



# St. Mary's Center

A Community of Hope,  
Healing & Justice

**Peer Support Circle's**  
**2023**  
**Senior Resource Guide**  
of Alameda County Services

**For Seniors, By Seniors**



[www.stmaryscenter.org](http://www.stmaryscenter.org)

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## **About St. Mary's Center**

St. Mary's Center is a community of hope, healing and justice dedicated to improving the well-being of Seniors and Preschool Families in West Oakland by meeting basic needs for food, housing, and social connection.

We build on a strong foundation of direct service provision with participant-led advocacy that amplifies the voices of people directly impacted by hunger, homelessness, and inequity, to create a more just and caring society.

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[www.stmaryscenter.org](http://www.stmaryscenter.org)



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# Peer Support Circle’s Senior Resource Guide

## Table of Contents

	Page
A Message from the Executive Director	7
About the Guide	8
System Navigation Tips	11
<b>Alameda County Services by Categories</b>	
Food Access	15
Physical and Mental Health Services	17
Housing Services	22
Internet Access	25
Legal Services	27
Social Services	29
Transportation Access	31
Peer Support Circle Members	34
From the Facilitators	40
My Resources	43







## A Message from the Executive Director

Dear Senior:

It is an honor to share this Resource Guide with you on behalf of the Peer Support Circle at St. Mary's Center.

Seniors came together to share their experiences of identifying, seeking and securing essential services while homeless, housing insecure, or extremely low-income. In it you will find help for the basics of life: food, housing, mental and physical health care, and social connection. This Resource Guide is different from others in that it reflects the urgent needs our Seniors felt, and how they addressed them.

There's more information in many places, including from St. Mary's Center Senior Housing Services and Community Center staff. But these resources come from the hearts of our Seniors, to help you secure the benefits and supports you are entitled to. Many of the services described here are ones that you have helped to fund during your lifetime and should benefit from now.

We have another goal, too: to encourage you to join St. Mary's Center as an active member and share your experience to help other Seniors.

Thank you for checking out this resource and being part of our community of hope, healing, and justice. I look forward to talking with you soon.

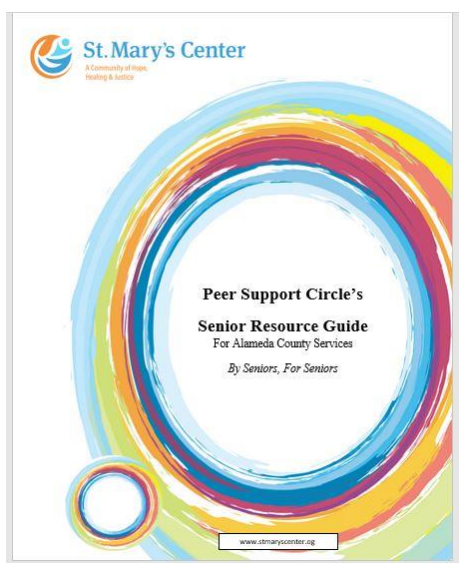
In community,

Sharon Cornu, MSHS  
Executive Director



## About The Guide

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed urgent needs for housing, health care, income security and social connection for persons over age 55. Their needs have been the subject of St. Mary's Center's work for decades. Seniors are more likely to rely on traditional communications, including word-of-mouth, newspapers, pastoral referral, or family caregivers to learn about new, existing, and expanded services. Some information is readily available but not accurate or complete; internet access is improving but not always intuitive. This Guide will provide information to help access services that have historically been too difficult to navigate.



The Peer Support Circle is made up of 16 seniors with lived experience of poverty and homelessness that met for five months to share their experiences and opinions on the Alameda County resources highlighted in this guide. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of services but to highlight priority resources that are senior identified, senior friendly, easy to navigate and meet or exceed Senior expectations. For a comprehensive list of services, we recommend Alameda County Social Services Agency Senior Resource Guide available at [www.alamedacountysocialservices.org](http://www.alamedacountysocialservices.org)

The Senior Resource Guide may also be used as a tool to keep track of personal resources. Check out “My Personal Resources” on page 42.



## Criteria Used in Evaluating Senior Services

Peer Support Circle seniors evaluated services under the following categories:

- Food Access
- Physical and Mental Health Services
- Housing Services
- Internet Access
- Legal Services
- Social Services
- Transportation Access

The criteria below were critical in defining impactful, respectful, and culturally competent services.

- **Accessibility**
  - Was the location accessible for wheelchair and mobility challenged seniors?
  - How long did it take to get an appointment and was it easy to get to?
  - Was the intake process easy to navigate?
- **Cultural Competency & Hospitality**
  - Was the environment welcoming? Did the provider make me feel comfortable?
  - Did I feel judged about my age, race, or circumstances?
  - Did the service provider build a trusting relationship with me?  
Did I feel respected?
  - Was the staff knowledgeable in senior specific issue?
- **Communication**
  - Did I understand the written and verbal communication given to me?
  - Was the information available in my language? Was there a human translator available when I asked for one?
  - Did the provider instill confidence in their ability to respond to my needs? Did I feel understood?



- **Affordability**

- Were their services affordable?
- Was the cost of the service explained to me?
- Were there unexpected expenses?

Peer Support Circle members were genuinely engaged. Collectively, members brought decades of experience into the process. The Guide is a unique window into Alameda County Services from the perspective of those that need them the most. We respectfully, and with enthusiasm share them with you.



