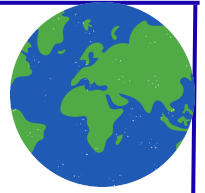


Plainfield Council on Aging

September 2025 Newsletter



Plainfield Council on Aging Town Offices
304 Main St., Plainfield, MA 01070

Polly Ryan, Coordinator
413-212-1581
pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us



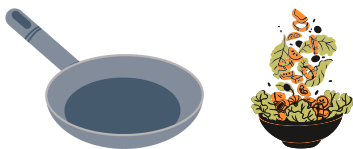
The COA board is looking forward to our September luncheon in Town Hall at noon on Wednesday the 10th.

We will be preparing ham, mac and cheese, baked beans, coleslaw, and dessert for you. Other desserts are welcome. The blood pressure clinic will also resume thanks to Kelly Hughes, our visiting nurse from the Northampton Health Department. She will also be giving a presentation on "Health Minds, Health Aging" Mental Health for Older Adults.

Join us for Pizza and a movie at Town Hall on September 20th at 4 pm. The Oscar winner movie "Conclave" will be showing. "

The Catholic Church's most powerful leaders have gathered from around the world, locked together in the Vatican halls. Tasked with running the covert process of selecting a new pope, Cardinal Lawrence finds himself at the center of a conspiracy and discovers a secret that could shake the very foundation of The Church". Pizza, popcorn, and other treats will be had along with plenty of comradery.

**Please RSVP with Polly at
pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us
or call 413-212-1581.**



A cooking demo geared toward preparing meals for singles and couples will take place in Town Hall September 25th from 11-1pm.

It will be led by Brandon Walton from Highland Valley Elder Services. The meal prepared during the demonstration will be served for lunch at noon. Brandon is highly entertaining and many other COAs have really enjoyed the meal he plans to prepare.

**Please RSVP with Polly at
pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us or call 413-212-1581.**

Healthy Bones and Balance class with Polly will resume on Tuesdays only beginning September 9th from 4-4:50pm at the Cummington Community House.

You are welcome to join at any time. The classes are free and ongoing. Classes with Jill are scheduled at the same location on Mondays and Thursday at 9:30 and all are welcome to join her as well.



**REACH OUT TO OUR
COMMUNITY CONNECTOR!**



Do you need help finding resources in the area? Please reach out to our Community Connector, Jen O'Connell.

Jen can help with many issues, including: obtaining benefits such as Fuel Assistance, SNAP, Social Security. Finding resources so you can continue to live independently at home. Programs for home repairs & transportation assistance. Plus more....

**Jen can be reached at
413-296-4536 ext. 110
or communityconnectjo@gmail.com**

***Funded by a grant from HVES
through funding under the
Federal Older Americans Act***



LOOKING AHEAD...



A vaccine clinic is scheduled for Wednesday October 15th at the Safety Complex from 10am to 1pm.

It will include the Covid and flu vaccinations. New guidelines dictate that Covid can only be administered to individuals 65 and older and anyone younger with compromised health. And the vaccine will only be available pending regulatory approval/authorization for the Pfizer 2025-2026 formulation.

Pre-registration is recommended at northamptonma.gov/2219/vax so that the Northampton Health Department knows how many vaccines to bring.

Walk-ins are welcome and should bring their insurance card. Vaccines are free to everyone, and no one will be turned away due to lack of insurance. However, health insurance companies do chip in to cover the costs incurred by the Northampton Health Department, this is why they ask that you share this information.



The Time Capsule

- It still needs items to fill it. At the "Schools Out, Summer Begins" COA event earlier this summer, our Plainfield community began donating items for a time capsule that will be opened in 2075 along with another one that was put together in 1975. There is still room for more items. The capsule is cylindrical, 16 inches long and 3¾ inches in diameter. It will be in the library until enough items are brought in to fill it. Items need to be non-degradable, safe, and non-toxic. It will rest with the previously filled capsule in a trunk at the Shaw Hudson House.



A discussion series around the book "Let's Talk about Death over Dinner," by Michael Hebb, will be offered at the Cummington Community House in October and November.

