

RESPECT FOR  
YESTERDAY,  
SUPPORT FOR  
TODAY,  
PLAN FOR  
TOMORROW



## Aging Matters

April 2024 Newsletter from the Illinois Department on Aging

Office of  
Governor JB  
Pritzker

### Message From Acting Director Mary Killough



News and  
Events

As we welcome spring, Illinois lawmakers are deep in discussions about what our state budget will look like for the next fiscal year that begins on July 1. Governor Pritzker's [proposed budget](#) largely maintains current funding levels for aging programs and services, with moderate increases included for home-delivered meals and the [Community Care Program](#).

Illinois' State  
Plan on Aging

During my testimony to [House](#) and [Senate](#) appropriations committees earlier this month, I explained that the proposed budget aligns with IDoA's [mission and values](#), maintaining critical investments in the Aging Network workforce and older adults to:

Find Services  
in Your Area

- Support direct care workers and family caregivers,
- Address social determinants of health, and
- Ultimately, improve longevity and quality of life through the delivery of home and community-based services.

Senior  
Illinoisans Hall  
of Fame

For information about services that empower older Illinoisans to live independently as they age, please visit [IDoA's website](#) or contact the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966, 711 (TRS), or by email at [aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov](mailto:aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov). HelpLine agents are available Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. and can answer questions about program eligibility, as well as help you find and access services in your area.

License Plate  
Discount

Our [Service Locator](#) can also point you in the right direction.

Sincerely,



# April Is National Volunteer Month

Observed annually in April, National Volunteer Month is dedicated to promoting, encouraging, and celebrating volunteerism. Volunteering can be a meaningful way for older adults to stay active and give back to their communities, and there are many volunteer opportunities available to fit your skills and interests.

[Intergenerational volunteer programs](#) are mutually beneficial for older and younger people, while other volunteer programs provide an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of older adults. For this newsletter issue, *Aging Matters* spoke with Donna Fox (pictured at right), a volunteer with the state's [Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program](#), which aims to improve the quality of life of residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.



Donna is one of several dozen volunteer ombudsmen statewide who make regular visits to long-term care facilities to speak with residents, help them understand their rights, and empower residents to self-advocate. Paid and volunteer ombudsmen also investigate complaints received from residents and their family members and may elevate complaints and/or concerns to facility staff with permission from the affected resident. "We can assist a resident [with] a range of issues, such as having their bedding changed, having a shower time switched, attending care plan meetings with a resident, assisting with completing Medicaid applications, or assisting a resident with finding a new facility," Donna explained.

She first got involved with the program around five years ago, when Donna's daughter was required to complete volunteer hours as part of her master's degree program. "She came to me and said, 'Mom, I think this would be perfect for you.'" Donna describes herself as "a caretaker by nature" and felt excited about becoming a volunteer ombudsman upon learning about the program. Through its volunteer coordinator, Donna learned that she would undergo a background check and complete a training course to get certified. "They teach volunteers how to advocate for residents - the proper channels available to go through to get issues resolved on behalf of the residents, ways to mediate on behalf of residents, and the importance of educating residents of their rights and letting them know we are there for them and take our direction from them."

Volunteers receive free ombudsman certification training and must complete 18 continuing education units annually to maintain ombudsman certification.

For Donna, there's no such thing as a typical day in her role. "One day, I may be attending a residential council meeting with the residents, discussing issues [they] have and need to have resolved by administration and staff. Then, I may go into rooms and follow up with residents I've advocated for to see how they are doing. Another day, I will go from room to room introducing myself and explaining what it is an ombudsman does for residents, and giving them

a pamphlet listing residents' rights in a long-term care facility and my card. Another day may be a day I go in and meet with various staff and/or administration to get issues resolved for residents I am advocating for."

No matter what her day looks like, Donna makes sure to find the time to greet and check in with every resident she encounters. "I also like to spend a few extra minutes talking with those residents that benefit from a little company to make their day a bit better."

"There is not a better feeling in the world to me than making sure our precious seniors are all being well taken care of and are being treated with the respect they deserve," said Donna.

"When I advocate for someone with no family and they're feeling very alone and/or defeated initially, the look on their face and the light that comes back in their eyes when they realize they are not alone, and that they can count on you and know they do have someone on their side who will go to bat for them is absolutely priceless to me."

**To give your time as a volunteer ombudsman**, contact the regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program [in your area](#).

### **Other opportunities to volunteer:**

**Senior Health Insurance Program:** Help others make informed decisions regarding Medicare coverage

**Nutrition Services Providers:** Help prepare or deliver meals to homebound older adults. Meal delivery routes typically require a commitment of 1-2 hours per week.

Your local senior center may welcome volunteers for a variety of programs. Contact your regional [Area Agency on Aging](#) for more information about what is available where you live.

## **IDoA Sister Agency Celebrates "30 Days of Public Health"**

This April, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is celebrating 30 Days of Public Health, an extended observance of [National Public Health Week](#) that also coincides with [National Minority Health Month](#). The month-long slate of activities is intended to engage Illinoisans and raise awareness about all that public health does to keep individuals healthy and safe. Activities will highlight the purpose of public health departments and their connection to the health care system, and also spotlight those who dedicate their time and energy to serving the people of Illinois.

