



Enhancing Lives Through Assistive Services and Technology

General Resource and Self-Help Information for Older Individuals with Disabilities

This resource guide is created to provide general resources and self-help information for family members, caregivers, guardians, advocates/representatives, and older individuals with disabilities, and is not a substitute for legal advice.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Older Americans Act (OAA)	4
Anti-discrimination in Employment	5
Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992.....	5
Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act.....	5
Smart Consumers Can Stop Fraud: A Guide for Seniors...6	
Division of Consumer Services.....	6
AARP	6
Visiting Angels-Living Assistance Service	7
The Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA).....	7
The Community Care for the Elderly Act.....	8
Senior Citizen Centers	9
Emergency Preparedness.....	9
Special Needs Registry	10
Safe and Well	10
Statewide Public Guardianship Office (SPGO).....	10
Elder Justice Centers (EJCs).....	11
America’s Second Harvest	11
Making Choices: Beginning to Plan for End of Life Care.12	
Five Wishes.....	12
The Florida Bar	13
Legal Aid In Florida.....	13
Hospice	14
2-1-1 Information & Referral Services.....	14
Clearinghouse on Disability Information (CDI).....	15
The Department of Community Affairs	15
Florida Division of Blind Services (DBS).....	16
Centers for Independent Living	16
Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. (FTRI).....	17
Motor Vehicles / Florida GrandDriver.....	17
Transportation Disadvantaged Program.....	18
Affordable Accessible Housing.....	18

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	19
Information for Senior Citizens.....	19
Florida Housing Finance Corporation	19
FloridaHousingSearch.org	20
Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. (FAAST)	20
National Accessible Apartment.....	20
Clearinghouse (NAAC)	20
Reverse Mortgages for Seniors	21
Housing Discrimination Complaints.....	21
Florida Commission on Human Relations.....	22
WebMD.com (Medical Information from A – Z)	22
Cancer Information Links	22
Alzheimer’s Helpline	23
American Heart Association.....	23
Mental Health America	23
National Parkinson Foundation.....	23
Eye Care of America.....	24
Social Security Administration.....	24
Long Term Care Ombudsman within the Department of Elder Affairs	24
Agency for Health Care Administration.....	26
DCF Adult Protective Services / Abuse Hotline	27
Nursing Homes and Nursing Home Requirements	28
Due Process Rights	29
Fair Hearings / Rights Prior to Involuntary Discharge or Transfer	30
Volunteer Organizations	31
Senior Corps	31
Foster Grandparents.....	32
Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities, Inc.	32

General Resource and Self-Help Information for Older Individuals with Disabilities

This resource guide is created to provide general resources and self-help information for family members, caregivers, guardians, advocates/representatives, and older individuals with disabilities and is not a substitute for legal advice.

To find a subject that may be of most help to you, refer to the Table of Contents for topics/subject matter and page number references.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) as amended for individuals 60 years of age and older

Overview:

In addition to creating the Administration on Aging, the OAA:

“...authorized grants to States for community planning and services programs, as well as for research, demonstration and training projects in the field of aging. Later amendments to the Act added grants to Area Agencies on Aging for local needs identification, planning, and funding of services, including but not limited to nutrition programs in the community as well as for those who are homebound; programs which serve Native American elders; services targeted at low-income minority elders; health promotion and disease prevention activities; in-home services for frail elders, and those services which protect the rights of older persons such as the long term care ombudsman program.”

For more information, go to:

http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/OAA/index.aspx

Anti-discrimination in Employment

Federal laws prohibit an employer from discriminating against job applicants and employees who are 40 years of age and older. Examples of employment discrimination protections can be found under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) and the Older Workers' Benefit Protection Act (OWBPA).

For more information, go to:

ADEA:

<http://www.legalworkplace.com/discrimination/adea-age.aspx>

OWBPA:

<http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/thelaw/owbpa.html>

Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992

“The general purposes of the Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992 are to secure for all individuals within the state freedom from discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, or marital status and thereby to protect their interest in personal dignity...”.

For more information on Chapter 760, Part I Florida Statutes, go to:

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch0760/SEC01.HTM&Title=-%3e2006-%3eCh0760-%3eSection%2001#0760.01

Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act

There are penalties and consequences for violating the rights of older Americans and individuals with disabilities, if a “...method, act, or practice victimizes or attempts to victimize senior citizens or handicapped persons, and commits such violation when she or he knew or should have known that her or his conduct was unfair or deceptive, is liable for a civil penalty of not more than \$15,000 for each such violation.”