"Given the right framing, a "difficult" conversation does not need to be difficult. It can be liberating. It can even be transformative," Michael Hebb. Death Doula Stacey Mackowiak will lead us through a "guided conversation that transforms a seemingly difficult conversation into one of deep engagement, insight, and empowerment."

Michael's book will be provided at an introductory session on Thursday October 16th from 4-5pm. On Thursdays November 6th and 13th two dinners will be held from 4-6:30pm to share our thoughts on questions posed in the book. Participation is limited to 15 individuals. Please RSVP with Polly at pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us or call 413-212-1581.

All individuals in the 7 COA consortium Hilltown's are welcome to participate. (Williamsburg, Goshen, Cummington, Plainfield, Worthington, Chesterfield, and Westhampton). *This is an event funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Council on Aging (MCOA)*

AN INVITATION AND GUIDE TO
LIFE'S MOST IMPORTANT CONVERSATION

let's
TALK
about
DEATH
(OVER DINNER)

MICHAEL HEBB
FOUNDER OF DEATHOVERDINNER.ORG

LOOKING AHEAD...

“Sharing Ourselves”
and a “Sharing Club”

These are two different ideas for gathering, lifting our spirits and, relieving any angst we may be feeling for whatever reason.

“Sharing Ourselves”

From Polly:

Recently a friend asked how I was doing, and I replied, “I’m uninspired.” I have been in a funk dealing with personal family strife and feeling the national chaos brewing in the background. I have not been in my own garden enough, where I meditate and heal from within. Yet, as a member of the Plainfield community, I am so grateful and continually impressed with the range of stories people have shared with me about their life experiences and talents. We have such a diverse, caring, artistic and smart collection of individuals in our midst who have vast, wise, and informative knowledge and experiences that inspire me when shared. It led me to think that I may not be the only person struggling and that having a platform for inspirational sharing might lighten everyone’s mood. Hence the “Sharing Ourselves” idea popped into my mind. If anyone would like to present their talent, experiences, knowledge, or artistic endeavors, please let me know. I will facilitate a platform for that to happen. Let us all prepare for the darker season by sharing the light we have within us.

Looking forward to hearing from you. Call me at 413-212-1581 or email me at pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us

“Jerry Little” has volunteered to be the first to share a fun adventure he has had in Alaska. He will present after our luncheon in October.



“The Sharing Club”

From Polly:

I successfully organized such a club years ago while living in a community where elders and families with young kids lived together in the same apartment building. Again, strife was the motivator. The apartment complex was primarily subsidized living for seniors but had 20 apartments allocated to families with young children. I noticed that not all the seniors were happy about their shared living circumstances with rambunctious kids running underfoot. The lobby of the building had a beautiful community space with a piano and a full kitchen for events. It occurred to me that the generational divide might improve if we started a “Sharing Club” designed to bring all of us together through things we had in common, like making and eating ice cream! It was such a hit! Even the grumpiest of elders and the most scornful parents soon began to smile as they witnessed the laughing and joy our “Sharing Club” had doing fun activities around common interests.

In Plainfield, I don’t know any elders that don’t like children underfoot. In fact, I think they would love more interaction on that front. I grew up in Europe where generational divides didn’t exist. Both the older and younger communities knew they benefited from helping each other and often lived together as extended families. I would love to provide a platform for a Sharing Club of this kind again. So let me know if a monthly (or bi-monthly) Sharing Club interests you and I will coordinate our coming together. Thanks.

You can reach me at 413-212-1581 or email me at pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us



**Ongoing Programs, Activities & Resources
on the Plainfield Town Website**



Tech Connect continues until the remaining funds are exhausted.

Whether you want to learn a new skill or need an upgrade, you can still get free equipment like iPads, Chromebooks, PC laptops, and even a desktop computer.

Email Nancy Brown at
coatechtrainer@gmail.com
or call 413-296-5080 to make a request.
Or go to <https://northernhilltownscoas.org/>
and submit your request through a form.

And...The Plainfield Library hosts drop-in tech support every 3rd Thursday of each month from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm.

Tech Savvy, Plainfield resident, Lee Locke-Hardy, has graciously volunteered her time for this. **Thank you, Lee!**

Caroline Solan is our new SHINE Coordinator and can answer all your Medicare/Advantage plan health insurance questions.

