

Quinnehtukqut Legal News



Volume 8 Issue 2

www.ptla.org/quinnehtukqut/qlegal.htm

A Newsletter for Native Americans in Connecticut

Winter 2005



On-Line Resources Now Available



Unemployment Comp Filing Can Be Done on Internet

If you are filing a continuing unemployment insurance claim, you can now visit www.ct.gov/dol and click on the icon titled "File Your Weekly Claim/Inquiry on the Internet" listed under "Unemployment" on the left side of your screen. You can only use this on-line process **after** a claim has been established by calling the agency's "Dial to File" TeleBenefits automated phone system. The numbers for this vary depending on your area and can be found on the same website by clicking on "Claims Filing by Phone."

Both filing by phone and using the on-line method follow the same filing days and hours – Monday through Friday, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday from 12 a.m. to 11 p.m. The site also provides additional features, including secured access that allows you to review and print out benefit filing history. This information can be obtained Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from 12 a.m. to 11 p.m. Eventually, the new Internet system will allow you to file your initial unemployment compensation claims online.

Food @Your Fingertips

Food@Your Fingertips is an interactive website that allows you to check for eligibility for food stamps. Just go to this web site: www.foodstampst.org. You can also call End Hunger Connecticut! (EHC!) at 860-560-2100 if you need to talk to someone about food stamps.

Section 8 Waiting List Web Site Now On-Line

A web site listing all open Section 8 waiting lists has come online. Creation of the web site was mandated by a state law adopted in 2004. The web site address is www.das.state.ct.us/Business_Svs/HCV/HCVP_Home.asp. Registration is available to any person, including tenants looking for housing. You can also go to the website to find a list of currently open Section 8 waiting lists.



Claim your Earned Income Credit

If you worked in 2003, you may be eligible for the Earned Income Credit. If so, you'll owe less in taxes, and you could get cash back. Even if you don't owe income tax, you can get the EIC.



** If you raised one child in your home in 2004 and



Pine Tree's Native American Unit is Restructured

The Native American Unit of Pine Tree Legal Assistance has been restructured. Although we will no longer have a full-time attorney in the NAU working out of Bangor, there are many advantages to this new structure. Perhaps most importantly, we will have several experienced attorneys around the state working in or close to the Native communities. They will be able to maintain a strong visible presence in those communities, respond quickly to issues that develop, and be ready to meet and consult with you in person when necessary.

Judy Plano, who had been the full-time NAU attorney based in Bangor since June of 2002, has transferred to Pine Tree's Augusta office. She very much enjoyed working full-time on Native legal issues, but the transfer to Augusta means she is close to home and saves her the long commute every day. She will continue to devote some of her time to Native issues.

Paul Thibeault has returned to Pine Tree and is located in our Machias office. He has many years of experience practicing law in Indian country. He will devote much of his time to providing legal services to the Passamaquoddy communities at Indian Township and Pleasant Point.

Jeff Ashby and Courtney Lockwood are attorneys in our Presque Isle office. Over the past few years they have helped many members of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs and Houlton Band of Maliseets in a variety of legal issues. They will continue to do so.

Mike Guare and Eric Nelson are attorneys and Danny Mills is the paralegal in our Bangor office. They have worked part-time in the NAU for several years. Eric serves as the directing attorney of the unit.

Pine Tree attorneys are not licensed to practice law in Connecticut. However, the Native American unit may be able to give information and help to low-income Native Americans in Connecticut with federal legal problems about the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Jay Treaty. Pine Tree can also refer cases to lawyers in Connecticut. Our telephone number is 1-800-879-7463.



your family earned less than \$30,338 (or \$31,338 for married workers), you can get up to \$2,604.

* If you raised more than one child in your home in 2003 and your family earned less than \$34,458 (or \$35,458 for married workers), you can get up to \$4,300.

(Continued on next page)

("EIC" continued from front page)

- ** If you weren't raising a child, were between the ages of 25 and 64 on December 31, 2004, and earned less than \$11,490 in 2004, you can get up to \$390.
- ** If you were raising a "qualifying child" in 2004, you must file federal tax return Forms 1040 or 1040A and **must** fill out and attach Schedule EIC. **You cannot get the EIC if you fill out Form 1040EZ or do not attach Schedule EIC.** Married workers must file a joint return.
- ** If you weren't raising children in 2004, file the return you would normally file (including the 1040EZ). Be sure to write "EIC" or the dollar amount of your credit on the Earned Income Credit line of your tax form. Do **not** file Schedule EIC.
- ** You don't have to calculate your own EIC. If you choose, the IRS will do it for you.
- ** A correct name and social security number must be provided for every person listed on the tax return and Schedule EIC. If this information is incorrect or missing, the IRS will delay your refund.