# System Navigation Tips for Seniors

## Universal

- Advocate for programs and speak up about your needs because nobody knows your needs like you do.
- Work with multiple organizations to get all the services you need.
- Expect to be treated the way you would like to be treated, not by the way you look or what you have done in the past.
- Remember that addiction is a disease and expect people to treat you as a person with a disease.
- Laminate your important benefit cards so they remain in good condition.
- Be patient, expect long lines when getting services.
- Ask for what you want with respect, don't make demands.
- Bring a support person to advocate for you and ask questions.
- Physical and mental health providers should work together. Both providers are important to successfully respond to your issues.

## Housing Services

- Have your documentation and paperwork in order. If possible, bring all the requested documents to your first appointment.
- Find someone who has been through the housing process to help you.
- Follow the rules to prevent eviction. For example, pay the rent on time, keep your space clean, and be a good neighbor.

## Transportation Services

- When traveling on BART at night, get inside the station before the last train leaves. Don't get stuck!
- Sit in the seats designated for seniors and people with disabilities.
- Correctly processing paperwork for Paratransit services is very important. Talk with your doctor, fill out the paperwork and submit it.



## **In-Home Support Services**

- Make sure your caregivers come alone and do not bring anyone with them. There have been reports of abuse and theft by people that come with providers.
- Make sure your caregiver communicates with the doctor and the psychiatrist to coordinate your medication and care.
- When you do the initial assessment with your in-home support caregiver, make sure they are comfortable with the list of tasks and understands what is involved to properly care for you.
- Dept. of Social Services conducts annual In-Home Support Services recertifications to make sure you are still eligible. Don't miss this appointment. Be sure to check your mail for the recertification.

## **Food Access**

- Make sure you give your provider information about your special dietary needs.
- For seniors with dental issues, put fruits in a brown paper bag to soften for a few days and cut vegetables smaller so they cook faster.
- For seniors with mobility issues, ask your provider if they can deliver groceries to your door.

## **Physical and Mental Health Services**

- Be open and honest with your provider. Explain what you need so they can help you. Be honest about your substance use, your trauma, your personal life.
- Take medicine as prescribed. Tell your doctor when you take it differently so they can adjust the instructions if possible.
- If you are not getting the treatment you need, change providers, or ask to be referred to someone new.
- If you are not satisfied with the services you are receiving, file a grievance.





**Peer Support Circle's  
2023 Senior Resource Guide**

**Alameda County Services  
by Category**





# Food Access

## **CalFresh/Food Stamps**

### **Alameda County Social Services**

[www.alamedacountysocialservices.org](http://www.alamedacountysocialservices.org)

2000 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland CA 94612

CalFresh Benefits Helpline: (877) 847-3663

CalFresh, or Food Stamps, known federally as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP, provides monthly food benefits to low-income individuals.

### ***Member Reflections***

- *Once I learned that SSI recipients could get Food Stamps I applied and got them.*
- *My case manager helped me apply. I was very appreciative of the increase I received during the pandemic.*
- *A disabled senior was told she would have to wait months to get Food Stamps but when they came, they were retroactive.*

## **Mercy Brown Bag**

[www.mercybrownbag.org](http://www.mercybrownbag.org)

3431 Foothill Blvd., Oakland CA 94601

(510) 534-8540

Elder Care Alliance's Mercy Brown Bag Program helps seniors remain self-sufficient and independent in their own homes. They distribute bags of food to seniors and promote changes in legislative policy that benefit low-income residents.

### ***Member Reflections***

- *The distribution system varies. At certain sites food is delivered to the client's door, at other sites the food is delivered to the building and the building manager decides how to distribute it to the residents.*
- *MBB honors dietary restrictions.*



## **Other Resources**

### **Emeryville Citizens Assistance Program (ECAP)**

[www.ecaprogram.com/](http://www.ecaprogram.com/)

3610 San Pablo Avenue, Emeryville CA 94608

Food distribution Mon-Sat 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Must have a form of ID – Bring your own bag.

### **Market Match**

[www.marketmatch.org/](http://www.marketmatch.org/)

Many Farmers Markets will double the value of your CalFresh or Food Stamp dollars when you buy vegetables, fruits, eggs, milk, and dairy. Check the website for locations near you.

### **Prescott Joseph Center**

[www.prescottjoseph.org/](http://www.prescottjoseph.org/)

920 Peralta Street, Oakland CA 94607

(510) 835-8683

Food distribution behind St. Patrick Church, 1640 19th Street, Oakland CA 94606

Mondays, Wednesdays, on Fridays and 4th Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Bring your own bag.

### **St Mary's Center**

[www.stmaryscenter.org/](http://www.stmaryscenter.org/)

925 Brockhurst Street, Oakland CA 94608

(510) 923-9600

For persons aged 55 and older, Mondays through Fridays, St. Mary's Center offers free breakfast at 9:30 a.m. and lunch for a \$1 at 11:00 a.m. On Sundays, they open their doors at 11:00 a.m. serving lunch for a \$1 at 1:00 pm. The Center is closed on Saturdays and holidays. Proof of vaccination is required for entry, and seniors may become members to access services.

### **Telegraph Community Center**

[www.tmcoakland.org/](http://www.tmcoakland.org/)

5316 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland CA 94609

(510) 961-4385

Food distribution on Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and

Wednesday evenings from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.







## Physical and Mental Health Services

### **Lifelong Medical Care Center Over 60 Clinic**

[www.lifelongmedical.org](http://www.lifelongmedical.org)

616 16th Street, Oakland 94602

2940 Summit Street #1B, Oakland 94609

Over 60 Clinic - 3260 Sacramento Street, Berkeley 94702

(510) 981-4100

Lifelong Over 60 Clinic is a nonprofit community health care center. Physical and mental health services include counseling, recovery services, psychiatry, and social services resources.