She is available in person on Wednesdays at Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES, 320 Riverside Drive in Florence). You can also call HVES at 413-586-2000 and leave her a message or book an appointment. The most expedited way to reach her would be to send her an email at csolan@lifepathma.org.

If you have questions about MassHealth

call Buliah Mae Thomas at the Hilltown Community Health Center 413-238-5511 or email her at bthomas@hchcweb.org

The next Foot Care Clinic at the Cummington Community House is scheduled for Tuesday November 4th.

Please call Piper Sagan on 413-522-8432 to schedule an appointment (\$50) or a home visit (\$80/session).

Please consider doing home kit Covid testing before attending COA events to curb any spread.

Got Food?

There are several programs for receiving food and/or prepared meals delivered to your home regardless of your income. Check in with Polly to find one that fits your needs. Or go to www.plainfield-ma.us/council-aging/page/food-meal-programs

And, if you wish to help a neighbor by volunteering to pick up food for them, please let Polly know.

Grab and go hot meals are available for Plainfield's 60 and over residents at the Cummington Community House.

They can be picked up every Tuesday between noon and 12:30. To register or order for the first time, call Chrisoula at 413-634-2262 or email her at croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov.

A suggested donation of \$4 per meal supports Highland Valley Elder Services who prepare them.

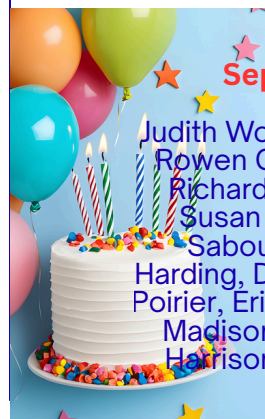


The Plainfield Mutual Support Network (PMSN) has a list of volunteers willing to provide rides to local vendors and medical appointments.

Please call 413-634-0170 a few days ahead to schedule something. Leave a message with your contact information and details of your transportation needs.

September's Happy Birthdays

Judith Wombwell, Paul Walter, Peter Bumpus, Rowen Caplan, Emily Howard, Shirley Todd, Richard Potter, David Locke, William Burt, Susan Wabnig, Victor Mistretta, Joseph Sabourin, Nora Dial, Nora Hauge, Peter Harding, David Alvord, Stephen Wicks, Cynthia Poirier, Erik Burcroff, Theresa Thatcher, Sandra Madison, Kathleen Filkins, Peri Kelly, Paula Harrison, Lynn Hubbard, Sheri Rosenblum.





SENIORS AWARE OF FIRE EDUCATION

Wow! It is already September and it is still hurricane season, which has already messed with us. With this in mind, here are a few ideas on how to prepare for any emergency.



- Have a plan on how to get out of the house in 3 minutes or less.
- Keep eyeglasses, canes, walkers, hearing aids, masks near where you are sleeping
- Make sure pathways are clear of clutter.
- Install night lights (LEDs work well) throughout the house to prevent falls.
- Remember your smartphone has a flashlight built in.
- Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the road so first responders do not have to spend crucial time finding you.
- Get and fill out a FILE OF LIFE from your Council On Aging and post it on the refrigerator.
- Know where you can seek shelter and find sustenance. Stay strong and be SAFE!

-- Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Departments

The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the MA Dept. of Fire Services.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE?



Looking back, I've been writing this note since early 2014 and volunteering in the topic since 2007. It occurs to me that I could ask you what you want to read. That I can write, of course... Here is an alphabetical list of topics I would be happy to work on. Please note the list does not include tax or investment advice!

Some of these topics have been at least touched on before, but somehow new information or warnings keep coming up.

Big Five and relatives

Will, health care proxy, durable power of attorney, advance directive, living will, MOLST, POLST, HIPAA release. Add to this beneficiary designations.

Budgeting

What to include, format for planning and recording, tips for staying on track

Credit

Cards, credit bureau records, managing, correcting errors, raising your score

Death

Dealing with finances and related matters after this unfortunate occurrence

Digital security

Phone and email and internet safety

Financial literacy

Finances and our brain, useful facts

Identity theft

How it happens, how to avoid, how to recover from

Scams

Recognizing and avoiding and recovering from

Web resources

For financial topics

Please let me know your thoughts!

