

RESPECT FOR
YESTERDAY,
SUPPORT FOR
TODAY,
PLAN FOR
TOMORROW



Aging Matters

Jan./Feb. 2025 Newsletter from the Illinois Department on Aging

Office of
Governor JB
Pritzker

Message From Acting Director Mary Killough



News and
Events

Last Wednesday, Governor JB Pritzker unveiled his seventh balanced [budget proposal](#), focusing on the long-term fiscal health of our state while maintaining investments in core priorities such as education, health and human services, and economic development.

Illinois' State
Plan on Aging

The budget contains just over \$2 billion for programs and services that address the critical needs of older adults and caregivers in communities statewide.

Find Services
in Your Area

While these investments are exciting and encouraging, uncertainty at the federal level continues to affect our agency and many local partner organizations that receive federal grant funding. We are closely monitoring announcements from the White House and evaluating their potential impacts on senior meals and other services as, for now, we continue operations as usual.

Senior
Illinoisans
Hall of Fame

If you have questions about your current services, or would like information about what's available in your area, contact the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or email Aging.ILSenior@Illinois.gov. You can also use our [Service Locator](#) to search by county.

License Plate
Discount

Free Income Tax Preparation Assistance Available

for Qualifying Taxpayers

Several trusted Illinois programs offer free income tax preparation for low-to-moderate income families and older adults who may need assistance in filing their 2024 income taxes:

- The [IRS' Volunteer Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly \(TCE\)](#) programs offer free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals needing assistance in preparing their own tax returns. People making \$67,000 or less, persons with disabilities and limited English-speaking taxpayers can take advantage of this service. In addition, the TCE program offers free tax help, particularly for those who are 60 years of age and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors. VITA and TCE sites are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls, and other convenient locations across the state.
- The [AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program](#) provides free tax assistance, with a special focus on taxpayers over the age of 50 or who have low-to-moderate income. Availability is determined at the local or community level. AARP membership is not required to receive assistance.
- In Chicagoland, the [Ladder Up Tax Assistance Program](#) (TAP) provides free basic tax return preparation for families and individuals earning up to \$67,000 annually (\$35,000 for individuals). Taxpayers must be full-year Illinois residents (the program does not prepare returns for other states, military personnel and/or partial-year residents).

You can learn more about free tax assistance by visiting tax.illinois.gov or by calling the Illinois Department of Revenue's Taxpayer Assistance Division at 800-732-8866.

Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Ends March 31

The [Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period](#) is underway for people enrolled in Medicare Advantage who want to switch to another Advantage plan or return to original Medicare.

How does the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period work?

When is the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period?

Jan. 1 to March 31.

Who is this for?

It's for people who are already enrolled in a private Medicare Advantage plan (with or without drug coverage).

What can I do during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment?

If you're in a Medicare Advantage plan (with or without drug coverage), you can switch to another Medicare Advantage plan (with or without drug coverage).

Or, you can drop your Medicare Advantage plan and return to original Medicare. You'll also be able to join a separate Medicare drug plan.

Are those my only options during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment?

Yes. To clarify, you cannot do the following:

- Switch from original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage plan.
- Join a Medicare drug plan if you have original Medicare.

- Switch from one Medicare drug plan to another if you have original Medicare.

When do changes become effective?

Your coverage will start the first day of the month after you apply to join a plan.

Get more answers to your Medicare questions

To get advice on Medicare, a good place to start is talking with a trained Medicare counselor from the Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). [Find your local SHIP office here](#) or call 1-800-252-8966.

Medicare is confusing. Here's what Illinois residents need to know.

Nominate Someone for the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame Class of 2025



NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS

CATEGORIES:

- Arts, Sports, and Entertainment
- Community Service
- Education
- Labor Force

IDoA
Illinois Department on Aging

IDoA is seeking nominations for the 2025 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:

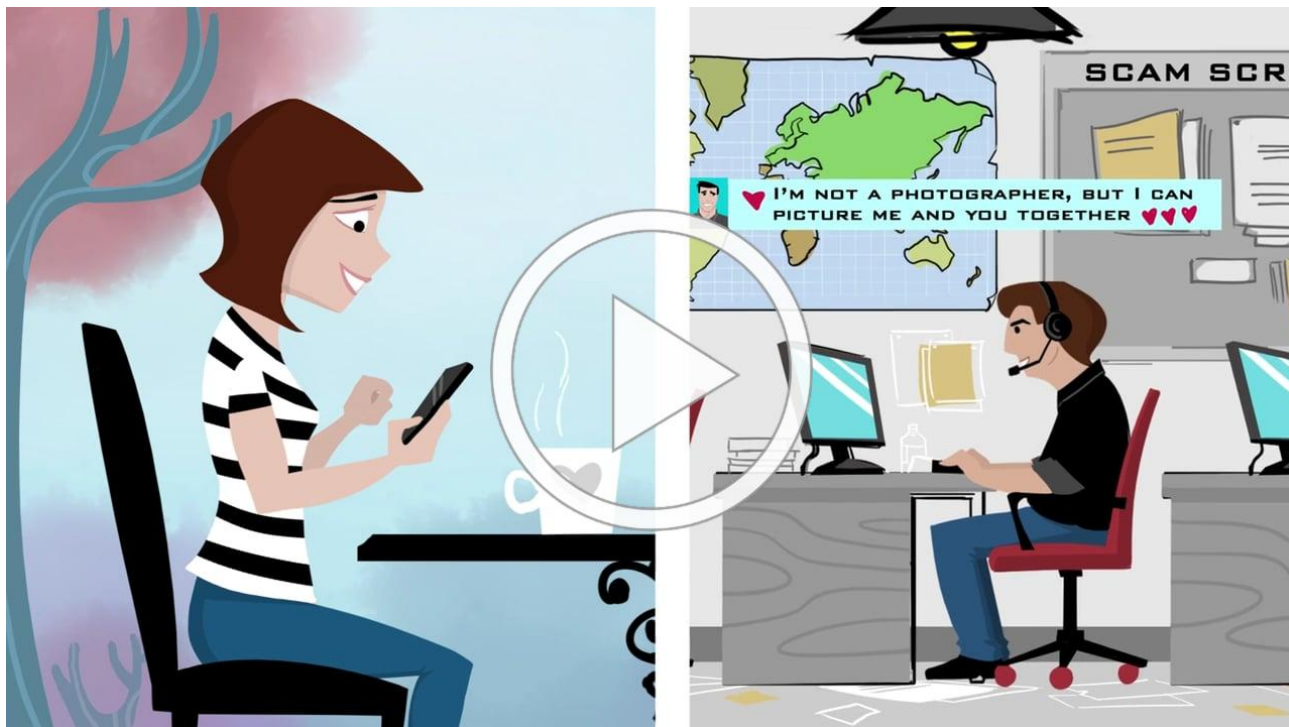
- At least 65 years old at the time of nomination; and
- A current Illinois resident or a previous resident of Illinois for most of their life.