### ***Member Reflections***

- *When I went there for the first time, they helped me fill out paperwork. I have had the same primary care physician ever since.*
- *Transportation to Lifelong was easy with my wheelchair using Paratransit.*
- *From the receptionist to the physician's assistant to the physician. Everyone was very professional and culturally competent.*
- *I feel very welcome. They know my name and they make me feel good.*
- *I love that I have everything under one umbrella including help for my diabetes and poor eyesight. I do not have to go all over for services.*
- *My primary care doctor at Lifelong downstairs referred me to Mental Health upstairs. All I had to do was go upstairs. It was great.*
- *When I was living on the streets, a mobile crisis unit helped me get connected to Lifelong.*
- *The Over 60 facility in Berkeley has everything. They know how to focus on seniors.*

## **Highland Hospital**

[www.alamedahealthsystem.org/locations/highland-hospital/](http://www.alamedahealthsystem.org/locations/highland-hospital/)

1411 E. 31st Street, Oakland, CA 94602

(510) 437-4800

Highland Hospital is a renowned regional trauma center. It has state-of-the-art primary, specialty, multi-specialty care, and topflight maternal child services and other advanced care.

### ***Member Reflections***

#### ***Emergency Services***

- *They saved me several times. They have great doctors.*
- *I had to wait four hours because they were taking care of a gunshot victim.*
- *I have had good experiences at Highland. There is a difference between regular and emergency services. Emergency services are really good, but when you move out of the emergency department, the service could be better.*

#### ***Non-Emergency Services***

- *They have a shuttle from Lake Merritt BART. I appreciate that.*
- *Highland fixed my bones several times. I have been through a lot.*
- *It is not easy to get there on the bus. But if you can get there, they treat you well and have really good doctors.*
- *I had to wait three months for a foot doctor appointment. At my age, they need to have a system for old people with certain conditions to be seen quickly.*
- *When you go to Highland, sometimes the initial contact is not friendly, but the medical attention I get after that is good.*

## **John George Psychiatric Hospital**

[www.alamedahealthsystem.org/locations/john-george-psychiatric-hospital](http://www.alamedahealthsystem.org/locations/john-george-psychiatric-hospital)

2060 Fairmont Drive, San Leandro, CA 94578

(510) 346-1300

John George Psychiatric Hospital provides psychiatric emergency and acute care services to adults experiencing severe and disabling mental illnesses and treats those who seek care regardless of their economic or social status.



### **Member Reflections**

- *I had a nice transition into John George. I was in my addiction at the time. The minute I got there; they took care of me.*
- *I went there for a little while, then they transferred me to a smaller care facility. Once I was stable, I got to go home. They also helped me connect with other services I needed.*

### **Other Resources**

#### **Asian Health Services**

[www.asianhealthservices.org](http://www.asianhealthservices.org)

817 Harrison Street, Oakland 94607

250 E. 18th Street, 2nd Floor, Oakland 94606

818 Webster Street, Oakland 94607

(510) 735-3100

Asian Health Services provides access to whole patient care including medical, dental, and mental health services.

#### **La Clinica**

[www.laclinica.org/](http://www.laclinica.org/)

1030 International Boulevard, Oakland 94606

1926 E. 19th Street, Oakland 94606

1531 Fruitvale Avenue, Oakland 94601

(510) 535-4000

La Clinica provides culturally appropriate, high-quality, accessible healthcare for all. They offer physical, mental, and dental health services.

#### **La Familia Mental Health Services**

[www.livelifamilia.org/](http://www.livelifamilia.org/)

26081 Mocine Avenue, Hayward, CA 94544

(510) 881-5921

La Familia has culturally sensitive counselors who speak many languages provide no-cost counseling, psychiatry services and other support when necessary.



### **Native American Health Center**

[www.nativehealth.org/](http://www.nativehealth.org/)

3050 International Blvd. Oakland, CA

(510) 434-5300

NAHC provides services that improve the health and wellbeing of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and others. They respect culture, traditions and respond to physical, emotional, spiritual, and social service needs.

### **Peers Envisioning and Engaging in Recovery**

[www.peersnet.org](http://www.peersnet.org)

8393 Capwell Drive, Suite 240, Oakland CA 94621

(510) 832-7337

PEERS is a diverse community of people with mental health experiences. They create culturally rich, community-based mental health programs that honor diverse experiences and eliminate stigma and discrimination.

### **Roots Community Health Center**

[www.rootsclinic.org/](http://www.rootsclinic.org/)

200 Harrison Street, Oakland CA 94607

4119 Broadway, Oakland CA 94609

(510) 533-1248

The goal is to uplift those impacted by inequities and poverty through medical and behavioral health care, health navigation, housing, outreach, and advocacy.

### **Sausal Creek Outpatient Clinic**

[www.telecarecorp.com/sausal](http://www.telecarecorp.com/sausal)

2620 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Oakland CA 94601

(510) 437-2363

The clinic specializes in innovative, outcomes-driven services for high-risk individuals with complex needs. Programs are recovery-focused, clinically effective and designed in partnership with other behavioral health organizations.

### **Towne House Wellness Center**

[www.rehab.com/towne-house-wellness-center-oakland](http://www.rehab.com/towne-house-wellness-center-oakland)

629 Oakland Avenue Oakland CA, 94611

(510) 613-0330

The Center specializes in the treatment of individuals suffering from mental health issues.