For more information, go to Chapter 501.2077, Florida Statutes:
http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch0501/SEC2077.HTM&Title=-%3e2006-%3eCh0501-%3eSection%202077#0501.2077

Smart Consumers Can Stop Fraud:
A Guide for Seniors

“This website contains a link to a new brochure, "Smart Consumers Can Stop Fraud: A Guide for Seniors." The information in the brochure provides valuable guidelines and steps for consumers to take to protect their interests. “Smart Consumers” also contains information on tools designed to save money, especially in the important area of prescription medication.”

For more information, go to:
http://www.myfloridalegal.com/Seniors_Brochure.pdf or call the fraud hotline within the Office of the Attorney General at 1-866-966-7226.

Division of Consumer Services

“The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services functions as the state's clearinghouse for consumer complaints. We assist consumers with information, protection and complaints, regardless of whether we regulate that particular industry.”

For more information or to file a consumer complaint, call 1-800-435-7352 or go to: <http://www.800helpfla.com>

AARP

AARP is dedicated to enhancing quality of life for all as we age. For more information, go to: <http://www.aarp.org/> or Call 1-888-687-2277, Monday – Friday, 7am - 12 midnight ET. For a Florida AARP Chapter closest to you, go to: <http://www.aarp.org/states/fl/>

Visiting Angels-Living Assistance Service

“Providing Senior Homecare By Angels®

Visiting Angels is the nation’s leading, nationally respected network of non-medical, private duty home care agencies providing senior care, elder care, personal care, respite care and companion care to help the elderly continue to live in their homes across America.

Visiting Angels is the family alternative to assisted living facilities and nursing homes. Our caring and experienced caregivers provide up to 24 hour care in the comfort of your own home, at affordable rates. Our services make possible for our clients to remain in their home instead of being placed in a nursing home or institutional facility.”

For more information, all toll-free 1-800-365-4189, or go to:
<http://www.visitingangels.com/whyvisitingangels.asp>

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA)

In 1988, DOEA was created under Florida’s Constitution, Article IV, Section 12, giving the Florida Legislature the authorization to create a Department of Elderly Affairs and provisions regarding the administration and duties of DOEA.

Further, DOEA is authorized under Section 430, Florida Statutes, to serve as the primary state agency responsible for administering human services programs; policy recommendations for long-term care; to combat ageism/ age discrimination; to oversee implementation of federally funded and state-funded programs and services for the state's elderly population; serve as an information clearinghouse; assist elderly persons to secure needed services; promote the prevention of neglect, abuse, or exploitation of elderly persons unable to protect their own interests; eliminate and prevent inappropriate institutionalization of elderly persons by promoting community-based care, home-based care, or other forms of less intensive care; and aid in the support of families and other caregivers of elderly persons among other services.

For more information on Chapter 430, Florida Statutes, go to:
http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=Ch0430/ch0430.htm

To request help, contact the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER or 1-800-963-5337, or go to: <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/index.php>, or contact them at:

Florida Department of Elder Affairs

4040 Esplanade Way

Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000

Phone: (850) 414-2000

Fax: (850) 414-2004

information@elderaffairs.org

The Community Care for the Elderly Act

Legislative intent:

“The purpose of ss. 430.201-430.207 is to assist functionally impaired elderly persons in living dignified and reasonably independent lives in their own homes or in the homes of relatives or caregivers through the development, expansion, reorganization, and coordination of various community-based services. The Legislature intends that a continuum of care be established so that functionally impaired elderly persons age 60 and older may be assured the least restrictive environment suitable to their needs. The development of innovative approaches to program management, staff training, and service delivery which have an impact on cost-avoidance, cost-effectiveness, and program efficiency is encouraged.” 430.202, Florida Statutes.

The Department of Elder Affairs is responsible for administering the Community Care for the Elderly (CCE) Program. Area Agencies on Aging subcontract across the state to provide community based services. A priority for services will be given to individuals who are determined to be victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation who are in need of immediate services to prevent further harm.

The following are services Community Care for the Elderly programs can provide for eligible elders in the community who are “functionally-impaired” to help them live in the least restrictive, most cost effective environments:

Adult day care, adult day health care, case management, case aide, chore, companionship, consumable medical supplies, counseling, escort, emergency alert response, emergency home repair, home delivered meals, home health aide, homemaker, home nursing, information and referral, legal assistance, material aid, medical therapeutic services, personal care, respite, shopping assistance, transportation, and other community-based services are provided to eligible clients.

For more information on the Community Care for the Elderly Act, Sections 430.201-430.207, Florida Statutes go to:

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch0430/SEC201.HTM&Title=->2006->Ch0430->Section%20201#0430.201

Or contact one of the eleven (11) areas on aging who help administer the Community Care for the Elderly Program, go to:

<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/english/aaa.php>

Senior Citizen Centers

Within Florida there are approximately 260 senior citizen centers that may offer a variety of services such as health (including mental health), social, nutritional, educational, and recreational.

