

August 6, 2024



Empowering Independence

CENTER FOR LIVING & WORKING, INC.

WHAT'S UP?



Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services

## Beware: Scammers Posing as IRS

Identity thieves may try to contact taxpayers through fake calls, emails, texts and social media [Facebook, Instagram, X] messages. They pretend to be the IRS to steal your money or personal information.



How do you know when it's really the IRS contacting you?

### Email, text and social media

The IRS will:	The IRS will not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mail a letter or notice <b>before</b> calling or emailing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send unexpected or unsolicited text messages.</li> <li>Start contact by email, text message or through social media.</li> <li>Send messages asking for personal or financial information, <i>especially about tax refunds.</i></li> </ul>

### Typical IRS-related online scams

- "Phishing" emails pretending to be from IRS staff.
- Fake IRS social media accounts that contact taxpayers about a fake bill, grant or refund.
- Text messages sent for fake "tax credits" or "stimulus payments."



### Phone calls

The IRS will:	The IRS will not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mail a notice or letter first, <b>then</b> call to confirm an appointment or discuss a scheduled audit.</li> <li>have a private collection agency call if the taxpayer owes a debt, but <b>only after</b> sending a written letter/notice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>leave pre-recorded, urgent or threatening messages. <b>NOTE:</b> any message that says you'll be arrested if you don't call back is a <b>SCAM</b>.</li> <li>will <b>never</b> ask you to pay using any kind of pre-paid card, store or online gift card.</li> </ul>

Learn more about making a payment at: [IRS.gov/payments](https://www.irs.gov/payments).

(Continued on page 2)



## IRS Letters and Notices

A letter or notice is usually the **first** contact a taxpayer gets from the IRS.



If you're suspicious or not sure, you can check to see if it's *really* the IRS by:

- logging on to your **secure** [IRS Online Account](#) to see a copy of the notice or letter.
- contacting [IRS customer service](#) to confirm it's real or a scam.
- reviewing IRS letters and notices at [Understanding Your IRS Notice or Letter](#).
- checking that a [private collection agency](#) has the **same** *Taxpayer Authentication Number* as the IRS notice.
- Visit Private Debt Collection Frequently Asked Questions to learn more about verifying a private collection agency.

### Received an IRS notice saying your payment has gone to a *Private Collection Agency*?

Learn more at: <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/private-debt-collection-faqs>

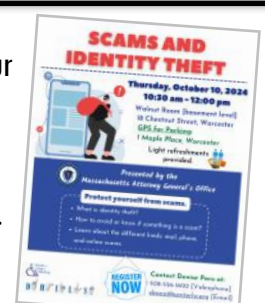
### Warning Signs of a Scam

Received an unexpected letter, email or text that claims to be from the IRS, bank, credit company or other trusted sources? **Here are some signs that it's a scam:**

- Spelling **errors** or **incorrect grammar**.
- A link or attachment with a *slightly* misspelled URL [website address] or a strange site. [EX: website says "irs.**com**" but the real IRS website is "irs.**gov**"]
- A threatening or urgent request to **pay now**, **follow a link** or **open an attachment**.

**Not sure if it's a scam?  
Be safe and contact  
the IRS!**

Want to learn more? Join our  
*Scams & Identity Theft*  
workshop on **October 10th**  
from **10:30am—12:00pm**.  
*Flier is coming soon!*



## Summer Tips for Protecting Hearing Devices from Sweat and Humidity

by Michelle DeStefano

- 1) **Moisture Protection Products:** use products designed to protect hearing aids/cochlear implants [CIs] from moisture. **EX:** *sweat-resistant covers or sleeves by Ear Gear and hearing aid headbands by Ear Band-It.*
- 2) **Waterproof Cases:** check with your audiologist, hearing aid/CI manufacturer for suggestions.
- 3) **Retention Clips:** secure devices to stop them from moving or falling out [due to sweat and movement].
- 4) **Dehumidifiers:** store your devices in a dehumidifier or drying box overnight to remove moisture. **EX:** *DriAid or Redux*
- 5) **Avoid Direct Water Exposure:** don't get your devices wet! [*unless they are specifically designed to be waterproof—see #2*].



Condensed from: <https://www.chcheating.org/post/summer-tips-hearing-aids-cochlear-implant-dry>

# Celebrating 34 Years of the ADA!

On Friday, August 2nd, under blue skies, the *Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council* [SILC] held their first annual Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] celebration at Dunn State Park in Gardner since the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a fun-filled day for people to enjoy hanging out with friends, hiking, kayaking, swimming, and a delicious lunch! DCR's *Universal Access Program* hosted accessible hiking and kayaking, which was a blast! The DCR staff were awesome, as were the MASILC volunteers, who coordinated and worked this great event.