### **West Oakland Health**

[www.westoaklandhealth.org](http://www.westoaklandhealth.org)

700 Adeline St. Oakland, CA 94607

2960 Sacramento Street, Berkeley 94702

(510) 835-9610

West Oakland Health has championed the health of the East Bay African American community for over 50 years. They offer comprehensive services in a variety of locations. There is a sliding scale fee structure. No one is turned away due to the cost.

### **National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**

(988) or (800) 273-8255 or

24-hour Crisis Support of Alameda County

1-(800) 309-2131

Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, if you or someone you know is struggling with uncomfortable thoughts and emotions. You do not need to be experiencing suicidal thoughts or feelings to call. Trained crisis intervention counselors are available to receive calls and give supportive counseling 24 hours a day, every day. Translation is available in more than 140 languages. They also offer teletype (TDD) services for deaf and hearing-impaired individuals.





## Housing Services

### **Oakland Housing Authority**

[www.oakha.org](http://www.oakha.org)

1616 Webster Street, Oakland CA 94612

(510) 874-1500

OHA is a federal public agency charged with providing safe and decent affordable housing to vulnerable populations. Applicants may apply when waiting lists are open. The wait may be two years or longer.

### ***Member Reflections***

- *I had assistance from my daughter to help fill out the paperwork and gather all the documents I needed. When they found out that I live with my daughter they helped connect us to senior housing resources.*
- *My ex-husband was a veteran. After I turned in my marriage license and ID, I was able to get Section 8 housing through Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing.*

### **Chronicle Season of Sharing**

[www.seasonofsharing.acgov.org](http://www.seasonofsharing.acgov.org)

2000 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland CA 94612

(510) 272-3700

Season of Sharing provides temporary financial assistance to help people living in the San Francisco Bay Area. Funds assist eligible households in Alameda County who demonstrate a critical need arising from emergency circumstances beyond their control. They collaborate with numerous community partner agencies to screen and process applications for assistance.

### ***Member Reflections***

- *The first time I used Seasons of Sharing, I called and left my name. They called me back and got information about the furniture I needed. I got everything I needed.*
- *My move-in costs were paid by Seasons of Sharing when I moved out of the shelter into my own apartment.*

### **Catholic Charities of the East Bay**

[www.info@cceb.org](http://www.info@cceb.org)

433 Jefferson Street, Oakland CA 94607

(510) 768-3100

Catholic Charities of the East Bay helps vulnerable communities within Alameda County. They work in partnership with other agencies and provide help with rent, utilities or security deposits and referrals to other resources.

### ***Member Reflections***

- *Catholic Charities paid my security deposit.*
- *When I moved to where I am now, I went to Catholic Charities and got move-in expenses and rent for the first month.*

### **Spectrum Community Services, Inc**

[www.spectrumcs.org](http://www.spectrumcs.org)

2617 Barrington Court, Hayward CA 94545

(510) 881-0300

Spectrum strives to improve the health and safety of seniors and low-income residents in Alameda County by enhancing their quality of life and helping them age at home with dignity. They can help with funds for utilities in addition to providing meals for seniors.

### ***Member Reflection***

- *From October of last year to May during COVID. Spectrum paid my PG&E bills. I have two grown sons that live with me & the bill was high. I am so grateful.*



## **Other Resources**

### **PG&E**

[www.pge.com/](http://www.pge.com/)  
(800) 743-5000

PG&E has several programs that provide one-time or longer-term assistance with energy bills to save money and energy. These include the California Alternate Rates for Energy Program (CARE), the REACH, Family Electric Rate Assistance Program (FERA) and the Low-Income Home Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to assist with utility bills. Information about how to access these programs is on their website.

### **Berkeley Food and Housing Project**

[www.bfhp.org](http://www.bfhp.org)  
3225 Adeline Street, Berkeley CA 94703  
(510) 649-4965

Berkeley Food and Housing Project works one-on-one with clients to help them move toward independence and into safe and affordable housing.

### **Bay Area Community Services (BACS)**

[www.bayareacs.org](http://www.bayareacs.org)  
559 16th Street, Oakland CA 94612  
(510) 613-0330

BACS serves people living on the streets or in encampments. They offer interim housing, benefits assistance, job support, food support, housing services, and more.



# Internet Access

## **Access from AT&T**

[www.att.com](http://www.att.com) Search for Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).  
(800) 288-2020

For households with one individual earning less than \$27,180, Access from AT&T provides low-cost internet service plans up to \$30 a month. The service has no annual contract, free installation, and in-home Wi-Fi. With the Federal ACP benefit and Access from AT&T you may be eligible to receive internet speeds up to 100Mbps.

## ***Member Reflections***

- *ATT wired my house and showed me how to use everything. I have not had any problems since. Speed and service are great.*
- *I lived with someone who had it. They came out and wired the house, hooked everything up and showed me how to use it.*
- *I signed up for the Affordability Connectivity Program for ages 55 and over. They were very friendly, and my monthly payment went down.*

## **Comcast/Xfinity Internet Essentials**

[www.internetessentials.com/apply](http://www.internetessentials.com/apply)  
(800) 934-6489

Internet Essentials offers low-cost, high-speed internet at home. To qualify for the discount, show proof of housing assistance, Medicaid, CalFresh or other low-income programs. Current Xfinity internet customers and those with outstanding Xfinity debt may not qualify. Check the website for exceptions.