To find a local senior citizen center, to go:

<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/english/seniorcenter.php>

Emergency Preparedness

“Your safety in a disaster depends heavily on your own actions, and developing a survival plan is the first and most important step.”

For more information, go to:

<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/english/disaster.php>

To review a 2006 Disaster Preparedness Guide for Elders, go to:

<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/english/disasterguide/2009.pdf>

Special Needs Registry

If you are an individual with a disability in Florida, you have an option to register with the Special Needs Registry maintained by the Emergency Management Division in each county. Ask your county's Emergency Management Division representative for details on services available in your county. You can locate your emergency management county officials through: http://www.floridadisaster.org/fl_county_em.htm.

Safe and Well

The Red Cross website allows you to register yourself as "safe and well" after a disaster. For information, go to: <https://disastersafe.redcross.org/> or call 1-866-438-4636.

Statewide Public Guardianship Office (SPGO) within the Department of Elder Affairs

"How can the Statewide Public Guardianship Office Help You? The Statewide Public Guardianship Office, housed within the Department of Elder Affairs, appoints local public guardian offices as directed by statute to provide guardianship services to persons who do not have adequate income or assets to afford a private guardian and there is no willing family or friend to serve. SPGO is also responsible for the registration of Professional Guardians."

You may contact the SPGO at 1-800-414-2381 or 1-800-414-2000. The SPGO also has Offices of the Public Guardian in select areas of the state.

For more information, go to: <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/english/spgo.php>

Elder Justice Centers (EJCs)

In Florida there are two Elder Justice Centers: in Tampa within the 13th Circuit Court, and in Palm Beach within the 15th Circuit Court.

“The Elder Justice Center (EJC) is a court program that helps persons age sixty (60) or older who are involved in the court system because of guardianship, criminal, family or other civil matters. ...[T]he Administrative Office of the Courts established the first Elder Justice Center in the nation. The goals of the program include: Providing a designated facility, coordinating access to existing agencies, providing assistance to senior victims of abuse and/or exploitation, providing public education to the public, and providing short term case management services.”

For more information on the EJC in Tampa, call 813-276-2726, or go to: <http://www.fljud13.org/ejc.htm>

The EJC in Palm Beach can be reached at 561-355-4385, or go to: <http://pbcgov.com/publicsafety/justiceservices/elderjustice.htm>

America's Second Harvest

“America's Second Harvest—The Nation's Food Bank Network is the nation's largest charitable hunger-relief organization:

- A Network of more than 200 Member food banks and food-rescue organizations;
- Serving all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Last year, the America's Second Harvest Network provided food assistance to more than 25 million low-income hungry people in the United States, including more than 9 million children and nearly 3 million seniors.”

For more information, call toll-free 1-800-771-2303, or go to: <http://www.secondharvest.org/>

Making Choices: Beginning to Plan for End of Life Care:
Living Wills and the Designation
of Health Care Surrogates

As a service to the public, the Florida Senate provides information and forms to help with the planning for end of life care.

“While these types of decisions are never easy, it is better to be prepared in the event that you find yourself in a similar situation.

Please consider completing the Living Will and Designation of Health Care Surrogate available below, and sharing a copy with your spouse or loved one, and your doctor. These documents will be provided on the Senate's website free of charge from now on.

The Florida Senate hopes that you and yours will never have to suffer through such a difficult decision as this one, but erring on the side of caution, we hope you will take the opportunity to fill out these forms and keep them with your personal and medical records for you and your family's protection.”

For more information or to download these important forms free of charge, go to: http://www.flsenate.gov/welcome/living_will/

For more information on a procedure for making a living will, notice to physician, suggested form of a living will, and procedure for living will, go to: Chapter 765.302 - .304, Florida Statutes, found at: http://www.flsenate.gov/welcome/living_will/Ch_765_FS.pdf

Five Wishes

“The *Five Wishes*” document helps you express how you want to be treated if you are seriously ill and unable to speak for yourself. It is unique among all other living will and health agent forms because it looks to all of a person's needs: medical, personal, emotional and spiritual. *Five Wishes* also

encourages discussing your wishes with your family and physician.

Five Wishes lets your family and doctors know:

1. Which person you want to make health care decisions for you when you can't make them;
2. The kind of medical treatment you want or don't want;
3. How comfortable you want to be;
4. How you want people to treat you; and
5. What you want your loved ones to know.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.agingwithdignity.org/5wishes.html>

The Florida Bar

“The Florida Bar provides information for the public on certain general areas of law as well as specific legal issues in our Consumer Pamphlets.”
You can find this information including forms for Living Wills, Health Care Surrogates, and Advanced Directives at:

<http://www.floridabar.org/tfb/flabarwe.nsf/basic+view/B954F12053A410EC85256E28005BD4A0?OpenDocument>

You can also contact The Florida Bar or request a referral for a private attorney by calling toll-free 1-800- 342-8060.

