



The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program: Advocates for Residents

The **Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP)** advocates for residents of nursing facilities, residential care communities, and other similar adult care facilities. Every state, D.C., Guam, and Puerto Rico is required to have an LTCOP that addresses complaints and advocates for improvements in the long-term care system. Each state has an Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman who directs the program statewide. **State Ombudsmen and their designated representatives** work to resolve problems individual residents face and effect change at the local, state, and national levels to improve quality of care. Staff and volunteers are trained and designated by State Ombudsmen as representatives to directly serve residents.

What Do Ombudsmen Representatives Do?

Representatives work with, and on behalf of, residents with their consent and direction. You may meet an ombudsman when you arrive at the facility for a call.

Ombudsman program representatives, with consent of the resident or their representative, will investigate any type of complaint including allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. With resident permission, the Ombudsman program will refer complaints or problems to other agencies or programs.

If a resident is not able to give informed consent and does not have a representative or trusted person to act on their behalf, the Ombudsman program representative will confer with the State Ombudsman to discuss how best to handle the concern.

In addition to addressing individual complaints, the Ombudsman program participates in systems advocacy, such as engaging in public policy work by recommending changes to the long-term care system to benefit residents.

The LTCOP promotes the development of citizen organizations and provides technical support for the development of resident and family councils to protect the well-being and rights of residents.

How Can Ombudsmen Representatives Be A Resource to First Responders?

- Provide information and assistance regarding long-term care facilities and residents' rights.
- Explain the distinct types of long-term care facilities in your state.
- Inform you of the reporting agencies which receive reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Serve as an advocate for residents in long-term care facilities when you have concerns about their care or well-being.
- Assist you in resolving informed consent issues on scene.
- Accept referrals by first responders on behalf of residents living in long-term care facilities.

Ombudsman Program Distinctions

All Ombudsman program documentation, case records, investigation interviews, etc. are confidential and will not be disclosed without the consent of the resident. This is critical because the ombudsman program should not be considered a source of documentation, case records, etc. for your report or investigation.

Ombudsman program records requested by subpoena, lawyers, insurance companies, sister agencies, or programs are confidential and will not be disclosed without the consent of the resident. Even with consent of the resident to share documentation, identifying names of third parties, other residents, etc., will be redacted.

Ombudsman representatives are not mandatory reporters of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Representatives may not make referrals to Adult Protective Services, law enforcement, licensure and certification agency, etc., without the resident's permission.

Tip

If EMS needs law enforcement to respond to a situation, they can contact their own dispatch by radio or onboard systems, and dispatch will coordinate directly with the police. Some EMS agencies also use direct phone numbers or priority lines to request law enforcement without calling 911.



RESOURCES

Contact Information for State Long-Term Care Ombudsman programs: theconsumervoice.org/get-help

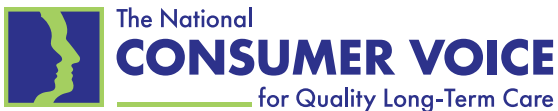
Administration for Community Living operates and funds the LTCO program in accordance with the federal Older American Act:

acl.gov/programs/Protecting-Rights-and-Preventing-Abuse/Long-term-Care-Ombudsman-Program

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, (Consumer Voice):

theconsumervoice.org/consumer-center

Scan the QR code to watch the accompanying video.



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