

Towns Served:

Avon
Bloomfield
Canton
Collinsville
East Granby
Farmington
Granby

Hartford
New Britain
New Canaan
Newington
Plainville
Rocky Hill
Simsbury

Suffield
West Hartford
Wethersfield
Windsor
Windsor Locks
Unionville

Eastern Region Office
100 Broadway
Norwich, CT 06360
Telephone: 860-886-5703
Fax: 860-886-2550
TDD: 860-886-5707

Towns Served:

Andover
Ashford
Bolton
Bozrah
Brooklyn
Canterbury
Chaplin
Chester
Clinton
Colchester
Columbia
Coventry
Deep River
Eastford
East Haddam
East Hampton
East Hartford
East Lyme
East Windsor
Ellington
Enfield
Essex
Franklin

Glastonbury
Griswold
Groton
Haddam
Hampton
Hebron
Killingly
Killingworth
Lebanon
Ledyard
Lisbon
Lyme
Manchester
Mansfield
Marlborough
Montville
New London
North Stonington
Norwich
Old Lyme
Old Saybrook
Plainfield
Pomfret

Portland
Preston
Putnam
Salem
Scotland
Somers
South Windsor
Sprague
Stafford
Sterling
Stonington
Thompson
Tolland
Union
Vernon
Voluntown
Waterford
Westbrook
Willington
Windham
Woodstock

West Central Region Office
Rowland State Government Center
55 West Main Street, Suite 210
Waterbury, CT 06702
Telephone: 203-805-6530
Fax: 203-805-6559
TDD: 203-805-6579

Towns Served:

Ansonia
Barkhamsted
Beacon Falls
Berlin
Bethany
Bethlehem
Branford
Bristol
Burlington
Canaan
Cheshire

Colebrook
Cornwall
Cromwell
Derby
Durham
East Haven
Goshen
Guilford
Hamden
Hartland

Harwinton
Kent
Litchfield
Madison
Meriden
Middlebury
Middlefield
Middletown
Milford
Morris

Naugatuck
New Hartford
New Haven
Norfolk
North Branford
North Canaan
North Haven
Orange
Oxford
Plymouth
Prospect

Roxbury
Salisbury
Seymour
Sharon
Shelton
Southbury
Southington
Thomaston
Torrington
Wallingford
Warren

Washington
Waterbury
Watertown
West Haven
Winchester
Wolcott
Woodbridge
Woodbury
Winsted

Southwest Region Office
350 Fairfield Avenue, 6th Floor
Bridgeport, CT 06604
Telephone: 203-579-6246
Fax: 203-579-6950
TDD: 203-579-6246

Towns Served:

Bethel
Bridgeport
Bridgewater
Brookfield
Danbury
Darien
Easton
Fairfield
Greenwich

Monroe
New Canaan
New Fairfield
New Milford
Newtown
Norwalk
Redding
Ridgefield
Sherman

Stamford
Stratford
Trumbull
Weston
Westport
Wilton

Related Information:

[Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, refer to page XV – 54.](#)

Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection

Description:

The Department of Consumer Protection is responsible for protecting citizens from physical injury and financial loss that may occur as the result of unsafe or fraudulent products and services marketed in the state of Connecticut. Its areas of oversight include: food and standards, drugs, cosmetics and medical devices, alcoholic liquor, occupational and professional licensing and trade practices. The Department administers its responsibilities through licensure, inspection, investigation, enforcement and public education activities. It also provides financial relief from fraudulent activities through its administration of the Home Improvement Guaranty Fund, the New Home Construction Guaranty Fund, the Real Estate Guaranty Fund, the Health Club Guaranty Fund and the Itinerant Vendor Guaranty Fund. Additionally, the Department administers the "Lemon Law" Arbitration Program which provides an independent arbitration mechanism to settle disputes between consumers and automobile manufacturers regarding defective new cars and motorcycles.

