

RESPECT FOR
YESTERDAY,
SUPPORT FOR
TODAY,
PLAN FOR
TOMORROW



Aging Matters

Oct. 2023 Newsletter from the Illinois Department on Aging

Office of
Governor JB
Pritzker

Message From Director Paula Basta



News and
Events

Illinois' State
Plan on Aging

Find Services
in Your Area

Senior
Illinoisans Hall
of Fame

License Plate
Discount



You may have heard by now that I will be retiring effective December 31, 2023. It has been the honor of my lifetime to serve Governor Pritzker's administration as Director of the Illinois Department on Aging. The past four years have been some of the most rewarding of my career, and I will always treasure the memories we made together. In this next chapter, I'm looking forward to spending more time with my wonderful wife Terri and our extended family and friends, but I won't be too far away. To quote MetroMorphosis Chief Executive Catalyst and Co-Lead Raymond A. Jetson, "I'm moving over, not out."

A national search will be conducted over the next several months to find a new Director of IDoA. In the meantime, we will be wrapping up our series of caregiver roundtables with [six in-person events in Cook County](#), hosting award ceremonies for our [2023 Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame inductees](#), and continuing to administer the home and community-based services that older adults rely on to live safely, comfortably and independently in their own homes and communities.

For information about eligibility and access to IDoA's [programs and services](#), contact the Senior HelpLine toll-free at 1-800-252-8966, 711 (TRS), or via email at aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov. If you are seeking services for yourself or a loved one, we can help connect you with a local office in your area.

Sincerely,

Three Older Adults Named to Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame

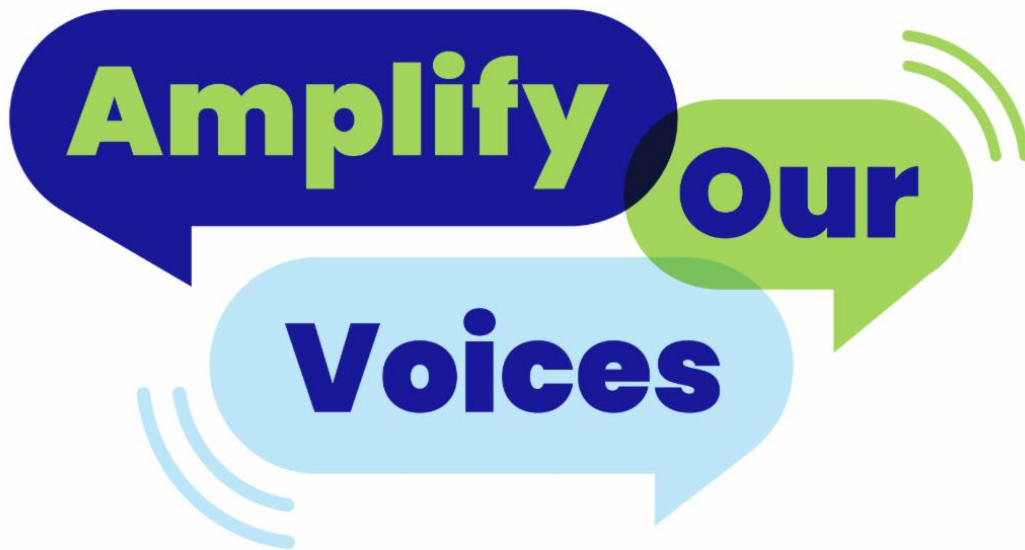


The Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame was established by the state legislature to honor older adults' accomplishments and contributions to their communities. Each year, up to four Illinoisans aged 65 and older are inducted into the Hall of Fame for their work in community service, education, arts or the labor force. IDoA is recognizing three new inductees for 2023, each of whom represents a positive image of aging and has made meaningful contributions over the course of their lives.

This year's inductees include a trailblazer for Chicago's Latino community, a physician of environmental and occupational medicine, and an international trainer on preventing and responding to violence against people with disabilities.

