



Childers Counseling Service

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Getting Seniors' Hands on Government Information

Informing and protecting the people are two useful activities of government, and serving older adults has become increasingly important. A wealth of information that will benefit seniors is available from government agencies.

For information about physical and mental health issues, visit Medlineplus.gov.

For scholarly research articles, check out Pubmed.gov. This site even has veterinary information for those who have pets. These authoritative sites are created and maintained by the National Library of Medicine.

The Johnson County Area Agency on Aging, <http://hsa.jocogov.org>, provides information and referral, in-home services, nutrition services, geriatric care, caregiver support and information, community services and nursing home preadmission screenings. The agency's aging information specialists may be reached at 913-715-8861.

The Kansas Department on Aging offers award-winning free publications at the Web site, www.agingkansasa.org/index.htm. Although some publications are available online on the Web, many may be ordered free of charge by phone at 800-432-3535 or at the library. Popular publications include "A Guide for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders," "Kansas Caregiver Guide," "Division of Assets: Questions & Answers on mSpousal Impoverishment," "Explore Your Options: A Kansas Guide to Information and In-Home Services," and "A Mental Health Guide for Older Kansas and Their Families."

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Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK), at 800-860-5260 or www.agingkansasa.org, is a free service for older Kansans. It offers a way to get answers to questions about Medicare and other insurance issues. The local SCHICK number is 913-715-8856.

View the Kansas Insurance Commissioner's Web site, www.ksinsurance.org, for assistance with Medicare, Medigap, and Medicare Part D. The office's publications are available free of charge from the Web, by phone at 800-432-2484, or at the library. Popular titles are "Auto Insurance and Shopper's Guide," "Kansas Homeowner," "Health Insurance in Kansas," "Kansas Long-term Care Insurance," "Long-term Care Insurance Shoppers Guide," "Kansas Medicare Supplement Insurance Shoppers Guide," and the "Small Business Insurance Packet."

The National Institute on Aging, www.nia.nih.gov, offers publications that may be viewed on the site. Some are available free of charge at www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications, by phone at 800-222-2225, or at the library. The institute's "Age Page" pamphlets cover topics such as choosing a doctor, avoiding scams, and diabetes. In addition, <http://nihseniorhealth.gov> features health and wellness information.

The Kansas Attorney General helps victims of crime and has a site covering elder abuse, Medicare fraud, and consumer rights. Register for the no-call list here, too. Check out the site at www.ksag.org or call 8700-828-9745.

Investments are of particular interest to older adults, and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission has a Web site especially for seniors at www.sec.gov. Investor publications may be reviewed online at

www.sec.gov/investor/pubs.shtml. Some are available in paper at the library, or order by phone, 888-732-6585, or e-mail, help@sec.gov.

The Kansas Office of the Securities Commissioner, www.ksc.ks.gov, may be reached by phone, 800-232-9580, or e-mail, ksc@ksc.ks.gov. An online complaint form is available, too. The office's award-winning publications are available free of charge by contacting the office or at the library.

The official Web site of the State of Kansas is www.kansas.gov. Exploring this site can result in lots of discoveries, from tourism to laws to community affairs.

The U.S. Government's official Web portal is www.usa.gov. This site is an excellent source of federal information and segues easily into state, local, and tribal resources. Sections have been developed such as "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren," "Veterans," and "Consumer Action." Seniors.Gov, Recreation.Gov, Grants.Gov, Travel.State.Gov and Kids.Gov are among many sites providing easy access to specialized information.

I can help seniors find the right government publications to meet their needs. Call me at 913-495-2464 or e-mail childersm@jocolibrary.org. Library staff can assist with accessing Web sites: call 913-495-9100, e-mail jclre@jocolibrary.org, or visit www.jocolibrary.org.

The world of government information is vast and exciting. Dive in!

Martha Childers is government documents librarian with the Johnson County Library.

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