Eligibility Requirements, Service Areas and program Year:

Eligibility Requirements:

- N/A

Service Areas:

Statewide

Program Year:

July 1 – June 30

Contact Information:

Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection

165 Capitol Avenue

Hartford, CT 06106

Telephone: 860-713-6300

Toll-free in CT: 800-842-2649

TDD: 860-713-7240

Website: www.ct.gov/dcp

Related Information:

[Volunteer Assistance Program, refer to page V – 20.](#)

Connecticut Fair Housing Center

Description:

The Connecticut Fair Housing Center is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring equal housing opportunity to Connecticut residents. The center provides various services that deal with fair housing matters including educating and training people on the rights of persons in protected classes, including those with disabilities, and on laws relating to housing discrimination; investigating housing discrimination complaints, providing advocacy and representation; referring victims of housing discrimination to attorneys and researching and giving technical assistance on issues related to fair housing. In addition, the Center has been working to ensure that homeowners in danger of losing their homes to foreclosure receive advice and, possibly, referrals to attorneys who are willing to take their foreclosure cases free of charge.

Persons can call the Fair Housing Center if they have been a victim of housing discrimination for any reason including, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, religion, family status, disability, marital status, age, sexual orientation or lawful source of income. Center staff solicits information from callers on the details of the alleged discrimination and may take the following actions: investigate the complaint, offer advice and counseling about fair housing laws, provide free legal representation or make referrals to legal representatives.

Eligibility Requirements, Service Areas and Program Year:

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be a Connecticut resident or be calling in regards to a Connecticut property.
- There are no income requirements.

Service Areas:

Statewide

Program Year:

January 1 – December 31

Contact Information:

For initial complaints and to speak with intake personnel:

Connecticut Fair Housing Center
221 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Telephone: 860-247-4400 or toll free 888-247-4401
Fax: 860-247-4236
Email: info@ctfairhousing.org
Website: www.ctfairhousing.org

Related Information:

[Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities \(CHRO\) refer to page XIV – 1.](#)
[Statewide Legal Services, refer to page XIV – 23.](#)

Conservator of Estate Program (COE)

Description:

The Department of Social Services' Commissioner may be appointed conservator of estate for eligible individuals when persons are incapable of making decisions on their own. The Department of Social Services (DSS) conservatorship can only be obtained through Probate Courts when there is no other person who can act as an individual's conservator. Individuals must meet financial eligibility criteria. The Conservator of estate is responsible for financial issues associated with the client including, financial transactions and money management. Appointment of the Commissioner of Social Services is intended to be a last resort. It is considered only after the court finds an individual incapable of managing his or her own affairs and (1) has property rights, which will be wasted or dissipated unless proper management is provided; and/or (2) funds are needed for the person's and/or his or her dependent's support, care or welfare. DSS central office staff act as conservator of estate designees.

The Department of Social Services does not accept voluntary appointment as a conservator. Probate Courts provide forms for submitting petitions and instructions on how to file for conservatorship.

Eligibility Requirements, Service Areas and Program Year:

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be age 60 or older.
- Must have no more than \$1,600 in liquid assets. Liquid assets include all cash and any resources, which can readily be converted to cash. It excludes burial insurance and certain pre-paid funeral expenses.
- Probate Court must determine that the person is incapable of managing his/her own affairs and that there is no other suitable person to serve as conservator.

Service Areas:

Statewide

Program Year:

July 1 – June 30

Contact Information:

Connecticut Department of Social Services
Social Work Service Division
Conservator of Estate Program
25 Sigourney Street

Hartford, CT 06106
Telephone: 860-424-5241

To determine which Probate Courts serve specific areas or to obtain forms for submitting petitions to file for conservatorship, persons can call the local Town Hall, access the blue pages of the telephone directory or www.jud.ct.gov/probate to obtain locations and telephone numbers of Probate Courts serving specific areas or call:

Probate Court Administration
186 Newington Road
West Hartford, CT 06111
Telephone: 860-231-2442

Related Information:

N/A

Conservator of Person Program (COP)

Description:

The Department of Social Services (DSS) administers the Conservator of Person (COP) program, which was initiated in recognition of the critical need for individuals to act on behalf of older adults who, due to mental or physical disability, are incapable of managing their own affairs. Probate Courts appoint the Commissioner of DSS as a conservator of person. Social Work staff in the DSS regional offices act as conservator of person designees for eligible persons when there is no other person to act as an individual's conservator and when the person's health or welfare is in jeopardy without the appointment of a conservator. Persons must meet financial eligibility criteria for the program. The conservator of person designees are responsible for the personal needs of the program participant, which include the person's shelter, food, clothing and safety as well as medical care and medical decision-making. Probate Courts provide forms for submitting petitions and instructions on how to file for conservatorship.

