

# HRA offers services for Polish speakers

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NEW BRITAIN — The Human Resources Agency offers outreach and victim advocacy to Polish-speaking residents who need help understanding government documents, signing up for services or dealing with the aftermath of a crime.

"It's invaluable," said Helen Supinskas, the Polish victim advocate who helps people who helps Polish speaking-people navigate the legal system and sign up for counseling. "Our Polish outreach is also invaluable.

We have a very strong Polish population and we can help them sign up for food stamps, temporary financial assistance and health care if they are having a problem."

"A lot of our clients are low income and they can read a little in English but they need

help understanding what government documents mean," she said. "Sometimes they have a letter from the government and they show up worried and asking if I can read it so they know what is happening."

In some cases, Supinskas can get crime victims help with paying for counseling by aiding them in signing up to receive money through a state victim compensation fund.

She can also read police reports and help people seeking restraining orders.

The outreach program helps low-income residents access services such as food stamps, Husky medical insurance and temporary financial assistance.

Supinskas' office works closely with the state Department of

Social Services and can track clients to see what progress has been made in obtaining help. "We can read correspondence and translate and help with immigration, obtaining a green card or citizenship," she said. "If a person is low income, we can help them apply for a fee waiver."

They can also help people with filling out New Britain Housing Authority applications and if they need assistance at the court house, they can refer residents to a Polish speaking employee at the court information center which provides forms for divorce and other legal proceedings.

"There are a lot of resources that Polish residents don't know about," Supinskas said. "The outreach program can assess their needs whether they are financial

or medical. Undocumented residents can get help if they have to go to the hospital and don't have insurance, we can work with them to get assistance because the bills can be devastating."

Polish-speaking residents who need help are encouraged to call first before they come in, she said. Often people will receive correspondence they don't understand and just show up. The walk-ins can be dealt with but they may have to wait. "If a person calls first, we can at least have an idea of when we can take them," Supinskas said.

Polish-speaking residents who are seeking help as the victim of a crime, can call (860) 612-1781. Polish-speaking residents who need outreach services can call (860) 612-1784.