[Read about the 2023 inductees](#)

October is Residents' Rights Month



National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

Joining advocates, residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities, facility staff and others across the country, the [Illinois Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program \(LTCOP\)](#) is honoring the individual rights of long-term care residents by celebrating Residents' Rights Month this October. Designated by the [National Consumer Voice for Long-Term Care \(Consumer Voice\)](#), Residents' Rights Month highlights residents living in all long-term care settings, as well as gives special recognition to the work of the individuals who help assure their dignity, privacy and other basic human rights are maintained.

This year's Residents' Rights Month theme, *Amplify Our Voices*, emphasizes a community of long-term care residents coming together to make their voices heard. For residents, amplifying your voice means being outspoken about your preferences and choices, and sharing who you are and your experiences.

A resident-directed advocacy program, the LTCOP helps amplify the voices and protect the rights of up to 144,000 Illinoisans residing in more than 1,500 long-term care facilities. At least 91 paid staff and 34 volunteers work to investigate residents' complaints and concerns, empower them to self-advocate and in some instances, liaise with facility staff to resolve complaints to the residents' satisfaction.

The program also provides older adults and their family members with information about how to find a long-term care facility, conducts community education sessions, and supports residents, their families and the public with one-on-one consultations regarding long-term care. All services are provided free of charge.

To contact an Ombudsman, call the statewide Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966, email Aging.SLTCOPProgram@illinois.gov, or reach out directly to the [regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in your area](#).

[Read Governor Pritzker's Residents' Rights Month proclamation](#)

Medicare Open Enrollment Is Here

REMINDER

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT BEGINS



The Medicare Open Enrollment period began on Oct. 15 and runs through Dec. 7. During this time, people with Medicare have the opportunity to review, renew, and/or change their current Medicare health or drug plan for the upcoming year.

To help beneficiaries compare available plans and make an informed decision about which option best meets their needs, Illinois' Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) provides trusted, unbiased Medicare counseling at no cost to people with Medicare, their family members, and caregivers. Counseling services are offered at [more than 300 locations](#) statewide. Beneficiaries are encouraged to schedule an appointment with a local SHIP counselor to review their current plan, costs, and health needs, then see how other plan options compare. Find a SHIP counselor near you by calling 1-800-252-8966 or emailing AGING.SHIP@illinois.gov.

[SHIP resources](#)

[Explore additional resources from the National Council on Aging](#)

High-Dose Flu Shots Recommended for Older Adults

Federal health officials recommend [specific flu vaccines](#) for people aged 65 and older. This year, the CDC also recommends that adults 60 and older get the newly updated COVID vaccine and to talk to their doctor about the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine.



Family dinner
Date night
Long Live Illinois
Book club

Enter your ZIP code at [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find places near you offering flu and updated COVID vaccines. If you are covered by [Medicare](#) or [Medicaid](#), these vaccines are free of charge. Need assistance finding a vaccine location or transportation to an appointment? Contact your local Area Agency on Aging using our [map tool](#).

Assistive Technology Devices Available Through Illinois Care Connections Program

Initially launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, IDoA's [Illinois Care Connections program](#) is aimed at enabling social connectedness; maintaining health, safety, and well-being; and promoting independence of older adults aged 60 and up. The program has historically provided tablet bundles to socially isolated older adults and persons with disabilities, and this year it is significantly expanding to offer vision, hearing, and mobility devices along with smart-home technology.

IDoA partners with the [Illinois Assistive Technology Program](#) (IATP) to administer this program. Aging Network partner organizations such as Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), AAA-funded entities, Care Coordination Units, and Adult Day Service providers can refer older adults aged 60+ living in the community to the program using an [online referral form](#). Referral sources must complete the entire referral form. IATP staff will then follow up with the referral source and/or the older adult with any questions before fulfilling the order. Devices will either be shipped directly to the older adult or delivered by IATP staff. Most orders are fulfilled within 1-2 weeks of referral.

[Learn more](#)

Get Ready to Renew Your Medicaid

[Content area for Medicaid renewal information]



GOT MEDICAID?



