

# COA'S DIAMOND CONNECTION



**A New Year, With Gratitude**

As we welcome this new year, we want to pause and say thank you.

Because of you—our supporters, volunteers, partners, and friends—last year was one of impact, compassion, and connection. Every meal served, every ride provided, every friendly phone call, wellness check, and moment of dignity shared happened because you chose to stand with the seniors we serve.

For many older adults, our organization is more than a service provider. It is a lifeline. It is reassurance that someone cares, that they are not forgotten, and that help will be there when it's needed most. Your generosity made that possible, even during times of uncertainty and rising need.

We are continually inspired by the kindness and commitment of this community. Whether you gave financially, volunteered your time, checked in on a neighbor, or shared our mission with others, you played an essential role in strengthening the safety net for seniors across our community.

We have a lot of exciting things to share with you this year. The first one is the launch of the COA Living Legacy Society. This important initiative allows you and those in the community to make meaningful, long-term contributions that can help sustain COA's mission well into the future. In aligning your charitable values with existing financial and estate planning goals, you will help create financial stability and ensure our capacity to serve future generations.

If you are interested in learning more, we invite you to join one of our upcoming informational sessions. Call us at 386-253-4700 x210 for details.

So, as we step into the new year, we do so with optimism and purpose. The needs of older adults continue to grow, but so does our resolve to meet them with compassion, innovation, and respect. In the months ahead, we encourage you to stay connected—whether by continuing your support, considering a first or renewed gift, volunteering, or simply spreading the word about our work. Every act of support, no matter the size, helps ensure that seniors in our community can age with dignity, independence, and care.

Thank you for believing in this mission. Thank you for your trust. And thank you for walking alongside us as we begin another year of service, hope, and community.

Wishing you a healthy, peaceful, and joyful 2026.

With sincere gratitude,

Terri Karol & Eveline Kraljic  
Co-Executive Directors

**ISSUE #6**

**COUNCIL ON AGING OF  
VOLUSIA COUNTY**  
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026 ↕



**CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS  
TERRI KAROL & EVELINE KRALJIC**

**In this newsletter  
you can expect:**

Holiday Joy - Center Celebrations!!!

BetterAge Assessment

Staff Profile Highlight

Who is COA?

Volunteer Spotlight

Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (EHEAP)

Bingo Bash Deltona

Aging with Dignity

Senior Center Highlights

Service Spotlight

COA Living Legacy Society

## *Holiday Joy!*

The holidays can be a difficult time for some of our senior clients and members, especially for those who don't have family living nearby. That's why it's even more important that their COA Family is there for them.

All of our Neighborhood Nutrition and Senior Activity Centers celebrated the season with festive gatherings filled with good food, music, and plenty of holiday cheer. We

proudly embrace the importance of coming together to ensure our senior clients and members feel all the love, connection, and joy of the holiday season.

COA's Neighborhood Nutrition Centers are open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and our Senior Activity Centers are open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Visit our website by clicking on the box below to explore all of our locations and activity calendars and plan your visit!

[Plan My Visit](#)

# Holiday *joy*



**Holiday celebrations at our Deltona, New Smyrna Beach and Ormond Beach Senior Activity Centers**



# LOOKING FOR A WAY TO BOOST YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING?

We are partnering with BetterAge to help you get the most out of your own life on your own terms. Small steps today can make a big difference.



## What Are Your Health Priorities?

Here is what thousands of older adults have told us:

**59%** Physical Activity

**40%** Sleep

**37%** Brain Health

**37%** Nutrition



Learn More about Your Own Health and Wellbeing. Scan here to start



[Start the Survey](#)

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**Staff Profile Highlights**  
*Hector Gonzalez*

**This month, we are proud to spotlight our amazing Facilities & Maintenance Technician, Hector Gonzalez. Hector has been with Council on Aging since 2023 and has been putting smiles on clients' faces ever since.**



Hector and his wife, Celeste, have been married for 32 years and are the proud parents of six children, grandparents to fourteen grandchildren, and great-grandparents to four great-grandchildren. After retiring in 2019 following 27 years as Lead Carpenter at St. Barnabas Hospital in the Bronx, NY, Hector continued his passion for helping others through in-home renovations. In December 2021, Hector and Celeste moved to Florida.