Legal Aid In Florida

“The American Constitution guarantees equal justice under the law, but those words mean little unless everyone has access to our legal system.

If you have a civil legal problem but cannot afford to hire a private lawyer, you still may have access to the legal system through your local legal

services or legal aid organization which provides free or low cost legal services to persons with low incomes.”

To find a legal aid in your area, go to:

<http://www.floridabar.org/tfb/TFBConsum.nsf/basic+view/A949D517A480A5A685256B2F006C5C77?OpenDocument>

Hospice

“Considered to be the model for quality, compassionate care for people facing a life-limiting illness or injury, hospice and palliative care involve a team-oriented approach to expert medical care, pain management, and emotional and spiritual support expressly tailored to the patient's needs and wishes. Support is provided to the patient’s loved ones as well.

The focus of hospice relies on the belief that each of us has the right to die pain-free and with dignity, and that our loved ones will receive the necessary support to allow us to do so. The focus is on caring, not curing, and in most cases, care is provided to you in your own home. Hospice can be provided in freestanding hospice facilities, hospitals, and nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.”

For more information, go to: <http://www.caringinfo.org/>

To find a local Hospice by county in Florida, go to:

<http://www.floridahospices.org/find.html>

2-1-1 Information & Referral Services

“Every hour of every day, someone in the United States needs essential services -- from finding an after-school program to securing adequate care for a child or an aging parent. Faced with a dramatic increase in the number of agencies and help-lines, people often don't know where to turn. In many cases, people end up going without these necessary services because

they do not know where to start. 2-1-1 helps people find and give help.”

For more information on 2-1-1 services, and to locate a 2-1-1 service in your area, go to:

<http://www.211.org>.

Clearinghouse on Disability Information (CDI)

For information and referral on cross-disability matters, you can contact the Clearinghouse on Disability Information toll-free hotline at 1-877-232-4968 (voice and TTY).

For more information, go to:

<http://www.healthfinder.gov/orgs/HR0035.htm>

The Department of Community Affairs, Weatherization Assistance Program

The Weatherization Assistance Programs provide grants to community action agencies, local governments, Indian tribes, non-profit agencies, including urban leagues in all Florida counties to fund energy saving repairs on low-income homes. Preference is given to elders, individuals with disabilities, and families with children 12 and under who meet low-income criteria.

An average of \$2,744 is spent on homes to help lower energy costs. Services may include insulation, weather stripping, water heater wraps and reduction of air infiltration. Furnaces and air conditioning systems may be repaired. An energy audit and testing must be performed on each home. The house data is entered into a computer program and a print out is provided. The print out must be evaluated to determine the measures that will be provided.

For more information on the Weatherization Assistance Program, go to:

<http://www.dca.state.fl.us/fhcd/wap/index.cfm>

Department of Community Affairs
Division of Housing and Community Development
Weatherization Assistance Program
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2100
(850) 488-7541 (Suncom 278-5431)

For a list of weatherization assistance programs by county, go to:
<http://www.dca.state.fl.us/fhcd/CommunityAssistanceContactList.pdf>

Florida Division of Blind Services (DBS)

DBS has programs that include services to older individuals with visual disabilities and blindness across the state. They work through a public-private partnership with the Florida Association of Agencies Serving the Blind (F.A.A.S.B.). The mission of F.A.A.S.B. is:

“To serve as a united voice and be the organizational support empowering private agencies serving Floridians with blindness and visual impairments to provide state-of-the-art professional vision rehabilitation services which enhance the quality of individual and community life.”

For more information on community independent living services through F.A.A.S.B. and DBS, call 1-800-342-1828 or go to: <http://faasb.com/>.

Centers for Independent Living

“The Florida Association of Centers for Independent Living (FACIL) is a networking, capacity building, advocacy organization of Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Centers for Independent Living are 501(c)(3), consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, non-residential, private, nonprofit federally mandated agencies. CILs work to empower persons with disabilities to take charge of their lives and guide their own destinies.” For more information, go to:
<http://www.floridacils.org>

To find a Center for Independent Living in your area, go to:
<http://www.floridacils.org/map-floridas-centers-independent-living>

Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. (FTRI)

“FTRI is a statewide non-profit 501(c)3 organization that administers the Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program for citizens of Florida who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind and Speech Impaired.”

For more information, call toll-free Voice: 1-800-222-3448 or TTY: 1-888-447-5620.