Yours in knowledge,

Jean O'Neil
TRIAD Committee member
jeanoneilmass@gmail.com
413-268-2228

TECH HELP AND TRAINING FOR SEPTEMBER



GREAT NEWS!

TechConnect is providing services through a partnership with Northampton Open Media. Although we have fewer trainings going forward, drop-ins and tech support will continue. Please take advantage of ongoing services.

DELIVERING NOW & ACCEPTING NEW REQUESTS: Internet Hotspots

If you need affordable internet access, we have a solution that may work for you. Hotspots are small cellular devices you can use to access internet and work in most areas in the hilltowns. If you are interested in learning more, please contact us by phone or email. Call 413-296-5080 or email to coatechdevices@gmail.com.

TECH SUPPORT AVAILABLE BY APPOINTMENT

Receive technology help by email, phone, drop-in, or by appointment:

coaTechHelp@gmail.com phone or text msg 413-296-5080. You can attend drop-in at all locations, except Nash Hill.

Devices for you: PC laptops, desktops, refurbished Chromebooks, and iPads

There is still time to join the Digital World while supplies last. We have received more PC laptops, desktop computers, refurbished Chromebooks, and a few iPads. If you need a device to connect to the internet, have something so old it is not working effectively, or need a different type of device please contact us by leaving a message at 413-296-5080, or use the online request form on our website, www.northernhilltownscoas.org

DROP IN CENTERS:

ALL WELCOME AT ANY LOCATION
(no appointment needed)

Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd.
Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00

DROP IN CENTERS: (CONTINUED)

Cummington Community House Drop-In tech support, 33 Main Street, 10 to Noon,
2nd Wednesday 9/10

Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from Noon to 2:00, 3rd Thursday, 9/18

Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library Drop-In tech support, from 5:30 to 7:30, 3rd Thursday 9/18

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, 4th Thursday 9/25

Williamsburg,

Meekins Library Drop-In tech support from 10 :30 to 12:30 2nd Tuesday, 9/9

Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support from 10:00 to Noon, 2nd Tuesday, 9/9

Worthington Drop-In tech support at COA office
– call COA for date/time

TECH TRAINING CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS:

MUST pre-register for training no later than one week before the scheduled training date. All classes held at the Chesterfield Community Center, 400 Main Rd, lower level.

To register email coaTechTrainer@gmail.com; call or text 413-296-5080, or sign up through the website www.northernhilltownscoas.org.

TECH TRAINING CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS:

There are no workshops or classes scheduled for September.

TECH CONNECT CONTINUES THROUGH OUR AFFILIATION WITH





Hilltown Easy Ride

Senior Van

need a ride?

Call 413-296-4232

Are you a resident of Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Plainfield, Russell or Worthington who is 60 Yrs, disabled or veteran in need of a ride to important medical appointments, grocery shopping, or to pick up medications? We want to help.

FRTA /HILLTOWN VAN

- Professional drivers
- Handicap accessible vehicle

DRIVER POOL DRIVERS

- Compassionate neighbors
- Personal vehicles

Our drivers are your neighbors and they want to support your transportation needs.
Interested in joining our team? Call us today!



NORTHERN HILLTOWNS

Meet Irene, our Northern Hilltown region FRTA van driver.



HILLTOWN CDC VAN

Meet Susan, our CDC van driver. She covers needs all over the Hilltowns



SOUTHERN HILLTOWNS

Meet Jack, our Southern Hilltown region FRTA van driver.

Some Hilltown Community Health Center and Highland Valley Elder Services consumers may be prequalified for services. Be sure to mention this to our coordinator upon calling.

DO YOU QUALIFY FOR SERVICES :

📞 413-296-4232
🌐 www.hilltowncdc.org/transportation

THE BOSTON SHUTTLE IS BACK!!

After a four-year pause, Cooley Dickinson Hospital has restarted its shuttle service for Pioneer Valley residents. Our voices were heard, and they responded. Here is some information about the Boston shuttle service.



The shuttle leaves Monday - Friday at 6:30 am from the parking lot across from 8 Atwood Drive, Northampton, and travels to Boston with stops at Mass. General Hospital, Mass. Eye & Ear, and Brigham & Women's Hospital. You must have an appointment scheduled at any of those facilities between 10 am and 1:30 pm. The shuttle departs Boston at 3 pm.