Hector consistently goes above and beyond for COA clients. On one occasion, a client's loved one asked if Hector could install a wall-mounted mailbox at the front door so the client would not have to walk to the end of the driveway. Hector was advised that this would involve both federal postal regulations and HOA approval. Hector took the initiative to secure permission from both before completing the installation. The client was thrilled—and relieved—to safely retrieve her mail without the risk of falling.

On another visit, Hector was informed that a client's washing machine had stopped working. Once a replacement was obtained, Hector returned to complete the installation. During the process, he noticed mold behind the broken machine caused by a leak. Not only did he repair the leak, but he also addressed the mold issue and installed the new washing machine—leaving behind yet another “over-the-moon” client. We were also able to replace a broken microwave for her so that she could continue making her meals without any risk to herself. This particular client always makes sure that anyone who visits her home leaves with two Peppermint Patties, three Hershey Kisses, and two butterscotch candies—a sweet thank-you for exceptional care. (pictured below)

Hector shares, “I want to treat our clients the way I would want to be treated when I get old—even though I'm 72 years old.” He says that helping our clients feels like helping his own parents. Many times, a simple task—like changing a light bulb—turns into meaningful companionship. These visits often become important social interactions for clients who need them most.

According to his immediate supervisor, Liam Sweeney, “Consistently earning outstanding client praise, Hector sets the standard for excellence. Clients regularly go out of their way to recognize his work, and for good reason— Hector doesn't just meet expectations, he exceeds them. His dedication, positivity, and willingness to go above and beyond make him exceptional at what he does and a true pleasure to work with.”

With a smile that lights up any room, Hector says, “I do my job to put smiles on the faces of our clients.” He is also deeply grateful for the supportive team he works with each day.

Hector is truly one of the many gems at Council on Aging of Volusia County, making a meaningful difference in the lives of our most vulnerable seniors—helping them remain safe, comfortable, and living with dignity in their own homes.



Are you familiar with the services provided by Council on Aging of Volusia County (COA)? Did you know we will be celebrating our 60th anniversary in March 2027 as the only nonprofit dedicated exclusively to serving seniors in Volusia County?

Now is the perfect opportunity to learn more about how COA supports older adults in our community. If you live in a 55+ community and would like our Community Engagement Liaison, Doreen Willett, to present at your next HOA meeting or community coffee hour, please call 386-253-4700, ext. 239.



## Who is Council on Aging of Volusia County, Inc.?



### Meals on Wheels:



One of COA's premier programs, Meals on Wheels offers nutritious meals delivered to the home. This also allows for a well-being check on those who may not have regular daily contact with anyone else.

### Nutrition Centers:

COA's Nutrition Centers function as neighborhood dining sites, offering older adults the chance to enjoy a healthy meal among peers. Located throughout the county, each Center has a roster of engaging activities meant to encourage social wellness and mental enrichment.



### In-Home Services:



Personal care and light homemaking services aim to keep seniors feeling their best. From running errands, to grocery shopping, to transportation to medical appointments, to personal hygiene assistance, COA can help older adults maintain their dignity in their own homes.

### Senior Activity Centers:

Senior Activity Centers create opportunities for older adults to enjoy engaging communal activities, from exercise classes, to card games, to educational presentations. Every activity is designed to promote social wellness.



For questions about services, please call us at 386.253.4700 ext. 225, visit us at [coavolusia.org](http://coavolusia.org), or use the QR code above!  
Council on Aging of Volusia County, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit organization serving seniors in Volusia County.

## Volunteer Spotlight Karen "Kit" Murphy

In the words of Alissa McCoy, Neighborhood Nutrition Center Coordinator, "What can I say, other than she is one of the sweetest people I know. From the moment she started two



years ago, she has truly been a Godsend. I couldn't have asked for a better volunteer for the Ormond Nutrition Center."

Not only does Karen assist with serving and cleaning every Wednesday and Thursday, but she also genuinely enjoys conversing with our clients and actively participates in presentations and activities during her time here. She always has a smile on her face, which brings comfort, happiness, and a sense of peace to everyone at the center.

