

Home and Community-Based Services for Florida's Seniors: Legal Assistance¹

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Introduction

This article is part of the Home and Community-Based Services for Florida's Seniors series, a collection of educational resources designed to inform the public about home and community-based support services available to seniors in Florida.

The Older Americans Act of 1965 (OAA) provides a variety of home and community-based services for eligible older Americans (those aged 60 years or older, as defined by the OAA) that are channeled through the Administration on Aging (AoA) and state-level units on aging. In the state of Florida, these services are administered and implemented through Florida's Aging Network, which comprises the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) and a host of 58 nonprofit organizations.

As the older adult population of Florida continues to grow rapidly, it is increasingly important that the state's seniors, their caregivers, other stakeholders, and the general public understand the home and community-based services and protections available through the 58 nonprofits — 11 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and 47 Community Care for the Elderly (CCE) lead agencies — that make up Florida's Aging Network.

Legal assistance is a valuable component of Florida's Aging Network. It refers to the multitude of services available to Florida residents aged 60 and older, operated in partnership with legal aid organizations. Seniors who meet basic eligibility may receive a free telephone appointment with a paralegal to get advice, guidance, referrals, or legal services (Florida Elder Law, 2025).

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What Is the Florida Senior Legal Helpline?

The Florida Senior Legal Helpline is a free, statewide telephone legal service available to Florida residents 60 years and older (Florida Elder Law, 2025).

To contact the helpline, call:

1-888-895-7873

9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Monday through Friday (excluding holidays)

Available Services

The helpline can help seniors navigate a variety of legal topics, including the following.

- **Consumer protection:** Scams, frauds, and unfair marketplace practices.
- **Housing concerns:** Landlord-tenant laws, discrimination, and accommodation.
- **Family law:** Disputes, guardianship, and caregiving.
- **Probate matters:** Estate planning, wills, and small claims.
- **Advance directives:** Power of attorney and living wills.
- **Medicaid and Medicare:** Coverage issues and denials.
- **Social Security and SSI:** Benefits and overpayments.
- **Elder abuse:** Financial, emotional, or physical harm.
- **Relative caregiver rights:** Legal custody, school enrollment, and benefit access.



Figure 1. Two older adults look at a laptop screen.
Credit: © LIGHTFIELD STUDIOS/Adobe Stock.



Figure 2. Two older adults review documents with a professional.
Credit: © Koto Amatsukami/Adobe Stock.

What Happens When You Call?

When your call is answered, you will be connected with a screening staff member who will ask you a few questions to complete your application for services. Have your name, address, household information, county of residence, and the nature of your legal concern available. You may only call the helpline on your own behalf, unless you have a (durable) power of attorney and provide that document to the screening staff. Once your eligibility is verified, a telephone callback appointment will be scheduled (Florida Elder Law, 2025).

At this callback appointment, services can be offered in English and Spanish. There is also translation assistance available in other languages and for those with hearing impairments. Be prepared at the scheduled time with any relevant documents or questions you may have, as well as a paper and pen to take notes. If you miss your appointment, the advocate will attempt to contact you again. If necessary, you can reschedule your appointment (Florida Elder Law, 2025).

In some cases, a follow-up call will be necessary after the advocate performs legal research or third-party calls. A client may also qualify for referrals to free, local legal services, based on their circumstances.

Other Legal Resources

Beyond the helpline, seniors and caregivers can access additional legal support through the DOEA and its partners (Florida Courts, 2025).

- **Elder Helpline:** 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337) — A referral service for elder programs, including legal aid.
- **Florida Bar Lawyer Referral Service:** 1-800-342-8011 — For seniors who need further legal assistance.
- **Florida Law Help:** www.floridalawhelp.org — Offers guides and legal forms.
- **Florida Courts Information for Elders:** www.flcourts.gov — Legal information and resources for older adults.
- **Claude Pepper Center at FSU:** www.claudepeppercenter.fsu.edu — Infographics.

Conclusion

Whether you are facing a legal crisis or just have a question about your rights, the Florida Senior Legal Helpline (1-888-895-7873) is an essential resource for older adults across the state. With free advice, compassionate guidance, and connections to local aid, seniors can face legal challenges with confidence and dignity.

References

- Florida Courts. (2025). Information for elders.
<https://www.flcourts.gov/Resources-Services/Office-of-Family-Courts/Self-Help-Information/Information-for-Elders>
- Florida Elder Law. (2025). Florida Senior Legal Helpline.
<https://law.elderaffairs.org/legal-services/florida-senior-legal-helpline/>

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