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Erie County Department for the Aging

OLDER ADULTS FROM ACROSS ERIE COUNTY ATTEND 2026 ELDER LAW DAY HOSTED BY ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING AND CENTER FOR ELDER LAW & JUSTICE

Erie County, NY – Hundreds of older adults, caregivers, family members, and professionals gathered today at the Buffalo Niagara Marriott in Amherst for the 2026 Elder Law Day, an annual event presented by the Erie County Department for the Aging in partnership with the Center for Elder Law & Justice (CELJ).

The free event provided attendees with direct access to legal professionals, educational presentations, and community resources designed to help older adults plan for the future, protect their rights, and maintain their independence. Throughout the day, participants attended workshops, met with service providers, and received guidance on a variety of legal and aging-related issues.

"We want to ensure local senior citizens have easy access to information on various legal issues that are important topics for the elderly," **said Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz**. "It is always wonderful to see so many residents take advantage of an event that provides resources and expertise for older adults."

Attendees had the opportunity to participate in a full schedule of educational sessions covering topics such as estate planning, wills and trusts, Medicaid planning, probate, caregiving challenges, reverse mortgages, fraud prevention, and strategies for avoiding family conflicts related to long-term care decisions. Additional presentations focused on legal planning tools and resources available to LGBTQI+ older adults.

One of the most popular features of the event was the opportunity for pre-registered participants to meet privately with experienced elder law attorneys for individualized

consultations. These sessions provided practical guidance on legal matters affecting older adults and their families.

The event also featured a resource fair showcasing more than two dozen organizations offering services and support related to aging, caregiving, legal assistance, healthcare, housing, and financial well-being. Attendees were able to connect directly with experts and learn about programs available throughout Erie County and Western New York.

"Elder Law Day is a reflection of our commitment to helping older adults remain informed, prepared, and empowered," said **Randall Hoak, Erie County Department for the Aging Commissioner**. "Whether someone is planning for retirement, caring for a loved one, protecting their assets, or seeking information about available benefits, the resources and expertise available at this event can make a meaningful difference. We are proud to partner with the Center for Elder Law & Justice to bring these services to our community."

Karen Nicolson, Chief Executive Officer of the Center for Elder Law & Justice, emphasized the importance of ensuring older adults have access to reliable legal information and advocacy.

"Elder Law Day is an invaluable opportunity for older adults and their families to access reliable legal information, connect with trusted resources," said **Karen Nicolson, CEO/Executive Director of Center for Elder Law & Justice**. "Laws, policies, and programs impacting older adults are constantly evolving, making it essential that seniors have access to current information and guidance. By bringing together legal professionals and community partners, Elder Law Day helps empower older adults to make informed decisions and protect their independence and well-being."

The need for programs such as Elder Law Day continues to grow. New York State is home to more than 3.5 million residents age 65 and older, a population that has increased significantly over the past decade. Many older adults face complex decisions related to healthcare, housing, finances, and long-term care while also navigating increasing risks from fraud and financial exploitation. Events such as Elder Law Day help bridge the gap between individuals and the information, services, and professionals they need to make confident decisions.

The Erie County Department for the Aging and the Center for Elder Law & Justice remain committed to providing opportunities that connect older adults and caregivers with trusted resources, helping them age with confidence, independence, and dignity.

About the Erie County Department for the Aging

The Erie County Department for the Aging is dedicated to helping older adults maintain independence and engagement within their communities through access

to essential services, wellness programs, and advocacy. For more information, visit <https://www3.erie.gov/seniorservices/>.

About the Center for Elder Law & Justice

The Center for Elder Law & Justice is a nonprofit legal services agency committed to safeguarding the dignity, safety, and independence of seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Learn more at <https://www.elderjusticenyc.org/>.