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 2025 induction class, nominations must be submitted on or before **June 2, 2025**. Nominators of new Hall of Fame inductees are expected to participate in an award ceremony honoring their nominee and highlighting their accomplishments.

Watch Out for Romance Scams During This Month of Love

Romance scams are a type of fraud that targets individuals seeking to connect with others online. Outside of romance scams, such connections typically culminate in an in-person date. However, in the case of romance scammers, meeting their target would expose them and jeopardize their chances of cashing in. Romance scams are very common and costly, with the Federal Trade Commission reporting losses reaching up to \$1.3 billion in 2022.



Source: consumer.ftc.gov

Common Signs and Tips to Identify Possible Romance Scams

You Look too Good to be True– To trick individuals seeking connection or romance, scammers will use enticing stock images of models or steal photos from other people’s social media profiles.

Tip: Conducting a quick reverse search of the photo using Google Images may reveal whether the photo is fake or stolen.

Requests to Move Conversation to Somewhere More Personal– Most reputable dating platforms have systems for uncovering dating scammers, so to avoid triggering these security measures, scammers request to move the conversation away from the dating platform early on. Scammers will want the individual to share their mobile number, email address or social media handle so that they can communicate with them in a more “personal” way.

Tip: Eventually transitioning to another way to communicate is normal, but a scammer will request the individual transition to another service quickly and usually within a few messages. This should immediately set off alarms.

Requests and Excuses to Reschedule Meetings – An in-person meeting would expose the scammer and jeopardize their chances of cashing in, so scammers often claim to be in positions that inspire trust and travel frequently for work. Scammers will often claim to be in the military, a diplomat or in sales because frequent excuses of “I’m being sent to a new base” or “I

have to fly to a conference” won’t seem so suspicious.

Tip: Canceling plans now and then is normal; however, if a suitor shuts down every attempt at a meeting, individuals should immediately become suspicious and question the suitor’s motives.

Hi, I Love You! - Scammers trap individuals by showering them with affection and making them feel wanted. Once the scammer has convinced the individual to believe that they are in a relationship, they move on to their ultimate target – the individual’s finances.

Tip: Saying “I love you” or calling an individual their soul mate within the first few days of conversation should send up red flags.

I’m Stuck, Can you Bail Me Out? - Once the scammer thinks that they have spoken to their victim for long enough and cultivated a strong enough relationship, they will move on to ask for money, gift cards, or even favors. The first requests will usually be for something small, like paying their ailing animal’s vet bill or buying some medicine, and the request is often targeted to evoke empathy (e.g., someone is ill and cannot afford medication). With success, they may begin to raise the bar by asking for larger sums they need to get out of a problem or help one of their relatives in dire need.

Tip: If someone an individual met online asks them for any amount of money, the individual should assume they are a scammer and immediately cut off all communication and report them to the service they are using and also to the Illinois Attorney General’s office at 217-782-1090.

Let the Illinois Tollway's I-PASS On Demand Team Help You



I-PASS On Demand provides in-person assistance with your I-PASS account, Pay By Plate service and invoice questions. Stop by an event to learn more about The Official Illinois Tollway App, pick up a new I-PASS Sticker Tag or find out if you qualify for I-PASS Assist.

And remember, **the Illinois Tollway will never text you asking for payment through a link**. If you receive a message like this, do not click - it's a scam designed to steal your credit card information.

[View I-Pass On Demand event times and locations](#)

Save the Date



Every May, the Administration for Community Living leads the nation's observance of [Older Americans Month](#), a time to recognize older Americans' contributions, highlight aging trends, and reaffirm our commitment to serving older adults.

The 2025 theme, *Flip the Script on Aging*, focuses on transforming how society perceives, talks about, and approaches aging. It encourages individuals and communities to challenge stereotypes and dispel misconceptions. This year, join us in honoring older adults' contributions, exploring the many opportunities for staying active and engaged as we age, and highlighting the opportunities for purpose, exploration, and connection that come with aging.

Items of Interest

[Illinois Department of Revenue reminds seniors about tax deferral deadline](#)

[Southern Illinois seniors get new spot to hang out](#)

[How new legislation could revise Illinois' controversial senior road test mandate](#)

[Illinois Secretary of State warns Illinoisans of scammers selling used vehicles](#)

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)**



Illinois Department on Aging | One Natural Resources Way, Suite 100 | Springfield, IL 62702-1271 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!