## ***Member Reflection***

- *I just got Comcast. It is reasonably priced. I picked up my own equipment. They sent a tech out the next day to do the installation.*
- *We like Comcast, especially the price under the discount program Comcast Essentials. Signing up for it was simple, we answered a few questions, submitted the paperwork and we got it!”*
- *The price is just right for a senior on limited income, the service is good too.*



## **Other Resources**

### **Federal Program Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)**

[www.att.com/help/affordable-connectivity-program/](http://www.att.com/help/affordable-connectivity-program/)

(800) 288-2020

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a federal program that provides qualifying households up to \$30 per month on eligible AT&T wireless or internet service.

### **City of Oak WIFI**

[www.oaklandca.gov/topics/oakwifi](http://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/oakwifi)

OAKWIFI is an initiative providing free internet access for the unconnected. They have live hotspots throughout the City of Oakland. Go to your WIFI settings on your electronic device, select OAK-WIFI and get connected. A map of the hotspots is on their website.

### **EveryoneOn**

[www.everyoneon.org/lowcost-offers](http://www.everyoneon.org/lowcost-offers)

(844) 525-1574

EveryoneOn works with a wide range of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to feature their low-cost internet service programs. Their Digital Learning Center teaches users how to set up email accounts, navigate the Internet and leverage the power of technology. They serve the San Francisco Bay Area.



## Legal Services

### **East Bay Community Law Center**

[www.ebclc.org/](http://www.ebclc.org/)

2921 Adeline Street, Berkeley CA 94703

(510) 548-4040

EBCLC seeks to address the underlying causes of poverty, economic and racial inequality to increase justice and improve opportunities in the areas of economic security, education, health and welfare, housing, and immigration.

### ***Member Reflections***

- *I was referred to EBCLC by a friend. They were very helpful. I had a public defender. I paid nothing. I had three court dates but only had to appear once. And the case was dismissed. The organization was wonderful for me.*
- *They were accessible and affordable. They handled everything and walked me through a legal matter. It was free and they were very accommodating.*

### **Homeless Action Center**

[www.homelessactioncenter.org/](http://www.homelessactioncenter.org/)

2601 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland CA 94612

(510) 695-2260

The Homeless Action Center (HAC) provides high-quality public benefits advocacy for free to homeless and disabled residents of Alameda County. With legal representation, people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless can access social safety net programs that provide a pathway to a better life.

### ***Member Reflections***

- *They started working with me in 2012. They were on top of everything when I had to go to court.*
- *They helped me sign up for SSI. They helped me get prepared and walked me through the process. And the services are free.*

### **Other resources**

#### **Legal Assistance for Seniors**

[www.lashicap.org/](http://www.lashicap.org/)

333 Hegenberger Road Suite 850, Oakland CA 94621

(510) 832-3040

Legal Assistance for Seniors works to ensure the independence and dignity of seniors by protecting their legal rights through education, counseling, and advocacy.

#### **Bay Area Legal Aid**

[www.baylegal.org](http://www.baylegal.org)

1735 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland CA 94612

(510) 663-4744

Bay Area Legal Aid's provides meaningful access to the civil justice system through legal assistance regardless of a client's location, language or disability.

# Social Services

## **Dept. of Social Services / In-Home Support Services (IHSS)**

[www.alamedacountysocialservices.gov](http://www.alamedacountysocialservices.gov)

6955 Foothill Blvd. # 300, Oakland CA 94605

(510) 577-1900

IHSS provides in-home support services to help seniors and people with disabilities stay in their homes and improve their well-being. They offer hourly and 24-hour live-in care for the San Francisco Bay area. Caregivers are professionally trained and registered to support clients with general household chores, personal care, and medical accompaniment.

### ***Member Reflections***

- *If you get a care provider you don't like, you can ask to change them. They have a registry where you can choose someone else.*
- *If you have friends that care about you, you can ask one of them if they can be your provider. They would need to take a class and be fingerprinted to be accepted into the program.*
- *During the Covid pandemic, care providers and IHSS workers were not able to come out when they were needed. It made life even more difficult for the homebound senior.*

## **Social Security Administration Supplemental Security Income (SSI) And Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)**

[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

360 22nd Street, #400, Oakland CA 94612

(800) 772-1213

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides assistance to very low-income Americans over 65, blind or have a qualifying disability. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) is for those who are unable to work because of a medical condition.

### ***Member Reflections***

- *It took perseverance but I finally got on SSI. I could no longer work because of my disability. I also became homeless because of my disability.*
- *I went to the Berkeley office; it was a pleasant experience. The worker explained everything to me.*
- *I had a great experience when my caretaker went with me to my appointments.*



## **Medicare**

[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

(800) 633-4227

TTY number: (877) 486-2048

Medicare is our country's health insurance program for people aged 65 or older and certain people with disabilities. Medicare helps pay for inpatient care in a hospital or limited time in a skilled nursing facility following a hospital stay. It also helps pay for services from physicians and other healthcare professionals, home health care, durable medical equipment, and some preventive services.

### ***Member Reflection***

- *Medicare conducts yearly recertifications to make sure you are still eligible. Be sure to check your mail for an announcement.*





## Transportation Access

### **Alameda-Contra Costa Transit (AC Transit)**

[www.actransit.org](http://www.actransit.org)

1600 Franklin Street, Oakland CA 94612

511 or (510) 891-4777

AC Transit delivers a safe, reliable, sustainable transit service that responds to the needs of their customers and communities. They help the Bay Area thrive by connecting East Bay communities to each other and to regional destinations.