For information on FTRI and free phones that amplify sound and other telecommunication services, go to:

<http://www.ftri.org/index.cfm/go/public.view/page/2>

Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles / Florida GrandDriver

What You Should Know About Aging and Driving:

Most older drivers are good drivers. But as we age, most of us will need to take steps to ensure that we can continue to drive safely. Changes in our visual, physical and mental abilities will affect each of us in different ways.

That's why the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and its partners have created "**Florida GrandDriver®**."

The goals of the **Florida GrandDriver®** program:

- Promote your continued driving safety
- Enhance your ability to get around your community when and where you want.

For more information, go to:
<http://www.floridagrandidriver.com/>

Florida GrandDriver®

Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles
2900 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
850-487-0867

Transportation Disadvantaged Program

The mission of the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged is to “...ensure the availability of efficient, cost-effective, and quality transportation services for transportation disadvantaged persons.”

For more information on the Transportation Disadvantaged Program in your area, go to: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/ctd/contacts/ctcsbycounty.htm>

Also, if you have any questions or concerns you may contact the TD Helpline at 1-800-983-2435.

For more information on Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, go to:
http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=Ch0427/titl0427.htm&StatuteYear=2006&Title=%2D%3E2006%2D%3EChapter%20427

Affordable Accessible Housing

William E. Sadowski Affordable Housing Act:

“Landmark Legislation to Create Housing and Employment and to Revitalize Communities — In 1992, the Florida Legislature adopted an extraordinary piece of legislation: The William E. Sadowski Affordable Housing Act. The Sadowski Act is of enormous significance in that it provides both the funding mechanism for a dedicated source of revenue for state

and local housing programs, and a flexible but accountable framework for local programs that stimulates local economies.”

For more information, go to:

<http://www.floridahousing.org/NR/rdonlyres/B7481E75-8A77-49B7-9DAB-B9D9FBCD458B/0/WilliamESadowskiAct.pdf>

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
Information for Senior Citizens

“Looking for housing options for yourself, an aging parent, relative, or friend? Do some research first to determine what kind of assistance or living arrangement you need, what your health insurance might cover, and what you can afford.”

For more information, go to: <http://www.hud.gov/groups/seniors.cfm>

Florida Housing Finance Corporation

“The mission of the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) is to help our fellow Floridians obtain safe, decent housing that might otherwise be unavailable to them.” <http://www.floridahousing.org>

For more information on **Florida Housing's Programs** such as Elder Housing Community Loan, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, State Apartment Incentive Loan Program (SAIL), Pre-development Loan Program, State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP), Demonstration Loans, Affordable Housing Catalyst Program, Hurricane Housing Recovery Program, and many other housing programs, go to:

<http://www.floridahousing.org/NR/rdonlyres/419C3DE6-2F66-4A20-A1B9-DD7969034D03/0/FHFCHousingPrograms.pdf>

For more information on Chapter 420, Florida Statutes, go to:

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=Ch0420/titl0420.htm&StatuteYear=2006&Title=%2D%3E2006%2D%3EChapter%20420

FloridaHousingSearch.org

“The FloridaHousingSearch.org website was launched in June of 2006, and is sponsored by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation. The website was developed with support from a number of non-profit and government organizations in Florida.

This service currently provides detailed information on affordable rental housing that has been financed by Florida Housing Finance Corporation and/or counties choosing to participate in the service. Our goal is to make this locator service the primary source for affordable rental housing in Florida.”

For more information, call toll-free 1-877-428-8844, or go to:
<http://floridahousingsearch.org>.

Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc.
(FAAST)

FAAST’s mission is to improve the quality of life for all Floridians with disabilities through advocacy and awareness activities that increase access to and acquisition of assistive services and technology.

For more information on FAAST’s programs and services and to review our housing resource guide, go to: <http://www.faast.org>.

National Accessible Apartment
Clearinghouse (NAAC)

“The apartment industry has developed an effective means to connect individuals with disabilities with apartments that have been designed for them, or adapted to meet their needs.”

Go To: <http://www.accessibleapartments.org>.

For more information on apartment listings in Florida, go to:
<http://www.accessibleapartments.org/custom/searchresults.asp?fr=53540&src=basic>.

Reverse Mortgages for Seniors

“Reverse mortgages are becoming popular in America. Reverse mortgages are a special type of home loan that lets a homeowner convert the equity in his/her home into cash. They can give older Americans greater financial security to supplement social security, meet unexpected medical expenses, make home improvements, and more.”

For more information on how a reverse mortgage works go to:
<http://www.hud.gov/buying/rvrsmort.cfm>

Housing Discrimination Complaints

HUD handles complaints in several categories.