Left to Right (Bottom) Kim White, Denise Paro, & Joan Philip  
(Top) Lucy Krznowski, Lee Nettles & Catherine Brown

Kim White & Denise Paro



Lee Nettles & Catherine Brown

Emily Patton, Linette Vazquez,  
Lucy Krznowski, Kim White & Denise Paro



Meg Coffin & Nicole Brodie



Kim White & Denise Paro

Denise Paro, Kim White,  
Joan Philip & Catherine Brown

# NAD Chicago Conference

## Final NAD Chicago Conference Update

<https://youtu.be/EDN1rFmNUzg?si=qNCLgtoTMsQGe2iO>



### NAD Priorities for 2024-2026

- Address Deaf Youth Well-Being
- Deaf Seniors Issues
- DECLARE: Deaf Children’s Language Rights Everywhere
- Access to Resources for DeafDisabled Citizens & Enhancing Services for DeafBlind Communities
- Deaf Community Needs: Access Emergency Responders & Emergency Notifications

### NAD Board 2024-2026

- **President:** Lisa Rose
- **Vice President:** Stephanie Hakulin
- **Secretary:** Milmaglyn Morales
- **Treasurer:** James “Dino” Christianson, Jr.
- **Representatives**
  - **Region I:** Nicholas Lalanne & Jacob Leffler
  - **Region II:** Kevin Ryan & Chris Haulmark
  - **Region III:** Michael Deuel & Christopher Patterson
  - **Region IV:** Laura Kim & Joseph “JoJo” Lopez
- **Affiliate:** Dawnmarie Caggiano

**NAD Board is working on filling up the vacancies.**



## Upcoming Account Changes: *Switch to Login.gov or ID.me for Sign In*

Did you setup an online Social Security account before *September 18, 2021*?

If you did, you must change to a **Login.gov** account to continue accessing your online services.

How do you do this?

Go to <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/> and log in. Look for the option to change to **Login.gov**. When your account is successfully linked, a confirmation screen will pop-up, and you will have immediate access to your personal my Social Security services.

## MCDHH Awards \$1 million for Substance Use Treatment and Recovery Services

\$1M in funding for substance use treatment and recovery services, will be equally distributed across three MA organizations: Behavioral Health Network Inc., High Point Treatment Center, and North Suffolk Community Services. View our vlog below for more information.

Read the full story here: [bit.ly/4coIML3](https://bit.ly/4coIML3)

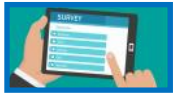
Vlog Transcript: [bit.ly/3zWocOs](https://bit.ly/3zWocOs)



# Easy Steps to Protect Your Computer and Phone

Find out how you can protect your phone and computer. For more information, go to <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/taxes-security-together>

Watch Vlog here: [https://youtu.be/HSjHTKPVIeA?si=USk\\_qQkJauj7ohKa](https://youtu.be/HSjHTKPVIeA?si=USk_qQkJauj7ohKa)



## IMPORTANT SURVEYS [Worcester]



### Autism Resources

From the Worcester Area Autism Task Force in collaboration with the Free Worcester Coalition.

**Are you a Parent or Caregiver of a child on the Spectrum in Worcester?**

**Please complete the survey about Autism Resources!**

The *Autism Task Force* is a group of parents, providers and community leaders that work to help coordinate local services, ensure the distribution of important resource information and help address gaps in services.

**Survey in ENGLISH:** <https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSfl4AZFPiknIf.../viewform>

**Survey in SPANISH:** <https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSeiWskZKfkRbs.../viewform>

*Additional translations coming soon!*

### After School Care in Worcester

From the City of Worcester Division of Youth Services w/ local parent leaders and community partners.

After school care is one of the TOP needs in the Worcester community. **If you are a parent or caregiver of a child in Worcester, please complete the survey!**

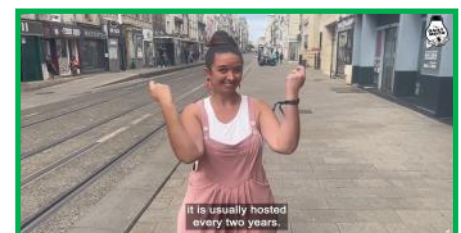


**Survey in ENGLISH:** <https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSdvZWeMWDa.../viewform>

**Survey in SPANISH:** <https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSeWAoLGKOKRQn.../viewform>

## France's Deaf International Sign Language Arts Festival: *Clin D' Oeil* Recap

The biannual sign language arts festival called *Clin D' Oeil* usually takes place in Reims, France. This is a recap of the recent weekend July 4 to 7: <https://youtu.be/XnmF3siQH3A>



# AUGUST AWARENESS



8/4

## National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day

- America's #1 favorite cookie.
- Invented by *Ruth Graves Wakefield* in Whitman, MA in 1937.
- Named after the *Toll House Inn*, which was run by Ruth and her husband.



8/7

## National Lighthouse Day

- Honors the beacon of light that meant safety and security for ships and boats at sea.
- Boston Lighthouse on Brewster Island in Boston Harbor is America's oldest light station built in 1917.
- The lantern room is a glassed-in housing at the top of a lighthouse tower.



