

Elder Legal Help Hotline Closes Due to Budget Cuts

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Anthony Young, Executive Director of Southern Arizona Legal Aid, Inc. (SALA) announced last week that SALA is preparing to close its Arizona Elder Law Hotline as of October 1st this year.

The Arizona Elder Hotline is a free service provided by Southern Arizona Legal Aid. The hotline, established in 1992, helps people 60 years and older with civil cases including social security, divorce, and housing issues. Currently the hotline handles more than 3,000 cases per year through the support of two part time employees. This service has been provided by Southern Arizona Legal Aid, Inc. since 1998 and has been funded by the Arizona Supreme Court through the Administrative Office of the Courts. Many seniors are able to obtain answers to their legal questions without needing to leave their homes.

Most callers receive the advice and information they need during a single phone call. In many instances, they will also receive referrals or fact sheets, booklets and/or forms relating to their questions in the mail. In some instances, the need for additional research requires follow-up calls; and hotline staff tries to resolve client problems directly, through telephone calls or letters to third parties, document review, and assistance with forms.

As most people know, the legislature has been forced to institute a number of budget cuts to meet the recent economic downturn. Without funding SALA is unable to maintain the project. Quality legal services are critical to seniors to protect their homes, income security, access to healthcare and other benefits, and to their autonomy. Seniors need to know that these services will no longer be available after October 1st without continued funding.

If you are interested in donating to help the hotline or legal services contact Lara Slifko at Lara.Slifko@azflse.org or go online at https://www.azflse.org/azflse/get_involved/donatenow.cfm