

MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Community-based and Collaborative

Massachusetts Money Management is collaboratively sponsored by AARP Foundation, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, and Mass Home Care. A network of twenty five local Money Management Programs reaches elders in every city and town in the Commonwealth.



The Compelling Need

Money Management Program volunteers help low-income, vulnerable older people regain peace of mind and remain independent. The program's clients are often homebound, disabled, visually impaired or forgetful. Many have no family, relatives or friends to help them manage their finances. For many people, help with routine finances could mean the lights stay on, the threat of eviction disappears, and the need to make hard choices between food and medicine is eliminated.

By balancing checkbooks, preparing checks for client signature, ensuring bills are paid on time and keeping track of finances, Money Management volunteers repair lives.

Two Levels of Service

Money Management has two levels of assistance:

- Volunteer Bill Payers work with the elder to create a budget to ensure that the client's essential bills are paid each month. The volunteer may also assist the elder in negotiating with creditors, such as utility or credit card companies. The elder remains in control of his or her funds at all times.
- Volunteer Representative Payees manage the client's federal benefits, such as Social Security; assure that monthly bills are paid (rent, food, utilities, etc.) by signing all checks; and provide the client with a monthly cash stipend.

The corps of professionally managed volunteers that preserves elder independence.

Because it is volunteer driven, the Money Management Program is remarkably cost-effective. The value of the time donated by our 1,300 volunteers is conservatively estimated at \$1.4 million annually.

For every elder who remains at home due to our intervention, the Commonwealth saves approximately \$60,000 in nursing home costs annually, even factoring in the expense of other public assistance.¹ If only *half* of our annual caseload remains in the community, the savings to the public amount to \$42 million annually – not to mention the improved quality of life that our clients experience through financial peace of mind in their own homes.

Remarkably Cost-effective

The Money Management Program is primarily supported through the state budget. Private donations also help to fund the program which, since its inception, has positively affected the lives of over 9,000 elders. We see the results firsthand, but we also know that 7% of elders over the age of 65 experience significant difficulty managing their financial affairs.² This means that over 10,000 elders in Massachusetts need our help. Even now, 200 seniors are on a list waiting to receive our vital service.

Growing Need - Need to Grow

Our vision for the future is to aggressively seek additional funding, increase outreach efforts, and help more elders living in the community.

Consider just a few of our cases

A neighbor referred Margaret, a 78-year-old woman victimized by a relative who kept the money after cashing her monthly Social Security checks. Our program stopped this abuse by matching a volunteer Representative Payee with Margaret who setup her checks to be directly deposited. She now lives in her home and actually feels confident enough to go out to the senior center to socialize.

Henry had been married 45 years when his wife died. He had never written a check and didn't know what bills needed to be paid. He also had substantial prescription drug costs. Our money management volunteer helped Henry develop a budget and sign up for Medicare prescription coverage. Now all the bills are paid and Henry remains in his apartment living independently. "I'm so grateful for the monthly help I get from John (his volunteer). I don't know what I would have done without him."

Mary was at a crossroads in her life. Her children had moved away and she was diagnosed with macular degeneration (rapidly diminishing eyesight). She could no longer read her mail or write checks to pay her bills. Mary thought she'd have to move into a nursing home. Now Sheila, a money management volunteer, assists her. Mary feels good that her financial obligations are being taken care of, and enjoys Sheila's visits twice a month.

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¹ See study of Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging and Longevity of Hunter College, New York as reported by NCEA e-news, September 2009. Money management paired with home care services, for example, cost an average of \$240 per month compared with an average cost of \$5,000 for a long term care facility.

² 2007 statistical study by AARP