### ***Member Reflections***

- *I use AC transit every day and I love it.*
- *If AC Transit don't go there, I don't go there. I started riding the bus when the fare was 10 cents. I want to keep the bus running.*
- *I have been riding AC Transit for 60 years. They take wheelchairs which is very important to disabled seniors.*
- *I have been to 38 states. There is nothing better than AC Transit.*

### **BART - Bay Area Rapid Transit**

[www.bart.gov](http://www.bart.gov)

P.O. Box 12688, Oakland CA 94604-2688

(510) 464-6000

BART provides fast, reliable transportation that connects to downtown offices, shopping centers, entertainment venues, universities and other destinations in the San Francisco Peninsula, East Bay, and South Bay. ·

### ***Member Reflections***

- *BART just celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The first time I rode it was from Richmond to Fremont. It cost \$1.10. Now it goes much farther.*
- *BART has a senior card that is just for BART. It is very convenient. BART will get you where you need to go fast.*
- *You can get a Senior Clipper Card by mail, email, fax, or in person. Go to [www.clippercard.com](http://www.clippercard.com) for more information.*

### **East Bay Paratransit**

[www.eastbayparatransit.org](http://www.eastbayparatransit.org)

1750 Broadway, Oakland CA 94612

(510) 287-5000

East Bay Paratransit is a public transit service for people who are unable to use regular buses or trains because of a disability or a disabling health condition. East Bay Paratransit can transport riders in vans equipped with a wheelchair lift.

### ***Member Reflections***

- *I don't mind saying that I recently got approved for Paratransit. You look at me but don't know that I have problems. My disability is not visible.*
- *Paratransit takes you straight to where you want to go.*
- *My primary care provider knew my situation and helped me get permission to use Paratransit.*

### **Other Resources**

#### **Clipper Card**

[www.clippercard.com/](http://www.clippercard.com/)

(800) 735-2929

Seniors and riders with disabilities can receive reduced fares and access to discounted passes. Clipper Cards for seniors can be purchased at 1600 Franklin Street in Downtown Oakland. Make sure you purchase a discount Senior pass instead of adding cash to your clipper card.



## **City of Oakland TUGO Taxi Up and Go**

[www.oaklandca.gov](http://www.oaklandca.gov) / Search Taxi Up and Go

(510) 238-3080

TUGO provides taxi transportation assistance to Senior residents of Oakland, age 60+ in the form of taxi vouchers as a supplement to existing transportation resources. Call to make an appointment or request an application by mail.

## **Lyft (Car Sharing Service)**

[www.lyft.com](http://www.lyft.com)

A smartphone is needed to download the Lyft app and an ATM or credit card to pay per ride. Lyft offers door to door services. You can request a ride immediately or schedule one in advance. Wait time varies but usually the driver arrives within 15 minutes. Warning: the cost may be a hardship for seniors on fixed incomes.

## **United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County (USOAC) Travel Training Program**

[www.usoac.org](http://www.usoac.org)

7200 Bancroft Avenue, Suite 270, Oakland CA 94605

(510) 729-0852

The USOAC Travel Training program teaches seniors a range of public transportation skills to navigate their community safely and independently. The training includes how to successfully use A.C. Transit, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), the San Francisco Bay Ferry and Cable Car. Upon class completion seniors will receive up to \$40.00 on their Clipper or RTC card. One-on-one and group travel trainings are available.



# PEER SUPPORT CIRCLE MEMBERS

## Keith Arivnwine



Keith's uses his experience of substance abuse, homelessness, and incarceration to advocate for senior services through the St. Mary's Center Hope and Justice program and as President of the Council of Elders. *"I got so many new ideas from the Peer Support Circle. It gave me an opportunity to learn about programs I wasn't aware of."*

## Vernon Dailey



Vernon participated fully in the group while experiencing homelessness and looking for housing. Vernon is a legendary Street Spirit Newspaper vendor and has an article in the January 2023 issue.

## William Garrett



William has a 50-year history of homelessness and substance abuse. His health was greatly compromised when he was placed on dialysis for kidney failure. The stories he shared about the health services he received were honest and unrestrained. *"I am an advocate for mental health services. It pleases me to be part of an organization like St. Mary's Center where senior citizens can speak their mind. I look forward to seeing how the Guide will help seniors."*

## Renee Gilmore



For over 15 years Renee navigated in and out of the County’s shelter system. She shared that it was good case management services that helped address her medical issues and secure permanent housing. *“I learned a lot from my peers by participating in the Peer Support Circle. I also learned a lot about myself. When we take time to listen, we all learn from each other.”*

## Olivia Gonzales



In 1970, monolingual Spanish speaker Olivia migrated to the United States from Guadalajara, Mexico. Olivia was relieved when the Circle offered to translate for her so she could share her experience clearly. *“I was happy to learn that some of the services I was getting offered senior discounts.”*

## Gayle Gray



Gayle credits the St. Mary’s Center Housing Services Dept. and their Housing Clinic program to help her find permanent housing. Gayle chose to participate in the Peer Support Group because she wanted to learn more about Senior Services and as an IHSS care provider she felt it was important for her to share her experience. *“I appreciate being a part of the Circle, I’ve learned a lot, and got to know seniors who dealt with the same challenges I have”*

## Judy Magana



Council of Elder member Judy was raised in El Salvador, moved to Nicaragua, then in the 80's, looking for work, moved to the California. By participating in the Circle Judy appreciated learning from the experiences of others on how to best navigate the system. She is in the St. Mary's Center Hope and Justice program where she advocates for affordable housing for seniors. *"I feel like the Circle members are my family. I would rather be at St. Mary's Center instead of home. The Center is where I make a difference."*

