

State Representative

Neal P. Goodman

SENIOR UPDATE

CAPITOL OFFICE: 512-E Main Capitol • P.O. Box 202123 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2123 • (717) 787-2798
DISTRICT OFFICES: 39 W. Centre St. • Mahanoy City, PA 17948 • (570) 773-3075 • Toll-Free: (866) 861-1311
18 N. 2nd St. • Saint Clair, PA 17970 • (570) 429-1222

Dear Friend,

This newsletter contains valuable information for senior citizens living in Schuylkill County. Please take a minute of your time and read about the many state services that are available to you, such as the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program and PACE and PACENET prescription assistance.

My constituent service offices are always available to serve you and have a variety of informational booklets, brochures and other publications on state programs. They are located at 39 W. Centre St., Mahanoy City and 18 N. Second St., Saint Clair. You can call the Mahanoy City office 570-773-3075 or the Saint Clair office at 570-429-1222.

In addition to stopping by my office, you can also reach me via email through my website at www.pahouse.com/Goodman and click on "Contact Me."

Sincerely,



State Rep. Neal P. Goodman

Free help with Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

If you qualify, you can receive a rebate of up to \$650 on the property taxes or rent you paid in 2017.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is open to homeowners and renters who are 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; or anyone 18 or older with a disability. Your household income must be \$35,000 or less if you are a homeowner, or \$15,000 or less if you are a renter, and you only have to count half of your Social Security benefits toward your total income when applying.

A law that I proudly authored ensures Pennsylvania veterans who receive a state-provided stipend related to their service will not be shut out of this program if it puts them over the income limit. The law also ensures that federal Veterans Administration benefits do not push a veteran over the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program income limit.

My office receives applications for this program in February. The application deadline is June 30. You may call my office at (570) 773-3075 for an application and for FREE help with applying. You can also obtain an application and apply for free at any Department of Revenue office and on the department's website at www.revenue.state.pa.us.



Do you have difficulty paying for your prescriptions?

Pennsylvania's PACE program can help

PACE, PACENET and PACE plus Medicare are Pennsylvania's prescription assistance programs for senior citizens. The programs offer low-cost prescription medication to eligible Pennsylvania residents who meet the income qualifications.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for PACE and PACENET, you must be:

- 65 or older
- A Pennsylvania resident for at least 90 days before applying
- NOT enrolled in the Department of Human Services' Medicaid prescription benefit

What are the income qualifications?

- PACE and PACENET eligibility is determined by your previous calendar year's income.

PACE

- For a single person, total income must be \$14,500 or less
- For a married couple, combined total income must be \$17,700 or less

PACENET

- For a single person, total income can be between \$14,500 and \$23,500
- For a married couple, combined total income can be between \$17,700 and \$31,500.

What is PACE Plus Medicare?

Under PACE Plus Medicare, PACE/PACENET coverage is supplemented by federal Medicare Part D prescription coverage and offers older Pennsylvanians the best benefits of both programs. Older adults continue to receive the same prescription benefits while, in many cases, saving more money.

My office can provide you with more information about PACE, PACENET and PACE Plus Medicare, and help you with the application process. ***Please contact my office about these programs.***

Improving PACE and PACENET

The Pennsylvania legislature is always looking for ways to maintain and improve the PACE and PACENET programs. Since PACE was created in 1984 and PACENET in 1996, we periodically have reauthorized the programs, expanded income eligibility and excluded Social Security cost-of-living adjustments. We even modified PACENET's deductible and adapted the program when Medicare's prescription benefit – Part D – was created. All of this was done to prevent thousands of people from losing their coverage and to make even more people eligible for the programs.

Recent years have been no different. With my support, Social Security Medicare Part B premiums are now excluded from income considerations. This change has the effect of increasing the income limits by that amount. For most Medicare beneficiaries, that's about \$1,258 per person per year.

Another change I supported excludes any Social Security cost-of-living adjustments from income when applying for the programs. For years, tens of thousands of seniors were close to being pushed out of their prescription drug coverage because their relatively small cost-of-living increase pushed them over the income limit. In the past, we enacted temporary moratoriums to keep that from happening. Now, the Social Security COLA exclusion is permanent.



Report fraud to the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Elder Abuse Helpline

Pennsylvania has the third highest percentage of older residents in the United States with nearly 2 million people 65 or older.

Senior citizens are favored targets for many kinds of consumer fraud including identity theft, charities, telemarketing and sweepstakes fraud.

Because various state agencies, local law enforcement, criminal investigators and prosecutors work together to resolve cases of elder victimization, it may be difficult to know where to report certain elder abuse concerns.

You may call the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Elder Abuse Helpline toll-free at 1-866-623-2137. Well-trained staff will provide help.

Is the PA Treasury holding your unclaimed property?

Each year, the state Treasurer's Office receives hundreds of millions of dollars of unclaimed property. In fact, one in 10 Pennsylvanians has unclaimed property that belongs to them. It might be yours, and I can help you find out.

You're probably wondering, what is considered unclaimed property? Examples of such property include closed bank accounts, uncashed checks, lost stocks and bonds, contents of safe deposit boxes, proceeds from the demutualization of insurance companies, and expired gift cards or gift certificates.

If these items go unclaimed for five years, they must be turned over to the state Treasurer's Office, which is required to hold unclaimed property. The goal is to return this unclaimed property to its rightful owners.

To find out if you have unclaimed property, search your name in the Unclaimed Property database at www.patreasury.gov/Unclaimed/Search.html, call 1-800-222-2046, or contact my office. There is NO CHARGE to claim your unclaimed property.

Don't forget your senior discount!

Retail stores and restaurants aren't the only places offering valuable discounts to seniors these days!

The commonwealth provides discounts to seniors for a variety of state services, ranging from driver services to recreational activities. Here are just a few that you should take advantage of:

Hunting and fishing licenses

Some of the best experiences our state has to offer happen in the great outdoors. The state Fish and Boat and state Game commissions make it a little easier on the wallet for seniors to fish and hunt.



People 65 and older may purchase yearly hunting and fishing licenses at reduced rates of \$13.90 for a hunting license and \$11.90 for a fishing license. Lifetime licenses are also available at \$51.90 for hunting or fishing.

You can find more information on how to purchase a fishing license online, the latest stocking guides, fishing information by your region and much more, by visiting the Fish and Boat Commission's website at www.fish.state.pa.us. Game news, state game lands maps, and other helpful resources are also available on the Pennsylvania Game Commission's website, www.pgc.state.pa.us.

Reduced automobile registrations

PennDOT offers retired Pennsylvanians earning less than \$19,200 annually a reduced yearly automobile registration rate of \$10, compared to the normal \$30.50. The income limit to qualify for this discount is per person. It is **NOT** based on household income.





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Harrisburg, PA 17120-2123

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- Senior Discounts!

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My office can help you with:

- Car registrations, special tags, duplicate titles and license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Birth and death certificate applications
- Pennsylvania income tax questions
- Requests for literature of all kinds — bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information, etc.
- Disability plates and placards
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- PACE and PACENET applications for senior citizens
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate questions or help
- Information regarding unclaimed property

Any issues with state government!