

MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY PROJECT

Asistencia Legal Para La Salud Mental

Law Foundation of Silicon Valley

111 West St. John Street, Suite 315

San Jose, California 95113

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ECONOMIC RIGHTS UNIT

What is the mission of the economic rights unit?

The Economic Rights Unit of the Mental Health Advocacy Project (MHAP) is dedicated to providing individuals with assistance with public benefits, consumer rights, and other general legal issues. By providing direct services to clients, as well as outreaching to homeless shelters in Santa Clara County, the economic rights unit's goal is to provide clients with information, education, assistance and advocacy to help them understand and enforce their legal rights.

Who is eligible to receive services?

The Mental Health Advocacy Project (MHAP) represents individuals who reside in Santa Clara County and who have or who identify as having mental health or developmental disabilities. Individuals do not have to meet a minimum income requirement to be eligible for MHAP's services. MHAP's legal and advocacy assistance is free to clients.

Whose interests do economic rights advocates represent?

Economic rights advocates represent the legal interests expressed by the client, so long as those interests are within the boundaries of the law and achievable within the advocates' resources. Advocates will discuss the relevant law, legal implications, and available options with clients to enable clients to make informed choices. Advocates will not impose their own views about what is in the "best interest" of their clients.

What services do economic rights advocates provide?

Economic rights advocates provide free legal advice, referrals, assistance and representation in the areas of public benefits, such as SSI or SSDI, Medi-Cal, Medicare, Denti-Cal and General Assistance; consumer rights; and equal access to public services. Specifically, economic rights advocates assist clients with the following issues:

- Social Security Hearings (SSI or SSDI)
- Working While on Benefits
- * Appeals of Denials
- Wrongful Withholding of Benefits
- * Continuing Disability Reviews
- Child Support Modification Hearings
- * Termination of Benefits
- Denials of Medi-Cal, Denti-Cal, or Medicare
- SSI or SSDI Overpayments
- Creditor Harassment
- Resource and Income Limits

How do clients seek assistance from the economic rights advocates?

Client can either visit MHAP's office at 111 West St. John Street, Suite 315, in Downtown San Jose or call MHAP at (800) 248-MHAP. A staff person will conduct an interview and ask for general information related to the client's economic rights issue. Then, the case will be assigned to an economic rights advocate who will contact the client within a week to provide advice or assistance.

MHAP also provides legal assistance in the areas of patients' rights and housing rights. Please call (800) 248-MHAP for further information.