

Medicaid Help for Seniors in Northeast Ohio: A Guide to Local Resources

Applying for Medicaid — or figuring out whether a parent or spouse even qualifies — is rarely a one-phone-call process. Between income limits, asset rules, waiver programs, and appeals, most Northeast Ohio families end up needing more than one type of help along the way. Below is a rundown of the organizations that actually do this work, organized by what they help with, along with contact information for the counties that make up the region.

1. Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) — The First Call to Make

Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging are the state's front door for anything related to aging services, including Medicaid waiver programs that pay for in-home and community-based care. Each AAA operates an Aging and Disability Resource Network (ADRN) center that provides free screening, application help, and referrals — regardless of income, though the programs they connect you to have their own eligibility rules. Which AAA serves a family depends on county, not city, so it's worth confirming before calling.

- **Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging** — serves Cuyahoga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, and Geauga counties. Handles PASSPORT (Ohio's home care Medicaid waiver), Residential State Supplement, and preadmission screening for nursing home applicants. Aging & Disability Resource Center: (216) 539-9240
- **Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities** — serves Summit, Portage, Stark, and Wayne counties. Screens for the PASSPORT waiver, Ohio Home Care Waiver, Assisted Living Waiver, and nursing facility Medicaid admission. Phone: (800) 421-7277
- **Direction Home of Eastern Ohio** — serves the Mahoning Valley region (Mahoning, Trumbull, and surrounding counties). Also operates a regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman program covering MyCare Ohio concerns. Phone: (330) 505-2300 or (800) 686-7367

If you're not sure which AAA covers your county, Ohio's statewide AAA locator line can point you to the right office: **1-866-243-5678**.

2. Legal Aid Organizations — Free Help With the Application Itself

Nonprofit legal aid societies in Northeast Ohio routinely handle Medicaid eligibility questions, denials, appeals, and related planning documents (powers of attorney, wills, Medicaid estate recovery issues) for low-income residents at no cost.

- **Legal Aid Society of Cleveland** — serves Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, and Lorain counties. Provides representation in public benefits cases, including Medicaid, along with estate and end-of-life planning help for clients 60 and older. Intake line: (888) 817-3777 | Cleveland office: (216) 861-5500
- **Community Legal Aid** — serves Columbiana, Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, and Wayne counties (central and northeast Ohio). Handles public benefits cases including Medicaid, alongside housing, consumer, and family law matters, with dedicated outreach to senior clients. HelpLine: (800) 998-9454, or apply online at communitylegalaidtheohio.org

3. Pro Seniors Legal Helpline — Statewide, Age 60+

For seniors anywhere in Ohio, **Pro Seniors** operates a free legal helpline specifically for callers age 60 and up, regardless of income. Typical calls involve Medicare, Medicaid eligibility, Medicaid estate recovery, denied applications, powers of attorney, and living wills. It's a useful option for families in Northeast Ohio who want quick legal information without going through a full legal aid intake.

Legal Helpline: (800) 488-6070 (appointments available Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.)

4. Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

If the concern isn't about qualifying for Medicaid but about the quality of care in a nursing home, assisted living facility, or a Medicaid waiver program like PASSPORT, Ohio's Long-Term Care Ombudsman program is the right resource. Ombudsmen advocate for residents' rights, help resolve complaints, and can assist with MyCare Ohio (the program for people enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid) at no cost. Regional ombudsman offices are generally attached to the local Area Agency on Aging — for example, Direction Home of Eastern Ohio's ombudsman line is (800) 589-5826 — so contacting your regional AAA is usually the fastest way to reach the right ombudsman office.

5. Ohio Medicaid Consumer Hotline — For Enrollment and Plan Questions

Once someone is approved for Medicaid, the **Ohio Medicaid Consumer Hotline** handles managed care plan selection, updating contact information, and general enrollment questions statewide.

Phone: (800) 324-8680 (TTY 711) — Monday–Friday 7 a.m.–8 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m.–5 p.m. ET

6. County Departments of Job and Family Services — Where Applications Are Actually Filed

Medicaid applications in Ohio, including long-term care Medicaid, are processed at the county level through the local **Department of Job and Family Services (JFS)** office, not through the AAA or state hotline directly. Families can apply online through the Ohio Benefits Self-Service Portal, by phone through the Consumer Hotline above, or in person at their county JFS office. Each county in Northeast Ohio (Cuyahoga, Summit, Stark, Lorain, Lake, Geauga, Medina, Portage, Mahoning, Trumbull, Columbiana, Wayne, and Ashtabula) has its own JFS office, so it's worth searching “[county name] Department of Job and Family Services Ohio” to find current contact details, since offices and hours can change.

Putting It Together: Who to Call First

Situation	Start Here
Not sure where to begin, need general guidance or an in-home care assessment	Your county's Area Agency on Aging
Medicaid application was denied or you need help appealing	Legal Aid Society of Cleveland or Community Legal Aid (by county)
Quick legal question about Medicaid rules, estate recovery, or planning documents	Pro Seniors Legal Helpline

Situation	Start Here
Concerned about care quality in a nursing home or waiver program	Long-Term Care Ombudsman (via your regional AAA)
Already approved and need to pick a managed care plan or update contact info	Ohio Medicaid Consumer Hotline
Ready to formally submit a Medicaid application	County Department of Job and Family Services

This guide reflects publicly available contact information as of 2026. Organizations occasionally change phone numbers, service areas, or intake procedures, so it's a good idea to confirm current details directly with each organization before relying on them for a time-sensitive matter.