“Federal law prohibits housing discrimination based on your race, color, national origin, religion, sex, family status, or disability. If you have been trying to buy or rent a home or apartment and you believe your rights have been violated, you can file a fair housing complaint.”

You can file a complaint online by going to:

http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/topics/housing_discrimination; or by calling toll-free 1-800- 669-9777; and you can contact them at:

Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Room 5204
451 Seventh St. SW
Washington, DC 20410-2000

Florida Commission on Human Relations

The Florida Commission on Human Relations also investigates housing discrimination complaints. You can contact them at 1-800- 342-8170, or go to: <http://fchr.state.fl.us>.

WebMD.com (Medical Information from A – Z)

WebMD.com is “your ultimate guide to reliable health information on topics from A to Z.” Topics from A-Z include but are not limited to Health Topics, Drugs, Health Videos, Diseases & Conditions, Healthy Living, Medical Tests, Newsletters, and others.

For more information, go to:

http://www.webmd.com/a_to_z_guide/default.htm

In addition, within WebMD.com you can also find information on health and wellness for aging at:

http://www.webmd.com/health_and_wellness/aging.htm

Cancer Information Links

American Cancer Society

<http://www.cancer.org> (National)

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/COM/COM_0.asp (Your community)

Faith In Action

<http://www.fianationalnetwork.org/>

Patient Advocate Foundation

<http://www.patientadvocate.org/>

Cancer Legal Resource Center

<http://www.cancerfed.com/legal.htm>

Cancer Care

<http://www.cancercare.org/>

Alzheimer's Helpline

There is a 24-hour helpline at 1-800-272-3900. For more information or to find an Alzheimer's Association in your area, go to <http://www.alz.org>.

American Heart Association

“Our mission is to reduce disability and death from cardiovascular diseases and stroke. That single purpose drives all we do. The need for our work is beyond question.” <http://www.americanheart.org>.

For more information or to contact a heart association in Florida, go to: <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=10000018&state=FL>

Mental Health America

“Mental Health America (formerly known as the National Mental Health Association) is the country's leading nonprofit dedicated to helping ALL people live mentally healthier lives. With our more than 320 affiliates nationwide, we represent a growing movement of Americans who promote mental wellness for the health and well-being of the nation – everyday and in times of crisis.”

In crisis? Call toll-free 1-800-273-8255, or for more information on finding help, finding treatment, how to pay for care, making the most of treatment, national resources, go to: <http://www.nmha.org/go/help/>

National Parkinson Foundation

To contact the National Parkinson Foundation, call toll free 1-800- 327-4545, or to find resources in your area, go to: <http://www.parkinson.org/Page.aspx?pid=201>

Eye Care of America

“The Seniors EyeCare Program (SEP) helps to ensure that all eligible seniors have access to medical eye care and promotes annual, dilated eye exams. SEP raises awareness about age-related eye disease, including cataracts, provides free eye care educational materials and facilitates access to eye care.

People eligible for a referral through the program receive a comprehensive, medical eye exam and up to one year of care—at no out-of-pocket cost—for any disease diagnosed during the initial exam. Volunteer ophthalmologists accept Medicare and/or other insurance reimbursement as payment in full.

The Seniors EyeCare Program is designed for people who:

- Are US citizens or legal residents
- Are age 65 and older
- Have not seen an ophthalmologist in three or more years
- Do not belong to an HMO or the VA”

To determine if you, a family member or friend qualify for a SEP referral, call 1-800-222-3937, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or for more information, go to: <http://www.eyecareamerica.org/eyecare>.

Social Security Administration

For information on Social Security and Social Security related programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, call 1-800-772-1213, or go to: <http://www.ssa.gov>.

Long Term Care Ombudsman within the Department of Elder Affairs

Under Chapter 400.0060-400.0091, Florida Statutes, the Long-Term Care Facilities Ombudsman Program was created as the Florida Legislature:

“ . . . finds that conditions in long-term care facilities in this state are such that the rights, health, safety, and welfare of residents are not fully ensured by rules of the Department of Elderly Affairs or the Agency for Health Care Administration or by the good faith of owners or operators of long-term care facilities. Furthermore, there is a need for a formal mechanism whereby a long-term care facility resident, a representative of a long-term care facility resident, or any other concerned citizen may make a complaint against the facility or its employees, or against other persons who are in a position to restrict, interfere with, or threaten the rights, health, safety, or welfare of a long-term care facility resident. The Legislature finds that concerned citizens are often more effective advocates for the rights of others than governmental agencies. The Legislature further finds that in order to be eligible to receive an allotment of funds authorized and appropriated under the federal Older Americans Act, the state must establish and operate an Office of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, to be headed by the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, and carry out a long-term care ombudsman program.”