Whatever needs to be done, Karen is the person who makes sure it gets done—and done properly. She is a kind, sweet soul, and anyone who crosses her path is fortunate to have her nearby. Alissa and the clients are incredibly appreciative of her presence and all that she does for the Ormond Beach Nutrition Center.

**COA**  
A NON-PROFIT SERVING VOLUSIA SENIORS

**We** **Need** **You**

**URGENT...  
VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED!**

*Meals on Wheels Drivers  
Needed*

at locations across  
Volusia County

If you are interested in giving back to your community,  
then you are at the right place!

More info, call us at: **COUNCIL ON AGING OF VOLUSIA COUNTY**  
**386-253-4700 x239**

Our Meals on Wheels programs across Volusia County are looking for caring community members to volunteer as drivers. If you're 18 or older with a valid Florida driver's license, good driving record, vehicle insurance, and can pass a Level 1 background check, we'd love to welcome you to the team. Bring your love for seniors and your desire to give back! Call Doreen Willett, our Community Engagement Liaison, at 386-253-4700 x239 to learn more. One call today can change a senior's life tomorrow.



# EHEAP

Emergency Home Energy Assistance  
for the Elderly Program

## About EHEAP

The Emergency Home Energy Assistance for the Elderly Program provides energy assistance to eligible households that have at least one person who is 60 or older.

Eligible energies include electricity, gas, and propane. All financial assistance is provided directly to the energy company. Funds may also be used for a deposit at a new residence.

Interested households may apply for EHEAP assistance at any Volusia County Community Assistance office, through a virtual phone appointment, or by submitting an online application.

Low-income senior citizen households experiencing financial hardship paying for their energy bills may apply.

## Funding Source

ElderSource, a private nonprofit agency, has been designated by the state as the Aging and Disability Resource Center for Northeast Florida. The maximum amount of assistance and number of benefits a household may receive is established by the funding source at the beginning of each fiscal year.

## Eligibility Requirements

- The applicant must be a Volusia County resident.
- At least one person in the household must be 60 or older.
- The applicant must provide a past-due or shut-off notice from their energy provider.

## Income Thresholds

# of Persons	Maximum Income
One	\$32,155
Two	\$42,049
Three	\$51,943
Four	\$61,837
Five	\$71,730
Six	\$81,624
Seven	\$81,624
Eight	\$83,479



EHEAP and LIHEAP funding is available. Individuals, or households that include an adult 60 or older, can call 386-239-7757 to schedule an appointment for assistance.

Regardless, everyone can submit an application for LIHEAP assistance online at [www.floridaliheap.com](http://www.floridaliheap.com).

# EHEAP Application Requirements

All documents listed below must be provided to receive services. Additional documents may be required to confirm eligibility. Only complete packets, which include verifications for all members of the household, will be accepted.

## VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS

### Home Energy Expense Statement (the bill)

- Must be the most recent statement at the current residence/address.
- One person's name on the account must live in the household.
- The statement must reflect a past-due amount, disconnection notice, or notice that utilities have been disconnected.

### Identification (may not be more than one-year expired)

- Adults (18+): Driver's license, State ID, or U.S. Passport
- Minors (17 and under): Driver's license or State ID, official birth certificate, immunization records (DH Form 680), or U.S. Passport. Identification is exempted if a newborn is 60 days or younger; however, guardian must show proof of infant's name and date of birth via hospital discharge paperwork.

### Social Security Number Verification

- Social Security card, income tax statement, or Social Security award letter. A Social Security number is not required if a newborn is 60 days or younger; however, guardian must show proof of infant's name and date of birth via hospital discharge paperwork.

### Proof of Volusia County Residency

- A current lease, mortgage statement, or property tax statement must be provided exhibiting a Volusia County address. The name of at least one adult household member must be on the document.
- The head of household must sign a document verifying all persons living in the household, including minors, not listed on either the lease or mortgage statement.