Increase Your Take-Home Pay With the EIC Advance Payment Option

Most workers get their EIC in one large check from the IRS after they file a tax return. You have another choice. Your employer can add part of your EIC to every paycheck. You get the rest of your credit after you file your return.

For many workers, getting part of their EIC in each paycheck can make a difference in paying the rent, buying groceries, and meeting other day-to-day needs. If you earn between \$490 and \$1,300 a month, for example, you can get about \$50 to \$60 extra in each bi-weekly paycheck. Advance EIC payments are not counted as additional income in determining eligibility for public benefits such as cash assistance, housing assistance, food stamps and Medicaid.

In 2005, you can qualify for an Advance EIC payment if you have at least one qualifying child and you expect your 2004 income to be less than \$31,030 (\$33,030 if you are married).

Get FREE Help Filing your Taxes!

Assistance with Returns: Free tax preparation is available through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs in most communities. Volunteers help prepare basic tax returns for taxpayers with low or limited incomes. To find a VITA site near you call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040. Taxpayers may also call AARP – the largest TCE participant – at 1-877-227-7844 to see if they are near a local Tax Aide site.



Remember: paying for tax preparation takes money away from YOUR refund.



www.ptla.org

Pine Tree Legal Assistance is a non-profit organization that gives free legal help to poor people with civil (non-criminal) legal problems in Maine.

Pine Tree operates a special Native American Unit in its Bangor, Maine office. The unit is staffed by attorneys Paul Thibeault, Judith Plano, Mike Guare, Jay Ashby and Courtney Lockwood, by Paralegal Danny Mills, and is headed by attorney Eric Nelson. Judith, Mike and Danny have worked with the Unit for several years. Paul has specialized in Indian Law since 1983. Jay and Courtney have worked on Native American issues out of our Presque Isle Office. Eric has worked at Pine Tree for many years on behalf of migrant farmworkers and Native Americans.

Pine Tree attorneys are not licensed to practice law in Connecticut. However, the Native American Unit may be able to give information and help to low-income Native Americans in Connecticut with federal legal problems, such as questions about the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Jay Treaty. Pine Tree can also refer cases to lawyers in Connecticut. The telephone number is 1-800-879-7463.

You can find a list of Indian Legal Services Programs in your state on the web at www.judicare.org/nails.html.

Federal Recognition Update

The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs found in December of 2004 that it made a mistake in evaluating the Schaghticoke Indian tribe's recognition application. The agency, which reversed a preliminary ruling and granted the tribe federal recognition last January, miscounted the number of Schaghticoques who married other Schaghticoques during the 19th century. The BIA said the error does not automatically mean the tribe's recognition should be rejected.

In March of 2005, Interior Secretary Gale Norton upheld the Bureau of Indian Affairs' ruling last June that the Golden Hill Paugussett had failed to satisfy the criteria for federal recognition.



Statewide Legal Services

Call Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut, Inc. (SLS) if you are low income and you need free legal help in the following areas:

- * Housing
- * Family Matters
- * Welfare

- * Medicare
- * Medicaid
- * Other Government Benefits

Telephone Numbers To Call:

In the Middletown calling area: 1-860-344-0380
From other places in Connecticut: 1-800-453-3320

Statewide Legal Services has changed hours to concentrate more staff during the busiest calling hours.

Monday 9AM-3PM Thursday 9AM-6PM
Tuesday 9AM-4PM Friday 9AM-4PM
Wednesday 9AM-3PM

You'll get through faster by using the "redial" button rather than hanging up and redialing manually if the line's busy.

We Want To Hear From You!

If you have comments, articles or ideas on how this Newsletter can be helpful to you, please let us know. Please send articles or letters to: Quinnehtukqut Legal News, Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Coe Building, 61 Main Street, Room 41, Bangor, ME 04401. Or you can send e-mail to csamp@ptla.org.

