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## CARE's WorkLife Solutions Monthly Wire

### The Administration on Aging's Pension Counseling and Information Program

June 2011

This month's Wire is taken from one of the many articles found on our website. The article, "the Administration on Aging's Pension Counseling and Information Program," fits right in with our June Webinar topic, "Adjusting to the Process of Aging," which is attached. To access this article, log-on to [www.caresworklivesolutions.com](http://www.caresworklivesolutions.com), click on the World Icon and enter your unique company password. (If you do not have a company password, contact CARE's WorkLife Solutions to request a temporary password.) Next, click on the Site Search tab on the right, enter "Pension," and you will find this article as well as others relevant to that topic. There are many ways to find information on our website, and we urge you to use the Site Search feature as well as the category search via the green menu bar near the top of our website.

### **The Administration on Aging's Pension Counseling and Information Program**

#### **The Purpose of the Program and How it Works**

Today, there are more than 700,000 private (as well as thousands of public) pension and retirement plans in the United States (according to the Administration on Aging). Given that an employee may have worked for several employers, which may have merged, sold their plans, or gone bankrupt, it is very difficult for the average person to know where to get help in finding out whether or not he or she is receiving all of his or her pension benefits.

The Administration on Aging (AoA) has established the Pension Counseling and Information Program to promote the financial security of older individuals. The program enhances their choice and independence by empowering them to make wise decisions with respect to pensions and savings plans. The program assists older Americans in accessing information about their retirement benefits and helps them to negotiate with former employers or pension plans for due compensation.

The AoA currently funds six regional counseling projects, covering 27 states. These projects provide hands-on assistance in pursuing claims through the following services:

- Handling administrative appeals processes
- Helping seniors to locate pension plans lost as a result of mergers and acquisitions
- Answering queries about complex plan provisions
- Making targeted referrals to other professionals for assistance

Projects serve individuals, regardless of age or income, who

- Reside or work in the project's service region
- Worked or resided in the project's service region while earning a pension, or when married to an individual earning a pension
- Seek pension benefits that are sponsored, administered, trusteeed, or are otherwise held or distributed by an entity that is or was headquartered or operated within the project's service region

By producing fact sheets and other publications, hosting Web sites, and conducting outreach, education, and awareness efforts, pension counseling projects also provide indirect services to tens of thousands of seniors and their families.

The AoA also funds a national Pension Assistance Resource Center. This provides support to the projects, as well as to State and Area Agencies on Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, legal services providers, and others by providing substantive legal training, technical assistance, and programmatic consultation.

The Pension Assistance Resource Center (<http://www.pensionrights.org/>) also assists individuals living in areas not currently served by a project. Current initiatives include development of a comprehensive dataset of pension information and resources to be used for a Web-based pension assistance and referral system.

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Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging. (Modified 2010, May 11). *Pension Counseling and Information Program (OAA Title II)*. Retrieved July 7, 2010, from <http://www.eldercare.gov/>