



The Consumer Connection

Summer 2019

Public Authority Services
by Sourcewise



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Providers Receive Pay for Training Class Completion

By Shannin Prather

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Independent Care Providers (IPs) in Santa Clara County who are active on the Registry or who are providing care to an IHSS consumer are now eligible to receive an incentive payment for each Public Authority Services (PA) training class they complete as well as reimbursement for certain classes they may choose to take outside of those offered by PA.

Beginning with the 2019 fall semester classes, IPs will receive a \$25 incentive payment for each PA class they complete.

The County has set aside a specific budget to be used each year for this purpose. Payments will be distributed on a first come-first served basis. Once the budget runs out for the year, no further incentives will be granted until the budget rolls over at the beginning of the following year.

IPs may also choose to take training classes outside those offered by PA and can apply to have the cost of tuition and books for those classes reimbursed up to \$500 per year.



To be reimbursed for classes offered outside of the PA's curriculum, the IP must apply for the Life Enhancement Fund at least one month prior to the beginning of the class. Classes must meet certain criteria and must enhance the wellness or effectiveness of the IP in providing value to the care of the consumer such as language, nutrition for seniors, or Home Health Aid classes.

Additional information will be available in mid-August within the Fall 2019 Class Schedule, which will be mailed to IPs, and will be available at: www.pascc.org

Public Authority Services by Sourcewise Celebrates 20 Years

By Mary Tinker

May of 2019 marked the twentieth anniversary of Public Authority Services by Sourcewise (PA); something we think is worth celebrating.

PA was originally established by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to act as the Employer of Record for the purpose of negotiating wages and benefits with the union for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Independent Care Providers (IPs). PA's scope has grown and shifted with the changing needs of the IHSS population.

Well before it was mandated by the State in 2003, Santa Clara County (SCC) established a Public Authority in 1999. Throughout California, Public Authorities have four mandates from the State:

- Provide a registry of workers (providers); recruit, screen, and refer these providers (aka IPs) to IHSS consumers
- Provide training for consumers and IPs
- Act as the employer of record for collective bargaining for IP wages and benefits
- Perform any other function related to the delivery of IHSS as assigned by the county

Today, 19 full-time staff work hard every day to accurately and effectively provide services to IHSS consumers and IPs. In 1999, PA began with two part-time administrative staff. At that time, PA began negotiating with the Service Employee International Union (SEIU) for IHSS IP wages and benefits. An increase of \$1 per hour above minimum wage was agreed upon in SCC for the first time.

Today, 19 full-time staff work hard every day to accurately and effectively provide services to IHSS consumers and IPs. In 1999, PA began with two part-time administrative staff.

The following year, PA once again enhanced IHSS consumers' ability to hire providers with the launch of health benefits for over 400 IPs. Today, Valley Health Plan covers 11,861 IPs. In 2001, dental and vision benefits were added for over 600 IPs. Today, this coverage has since increased to 12,562. This rich benefit package is considered one of the best in the State.

A few years later, PA assumed direct responsibility for the Registry— although the Registry was a Sourcewise service since 1995.

The Registry expanded under PA, based on recommendations from the Advisory Board, and the Urgent Care Registry was created as a safety-net program. Additional services have been added throughout the years such as provider enrollment, Department of Justice background checks, and a robust provider training program, offering 15 different topics in five locations throughout SCC.

We are pleased to continue serving the 24,966 consumers and 25,376 IPs currently active in Santa Clara County's IHSS. The past two decades have brought successes and challenges, and we look forward to adapting to the changing needs of the ever-growing IHSS population for many more years to come.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Tinker". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sincerely,
Mary Tinker
Director
Public Authority Services by Sourcewise

Use Public Transportation to Get Around Town

By Shannin Prather

Transportation is a fundamental means of accessing resources to meet our daily needs. Driving is often the preferred mode of travel for many. However, having decreased strength, vision, slow reaction times, and short-term memory issues may make it unsafe to drive. This may result in needing to give up driving earlier in life than some may wish. Older adults who can still drive might find that they feel nervous driving after dark, and may look for other transportation options due to fixed incomes that cannot absorb high gas prices. For these individuals, accessing public transportation is crucial for aging well in place.