For more information on the Long-Term Care Facilities Ombudsman Program established by the Legislature under Chapter 400, Florida Statutes, go to:

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch0400/SEC0061.HTM&Title=->2006->Ch0400->Section%200061#0400.0061

The Office of State Long-Term Care Ombudsmen shall investigate and work to resolve complaints submitted by family members and, or on behalf of, residents of long-term facilities who are 60 years of age or older. The Office of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman has 17 local councils statewide, all offering their services to residents of long-term care facilities and their families.

The Office of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman may inspect each long-term care facility such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities and adult family care homes annually to help ensure the health, safety and welfare of individuals within these facilities.

When individuals enter long-term care facilities, they keep all their rights as citizens, and gain special “Residents’ Rights” granted by federal and state laws. Long-term care facilities must post a copy of these rights in an area easily accessible and visible to the residents. Additionally, they must provide a copy to each resident upon admission to the facility.

Residents’ rights include, but are not limited to:

- The right to make informed personal decisions;
- The right to choose one’s own physician; and
- The right to be treated with the fullest measure of respect and dignity.

For a complete listing of residents’ rights, go to:
<http://ombudsman.myflorida.com/rights.php>.

To file a complaint or for more information you can reach the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program at 1-888- 831-0404, or go to:
<http://ombudsman.myflorida.com/>, or contact them at:

Ombudsman Program
4040 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000
850-414-2323
Toll Free: 1-888-831-0404

Agency for Health Care Administration

The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) accepts complaints regarding health care facilities, such as: hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, home health agencies or other types of health care facilities.

Agency for Health Care Administration
2727 Mahan Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32308
1-888-419-3456
www.fdhc.state.fl.us

DCF Adult Protective Services / Abuse Hotline

In addition to the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, the Department of Children and Families' Adult Protective Services Office serves as the lead agency for handling reports and investigations of abuse. ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES under Florida Statutes, Chapter 415.103 and §415.1034 require that the state have specific procedures for reporting and investigating instances of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of disabled adults and the elderly. The Adult Protective Services Statewide Abuse Hotline number is 1-800- 962-2873.

To report abuse, neglect or exploitation, contact the Florida Abuse Hotline. Be prepared to provide:

1. Victim's name, address or location, approximate age, race and sex;
2. Physical, mental or behavioral indications that the person is infirm or disabled;
3. Signs or indications of harm or injury, including a physical description if possible;
4. Relationship of the alleged possible responsible person to the victim. If the relationship is unknown, a report will still be taken if other reporting criteria are met.

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/abuse/>

1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)

TDD 1-800-453-5145

FAX 1-800-914-0004

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations also accepts complaints about the quality of care at a health care organization.

Office of Quality Monitoring

Joint Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

One Renaissance Boulevard

Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

complaint@jcaho.org

1-630-792-5636

Website: <http://www.jointcommission.org/>

Nursing Homes and Nursing Home Requirements

Nursing Homes are required to be licensed by the state of Florida, found at Florida Statutes, Chapter 400.021. Nursing Homes are facilities in which individuals receive nursing care that includes “the establishment and implementation of a nursing regimen for the care and comfort of individuals, the prevention of illness, and the education, restoration, and maintenance of health.” (NURSING HOMES AND RELATED HEALTH CARE FACILITIES under Florida Statutes, Chapter 400.021(13) & (14) found at: http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=Ch0400/titl0400.htm&StatuteYear=2004&Title=%2D%3E2004%2D%3EChapter%20400).

Bill of Rights within nursing homes: Nursing home facilities shall adopt and make public statement of the rights and responsibilities of the residents and shall treat such residents in accordance with the provision of that statement. Under Florida Statutes, Chapter 400.022, each resident shall have the right to:

- Civil and religious liberties;
- Private and uncensored communication (such as sending unopened mail, access to a telephone, or visitors during visiting hours);
- Visitation by any individual providing health, social, legal, or other services and the right to deny or withdraw consent at any time;
- Present grievances and recommend changes in the policies and services free from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal;
- Organize and participate in resident groups;
- Participate in social, religious and community activities;
- Examine results of recent facility inspections by federal and state agencies, including the plan of correction, if applicable;
- Manage his/her own financial affairs;
- Refuse medication and treatment and to know the consequences of refusal;
- Receive adequate and appropriate health care, protective and support services;
- Privacy in treatment and caring for personal needs;
- Be informed of medical condition and proposed treatment and be allowed participation in planning;

- Be treated courteously, fairly, and with the fullest measure of dignity;
- Be free from mental and physical abuse, corporal punishment, extended involuntary seclusion, and from chemical restraints;
- Be transferred or discharged only for medical reasons, the welfare of other residents or nonpayment of bill;
- Receive a thirty (30) day notice of discharge or relocation, and challenge such notice;
- Choose physician and pharmacy;
- Retain and use personal clothing and possessions as space permits;
- Copies of rules and regulations of the facility;
- Notification prior to a room change; and
- Information concerning room reservation policy for hospitalization.