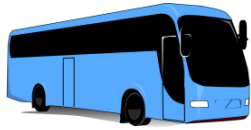
- The shuttle is wheelchair-accessible, is complimentary, and seats 28.
- Each patient may bring one companion.
- You must register at least 24 hours in advance by calling 413-966-8011. They have people
- to reserve seats/answer questions from 8 am - 12 pm, Monday-Friday. If you call outside of those hours, press "1" to leave a message.

We hope that you can make good use of this service so that the shuttle will continue to run well into the future. Please share this information with your friends. There is a parking lot at Atwood Drive to leave your vehicle until you return.

<https://www.cooleydickinson.org/2025/06/cdh-to-restart-weekday-round-trip-shuttle-service-for-patients-seeking-care/>

On the Road Again...

2025 TRIPS



Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat **BEFORE** mailing payments. For more info call 413-296-4291 Email: francine.frenier@gmail.com
Mail to: 11 Stage Rd. Williamsburg, MA 01096

Day Trip Sept. 15th The BIG E, an annual favorite, with free entertainment at The Court of Honor Stage. The Stylistics perform hits from the 70's. Cost \$18 for Northampton Seniors, all other seniors \$20. Make your check payable to Barbara Kaczinski & send to 39 Leeno Terr. Florence, Ma 01062. Due Now. NO REFUNDS due to bargain price. The bus leaves from Sheldon Field. NOTE check info and mailing address.

NEW Day Trip WED. October 8 Historic Salem Cross Inn. Includes luncheon, choices available. Tour of Quabbin and Stop at Brookfield Orchards. Discounted price for Worthington Seniors over 60 and \$103 for other seniors. Call Phyllis 413-238-5962 or email coa@worthington-ma.us for details & to reserve a seat. Limited seating.

Day Trip Oct 9 A Chorus Line. Center orchestra seating for the 50th Anniversary Production at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT. Lunch at The Gelston House. Price is \$177. Make your check payable to Landmark Tours and mail it to the address above NOW. A few seats are available.

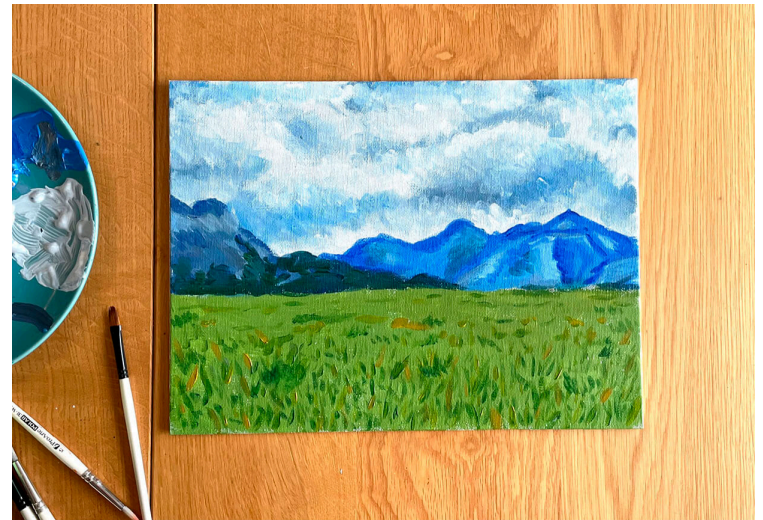
Multi Day Trip October 12-18 Biltmore Estate & Smoky Mountains, Asheville, NC. Seven days, six nights. Visit the Biltmore Estate, the St. Lawrence Basilica, historic Gatlinburg, TN & Asheville, NC. Guided tour of the Smoky Mountains National Park. Price \$1,099. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. Wait list.

Day Trip Dec 7, Sunday A Holiday Event in Waltham, Ma. Reagle Music Theater Players beloved Christmas extravaganza--100 performers, live orchestra, dancers, living nativity, and yuletide tunes. Pre-show lunch at the Chateau Restaurant.