## Shirley Matthews



Though she was born in Texas, Shirley has been in California since she was 8 years old. She is a mental health advocate through Peers Envisioning and Engaging in Recovery (PEERS) and a graduate of the St. Mary's Center Leadership Academy. *"I was happy to participate in the Circle. I took advantage of what I learned from the Transportation session, and I now save money with my new Senior Discount card."*

## Norris Reed



Good natured Norris has been a St. Mary's Center member for 5 years. After a stay in their Almost Home Winter Shelter and support from the Lifelong Medical Street Outreach program, he secured permanent housing. *"I am grateful to have participated in the Circle, I care about food access for seniors, and I was happy to learn that seniors can CalFresh food stamps at farmer's markets."*

## Sharon Snell



Senior Advocate Sharon was born and raised in Oakland. She has experienced a long history of homelessness and suffers from a chronic illness that affects her quality of life. *“Once I got permanent housing, I did everything I needed to keep it.”* She shared that the Circle helped her stay active and get a better understanding about the services she uses. *“I’ve been with St. Mary’s Center since 2005 even through my challenges life keeps getting better and better.”*

## Mary Sturdivant



In 2008, Leadership Academy Graduate Mary became homeless after losing her apartment in a fire. She shared that St. Mary’s Center helped her get back on track. *“I enjoyed the Peer Support Circle. I learned a lot about how things work. I came as one and leave as many.”*

## Carolyn Sutton



Carolyn suffered through years of chronic physical pain while experiencing homelessness. Through determination and the will to never give up, she entered the St. Mary’s transitional house program, and after several years of waiting, secured permanent housing. She is a staunch supporter of mental health services and openly shares her experience. *“I hope that by sharing what I went through it helps other seniors live better lives.”*

## Lillian Walker



Leadership Academy graduate Lillian was born in Louisiana and moved to the Bay Area when she was 11 years old. She was chronically homeless as a senior, so was happy to secure permanent housing with the help of the East Oakland Community Project. She feels strongly about improving the Mental Health system. *“As a Circle member, I learned that I was not alone and that other seniors shared the same struggles I have”*

## Bennie Whitfield



Council of Elder member and Senior Advocate for Hope and Justice Bennie has been using his lived experience to help other seniors since he came to St. Mary’s Center in 2004. *“In the Circle, I learned that I could learn more when I listen instead of when I talk. This was a great group of seniors; we came together not only to fulfill a task but to support one another”*

## Kwai Wong



Kwai, an Oakland resident, and monolingual Cantonese speaker with limited English shared that she learned a lot from participating in the Circle. *“I have a better understanding of Supplemental Security Income, Food Resources, and transportation services.”* She plans on sharing what she learned with members of her community.

## Cecelia Wynn



Cecelia grew up in an unsafe household in Oakland. She wanted to make a better life for her son which is why she is exceptionally proud of her 26 years of sober living. Cecilia is a St. Mary's Center Senior Advocate for Hope and Justice and a Leadership Academy graduate. *"I feel seniors have to advocate for better transportation services. I depend on AC Transit every day."* She thanks the Peer Support Circle for the opportunity to come together and respectfully share sensitive experiences in a safe space.



## **From the Peer Support Circle Facilitators**

We want to thank our Peer Support Circle members for their time and dedication in creating the Senior Resource Guide. We also want to thank the Senior Foundation of the East Bay for the funding necessary to produce such an excellent tool for seniors. It was a privilege to facilitate the circle, we were amazed at the honesty which the seniors deliberated and the appreciation they had for the services they received.

### **The key takeaways were:**

1. Seniors respond to service providers who treat them with kindness and respect.
2. Services delivered with integrity and transparency help build trust in the senior to service provider relationship.
3. We need to be acutely aware of how our biases show up when treating seniors with substance abuse issues to avoid alienation and causing more harm.
4. Finally, this process solidified our view that to provide accessible, culturally competent services, we must genuinely incorporate the opinions of who we serve.

We also learned that we could do better to disseminate information about Alameda County services. During the session on Social Services, we noticed that seniors had many questions about the Social Security and Medicare programs. They also wanted to learn more about navigating DMV and public transportation. Due to our



time constraint, there were important areas we were not able to cover such as Senior Employment, End of Life Planning and Homelessness.

Next steps for the Senior Resource Guide include securing funding to:

- translate the Guide into multiple languages,
- host hybrid workshops that connect service providers to our seniors
- and sharing this information through presentations to local senior buildings.

We welcome your feedback. Email Karla Salazar at [ksalazar@stmaryscenter.org](mailto:ksalazar@stmaryscenter.org) or leave a message at (510) 925-9500 x 235.

Thank you,

Terri Dunn and Karla Salazar  
Peer Support Circle Facilitators



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# MY RESOURCES

Contains Sensitive, Confidential Information

**KEEP IN A SAFE PLACE**

My Contact Information		
Legal Name		
Address		
City / Zip Code		
	Home Phone #	Cell Phone #
Email Address		
Email Address Password		
Emergency Contact	Name	
	Address	
	Phone #	

Notes
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My Residence		
Developer	Address and Phone Number	
Property Manager	Contact Person	
Office Hours		
Email #	Business Phone #	Emergency Phone #
	Website:	
	Login/ Username:	
	Password:	
	Annual Recertification Date	

