



Success Stories

How **BenefitsCheckUp** Helped Maria Ibarra find Benefits for Her Elderly Family Members



Maria Ibarra

Many older people need help paying for prescription drugs, health care, utilities and other basic needs. Millions of older Americans – especially those with limited incomes – are eligible for but not receiving benefits from existing federal, state and local programs. Ranging from heating and energy assistance to prescription savings programs to income supplements, there are many public programs available to seniors in need if they only knew about them and how to apply for them.

Thanks to BenefitsCheckUp®, help is available for seniors and those who care about them. Launched by the National Council on Aging (NCOA) in 2001, BenefitsCheckUp® is the nation's most comprehensive Web-based service to screen for over 1,550 benefits programs available to those 55 and over. Since its inception, BenefitsCheckUp® has helped two million older Americans determine eligibility for these programs and has identified nearly \$6 billion in public benefits support.

BenefitsCheckUp – “You are awesome!!”

Maria Ibarra from Florida is accustomed to helping people. As a health coach with a Masters in Public Health, she talks with people daily about improving their lives. But the task of helping two elderly members of her own family in need of assistance proved to be quite challenging for Maria.

“I have an elderly father-in-law who moved in with us and I am helping him find employment as well as resources like food stamps that he may be eligible for,” explains Maria. “I am also helping my 87-year-old dad locate adult housing and home care options.”

“I tried to find benefits for two elderly males in my family, and BenefitsCheckUp helped me tremendously! It has very useful information and is easy to navigate. BenefitsCheckUp is awesome!”

Maria spent considerable time on the Internet looking for information but did not find the help she needed. Then she read about BenefitsCheckUp in a local newspaper article written by Mr. Jim Miller, author of *The Savvy Senior*.

Maria completed the BenefitsCheckUp.org screening questionnaire that guided her through different programs that her father-in-law and dad were eligible for.

“BenefitsCheckUp was easy to navigate, and I found so many resources I did not know about,” said Maria. “BenefitsCheckUp centralizes everything, so I saved a lot of time by not having to visit a lot of different Web sites. It’s great for me because my elders are relying on me for information. BenefitsCheckUp not only educates me about available programs that I can apply for online but also directs me to physical locations where I can apply and phone numbers to call for information.”

As a person of Hispanic descent, Maria also found the BenefitsCheckUp web site friendly. “BenefitsCheckUp appeals to all cultures and includes resources for everybody, which I found very welcoming.”

Maria now plans on using BenefitsCheckUp to help others. “Because of my health coaching experience and the fact that I am fluent in both Spanish and English, a good number of my Spanish-speaking friends and family come to me for information. BenefitsCheckUp will allow me to help so many more people. Thank you, BenefitsCheckUp—you are awesome!!”

Contacting BenefitsCheckUp

Partnerships

Molly Dworken
National Partnerships
National Council on Aging
Molly.Dworken@ncoa.org
202-479-6668

Media

Scott Parkin
Vice President, Communications
National Council on Aging
scott.parkin@ncoa.org
202-479-6975

BenefitsCheckUp

BenefitsCheckUp is an online decision-support and enrollment tool that helps organizations screen seniors with limited income and resources for over 1,550 public and private benefits including:

- Prescription drugs
- Heating bills
- Housing / Rent
- Meal programs
- Legal services
- Medical costs
- In-home services
- Tax relief
- Veteran’s benefits
- Employment
- Volunteer work

And gives agencies:

- Single-page screenings format for fast data entry
- Printable screening questionnaires for enrollment events, mailing and pre-screening
- Over 250 Rx program application forms, searchable by drug or program name
- Reports that document the number of clients screened, their demographics and the programs for which they are eligible