Without access or confidence in using public transportation, older adults often turn to loved ones, caregivers, or friends and neighbors for rides. Some may feel guilty asking someone for a ride for “nonessential” trips, which may lead them to stay at home and become socially isolated, or to continue to drive, putting themselves and others at risk.

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) operates bus, light rail train, and paratransit services throughout Santa Clara County. The VTA has created many services and programs to assist seniors and individuals with disabilities with their transportation needs.

The VTA’s “Daycation” program provides travel training to small groups so they become comfortable using public transportation. The program features a free round trip to the destination of the group’s choice within VTA’s service area, training on how to use VTA services and an escorted trip on a bus or light rail train.

Safety concerns, such as fear of falling, being rushed to enter and exit a bus or light rail train, uneasiness about not knowing the routes, or missing the desired stop are common reasons older adults and individuals with disabilities may not feel confident in using public transportation. VTA addresses these safety concerns in several ways:

- All VTA buses have lifts or ramps to make boarding easier. The bus operator will make these available if you let them know you need it. In addition, many



VTA buses can lower, or “kneel”, to make boarding easier.

- All light rail platforms are level with the deck of the train, making it easier to move from the platform to the train, and vice versa.
- After evening peak hours, VTA bus operators can make a stop closer to the rider’s final destination rather than the regular bus stop. This service is available upon request for exiting only and only when the operator feels it is safe to pull over.
- Bus and light rail trains have internal and external announcements for destination and stops, as well as visual display boards projecting this information.
- While riding VTA transit, the operator can answer simple questions when asked, such as the number of stops that are coming before reaching your destination.
- Customized trip planning with a VTA representative can help individuals plan the exact route to their destination.

VTA has senior fares to help make riding public transit more affordable—a single ride costs \$1.00—which can be paid in either cash or with a Senior Clipper card.

To learn more about VTA, visit www.vta.org or speak with an Information Services Representative by calling (408) 321-2300.

Three Steps for Interviewing Care Providers

By Mariah Martinez

Whether you found a potential In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) care provider through the Public Authority (PA) Registry or your personal search, screen these providers to make sure they are a great fit for you.

To ensure the screening process is successful, follow these three steps to choose the best provider for you.

1) **The Telephone Interview:** Learn if the provider will meet your needs during this screening by asking:

- What IHSS tasks are you willing to do?
- How many hours are you willing to work?
- What days of the week can you work?
- What times of the day can you work?

Remember to be flexible. If the provider can only work some of your hours, or they can work only certain days, you may find it worthwhile to hire them and test if the match works for you.

When you call, if the provider does not immediately answer, leave a clear message stating your name, why you are calling, and your phone number. Make sure your voicemail is set up and your voicemail box is not full so the provider can leave a message if you are unavailable when they call back.

2) **Face to Face Interview:** If the phone interview goes well, meeting with the provider in person to discuss the information from the phone interview in more detail can aid you in making your decision. As the employer, you make the work environment —your home— as safe and welcoming as you are able. If you are meeting in your home, tidy up if you can, and make sure a place is available for the provider to sit during the interview.

Additional screening questions you may like to ask the provider:

- What is your experience as a care provider?
- What type of services have you provided to other clients?
- Do you have any special training?

3) **Reference Checks:** If the provider is not from a PA Registry list, ask for their references. When you call the references, ask:

- How long did the provider work for you?
- What type of tasks did they perform for you?
- Was the provider reliable?

For more information on how to hire an IHSS provider or to receive a list of pre-screened IHSS providers to interview, contact the Public Authority Registry: (408) 350-3251.

Visit Happy Hollow Foundation's Sixth Annual Senior Safari

Happy Hollow Park & Zoo invites visitors ages 50 and up to take over the park in a kid-free environment monthly from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. every fourth Thursday through October 24, 2019.