[Continue reading](#)

## **Give Yourself a Boost With Benefits**



# **BoostYourBudget**

The cost of living keeps going up – which can be hard if you're living on a fixed income. April 15-19 is Boost Your Budget Week, the perfect time to see if you qualify for benefits programs that can help you pay for food, medicine, housing, and more. The National Council on Aging's [BenefitsCheckUp® tool](#), available in English and Spanish, is free and confidential and will

give you a personalized list of benefits to explore. Answer a few short questions and get a list of programs that could help you.

[Start your checkup](#)

## Check Your Eligibility for License Plate & Transportation Discounts



IDoA's [Benefit Access Program](#) determines eligibility for discounted license plate renewal stickers and ride-free transit passes for public transportation. To qualify, an individual must live in Illinois, be at least 65 years old, or at least 16 years old with a documented disability, and meet the program's income requirements.

### Income Requirements

Total gross income for the last closed tax year must not exceed:

- \$33,562 for a 1-person household (yourself only); or
- \$44,533 for a 2-person household (yourself and your spouse, or yourself and one Qualified Additional Resident); or
- \$55,500 for a 3-person household (yourself, your spouse and one Qualified Additional Resident, or yourself and two Qualified Additional Residents).

Applications submitted between January 1 and April 15, 2024, are approved or denied based on 2022 income information. If your application was previously denied, you may re-apply on or after **April 16, 2024**, using your **2023** income information. Once approved, your benefits are active for a two-year period.

[Apply online](#)

For help filing an application, please contact your local [Senior Health Assistance Program \(SHAP\)](#) site. For questions regarding your application, contact the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966. The HelpLine experiences its highest call volume on Mondays, the day following a holiday, and over the lunch hour on weekdays. To avoid long hold times, we recommend calling

during non-peak hours: Tuesday through Friday, between 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. or between 2 and 5 p.m.

## Make Your Voice Heard on Transportation Issues



### IDOT's Annual Traveler Survey

The Illinois Department of Transportation is asking the public to provide feedback on the state's transportation system and the department's overall performance through its annual Illinois Traveler Opinion Survey. Available now through April 26, the survey can be taken online by clicking [here](#) or visiting [idot.illinois.gov](http://idot.illinois.gov).

## Beware of IRS Impersonators

An **IRS scam** is a fraudulent attempt to deceive individuals, businesses, and tax professionals by impersonating the **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**. Scammers use various methods, including regular mail, telephone calls, and email, to perpetrate these scams. Here are some key points about IRS scams:

- **Phishing Scams:** Scammers send unsolicited emails or create fake websites that appear to be from the IRS. These emails often request personal or financial information, such as Social Security numbers, bank account details, or credit card information. The IRS **never** initiates contact via email, text messages, or social media channels to request such information.
- **Phone Scams:** Fraudsters make phone calls pretending to be IRS agents. They may threaten legal action, demand immediate payment, or claim that you owe back taxes. Remember that the IRS does **not** make threatening calls or demand immediate payment over the phone.
- **Identity Theft Scams:** Scammers steal personal information to file fraudulent tax returns on behalf of victims. Tax professionals are also targeted by identity thieves who aim to gather data for filing fake tax returns.
- **COVID-19 and Stimulus Payment Scams:** Some scams reference COVID-19 relief payments or economic impact payments. Be cautious of text messages or emails containing suspicious links claiming to be from the IRS.
- **How to Report Scams:**
  - If you receive unsolicited emails claiming to be from the IRS, forward them to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov).
  - Report any suspicious phone calls or other scams related to tax matters to the IRS.
  - Stay vigilant and learn to recognize the telltale signs of scams.

Remember that the IRS communicates primarily through official channels, and they do not initiate contact for personal or financial information via email or phone. If you encounter any suspicious communication, verify its legitimacy directly with the IRS.

## Nominate Someone for the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame Class of 2024



**NOW  
ACCEPTING  
NOMINATIONS**

**CATEGORIES:**

**Arts, Sports, and Entertainment**

**Community Service**

**Education**

**Labor Force**



The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) is seeking nominations for the 2024 induction class of the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame, which honors the accomplishments of Illinois residents aged 65 and older.

Each year, four older adults are inducted into the Hall of Fame for their work in the arts, sports, and entertainment; community service; education; or the labor force. Anyone may nominate an older adult for consideration.

To be eligible for nomination to the Hall of Fame, nominees must be:

- At least 65 years old at the time of nomination; and
- A current Illinois resident or a previous resident of Illinois for most of their life.

Posthumous nominations are also accepted, provided the nominee was 65 or older and living in Illinois at the time of death.

**To guarantee consideration for the 2024 induction class, nominations must be submitted no later than June 1, 2024.** Nominators of new Hall of Fame inductees are expected to participate in an award ceremony honoring their nominee and highlighting their accomplishments.