### Income Guidelines

- Proof of verifiable income for 30 days prior to application date.
- Total household income cannot exceed 60% of the current Florida State Median Income guideline for households with one to eight members.
- Bank statements will not be accepted.
- Adults (18+) who have not received any income within the previous 30-day period must complete and sign a "Self-Declaration of Income" form.

### Verification of Public Assistance (if applicable)

- Current award letter with benefit amount for SNAP, Section 8/HUD/THA, or other public assistance program if applicable.

### Official Applications

- An official EHEAP package will be completed during intake.

### Note about Utility Deposits

- The applicant must have already established an account number with the utility provider prior to submitting an application.

A household eligible for Crisis Assistance may apply multiple times within a program year (July 1 to June 15). However, a household may not receive LIHEAP and EHEAP during the same eligibility period. The maximum crisis benefit per program year is \$2,000.

**CALLING ALL BINGO PLAYERS ON THE WEST SIDE OF VOLUSIA COUNTY!**

**THE BINGO BASH IS BACK! FEBRUARY 7 AT OUR DELTONA NUTRITION & SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER!**

**CALL GWEN DONNELLY AT 386-253-4700 X 209 FOR YOUR TICKETS NOW!!!**



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# BINGO BASH 2026

**Doors Open: 9 AM  
Games Start: 10 AM**

**Saturday, February 7, 2026**

Deltona Nutrition & Senior Activity Center  
1640 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.  
Deltona, FL 32725

Enjoy our upcoming bingo events featuring prizes, community, and fun! Refreshments will be provided.

Each ticket includes: **one "3/18" Bingo card, a game sheet, a door prize ticket, a raffle ticket, and lunch!**

**\$25 entry ticket,  
or \$30 at the  
door**

**15 Games @ \$50  
2 Games @ \$150  
1 Game @ \$250**

***\$250 JACKPOT!***  
***BIGGER AND BETTER  
THAN LAST YEAR!***

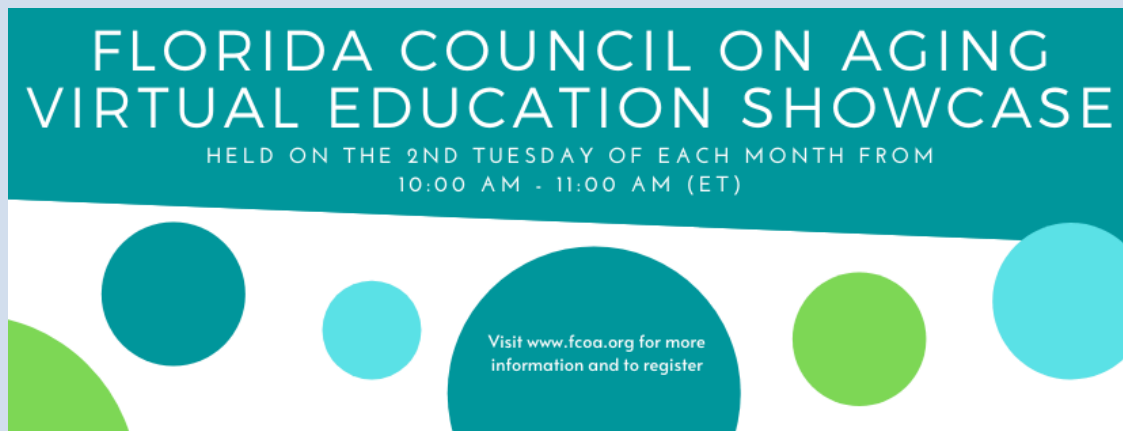
**To RSVP call Gwen at  
386.253.4700 ext. 209**



**Mark your Calendars!** 🎉

Another Bingo Bash is heading to the east side of Volusia County on Saturday, March 21, 2026, at the Ormond Beach Senior Activity Center (351 Andrews Street). More information will be shared soon—stay tuned!

FLORIDA COUNCIL ON  
**AGING**



**Register Today for the February 10th Webinar!**

**Registration closes Monday, February 9th at noon. The Zoom link will be sent on the afternoon of Monday, February 9th.**

Session: "More Seniors are Aging Solo"

Session Description: This presentation reviews the challenges of aging solo in the USA - and resources to help mitigate these challenges. We will consider the impact of living arrangements, legal resources, safety concerns, social connection and resilience for the senior who is aging solo.