Eligibility Requirements, Service Areas and Program Year:

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be age 60 or older.
- Must have liquid assets of no more than \$1,500. Liquid assets include all cash and any resources that can readily be converted to cash.
- Probate Court must determine a person incapable of managing his/her own affairs and that there is no other suitable person to serve as conservator.
- An individual's health or welfare must be in jeopardy without the appointment of a conservator.

Service Areas:

Statewide

Program Year:

July 1 – June 30

Contact Information:

To obtain information on the Conservator of Person Program contact the local DSS Regional Offices located in [Appendix H](#).

To determine which Probate Courts serve specific areas or to obtain forms for submitting petitions to file for conservatorship, persons can call the local Town Hall, access the blue pages of the telephone directory or www.jud.ct.gov/probate to obtain locations and telephone numbers of Probate Courts serving specific areas or call:

Probate Court Administration
186 Newington Road
West Hartford, CT 06111
Telephone: 860-231-2442

Related Information:

N/A

Consumer Law Project for Elders

Description:

The Consumer Law Project for Elders (CLPE) is a project of Connecticut Legal Services, a nonprofit law firm. Persons age 60 and older of any income and asset level can call the CLPE Hotline with a consumer problem. Younger persons can call the hotline on behalf of individuals who are at least 60 years of age. CLPE's staff of attorneys and paralegals help older adults resolve consumer issues that may include: questions about consumer rights, debt or collection problems, receipt of bills for items never purchased, identity theft, bankruptcy, dispute of goods or services purchased, and unfair and undisclosed loan terms. All information provided to the CLPE is confidential. CLPE may offer advice or provide options that help callers resolve their problem.

CLPE may represent persons in certain circumstances or it may refer them to lawyers who specialize in areas that address their problems. CLPE prioritizes available representation based on the type of problems and the financial needs of callers. All services provided by CLPE are free including educational materials; when court fees are charged, however, they are the responsibility of the person receiving assistance.

Eligibility Requirements, Service Areas and Program Year:

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be age 60 or older or request information on behalf of someone who is at least age 60.

Service Areas:

Statewide

Program Year:

July 1 – June 30

Contact Information:

Consumer Law Project for Elders

Telephone: 800-296-1467

Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Website: www.ctelderlaw.org

Related Information:

Lawyer Referral Services, refer to page XIV – 15.

Legal Assistance for Military Retirees ad Dependents, refer to page XIV – 17.

Legal Assistance for Older Persons, refer to page XIV – 18.

Lawyer Referral Services

Description:

Lawyer Referral Services:

Lawyer Referral Services of Area Bar Associations sponsor not-for-profit services that refer members of the public to private attorneys. Persons who access these services are asked several questions by a referral consultant to determine the nature of their situation. The consultant refers individuals to a private attorney for a consultation if it is determined that it would be beneficial to discuss the matter with an attorney. Persons are given an attorney's name and telephone number, whom they must contact to arrange a half-hour consultation. A modest referral fee is charged to offset the program's administrative costs. This fee is due at the time of referral.

Modest Means Reduced Fee Referral Program:

In addition to Lawyer Referral Services, the New Haven County Bar Association sponsors the Modest Means Reduced Fee Referral Program for certain types of family law, landlord/tenant, unemployment compensation and minor criminal cases. Eligible individuals are referred to attorneys who have agreed to consult with clients and possibly take cases for a hourly fee of \$60, which is lower than the typical hourly rate in this area. Family cases are restricted to only new family matters that are filed in the New Haven or Milford courts. Such matters include divorce, child support or custody modifications that are not already in litigation.