[Submit a nomination](#)

## Employment Opportunities

### Management Operations Analyst II

**Work Location:** Springfield

**Salary:** Anticipated starting salary (effective 7/1/24) \$5,901; full range \$5,901-\$8,825 monthly

**Application Deadline:** April 25, 2024

#### **Job Responsibilities:**

1. Contributes to policy development and analyzes Federal/State current and suggested legislation regarding the Community Care Program (CCP) and Adult Protective Services (APS). Independently gathers statistical and program information of Department CCP and APS policy and procedures. Develops, documents, reviews, and maintains work processes for efficiency and effectiveness. Develops evaluative models for various components of the CCP and APS. Models to forecast future expenditures, caseload, and

service trends. Collaborates with internal divisions to monitor billing activity for CCP and APS agencies.

2. Provides advice and guidance in the collection of data. Provides analysis, modeling, risk analysis, and scenarios. Utilizes various compilation and presentation techniques for the purpose of reporting and making system modifications for CCP, APS, and special projects.
3. Confers with management to provide program, policy, and operational support. Evaluates existing program operations. Recommends initiatives to improve availability of statewide services. Assists with the development of legislative analyses including fiscal implications for the Division.
4. Presents data to interagency committees as the CCP and APS Data Analyst. Supports and integrates data from the CCP and APS with other services on an intra-agency and inter-agency basis.
5. Works directly with other data analysis staff and program staff in development of reports. Assists data analysis unit in requests and reports for various Department programs.
6. Performs other duties as required or assigned which are reasonable within the scope of the duties enumerated above.

[Apply here](#)

## Save the Date

The [Senior Housing Residents' Advisory Council](#) will meet on Tuesday, April 23 at 3 p.m.

[Join via Webex](#)



**Save the Date – April 27!**

**10 a.m. – 2 p.m. | [DEATakeBack.com](http://DEATakeBack.com)**

Prescription Drug Take Back Day offers free and anonymous disposal of unneeded medications at close to 5,000 [local drop-off locations nationwide](#).

Prescription and over-the-counter solid-dosage medications (i.e., tablets and capsules) will be accepted. To protect your privacy, you can use a permanent marker to blacken out your personal information on the pill bottle labels prior to turning them in.

[Find a collection site near you](#)



Help us kick off Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage (AAPI) and Older Americans (OA) Month !

# Fall Prevention for Asian American Elders

## When

Tuesday, **April 30th**  
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm CST

Join us for a free webinar with fall prevention experts . .

Don't miss this opportunity to empower yourself with knowledge and resources for fall prevention. Register now and take proactive steps towards a safer and healthier future!

**Tanvi Bhatt**  
Professor,  
Physical Therapy



**Jenica Lee**  
Clinical Associate Professor,  
Occupational Therapy

This webinar is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$620,918 with 67% percentage funded by ACL/HHS (Grant number # 90HDR001 I-01-00, PI: Mirza) and \$207,960 or 33% percentage funded by non-government source(s). The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

Registration Link:  
<https://go.uic.edu/ASIAANFPWebinar>  
Or, simply scan the QR code to register!



A University of Illinois Chicago webinar on **Tuesday, April 30** will provide a comprehensive overview of fall prevention explicitly tailored to Asian American older adults. Live interpretation will be available in Cantonese, Hindi, Mandarin, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

[Register here](#)



Inaugural African American Conference

## RELEASE THE SILENCE

Reducing Memory Health Disparities with Awareness, Education, and Resources

SATURDAY | MAY 4, 2024

9:00AM – 2:00PM

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH  
1405 E MONROE ST, SPRINGFIELD, IL



In partnership with the Illinois Department on Aging, Illinois Department of Public Health, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., NAACP, Prince Hall Masons, Frontiers International Springfield Club, and Senior Services of Central Illinois, the Alzheimer's Association Illinois Chapter invites you to the *Release the Silence* Conference on **Saturday, May 4** from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Union Baptist Church in **Springfield**.

This **free** conference is designed for those who are caregivers of a person with Alzheimer's, individuals who want to learn more about the disease as well as professionals wanting to understand the health disparities which affect individuals in the African American community. Topics covered will include the Alzheimer's & dementia journey, managing the caregiving role and navigating healthcare systems.

Register by clicking the button below or by calling 800-272-3900.

[Register now](#)

# Central Illinois Senior Celebration



The 24th annual Central Illinois Senior Celebration will be held on **Wednesday, May 15** in the Orr Building on the Illinois State Fairgrounds. The celebration occurs each year during [Older Americans Month](#), providing a comprehensive resource fair for older adults and their caregivers. Attendees can expect nearly 100 exhibitors, free health screenings, entertainment, door prizes, and much more. Admission is free with the donation of a canned food item, and concessions will be available for purchase.

[RSVP on Facebook](#)

# Items of Interest

[Senior Services of Will County invites public to opening for new Romeoville center](#)

[How to help reduce elder poverty? Keep Chicago seniors employed](#)

[Senior advocates offer new caregiver resource](#)

[Seniors from all over central Illinois are stepping into a virtual world](#)

[Northern Illinois University group uses arts to help older adult's minds engage](#)

[1st phase of new affordable housing for seniors nears completion](#)

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the **Senior HelpLine at (800) 252-8966; 711 (TRS)**