Notes

<b>My Health Home (Primary)</b>	
Medical Facility	
Address	
City / Zip Code	
My Healthcare Account #	
My Medicare / Medical #	
Name	Website:
	Login/Username:
	Password
Primary Physician	Appointments/Advice Phone Number #
Social Worker	
Cardiologist	
Psychiatrist	
Gastroenterologist	
Oncologist	
Surgeon	
Other	
Other	
Notes	



**My Health Home (Secondary)**

Medical Facility	
Address	
City / Zip Code	
My Healthcare Account #	
My Medicare / Medical #	
Name	Website:
	Login/Username:
	Password
Primary Physician	Appointments/Advice Phone Number #
Cardiologist	
Psychiatrist	
Gastroenterologist	
Oncologist	
Surgeon	
Social Worker	
Other	
Other	
Notes	



<b>Food Resources</b>		
Agency Name		
Address		
City / Zip Code		
Food Delivery Information	Days	Times
	Contact Person	Phone #

<b>Food Resources</b>		
Agency Name		
Address		
City / Zip Code		
Food Delivery Information	Days	Times
	Contact Person	Phone #

Notes
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<b>Internet</b>	
Provider	
Address	
City / Zip Code	
Customer Service Number	
Account Number	
	Website:
	Login/Username:
	Password

Notes
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<b>Legal Services</b>	
Agency	
Address	
City / Zip Code	
Contact Person	
Phone Number	
	Website:
	Login/Username:
	Password
Case Number	

Notes
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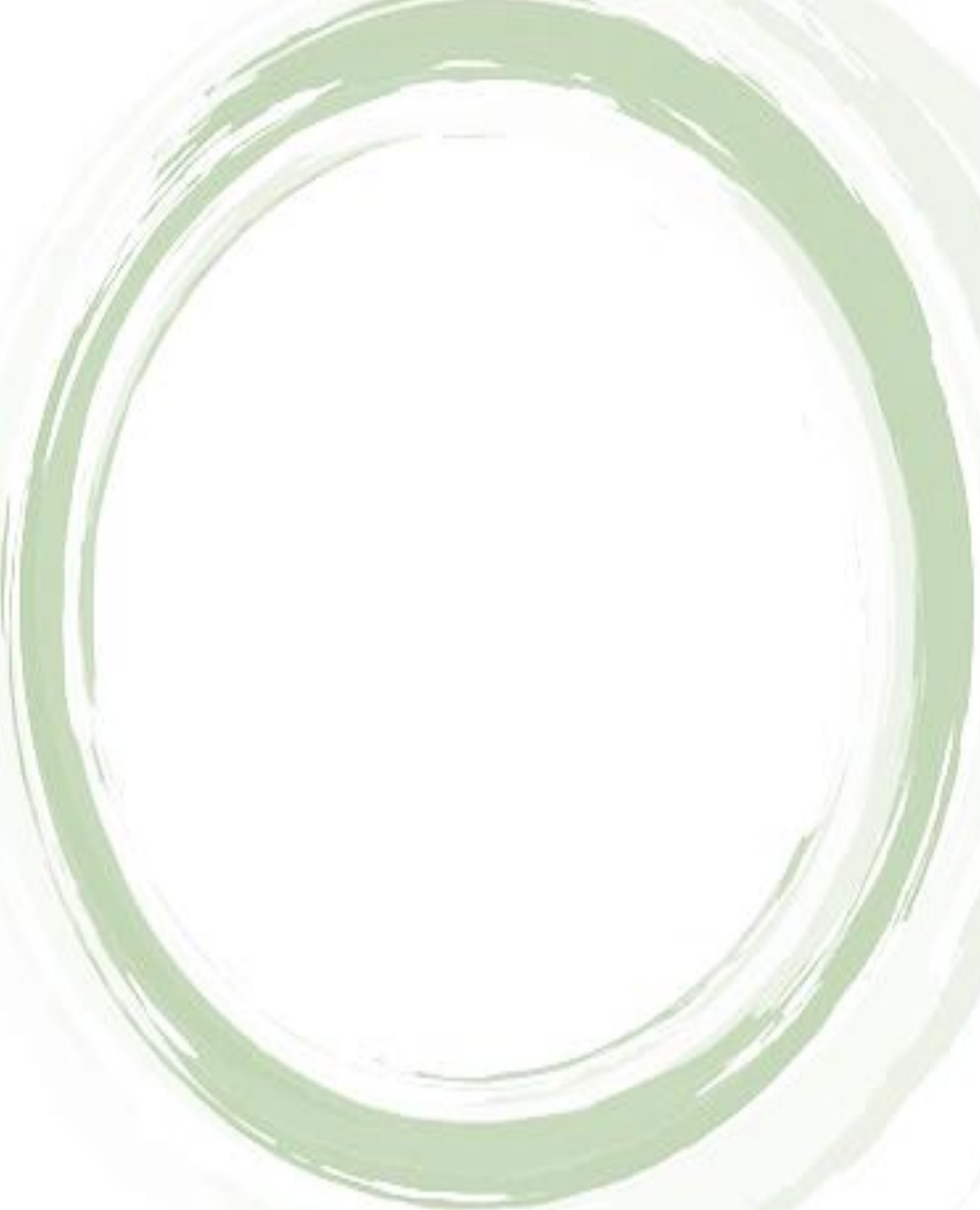
<b>Transportation</b>	
Agency	
Address	
City / Zip Code	
Customer Service Number	
Account Number	
	Website:
	Login/Username:
	Password

<b>Transportation</b>	
Agency	
Address	
City / Zip Code	
Customer Service Number	
Account Number	
	Website:
	Login/Username:
	Password

Notes
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## Notes



## Notes