Presented By: Rev. Carolyn Richar, BSN, RN, MDiv, CHPN

All registrants will receive a link to the recorded session after the webinar, and it will be active for 1 month. If you are not available on the day of the webinar, but want to watch the session, be sure to REGISTER!

**CONTINUING EDUCATION IS NOT AVAILABLE**

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

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Together We Can  
Make A Difference

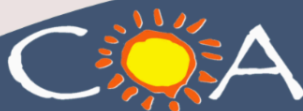
# “Aging with Dignity”

With our ever-increasing population of seniors, the demand for Council on Aging of Volusia County’s critical services is rising faster than ever. We must respond to ensure no one goes without the support and services they deserve.

Our “Aging with Dignity” campaign goes hand in hand with our services in many ways.

## We are accepting donations of the following consumable products for our clients:

- Depends, Poise Pads - incontinence products
- “Chucks Pads” (also known as chux pads) - absorbent, disposable underpads used to protect mattresses and bedding
- Disposable Wipes
- Protective Gloves - to change undergarments/bedding
- Protein Drinks - Ensure, Boost or equivalent types of drinks (protein drinks can be a convenient and nutritious way for seniors to meet their daily protein needs, which are typically higher in older adults)



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Consumable products are vital to the overall comfort and well-being of our many clients who are low-income seniors unable to afford these essential supplies. By providing these important items, we can ensure that seniors in our community have the supplies they need to maintain their health and dignity.



All donations can be dropped off at the main office:  
Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
420 Fentress Blvd.  
Daytona Beach, FL 32114  
386-253-4700

## SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

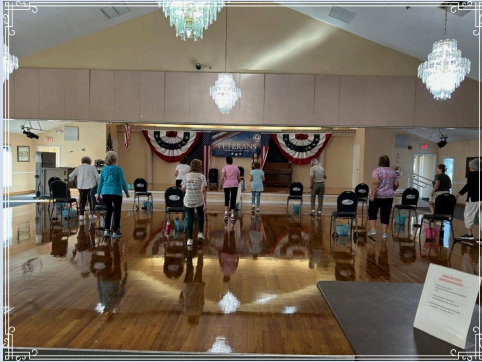
COA operates four senior activity centers—located in Ormond Beach, New Smyrna Beach, Orange City, and Deltona—each designed to serve our community in its own unique way. Seniors aged 60 (or better!) are invited to visit **FREE** up to three times, and then join for just \$50 for the first year and \$40 upon renewal. *This annual membership fee allows entry to ANY of our four senior centers in Volusia County - not just one.* That’s literally less than \$1 a week to be part of a welcoming community of friends just waiting to meet you!

With a wide variety of activities and special events, there’s truly something for everyone. So, what are you waiting for? Stop by any center Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and see what tickles your fancy!

All senior center monthly calendars can be viewed on our website by visiting [COA's Senior Activity Centers](#)



## ORMOND BEACH ACTIVITY CENTER



Pictured Above - "A Matter of Balance"  
class facilitated by North East Florida  
Area Health Education Center (top) and  
Silver Sneakers class instructed by Mary  
Evans (bottom)



Pictured Above - "Art Attack" class instructed by  
Veronica Egidio (top) and Ormond Beach Mayor  
Jason Leslie addressing our members before  
lighting the Christmas tree (bottom)



Blanca teaching exercise



The dominoes crew!

## DELTONA ACTIVITY CENTER



Friends and puzzle enthusiasts



Beautiful friends, dresses, headbands, smiles all while dancing to lovely music

### Annual Memberships are Now Available!

**First-time Members: \$50.00; Renewing Members: \$40.00**  
To learn more about becoming a member,  
call Gwen Donnelly at (386) 253-4700 x209



# Service Spotlight on

Here at the Council on Aging, our goal is to keep our senior population happy, healthy, and living with dignity in their own homes.