Eligibility Requirements, Service Areas and Program Year:

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must have the ability to pay attorney's fees.
- Modest Means Reduced Fee Referral Program: income must be no more than 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Refer to [Appendix F](#).

Service Areas:

Service areas vary depending upon the availability of participating attorneys.

Program Year:

N/A

Contact Information:

To obtain a referral to a participating attorney:

Fairfield County Bar Association
(Greater Bridgeport/Fairfield Area)
Telephone: 203-335-4116
\$35 referral fee

Modest Means Reduced Fee Referral
Program
Telephone: 203-562-0162
\$25 referral fee

Hartford County Bar Association
Telephone: 860-525-6052
\$25 referral fee

New London County Bar Association
Telephone: 860-889-9384 (only on
Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays)
\$25 referral fee

New Haven County Bar Association
(Greater New Haven/Valley/Waterbury)
Telephone: 203-562-5750
\$35 referral fee

Related Information:

[Legal Assistance for Older Persons, refer to page XIV – 18.](#)

Legal Assistance for Military Retirees and Dependents

Description:

Coast Guard and Navy attorneys provide general legal assistance free of charge for all branches of military service and their dependents, which include active duty, reserves on active duty for 30 or more days, retired military personnel (as resources permit) and dependents. Attorneys help with a variety of civil (non-criminal) legal concerns, including wills and probate, powers of attorney, health-care directives, landlord/tenant disputes, consumer issues, domestic relations and small claims procedures. Assistance does not, however, extend to court representation. Assistance services provided by the Naval Legal Service Office may be offered on a walk-in basis as well as by appointment, services offered by the Coast Guard Academy Legal Office may, however, require an appointment.

Eligibility Requirements, Service Areas and Program Year:

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be an active duty, reserve on active duty for 30 days or more, retired military personnel or a dependent of one.
- Must possess a valid Department of Defense or Coast Guard identification card.

Service Areas:

Statewide

Program Year:

N/A

Contact Information:

Naval Legal Service Office
North Central Groton Department, Box 10
Naval Submarine Base, New London
Groton, CT 06340
Telephone: 860- 694-3741
Fax: 860-694-2628

Academy Legal Office
U.S. Coast Guard Academy
15 Mohegan Avenue
New London, CT 06333
Telephone: 860-701-6792
Fax: 860-444-8333

Related Information:

N/A

Legal Assistance for Older Persons

Description:

Persons age 60 and older who may not be able to afford to hire a private attorney for a civil matter may receive help from Legal Services agencies in Connecticut that provide free counseling and representation on many elder law issues. These issues include matters related to Medicaid, other government programs, patient's rights and nursing homes. The three agencies that are funded through the Older Americans Act are Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Assistance and New Haven Legal Assistance. Funding to these agencies is limited, therefore, the following categories have priority for legal representation:

- Access to healthcare;
- Federal and state benefit and support programs;
- Rights of nursing home residents; and
- Legal issues, which are the direct result of a person's poverty.

Eligibility Requirements, Service Areas and Program Year:

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be at least 60 years of age.

Service Areas:

Statewide

Program Year:

October 1 – September 30

Contact Information:

Eastern Connecticut
Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.
872 Main Street
Willimantic, CT 06226
Telephone: 860-456-1761
Toll Free: 800-413-7769

North Central Connecticut
Greater Hartford Legal Assistance
80 Jefferson Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Telephone: 860-541-5000

South Central Connecticut
New Haven Legal Assistance
Association
426 State Street
New Haven, CT 06112
Telephone: 203-946-4811

Southwestern Connecticut
Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.
211 State Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604
Telephone: 203-336-3851
Toll Free: 800-809-4434

Western Connecticut
Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.
85 Central Avenue
Waterbury, CT 06702
Telephone: 203-756-8074
Toll Free: 800-413-7797

Related Information:

[Consumer Law Project for Elders, refer to page XIV – 13.](#)

[Lawyer Referral Services, refer to page XIV – 15.](#)

[Statewide Legal Services, refer to page XIV – 23.](#)

Protective Services for the Elderly (PSE)

Description:

Protective Services for the Elderly is administered by the Division of Social Work Services within the Connecticut Department of Social Services. It is designed to safeguard people age 60 and older from physical, mental, and emotional abuse, neglect, abandonment and/or financial abuse and exploitation. The Department's Social Workers devise a plan of care aimed at enhancing an elder's safety while preserving the person's right of self-determination. Staff may help the person to remain in the living situation he or she prefers, safeguard legal rights, prevent bodily harm or injury, determine service needs and then mobilize resources to provide necessary services.