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You may contact us at Quinnehtukqut Legal News, Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Coe Building, 61 Main St, Room 41, Bangor ME 04401. Or you can send e-mail

The articles in this paper are meant to give information, NOT to give legal advice. No one should interpret any law without the help of an attorney who has been told all the facts



INDEX of COMMUNITY RESOURCES

This is a list of some key resources, which will offer you service or direct you to the best local resource.



CRISIS SERVICES (available 24 hours a day)



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INFOLINE

www.infoline.org

INFOLINE is an integrated system of help via the telephone – a single source for information about community services, referrals to human services, and crisis intervention. It is toll-free and operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Multilingual caseworkers and TDD access is available.



Child Abuse and Neglect:

Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline
www.state.ct.us/dcf/HOTLINE.htm

1-800-842-2288

TDD 1-800-624-5518



Domestic Violence:

www.ctcadv.org/

Statewide Hotline: This toll-free number will connect you to the nearest domestic violence agency.

888-774-2900

Ansonia:

The Umbrella

www.bghhealth.org/umbrella_domestic_violence_services.htm

203-736-9944

Bridgeport:

Center for Women and Families of Eastern

Fairfield County, Inc. www.cwfefc.org/home.html

203-384-9559

Columbia/Danielson/Danville:

Domestic Violence Program/United Services

860-774-8648

Danbury:

Women's Center of Greater Danbury

www.danbury.org/womenctr

203-731-5206

Enfield:

Network Against Domestic Abuse

860-763-4542

Greenwich:

Domestic Abuse Service Greenwich YWCA
www.ywcagreenwich.org/domesticabuse.htm

203-622-0003

Hartford:

Interval House www.intervalhousect.org

860-527-0550

Manchester:

Interval House East www.intervalhousect.org

860-645-4033

Meriden:

Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis

203-238-1501

Middletown:

New Horizons

860-347-3044

New Britain:

Prudence Crandall Center for Women
www.prudencecrandall.org/

860-225-6357

New Haven:

Domestic Violence Services of Greater New Haven
www.dvsgnh.org

203-789-8104

New London/Norwich:

Women's Center of Southeastern Connecticut

860-701-6000

Norwalk:

Domestic Violence Crisis Center www.dvccct.org

888-774-2900

Sharon:

Women's Support Services

860-364-1900

Simsbury:

Interval House West www.intervalhousect.org

860-658-7227

Stamford:

Domestic Violence Crisis Center

203-357-8162

Torrington:

Susan B. Anthony Project www.sbaproject.org/

860-482-7133

Waterbury:

Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury

203-575-0036

Willimantic/Wauregan:

Domestic Violence Program/United Services

860-456-9476



Elder Abuse and Neglect:

INFOLINE (for after hours emergencies).....211

Connecticut Department of Social Services. (Statewide toll-free number):.....1-888-385-4225
www.dss.state.ct.us/svcs/socialwork/pg3.htm



Poison Control:

Connecticut Poison Control Center
poisoncontrol.uhc.edu/

800-222-1222

TDD 866-218-5372



Sexual Assault Crisis Programs: (Hotline Numbers)

Call 888-999-5545 to get the name of the sexual assault crisis service nearest you or go to their website at www.connasacs.org/.

❖ Center for Women and Families of Eastern

203-333-2233

Fairfield Co. www.cwfefc.org/sexual_assault.html

❖ Women's Center of Greater Danbury Sexual

203-731-5204

Assault Crisis Service www.danbury.org/womenctr/

❖ Hartford Region YWCA Sexual Assault Crisis

860-522-6666

Services www.ywcahartford.org

Toll Free Spanish:

888 568-8332

Toll Free English:

888 999-5545

❖ Sexual Assault Crisis Service Of Central CT

860-635-4424

❖ Rape Crisis Center of Milford

203-878-1212

❖ New Britain YWCA

Sexual Assault Crisis Service

860-223-1787

❖ Greater New Haven Sexual Assault Crisis

203-624-2273

Service

❖ Women's Center of Northeastern Connecticut

860-456-2789

bronzefrogs.com/center/index.html

❖ Susan B. Anthony Project for Women (Serving

860-482-7133

Northwestern Connecticut) www.sbaproject.org

❖ Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury Crisis

203-575-0036

Services