Found at:

http://www.flsenate.gov/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch0400/SEC022.HTM&Title=->2006->Ch0400->Section%20022#0400.022

Due Process Rights

Resident Grievance Procedures: Florida Statutes, Chapter 400.1183

- 1) “Every nursing home must have a grievance procedure available to its residents and their families. The grievance procedure must include:
 - a) An explanation of how to pursue redress of a grievance;
 - b) The names, job titles, and telephone numbers of the employees responsible for implementing the facility’s grievance procedure. The list must include the address and the toll-free telephone numbers of the ombudsman and the [A]gency [for Health Care Administration];
 - c) A simple description of the process through which a resident may, at any time, contact the toll-free telephone hotline for the ombudsman or the agency to report the unresolved grievance;

- d) A procedure for providing assistance to residents who cannot prepare a written grievance without help.
- 2) Each facility shall maintain records of all grievances and shall report annually to the [A]gency [for Health Care Administration] the total number of grievances handled, a categorization of the cases underlying the grievances, and the final disposition of the grievances.
 - 3) Each facility must respond to the grievance within a reasonable time after its submission.
 - 4) The [A]gency [for Health Care Administration] may investigate any grievance at any time.
 - 5) The [A]gency [for Health Care Administration] may impose an administrative fine....”.

Fair Hearings / Rights Prior to
Involuntary Discharge or Transfer

For more information on the right to a fair hearing, go to Chapter 400.0255, Florida Statutes, resident transfer or discharge, requirements and procedures, hearings, found at:

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch0400/SEC0255.HTM&Title=->2006->Ch0400->Section%200255#0400.0255

For more information on the rights of individuals in health care facilities, see FAAST’s resource guide entitled, “General Information Regarding the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities in Nursing Homes and Other Health Care Facilities” at:

http://www.faast.org/upload_documents/ResourceGuideforIndividuals withDisabilitiesinNursingHomesandOtherHealthCareFacilities41509.pdf

Volunteer Organizations

Volunteer Florida including Seniors

“The Governor’s Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service was established in 1994 by the Florida Legislature to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The Commission grants funds to Florida AmeriCorps and National Service programs; encourages volunteerism for everyone from youths to seniors to people with disabilities; promotes volunteerism in emergency management and preparedness; and helps to strengthen and expand Volunteer Centers in Florida.”

For more information, go to: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/>

In addition, for the latest information in available grants that provide funding for community programs, along with information to assist in applying, go to: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grantinfo.html>

Senior Corps

“Americans over 55 have a lifetime of experience to share, and the desire to make a real difference in their world. They’ve managed households, been business owners and nurses, farmers and salespeople, artists and executives. Now they are ready to put their unique talents and expertise to work in their communities, and enrich their own lives in the process.

Senior Corps connects today’s over-55s with the people and organizations that need them most. We help them become mentors, coaches or companions to people in need, or contribute their job skills and expertise to community projects and organizations. Conceived during John F. Kennedy’s presidency, Senior Corps currently links more than 500,000 Americans to service opportunities. Their contributions of skills, knowledge, and experience make a real difference to individuals, nonprofits, and faith-based and other community organizations throughout the United States.

Senior Corps offers several ways to get involved. Volunteers receive guidance and training so they can make a contribution that suits their talents, interests, and availability.”

For more information, go to:

<http://www.seniorcorps.gov/about/sc/index.asp>

Foster Grandparents

Make a Difference in the Life of a Child

“Foster Grandparents devote their volunteer service entirely to disadvantaged or disabled youth. Across the country, Foster Grandparents help these children in many ways:

- Offering emotional support to child victims of abuse and neglect;
- Tutoring children with low literacy skills;
- Mentoring troubled teenagers and young mothers; and
- Caring for premature infants and children with physical disabilities and severe illnesses.”

For more information, go to:

<http://www.seniorcorps.gov/about/programs/fg.asp>

Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities, Inc.

For information on Florida’s protection and advocacy system and their Issue Based Teams within the Advocacy Center, fact sheets on disability related matters, their mission and more, you may wish to visit www.advocacycenter.org, or call 1-800-342-0823; TDD at 1-800-346-4127; or fax at 850-488-8640.

This resource guide is not a substitute for legal advice

Authored by: Steven L. Howells, FFAST Executive Director