Older adults can enjoy a unique environment that stimulates both body and mind, while enjoying animal meet-and-greets, zookeeper chats, and a variety of other activities. Senior Safari admission and parking are free, and guests who enter before 10 a.m. may stay the whole day for free.

For more information contact the Happy Hollow Park & Zoo at (408) 794-6400 or visit their website: www.happyhollow.org.

CalFresh Expands Benefits for SSI Recipients for First Time

By Elizabeth Brown

As of June 2019, for the first time, seniors and individuals with disabilities who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or State Supplementary Payment (SSP) may be eligible to receive CalFresh benefits without it affecting their SSI/SSP benefit amount.

In California, 54% of seniors age 60 and over, and 37% of adults between the ages of 18-59 receive SSI or SSP, according to the California Department of Social Services.

CalFresh is available to low-income individuals who meet the federal income eligibility. CalFresh issues the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to qualified individuals. The EBT card is valid at most grocery stores and many local farmers markets, all of which offer newly eligible CalFresh recipients access to purchase fresh, nutritious, unprocessed, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and fresh-cut herbs.

CalFresh food benefits may range from \$15 to \$192 per month. The average food benefit amount available nationally for an older adult or person with disability is \$105 - \$110 per month.

Newly eligible SSI recipients will need to apply for CalFresh either via telephone, online at www.getcalfresh.org, or in person at locations around the county.

SSI recipients who currently receive CalFresh do not need to apply as they will be added automatically to the existing CalFresh household at the next semi-annual or annual report. Individuals who might not be eligible to receive CalFresh may have access to alternative government support programs.

Learn more about the CalFresh benefit expansion, how it might affect you or someone you know, or if you are interested in applying for CalFresh benefits Sourcewise provides one-on-one application assistance, contact a Community Resource Specialist of Sourcewise: (408) 350-3200, option 1.

Attend a Free Health and Wellness Fair

By Shannin Prather

Seize the opportunity to visit a free health and wellness resource fair this fall. Learn about resources including health care, social services, and assistive devices. Take advantage of free health screenings, and flu shots, as well as raffle prizes and giveaways.

The Centennial Recreation Senior Center (CRSC) in Morgan Hill offers a variety of free activities for seniors during their second Annual Healthy Aging Week October 7-11, 2019, including a Senior Resource Fair on Thursday, October 10, 2019.

For more information on these and other events, contact CRSC at (408) 782-1284.

The Santa Clara County Social Services Agency's Department of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS), invites the public to the twenty-seventh Annual Senior Resource and Wellness Fair on Wednesday, October 16, 2019. Over 50 agencies and community organizations will be on-site, as well as volunteer interpreters for attendees who may need translation assistance.

Free parking validation is available for the City Hall Garages located on South 6th Street and 4th street. For more information contact Teiana Johnston, Social Worker at DAAS at (408) 975-5720.





Public Authority Services

by Sourcewise



Public Authority Services by Sourcewise www.pascc.org
Phone: (408) 350-3206 Fax: (408) 296-8340 E-mail: info@pascc.org

Important Phone Numbers

Public Authority Services by Sourcewise

Information concerning provider benefits, bus pass, training or other services of the Public Authority.
(408) 350-3206

Public Authority Services Registry

Call the Registry, if you need help finding an IHSS care provider.
(408) 350-3251

IHSS Social Services

Information regarding authorized hours and services or to speak with a social worker.
(408) 792-1600

IHSS Payroll

Call for any payroll or timesheet matters.
(408) 792-1600

UNION SEIU Local 2015

Representing providers. Call for information about the Union and payroll deductions.
(855) 810-2015

Adult Protective Services

24-hour Hotline. Call for help, if you or someone you know suspect abuse of a senior or dependent adult.
(408) 975-4900
(800) 414-2002

Sourcewise Information & Awareness

Information on available services in Santa Clara County.
(408) 350-3200, option 1

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