8/15

## National Relaxation Day

- Encourages us to slow down and unwind.
- Focus on taking care of ourselves to relax and reduce stress.
- *How do you relax?*



8/17

## National Massachusetts Day

- Nickname - The Bay State
- Statehood: 1788; 6th state
- State bird: black-capped chickadee
- State flower: mayflower





# UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

## GET READY FOR TAX SEASON!

SEPTEMBER 04

**TAX-AIDE GET READY FOR TAX SEASON!**

What do you need to know?

Wednesday, September 4, 2024  
3:30 - 5:30 pm

- Do I need to file taxes?
- Where can I go to file taxes?
- What do I bring to my tax appointment?
- What if I can't attend?
- How can I take a break off my expenses & driving through the city. Personal development idea.
- What tax credits can I get to make my taxes?

Workshop Room (downstairs level)  
18 Chestnut Street, Worcester  
Parking: 18 Chestnut Street  
Register with Devine at: [devine@clw.org](mailto:devine@clw.org)  
#TaxAideWorkshop

## DRIVER'S EDUCATION

SEPTEMBER 11

Wednesdays  
Last class Nov. 13th

**DRIVER'S EDUCATION SERIES**

Need to take your Learner's Permit test? 10 weeks | In-person (at CLW in Worcester)

You Will:

- Receive this class materials
- Practice driving
- Take practice exams
- Receive your license

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Workshop Room (downstairs level)  
18 Chestnut Street, Worcester, MA  
Parking: 18 Chestnut Street

## INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF THE DEAF PARTY

SEPTEMBER 24

**International Week of the Deaf Party**

SEPTEMBER 24, 2024  
11:00AM TO 2:00PM

- International Sign History.
- Sign language game challenges & fun activities for all ages!

GPS for Parking: 1 Maple Place, Worcester  
Workshop Room (downstairs level) 18 Chestnut Street

Must Register! by September 20th

CLW will provide lunch and drinks.

Contact Devine to register!  
508-556-3030 (vocalphone)  
[devine@clw.org](mailto:devine@clw.org)

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

OCTOBER 9

Every other week.  
Last class Dec. 4

**Healthy Relationships SERIES**

FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMUNITY

We're here for YOU!

- Join us for discussion about:
  - personal empowerment
  - self-advocacy
  - healthy relationships with others

AG and deaf relationships will be provided. Please register early!

Monthly Meetings  
1:00 - 3:30 PM via Zoom

Registration: 18 Chestnut Street, Worcester  
Workshop Room (downstairs level)  
18 Chestnut Street, Worcester, MA  
Parking: 18 Chestnut Street

Register with Devine at: [devine@clw.org](mailto:devine@clw.org)  
508-556-3030 (vocalphone)

## SCAMS & IDENTITY THEFT

OCTOBER 10

**SCAMS AND IDENTITY THEFT**

Thursday, October 10, 2024  
10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Workshop Room (downstairs level)  
18 Chestnut Street, Worcester  
GPS for Parking: 1 Maple Place, Worcester

Presented by the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office

Protect yourself from scams.

- What is identity theft?
- How to avoid being a victim if something is a scam?
- Learn about the different kinds, red flags, and advice on how to avoid them.

REGISTER NOW

Contact Devine at: [devine@clw.org](mailto:devine@clw.org)  
508-556-3030 (vocalphone)

D H I L S



Follow us on Facebook to see the latest news!

<https://bit.ly/CLW-DHILS>



# Worcester Parent Guide to Community Resources

[CLICK HERE FOR ENGLISH GUIDE](#)



## **UPDATED: Therapists for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Directory**

Click here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mRNQIKYYNjM4vYpRX7OECQkiW-PQlu62/view?usp=sharing>



### MISSED A *WHAT'S UP* NEWSLETTER?

*Past issues of newsletters are on our website!*

VISIT: [HTTPS://WWW.CENTERLW.ORG/2022/07/WHATS-UP-NEWSLETTER/](https://www.centerlw.org/2022/07/whats-up-newsletter/)

## Questions? Contact your Skills Trainer

Joan Philip	DHILS Director	508-762-1165 (VP)
Denise Paro	Administrative Assistant	508-556-1600 (VP)
Ellen Perkins	DHILS Asst. Manager/Hard of Hearing Skills Trainer	508-502-7576 (Voice); 508-762-1354 (VP)
Deanna Emberley-Handricken	Deaf Skills Trainer (Part-time)	508-762-1021 (VP)
Rosemary Moreira	Deaf Skills Trainer (Full-time)	508-762-1166 (VP)
Jonathan Vanderschrick	Deaf Skills Trainer (Full-time)	508-762-1350 (VP)
Kim White	Staff Interpreter	508-755-1042 (Voice); 508-283-1036 (VP)

### Contact Us!



Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services

Center for Living & Working, Inc.

*Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services Department*

Videophone: 508-762-1164

Voice/TTY: 508-755-1003

[www.CenterLW.org](http://www.CenterLW.org)



CLW: <https://www.facebook.com/CenterForLivingAndWorking>

DHILS Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/469192334303776>