Price \$160. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by October 13. Call or email above to be added to the Wait List

There are day trips to Bronx Zoo, Radio City Rockettes, Craft Festival at Mohegan

***** 2026 Multi Day trips to Washington DC and Mackinac Island*****



ACRYLIC PAINTING CLASS

JOIN US!! GOSHEN COA SPONSORED ACTIVITY

Acrylic Painting Class
Goshen Town Hall - Upstairs Dining Hall
42 Main St, Goshen, MA 01032

Learning to capture an object through painting, to see its shape, value, lighting, line is a satisfying practice. Participants will work on developing traditional painting methods including color mixing/theory, value, line, shape, and "seeing" what they are painting. Students will complete 2-3 paintings during this class time, and will be allowed to work at their own speed and move onto the next project when they are ready. Inspiration will come from still life's of every day objects and photos.

Thursdays 10am-Noon
9 classes: Sept. 18 -Nov. 13
Suggested Donation of \$10 per class
All materials and supplies provided
Register at www.lenagarcia.com

GOOD NEWS FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

By Deb Hollingworth

I confess... sometimes I struggle finding Good News with our current events...and this month especially I am so tempted to call this column Bad News because a perfect storm is brewing which looks like it will result in substantial increases in your monthly premiums, deductibles and co-pays for Medicare D plans.

Do you care, will this effect you? That depends. The answer is No....if you get your Rx through the VA because you are a veteran.

The answer is No... if you get your health insurance through your retirement pension plan, or your spouse's pension plan. (like municipal or State employees)

The answer is No, not as much....if you don't take any Rx...or if your Rx are just generics.

But the answer is Yes....if you are one of those Medicare beneficiaries who take brand name Rx and have a "stand alone" Medicare D plan. Which means you do not have a Medicare Advantage plan where your Rx are included.

Of the 70 million Medicare beneficiaries...there are a lot of us who like traditional Medicare and who have resisted enrolling in a Medicare Advantage plan, so we have a "stand alone" Medicare D plan.

AND, Open Enrollment is coming up... October 15th– December 7th where we have to decide to stick with our D plan that we've had this year.....or change plans because the cost for premiums, co-pays and deductibles will be lower if we switch plans?

In 2006 when Medicare D plans were "invented".....there were 22 Medicare D plans for New England residents. This past year we were down to 14. That number may shrink again for

2026 ... as Health insurance companies that offer Medicare D plans are looking at their bottom line and determining there's not a large enough profit margin to continue to offer them.

What's making the cost of Medicare D plans increase this year?

- rising cost of RX.....we have some remarkable new RX on the market now, but they come with significant co-pays as many of us taking blood thinners have discovered.
- regulatory changes which allow D plans to increase their monthly premiums as much as \$50 x month where before they were limited to \$35 x month increases.
- cutbacks in subsidy that these health insurance companies were getting as part of the Deficit Reduction Act passed in the summer of 2022. A recent Wall Street Journal article said subsidy cutbacks expected to be as much as 40%.

All these factors impact profit margins....so we anticipate changes in D plan costs as we help folks during Open Enrollment this year.

The Good News is that there are Medicare familiar counselors who can help you sort through your options. Suggest you call early for **an appointment!**

SHINE counselor Caroline Solan at Highland Valley Elder Services ... 413-586-2000

Pharmacy Outreach Program ... 866-633-1617

LifePath regional SHINE office ... 413-773-5555

.....



Trip to Polar Park where the group watched the WooSox play on August 3rd in Worcester

PLAINFIELD COUNCIL ON AGING
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PLAINFIELD, MA 01070

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BFILLUPS21@ICLOUD.COM

Scam Alert!

**Government &
Business
Imposter Scams**



They say they want to help, but they just want to steal your money!

- Someone is using your account, or they found suspicious activity.
- Your information or Social Security # is being used to commit crimes.
- There's a security problem with your computer.

WHAT TO DO

Do not respond. Just hang up!

Do not call the phone number they provide.

Don't click on links in text or email messages.

Verify the information. Call your bank using the phone number on your card or statement.

Get help for tech issues from someone you trust.

If you have a consumer problem or question, contact the

**Northwestern
District Attorney's
Consumer
Protection Unit**

**Greenfield
(413) 774-3186**

**Northampton
(413) 586-9225**

www.NorthwesternDA.org

Working in cooperation with
the Office of the MA Attorney
General.