

A Guide To Welfare Aid Is Published

CHAPEL HILL—A 120-page booklet, "Advocate's Guide to Public Assistance and Insurance Programs in North Carolina," has just been published to assist social workers, health and legal professionals, community groups, information and referral centers, and other groups or individuals responsible for helping people obtain public benefits.

The "Advocate's Guide," was written by Ms. Heather Barkley Craige, staff social worker at North State Legal Services in Hillsborough. It was produced as a joint project of North State Legal Services and the University of North Carolina's Division of Development and Learning.

Included in the booklet are the eligibility criteria and application processes for sixteen state wide public benefit programs including: Social Security, SSI, Workers' Compensation, Unemployment Insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, Hill-Burton, Vocational Rehabilitation, WIC, and Food Stamps.

The booklet also contains information on how to obtain free civil legal assistance and how to appeal Department of Social Services or Social Security decisions which deny or terminate benefits.

According to Ms. Craige, all income limits and benefit levels listed in the booklet are current as of January 1, 1980.

"Information in the 'Advocate's Guide' was gathered from a number of sources including federal and state publications and from persons involved in administering the various programs," said Ms. Craige. "Before going to press, each chapter was reviewed by benefit specialists from around the state."

This is the second edition of the "Advocate's Guide," the first was written and published by Ms. Craige in 1978.

A native of New York, Ms. Craige received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Barnard College, Columbia University, and her Master's in Social Work from UNC.

She says she was motivated to write the first edition of the "Advocate's Guide" after spending almost an entire summer while in college, waiting in lines to complete applications for Social Security Disability, AFDC, Food Stamps, and Medicaid benefits for her younger brother and her mother, who was terminally ill with cancer.

"It was difficult, exhausting and totally frustrating experience which was sadly compounded by the fact that my mother was dying," she says. "I knew nothing about the welfare system and was unable to get straight answers from the people running the programs."

Ms. Craige says that the 1978 edition of the "Advocate's Guide" was well-received in North Carolina and she believes the second edition will be even more useful.

Copies of the "Advocate's Guide" can be obtained for \$5 each by writing to: Librarian, Division of Disorders of Development and Learning, Biological Sciences Research Center, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 27514. Checks should be made payable to the division for Disorders of Development and Learning.

North State Legal Services, with offices in Hillsborough, Graham and Pittsboro, is one of fifteen general population and special client programs funded by Legal Services of North Carolina (LSNC). Funding for LSNC comes from the U.S. Congress, via the national Legal Services Corporation in Washington, D.C.



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