Unemployment Comp Filing Can Be Done on Internet

I
f 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.foodstampct.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.dol.state.ct.us/Business_Ses/HCVP/HCVP_Home.asp. Registration is available to anyone, 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

I
f 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.

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("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 moderate 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 Pannell, Mike Quaile, Jay Ashley 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, discredited the number of Schaghticoke members who married other Schaghticoes 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

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

- Housing
- * Family Matters
- * Medicare
- * Welfare
- * 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.
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)

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.ct.gov/dfr/HOTLINE.htm
1-800-842-2288
TDD 1-800-624-5518

Domestic Violence:
www.ctadv.org
Statewide Hotline: This toll-free number will connect you to the nearest domestic violence agency.
- Ansonia: The Umbrella
  www.theumbrella.org/umbrella_domestic_violence_services.htm
  888-774-2900
- Bridgeport: Center for Women and Families of Eastern Fairfield County, Inc.
  www.cwecfc.org/home.htm
  203-736-9944
- Columbia/Danielson/Daysville:
  Domestic Violence Program/United Services
  203-384-9559
- Danbury:
  Women's Center of Greater Danbury
  860-774-8648
  203-731-5206
- Enfield:
  Network Against Domestic Abuse
  860-763-4542
- Greenwich:
  Domestic Abuse Service Greenwich
  www.ywca.greenwich.org/domesticabuse.htm
  203-622-0003
- Hartford:
  Interval House
  www.intervalhouse.org
  860-527-0550
- Manchester:
  Interval House East
  www.intervalhouse.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.dvsgh.org
  203-789-8104
- New London/Norwich:
  Women's Center of Southeastern Connecticut
  860-701-6000
- Norwich:
  Domestic Violence Crisis Center
  www.dvccct.org
  888-774-2900
- Sharon:
  Women's Support Services
  860-364-1900
- Simsbury:
  Interval House West
  www.intervalhouse.org
  860-658-7227
- Southbury:
  Domestic Violence Crisis Center
  203-357-8162
- Torrington:
  Susan B. Anthony Project
  www.sabapct.org
  860-482-7133
- Waterbury:
  Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury
  203-575-4036
- Willimantic/Waterford:
  Domestic Violence Program/United Services
  860-456-9476

Elder Abuse and Neglect:

INFOLINE (for after hours emergencies)
Connecticut Department of Social Services. (Statewide toll-free number):
1-888-385-4225
www.css.state.ct.us/ct/state/socialwork/p3.htm

Poison Control:
Connecticut Poison Control Center
poisoncontrol.wcte.edu/
1-888-222-1222
TDD 866-218-2372

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.commsct.org/.
- Center for Women and Families of Eastern Fairfield Co.
  www.ctadv.org/center/families/family.html
  203-333-2233
- Women's Center of Greater Danbury Sexual Assault Crisis Service
  www.danbury.org/womenscenter/
  203-731-5204
- Hartford Region YWCA Sexual Assault Crisis Services
  860-522-6666
  Toll Free Spanish: 888 566-8332
  Toll Free English: 888 999-5545
- Sexual Assault Crisis Service Of Central CT
  860-615-4424
- Rape Crisis Center of Milford
  203-878-1212
- New Britain YWCA
  860-223-1787
- Sexual Assault Crisis Service
  203-624-2273
- Greater New Haven Sexual Assault Crisis Service
  860-456-2789
- Women's Center of Northwestern Connecticut
  women'scenterofnortheasternct.org
  860-815-7979
- Susan B. Anthony Project for Women (Serving Northwestern Connecticut)
  www.sabapct.org
  860-482-7133
- Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury Crisis Services
  203-575-9036
Quinnehtukqt Legal News

Sexual Assault Crisis Services 203-329-2929

Youth Crisis:
Contact the nearest Youth Service Bureau through your town hall

LEGAL RESOURCES

Lawyer Referral Service: www.sbar.org/article/articleview/291
This service can recommend a private lawyer who, for a small fee, will assess a case and give an estimate of charges.
Fairfield County 203-335-4116
Hartford 860-525-6052
New Haven Area/Waterbury/Middlesex County 203-562-5750
New London/Norwich 860-889-9384

Legal Assistance Programs:
These organizations give free civil legal help to income eligible people.
This help includes telephone advice, referrals, direct representation, and giving out self-help materials, depending on the priorities and resources of the organization.

STATEWIDE Statewide Legal Services 1-800-453-3320 in Middletown 860-344-0380

Statewide Legal Services (sleto.org) screens cases for all legal assistance programs in the state, giving brief service and advice, community education materials, and referrals to local legal services offices for non-criminal cases. Please call Statewide Legal Services first, unless you have an emergency that needs to be settled that day or you are over age 60.

# Bridgeport Connecticut Legal Services 203-336-3851
# New Britain Connecticut Legal Services 860-225-8678
# New London Connecticut Legal Services 860-447-0323
# Stamford Connecticut Legal Services 203-348-9216
# Waterbury Connecticut Legal Service 203-756-8074
# Willimantic Connecticut Legal Service 860-456-1761
# New London New Haven Legal Assistance 203-946-4811
# Hartford Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc. serving Greater Hartford 860-541-5000

Law School Legal Clinics: Law school legal clinics provide legal assistance to low-income clients.

Quinnipiac University School of Law Legal Clinics 203-582-3238
law.quinnipiac.edu/s317.txt

University of Connecticut School of Law www.law.uconn.edu/clinics/

Yale Community Legal Services Clinic 203-787-0191

Center for Medicare Advocacy www.medicareadvocacy.org/
This organization gives legal advice, written materials and representation to elderly and disabled people denied Medicare coverage for home health care, skilled nursing facility care, rehabilitation and other health services. Services are free to residents of Connecticut.

Connecticut Legal Rights Project www.mindlink.org/crpl.html
This organization helps low-income adults who have or are perceived to have psychiatric disabilities. Its staff may also help clients to protect their civil rights in conservatorship and commitment proceedings or in discrimination in housing.

Connecticut Lawyers Legal Aid to the Elderly
This organization offers legal help to low-income elderly in the Hartford area.

Children's Law Center www.sleto.org/
This organization gives legal representation to children in northeastern Connecticut using a lawyer/mental health team approach. The Center also provides legal information about situations involving children through the Children's Lawline (1-888-LAW-DOGH).

Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund www.cwealf.org/
This organization provides a free telephone counseling, information and legal referral line for help on discrimination, harassment and family matters. The group also offers community education and training, mainly in employment and family law.

CT Elderlaw.org www.ctelderlaw.org/
CT Elderlaw.org was created to provide comprehensive, current information on elder law, government programs and legal assistance for residents of Connecticut age 60 and older. It is a service of Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.

Disabilities:


Southwest Region: 1229 Albany Avenue
Hartford, CT 06112-2193
Tel.: 860-566-7710
TDD: 860-566-7710

Eastern Region: Rowland State Government Center
55 West Main St.
Norwich, CT 06360

Suite 210
Waterbury CT 06702-2004

Tel.: 203-805-6530
TDD: 203-805-6579

Social Security: www.ssa.gov/

Some Helpful Native American Web Sites

Some Helpful Native American Web Sites

Pine Tree Legal Assistance www.pla.org

Index of Native American Resources on the Internet www.hanksville.org/NAreresources

Native Links: www.johnco.com/native/

Aboriginal Links: www.bloorstreet.com/300block/aborcan.htm

Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut www.larcc.org

Statewide Legal Services: www.sleto.org/sttoct/