We're featuring our **Nutrition Centers!** Served every weekday at different sites throughout the county, Nutrition Centers offer the chance for seniors to enjoy a nutritious meal among friends, working to stop hunger while promoting social wellness. Each of the seven Nutrition Centers throughout the county provide activities in addition to a meal, from puzzles to chair yoga to bingo!

Join us in DeLand, Deltona, New Smyrna Beach, Orange City, Daytona Beach, Ormond Beach, or Port Orange. Please check times at your preferred Center. If you or a loved one are interested, please make a reservation one week in advance by calling your preferred location. Numbers available at [www.coavolusia.org/senior-centers-and-dining-sites-menu](http://www.coavolusia.org/senior-centers-and-dining-sites-menu).



A NON-PROFIT SERVING VOLUSIA SENIORS



Find more Information at [coavolusia.org](http://coavolusia.org)

COA offers a wide range of services to Volusia County seniors—from vibrant Senior Center activities, meal delivery, and reassurance phone calls to In-Home care, Caregiver Respite Support, and Guardianship. Services are either grant- or

donation-funded, which means they are provided at no cost or at a low cost to those who qualify, or they can be provided on a private-pay basis.



**JOIN THE  
COUNCIL ON AGING  
LIVING LEGACY SOCIETY**

**Bequests:  
Wills & Trusts**  
By designating a portion of your estate to COA, you create a gift that costs nothing today but changes lives tomorrow

**Beneficiary Designations**  
Naming COA as a beneficiary of your retirement plan, life insurance policy, or bank account is a simple way to create a legacy gift without altering your will.

**Other Planned Gifts**  
Charitable gift annuities, donor advised funds, retirement assets, and more.

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LIVING LEGACY SOCIETY

**REFLECT  
YOUR VALUES  
IN YOUR WILL**

**Your will is your legacy. It determines how you will be remembered and can be designed to reflect what you value most.**

By including Council on Aging of Volusia County, Inc. in your estate plans, you ensure that older adults in our community continue to receive meals, caregiving, social activities, and the dignity they deserve for generations to come.

**— THE LEGACY OF COA —**

OPERATING SINCE: <b>1967</b>	SENIORS SERVED THIS YEAR: <b>2,000+</b>	MEALS PROVIDED ANNUALLY: <b>250,000</b>
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 For more information on leaving a legacy gift to Council on Aging of Volusia County, Inc., contact Eveline Kraljic, Co-Executive Director, at [ekraljic@coavolusia.org](mailto:ekraljic@coavolusia.org) or visit [www.coavolusia.org](http://www.coavolusia.org)  
420 Fentress Blvd., Daytona Beach, FL 32114 | 386.253.4700, ext. 210

Thank You for supporting COA

## How Your Gift Will Support Council on Aging of Volusia County

All gifts to COA will help seniors continue to live with dignity in their own homes. Because of YOU, we're able to serve over 2,000 seniors annually throughout Volusia County, providing in-home care, meal delivery, rides to medical appointments, social wellness activities, and more!

### Matching Gifts

Did you know that more than 65% of Fortune 500 companies offer matching gift programs? But just because you don't work for a Fortune 500 company doesn't mean you shouldn't check whether your

donation is eligible. Visit [Charity Navigator](#) or [BestBuddies](#), and see if your company participates.

Please note that these sites are not hosted by Council on Aging and are public resources.  
If you have any questions about your donation, please reach out to us at [sduguay@coavolusia.org](mailto:sduguay@coavolusia.org)!



**COA**  
A SUNSHINE STATE VOLUNTEER SERVICE  
Administrative Offices

<b>COUNCIL ON AGING OF VOLUSIA COUNTY</b>	<b>420 FENTRESS BLVD. DAYTONA BEACH, FL 32114-1208</b>
<b><a href="http://www.coavolusia.org">www.coavolusia.org</a></b>	<b>(386) 253-4700</b>



FOLLOW US ON



A UNITED WAY AGENCY  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.COAVOLUSIA.ORG](http://WWW.COAVOLUSIA.ORG)  
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MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE 1-800-HELP-FLA OR ONLINE AT [WWW.FLORIDAConsumerHELP.COM](http://WWW.FLORIDAConsumerHELP.COM). REGISTRATION DOES  
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