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Pension Action Center

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Pension Action Center

Gerontology Institute

John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies

Summary

The Pension Action Center (PAC) strives to improve retirees' and workers' standard of living in retirement through individual case advocacy; referrals to appropriate programs and professionals; and issue analysis and reform of public policy. The center, which is part of the Gerontology Institute at UMass Boston, focuses on the experience of participants in retirement plans throughout its work.

The PAC is a one-of-a-kind organization in New England that touches the lives of thousands of people.

Goals and Objectives



- To increase retiree's knowledge of and access to retirement benefits
- To identify trends affecting plan participants
- To propose solutions to problems faced by participants
- To work with policy makers and stake holders to implement improvements in our retirement income systems

Approaches and Methods



The New England Pension Assistance Project and the **Illinois Pension Assistance Project**, the individual case advocacy arms of the PAC:

- provide comprehensive assistance on private or public pension issues at no cost
- unravel complex pension plan documents and calculate benefit amounts
- search for lost pensions

Policy Work

The Pension Action Center's pension assistance work helps to inform the center's issue analysis and policy reform agenda.

Referral Service

The National Pension Lawyers Network (NPLN) is made up of pension attorneys across the country. This referral service is an important program of the Pension Action Center, because many pension plan participants have difficulty securing legal counsel.

Results/Impact

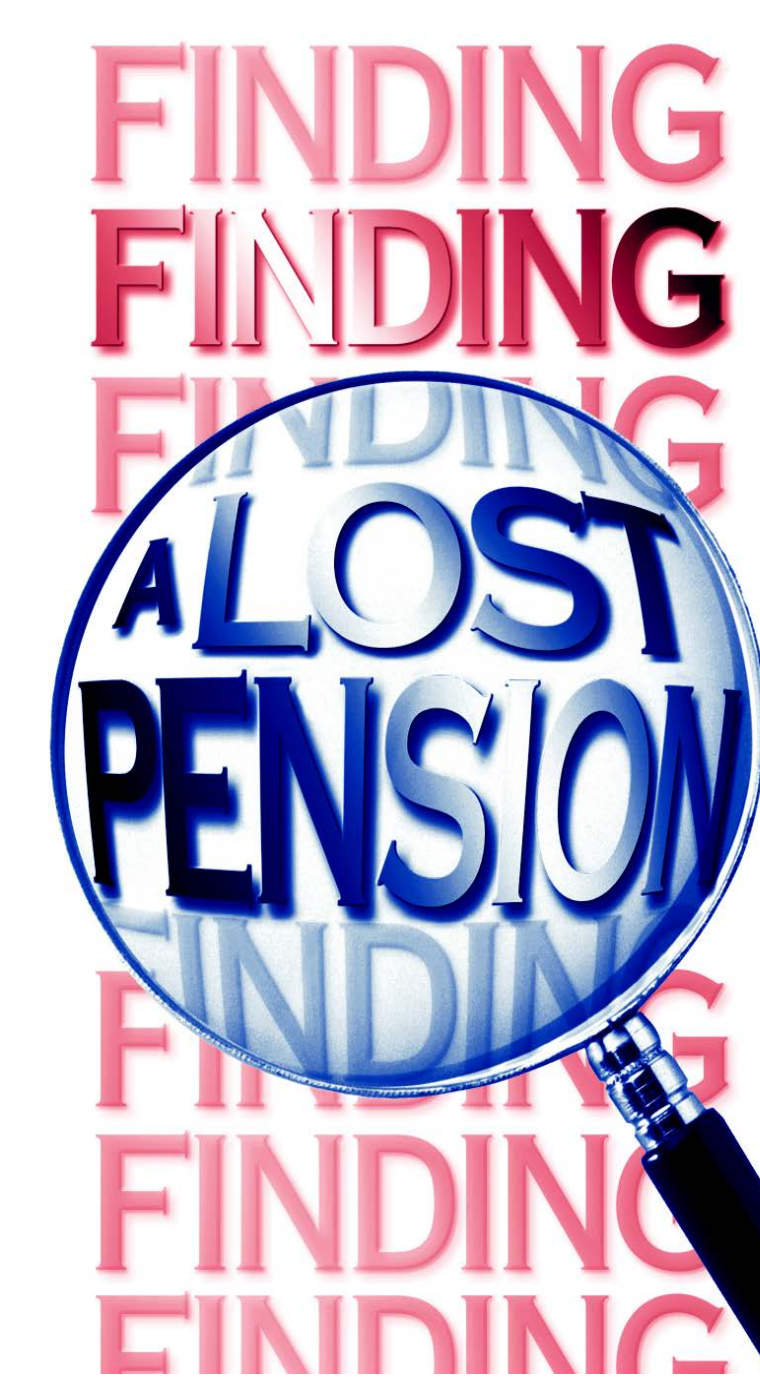
Individuals Assisted

Through its pension assistance projects, the center has:

- Helped more than **6,400** workers, retirees, and their families.
- Recovered over **\$42 million** in pension benefits that were earned but, for whatever reason, were not paid

| Year | Recoveries |
|------|-------------|
| 2008 | \$4,350,883 |
| 2009 | \$1,385,311 |
| 2010 | \$1,833,846 |
| 2011 | \$2,197,888 |
| 2012 | \$3,061,137 |

Finding a Lost Pension Booklet



In collaboration with the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, the Pension Action Center authored a widely distributed self-help guide for individuals, "Finding a Lost Pension".

Partnerships

- Aging services network
- Legal service providers
- MA Secretary of State
- Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC)
- Pension Rights Center
- Retirement Research Foundation
- U.S. Administration on Aging
- U.S. Department of Labor

Conclusion

Pension counseling in the PAC has served as a model for the Administration on Aging as it has expanded this service nationally.

The direct services of the center also provide a basis for policy analysis, identifying issues that confront participants in pension plans such as the lost pension problem, adequacy of public pensions in Massachusetts, and usefulness of required notices under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA).

For More Information

Visit our website at:
www.umb.edu/pensionaction