

The Law and You

Internet Resources for Seniors

The National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (“NAELA”) has again this year declared the month of May to be National Elder Law Month. Some states, like Utah, have also declared the Month of May as Elder law Month.

In celebration of National Elder Law Month, I am devoting this column to sources of information and help for senior citizens, especially those sources relating to legal matters. This information has been updated from a similar column three years ago.

With the Internet becoming so accessible, even for seniors, I will refer to many Internet sites that may be helpful to the reader. One of the most extensive sources of elder law information is contained on NAELA’s web site at www.naela.com. This notational format to identify useful senior sources.

In addition to general information and a directory of Elder Law Attorneys, NAELA’s site contains more than 50 “hot links” to other Internet sites. The term “hot links” simply means that you only have to click your mouse on the link or address and you will be taken immediately to that particular site.

The Center for Social Gerontology maintains a web site that provides information on federal legislation, both enacted and pending: www.tcsg.org. For instance, you can go to that site and obtain a copy of the The National Survey of Legal Assistance for the Elderly.

If you do not have access to the Internet, you might ask a child, grandchild, relative, or a friend to help you. Also, many of the local senior centers provide Internet access to seniors. However, if you have no access to the Internet, you can write or call the Center for Social Gerontology at 2307 Shelby Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103; (734) 665-1126.

At the State level, the Aging Services Program provides services as set forth in the Older Americans Act. It is funded by federal, state, and local governments: www.hsdaas.state.ut.us/srvage.htm. At this site, you can click on and obtain an eighteen page booklet entitled “Utah Legal Services for Older Adults.” There are also links to about 21 other Internet sites that may be helpful.

There are 12 area offices throughout the State of Utah. For local information, check the telephone directory for Aging Services.

At the national level, there is the National Senior Citizens Law Center, 1101 14th Street, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 2005. Or, you can access them on the Internet at www.nsclc.org. The NSCLC is a not for profit organization that advocates nationwide to promote independence and well-being of low-income elderly individuals.

For low-income seniors (usually below 125% of the federal poverty level), legal services may be available through different agencies. Qualifications and services may be obtained at the “*and justice for all*” web site located at: www.uls.state.ut.us/services.html.

At that site, you will find at least four links to other sites: Utah Legal Services, The Legal Aid Society, Disability Law Center, and the Utah State Bar.

The Utah State Bar sponsors a free legal advice program in Salt Lake City known as the Tuesday Night Bar. This is an evening where lawyers volunteer to meet one-on-one with individuals for 30 minutes at no cost to assist the public in determining their legal rights. These consultations are held four Tuesdays each month between 5:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. at the Utah Law & Justice Center, 645 South 200 East. Appointments may be scheduled by calling 531-9077.

For the more adventurous, you can access

Utah's Code (or statutes), if you know the specific title, chapter, and section, at www.romingerlegal.com/state/utah.html. Utah's statutes may be accessed, read, and printed. Searching is somewhat difficult, but the full text of the particular code sections desired are available at no cost. This site is provided free by Rominger, a Pennsylvania corporation specializing in hosting and developing web sites. Since the site provides free legal information, it can be used without subscription or fees.

The Internet will undoubtedly continue to expand services of all kind, including legal services and services for seniors. But, it can be confusing. If you need an attorney, especially for age-related issues such as estate planning, Medicaid, Guardianship, Conservatorship, good legal advice is important; you should contact an Elder Law Attorney. To locate an Elder Law Attorney, check with the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys at (520) 881-4005, or your local Yellow Pages.