

# Basic Public Benefits Advocacy Trainings

*MCLE, the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI), and other Massachusetts legal services programs collaborate to provide annual basic public benefits advocacy training events for the many public and private sector lawyers and community advocates who assist Massachusetts residents to qualify for and receive public benefits.*

*Tuition: Program 1, \$55 for legal services attorneys and non lawyer advocates; \$125 for all others; Programs 2-5, \$35 for legal services attorneys and non lawyer advocates; \$125 for all others.*



## September–December Programs

### 1. Evictions

#### **Boston & Live Webcast—**

Tuesday, September 19, 2025

12:00 pm–4:00 pm (2260233P01 / 2260233WBC)

#### **Rebroadcasts—**

Wednesday, October 1, 2025, 10:00 am–2:00 pm (2260233RB1)

Thursday, October 9, 2025, 12:00 pm–4:00 pm (2260233RB2)

• Earn up to 3.5 CLE credits

This training is for community and lay advocates, mediators, housing and legal advocates, and others interested in having a better understanding of tenants' rights in Massachusetts. The training focuses on evictions, focusing on the rights of the tenants and going through the eviction process. The program looks at notices to quit, summary process, the tenant's rights through the process, and many other topics. Materials include *Legal Tactics: Tenants' Rights in Massachusetts*.

#### **Faculty**

Annette R. Duke, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*

Laura F. Camara, Esq., *Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts LLC, Brockton*

Patricia Whiting, Esq., *Harvard Legal Aid Bureau, Cambridge*

### 2. Assisting Families Experiencing Homelessness

#### **Live Webcast Only—**

Tuesday, September 23, 2025

9:30 am–3:00 pm (2260002P01 / 2260002WBC)

#### **Rebroadcasts—**

Wednesday, October 8, 2025, 9:30 am–3:00 pm (2260002RB1)

Thursday, October 16, 9:00 am–3:00 pm (2260002RB2)

• Earn up to 4.5 CLE credits

This program focuses on strategies to assist families experiencing homelessness in accessing and retaining shelter, short-term housing, and services from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). Trainers provide an overview of the Emergency Assistance (EA) shelter and services program, including current restrictions on access to EA shelter. The training also includes advocacy tips regarding the range of issues facing families at risk or experiencing homelessness as they seek access to EA shelter, overflow shelter, and the HomeBASE program. The training includes an overview of the system, the application process, denials, terminations, shelter placements, and program requirements.

This training is for legal services advocates, lawyers in private practice, social and health services workers, and community activists who want to learn about the nuts-and-bolts of the EA

system and the HomeBASE program. Training materials include the *Emergency Assistance Advocacy Guide: A Guide to Emergency Shelter and Rehousing Services for Homeless Families with Children in Massachusetts*.

#### **Faculty**

Andrea M. Park, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*

Ben Levine, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*

### 3. CORI Basics: Criminal Record Sealing, Expungement & Related Issues

#### **Boston & Live Webcast—**

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

9:30 am–1:15 pm (2260003P01 / 2260003WBC)

#### **Rebroadcasts—**

Wednesday, October 22, 2025, 12:00 pm–3:45 pm (2260003RB1)

Thursday, October 30, 2025, 1:15 pm–5:00 pm (2260003RB2)

• Earn up to 3 CLE credits

This seminar provides an overview of criminal offender record information (CORI) laws as related to employment, housing, and other collateral consequences. Topics include, but are not limited to, how to seal and expunge criminal and juvenile records; how to get and correct CORI reports; Chapter 151B anti-discrimination provisions that apply to job interviews and job applications; tenant protections related to use of criminal records by landlords and housing authorities; varied legal protections depending on the type of record sealed; when to expunge versus a seal a record; appeals of denials of requests for sealing or expungement; new caselaw by the Supreme Judicial Court on expungement of records; and new or pending legislation on CORI.

Massachusetts keeps "CORI" on every individual who has a criminal case in a Massachusetts state court. CORI is recorded and kept on file even if the underlying case is ultimately dismissed or the accused is found not guilty. CORI is available to police, and also used in screening processes by employers, landlords, government agencies, and others. Clients with criminal records face barriers to employment, housing, benefits and opportunities for economic stability. This training is for legal services advocates, lawyers in private practice, social and health services workers, and community activists who want to learn about the law or get a refresher course on the basics of CORI.

#### **Faculty**

Pauline Quirion, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*

Sean J. Casey, Esq., *Massachusetts Probation Services, Boston*

Susan Hegel, Esq., *Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services, Cambridge*

Agapi Koulouris, Esq., *Department of Criminal Justice Information Services, Chelsea*

Susan Malouin, Esq., *Northeast Legal Services, Lawrence*

## 4. SSI & SSDI Basics

### Boston & Live Webcast—

Wednesday, October 29 2025

9:30 am–4:00 pm (2260004P01 / 2260004WBC)

### Rebroadcasts—

Thursday, November 13, 2025, 9:30 am–4:00 pm (2260004RB1)

Friday, November 21 2025, 9:30 am–4:00 pm (2260004RB2)

- Earn up to 5 CLE credits

Social Security disability programs continue to be a major source of cash and health benefits for individuals with disabilities. However, dealing with a large federal agency can be daunting and overwhelming, especially for an unrepresented claimant. The program begins with an overview of the two disability programs administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA), with emphasis on eligibility requirements and procedures, including online procedures and any remaining COVID-19 related procedures, basic disability eligibility standards and non-disability issues such as income, resources, and non-citizen criteria. An explanation of the recently revised evidence submission and analysis rules begins the afternoon session followed by an overview of the appeals process for disability applications. Concluding the program is a review of certain post-entitlement issues, with special emphasis on continuing disability reviews, work incentives rules, and benefits overpayments.

The training is for legal services advocates, lawyers in private practice who are thinking of representing clients before SSA, social and health workers, and community activists.

### Faculty

Linda Landry, Esq., *Disability Law Center, Boston*

Svetlana Uminkova, Esq., *Disability Law Center, Boston*

## 5. Overview of the TAFDC Program, Massachusetts' Cash Assistance Program for Families

### Boston & Live Webcast—

Wednesday, December 9, 2025

9:30 am–3:00 pm (2260005P01 / 2260005WBC)

### Rebroadcasts—

Friday, December 26, 2025, 9:30 am–3:00 pm (2260005RB1)

Monday, January 5, 2026, 9:30 am–3:00 pm (2260005RB2)

- Earn up to 4 CLE credits

This training is for legal services advocates, lawyers in private practice, social and health services workers, and community activists who want to learn about TAFDC (Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children)—the cash assistance program for families. The training provides an overview of program rules and eligibility, as well as information about recent policy and practice changes. The training will also cover applying for and keeping TAFDC benefits, and protections for specific populations including people with disabilities, people dealing with domestic violence, and people with limited English proficiency. Child care and immigration topics will also be covered.

Materials include PowerPoints handouts and other resources. An updated *TAFDC Advocacy Guide: An Advocate's Guide* will also be provided. The 2024 edition is available free at <https://www.masslegalservices.org/TAFDCAdvocacyGuide>.

### Faculty

Betsy Gwin, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*

Lisa Bradley, *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*

Lizbeth Ginsburg, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*

Sarah Levy, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*

Naomi Meyer, Esq., *Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston*