



Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential

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

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## ACCESS TO BENEFITS AND RESOURCES

**GOAL:** To provide assistance in accessing services and resources related to disability and to provide education about, access to, and assistance with benefits that help people with disabilities acquire stable and adequate financial resources.

**Information and Assistance** is a help line that connects callers to information, resources, services and programs helping to make it easier for persons with disabilities, family members, caregivers, and friends to get the support they need. These supports include access to accessible housing and transportation, income supports, assistive technology, adequate health care, and other basic needs that are barriers to independent living and employment.

**Benefits Navigation and Assistance** includes:

- **Disability Navigation** helps individuals navigate the maze of public benefits, and provides information and education about disability determination and benefits eligibility. LEAP educates people with disabilities and seniors on eligibility criteria, and connections to federal and state funded benefit programs. We also provide information regarding online screening tools and on application assistance offered by LEAP's Aging and Disability Resource Center.
- **Disability Benefits Application, Enrollment, and Appeals Assistance** helps people with disabilities apply for and enroll in various benefits programs and provides information and assistance with Social Security reconsideration appeals. This includes:
  - Assistance with resources that promote self-sufficiency, such as food stamps, housing, child care, Medicaid, Medicaid Buy-in for Workers with Disabilities, and RTA paratransit eligibility
  - Disability determination assistance for individuals who have experienced difficulty in securing disability-related benefits
  - Guidance on disputes relating to benefit entitlements covering Medicaid and Social Security disability denials, as well as facilitation of access to vocational rehabilitation, housing, and transportation
- **Disability Benefits Analysis:** provides one-on-one consultation to Social Security beneficiaries and their families.
  - Social Security beneficiaries and their families are informed and educated about their disability benefits (SSI, SSDI, SSDAC, Medicaid, Medicare, and SNAP). Assessment of the potential impact of wages on eligibility for federal and state benefits and overall financial well-being
  - Information and assistance in understanding the potential impact of changes in life situations (for example, changes in marital status, dependents, income, and resources), and guidance regarding the effects of various work incentives
  - Assistance in developing a **Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS)**, a Social Security work incentive that allows a person to set aside income to finance a work goal, such as starting a business or paying for education.

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## **Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)**

LEAP is a partner in the Aging and Disability Resource Network (ADRN) coordinated by the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging. The network serves Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties, and offers consumers a “no-wrong-door” approach to obtaining information and resources pertaining to long-term care and participation in the community.

### **Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)**

The ADRC provides consumers with a single point of entry for information and access to long-term services and community supports.

*Information and Assistance* provides current information to people with disabilities, their family members, professionals, and the general public on issues affecting how people with disabilities live and participate in the community. The center also offers assistance with research on available options and referrals to appropriate community resources based on individual needs and preferences.

*Options Counseling* provides information to help people make informed choices about long-term services and supports. Information is offered in the context of each individual’s needs, preferences, values, and circumstances.

*Benefits Assistance* helps individuals with streamlined determination of eligibility, application, and enrollment for public benefits such as food stamps (SNAP), assistance with heating bills (HEAP), Medicaid, Medicare savings programs, and the low-income subsidy (LIS).

**Eligibility, funding and availability of these services vary by program.  
Please call for more information.**

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