HFS

Illinois Department of
Healthcare and Family Services

abe.illinois.gov



Medicaid customers have not had to renew their Medicaid coverage since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Medicaid pays for healthcare, like doctor visits, prescription medicine, and urgent emergency services.

Now Illinois is starting renewals again to see if people are still eligible. Everybody's renewal date is different, so it is critical that you get ready to renew.

Don't risk losing your Medicaid! Here is what you need to do:

Click Manage My Case at abe.illinois.gov to:

- Verify your mailing address under "contact us."
- Find your due date (also called redetermination date) in your "benefit details".

Watch your mail and complete your renewal right away.

If you are no longer eligible for Medicaid, connect to coverage at work or through the official Affordable Care Act marketplace for Illinois, GetCoveredIllinois.gov.

Employment Opportunities

IDoA has no open positions at this time. Vacancies will be posted to the [State of Illinois job board](#) on an ongoing basis.

Events Recap

Fall Conference and 50th Anniversary Celebration

Earlier this month, more than 600 members of the Aging Network attended IDoA's fall conference at the University of Illinois Springfield. We closed out the conference with a celebration of IDoA's 50th anniversary,



during which Director Paula Basta read a proclamation from Governor JB Pritzker, and AARP Illinois presented us with a jumbo-sized membership card. Take a walk down memory lane and read about IDoA's 50-year history [here](#).

Pictured: Ryan Gruenenfelder, Director of Advocacy & Outreach for AARP Illinois, presented IDoA with an oversized AARP membership card during the agency's 50th anniversary celebration.

IDO Director Honored by Chicago Methodist Senior Services

Celebrating its 125th anniversary this year, Chicago Methodist Senior Services (CMSS) provides compassionate, inclusive, and person-centered care to older adults in the city and near suburbs. The non-profit organization's Spirit Award honors individuals who live and demonstrate CMSS' core values of dignity, respect, compassion, and equity. CMSS honored IDoA Director Paula Basta with the 2023 Spirit Award and has also [published a Q&A](#) with her on their blog.



Pictured: CMSS President and CEO Bill Lowe (right) presented IDoA Director Paula Basta with the 2023 Spirit Award during CMSS' Fall Benefit on September 14.

Upcoming Events

Caregiver Roundtables - Join the Conversation



You're invited to...

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

A Regional Caregiver Roundtable Discussion

RSVP TODAY!

Let's explore additional support that can enhance your caregiving journey by identifying the needs and challenges caregivers face.

Your valuable insights will help shape future policies and initiatives that address the specific concerns of caregivers like yourself.

To gain insight into the needs and challenges of family caregivers across Illinois, IDoA is hosting a series of caregiver roundtables in partnership with Illinois' 13 regional Area Agencies on Aging. These events aim to provide a platform for open discussions about unpaid family caregivers' needs, experiences, and preferences regarding caregiver support. Your valuable insights will help shape future policies and initiatives that address the specific concerns of caregivers across Illinois.

Click on a location below to view event details, including RSVP information.

**Southwest Chicago -
Oct. 27**

Englewood - Oct. 27

**Central West Chicago -
Nov. 1**

Northfield - Nov. 2

Lynwood - Nov. 3

The Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness is partnering with communities throughout Illinois to gather input on how the State of Illinois can work across agencies and within communities to best serve people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. [View upcoming listening session dates and locations.](#)

Community members are also able to provide written feedback via the [Office to Prevent & End Homelessness website](#). For questions or more information, please contact homeless.office@illinois.gov.

The next meeting of the [Senior Housing Residents' Advisory Council](#) will be on Tuesday, Oct. 24 at 3 p.m.

[Join meeting](#)

Items of Interest

[Lincoln Park Zoo launches first-of-its-kind program for people with dementia](#)

[Boone County Council On Aging honored for 50 years of service](#)

[Decatur resident inducted into Illinois Senior Hall of Fame](#)

[Money Matters: Top 10 Budgeting Tips for Older Adults](#)

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; (888) 206-1327 (TTY)



[Visit our website](#)