The Social Work Case Plan involves a thorough assessment of the person and his or her situation; and may include crisis intervention, arranging for and coordinating services such as, adult day care, companion, counseling, homemaker, home health care, home delivered meals, long term care or, if necessary, emergency placement.

In extreme cases, the Department of Social Services can seek court authorization to provide services to a person who appears to "lack the capacity" to give consent to reasonable and necessary services to assure personal safety. Similarly, the Department may apply to the Probate Court for the appointment of a Conservator whose role is to make decisions on behalf of an incompetent person.

Eligibility Requirements, Service Areas and Program Year:

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be a Connecticut resident
- Must be age 60 or older and meet the statutory criteria of being abused, abandoned, exploited or neglected.
- There are no income requirements.

Service Areas:

Statewide

Program Year:

July 1 – June 30

Contact Information:

To report cases of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation directly to the Department of Social Services Protective Services for the Elderly contact the intake telephone numbers that are listed below by region. Protective Services can also be accessed by contacting the DSS Regional Office found in [Appendix H](#) or by calling:

Telephone: 888-385-4225, during regular business hours.
For emergencies after hours call: 2-1-1.

Department of Social Services Protective Services for the Elderly intake telephone numbers by region:

North Region:

Hartford
3580 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06120
Telephone: 860-723-1003

New Britain Sub-Office
270 Lafayette Street
New Britain, CT 06053
Telephone: 860-612-3565

Manchester Sub-Office
699 East Middle Turnpike
Manchester, CT 06040
Telephone: 860-647-5914

Willimantic Sub-Office
676 Main Street
Willimantic, CT 06226
Telephone: 860-465-3550

South Region:

New Haven
194 Bassett Street
New Haven, CT 06511
Telephone: 203-974-8029

Middletown
117 Main Street Extension
Middletown, CT 06457
Telephone: 860-704-3046

Norwich

Uncas on Thames
401 West Thames Street, Suite 102
Norwich, CT 06360
Telephone: 860-886-0521

West Region:

Bridgeport
925 Housatonic Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06606
Telephone: 203-551-2881

Danbury Sub-Office
342 Main Street
Danbury, CT 06810
Telephone: 203-597-4141

Stamford Sub-Office
1642 Bedford Street
Stamford, CT 06905
Telephone: 203-251-9392

Waterbury
249 Thomaston Avenue
Waterbury, CT 06702
Telephone: 203-597-4141

Torrington Sub-Office
62 Commercial Boulevard
Torrington, CT 06790
Telephone: 860-496-6950

Related Information:

N/A

Statewide Legal Services

Description:

Statewide Legal Services operates a general legal hotline that provides free legal advice on a variety of civil law issues such as housing, including landlord-tenant and foreclosure matters; family problems; consumer issues, including bankruptcy and matters related to public benefits such as, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), energy assistance, State Supplement and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Persons needing legal representation are referred to the appropriate Legal Services office. Statewide Legal Services also provides a wide variety of educational pamphlets on common legal problems relating to housing, family matters, public benefits and consumer issues. Older adults are encouraged to call the local Legal Services office in their region before accessing Statewide Legal Services.

Eligibility Requirements, Service Areas and Program Year:

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must have incomes at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty level. Refer to [Appendix F](#).

Service Areas:

Statewide

Program Year:

N/A

Contact Information:

Statewide Legal Services
424 Main Street
Middletown, CT 06457
Telephone: 860-453-3320 or 860-344-0380

Related Information:

[Consumer Law Project for Elders, refer to page XIV – 13.](#)
[Lawyer Referral Services, refer to page XIV – 15.](#)
[Legal Assistance for Older Persons, refer to page XIV – 18.](#)