

## **C- 5c. LEGAL SERVICES**

The legal assistance services program targets seniors who are 60 years of age and older, low income, and more likely to live alone, be minorities and be limited or non-English speaking. Seniors are served by providers who have multi-cultural, bilingual staff who can meet with the seniors either in their homes or at accessible office locations. Legal services providers publicize the program. They explain the program to other service providers and how referrals can be made.

The program is to foster cost-effective high quality service that is integrated in the aging services network, is accessible throughout the planning service area, and develops and maximizes the use of other resources.

Coordinated Legal Education, Advice and Referral for Seniors (CLEAR \*Sr) is the primary gateway for seniors seeking legal help, available, toll-free, throughout WA State. NJP also has access to regional volunteer lawyers and Pro Bono programs operated by county Bar Associations to assist with cases.

### **CONTRACTED LEGAL SERVICES:**

ALTC contracts with Northwest Justice Project (NJP) for legal services in ALTC's eight county area. NJP has their main office located in Yakima with satellite offices in Pasco and Walla Walla.

Legal assistance services provide access to the system of justice by offering representation by the legal service provider who acts as an advocate for the socially and economically needy older individual experiencing legal problems. Issues are

prioritized to reflect local needs. As resources are limited, clients with problems in the following areas receive services: income maintenance, health care, long term care, nutrition, housing, utilities, protective services, defense of guardianship, abuse & neglect, age discrimination, and other related matters.

### **LEGAL SERVICE ISSUES:**

Having this legal aid available to assist our AAA's vulnerable senior population is critical for seniors calling for help when they are close to losing their homes, are victims of fraud, or have been treated unjustly.

Comparing the 2010 US Census to the 2015 OFM estimate, the senior population in ALTC's region has grown by 59.62%, making it imperative that the funding for legal services be continued and preferably be increased. Knowledge of the existing legal advocacy program is limited for the public and legislators.

**GOAL: ALTC will advocate for seniors and disabled persons by supporting legal programs. ALTC will work to increase public awareness and advocate for continued and increased funding for legal aid services for older and disabled persons.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

**ALTC will support NJP in attaining adequate and continued funding for legal aid services by informing the public and**

**legislators of the legal aid services and the persons served. *By December 2016.***

- **Coordinate with NJP for the provision of at least two annual training sessions to ALTC staff and two annual presentations to groups of seniors that focus on legal rights and entitlements. *By December 2016***