

What do Money Management Volunteers Do?

Money Management Volunteers enable people who need help managing their finances to live as independently as possible, providing safeguards to protect the consumer and preserving their dignity and privacy.

The Money Management Program recently helped two twin brothers who live together. The elder twin was in a rehabilitation facility following an extended hospitalization, and the younger twin was living in the home but unable to manage the mounting pile of bills. Property tax, mortgage, car insurance, health insurance, prescription coverage, cable, and utility bills had not been paid for months. The brothers were so worried, stressed, and overwhelmed by the unpaid bills they did not know where to start.

Luckily, Darlene Skog, program manager, did know. Once she explained the program to the brothers, they welcomed the help and willingly shared the two 30-gallon garbage bags where they stored their unopened mail.

At the first meeting Darlene sorted through the mail looking for critical bills like health insurance, mortgage, car insurance, and utility shut off notices that needed to be immediately addressed. By the end of that first visit the brothers had an accurate bank balance, and checks were written out to pay the most critical bills. The utility shut-off notices were also addressed.

A week later, the brothers were introduced to the Money Management Volunteer who would be working with them on a regular basis. During that visit, the volunteer assisted the twins in making phone calls to set up payment plans, get copies of important documents, and find past due balances on several accounts. Additional bills were paid, and the volunteer arranged a regular monthly meeting with the brothers.

Meeting monthly with the brothers in their home, the Money Management Volunteer helps the brothers to balance their checkbook, reconcile their bank statements, and write out checks to pay monthly bills and slowly catch up on past due balances. Over a few months, pile of unpaid bills began to diminish, and the brothers became current with their bills and were no longer in danger of losing their home. Since then, the elder twin has been hospitalized multiple times but the brothers have avoided becoming buried in debt again.

The Money Management Program is collaboratively sponsored by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Mass Home Care and AARP Massachusetts. Money Management volunteers undergo criminal background checks and rigorous training, because trust and accountability are key to the program's success.

If you, a friend or family member need help organizing and paying household bills, please contact our Information and Referral Department at 508-394-4630 or use the on-line referral form on our website at <https://escci.org/information-referrals/>.