



Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

States' Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman programs work to resolve problems related to the health, safety, welfare and rights of individuals who live in long-term care facilities (i.e. nursing homes, board and care, assisted living and other residential care communities). LTC Ombudsman programs promote policies and consumer protections to improve long-term services and supports (LTSS) at facility, local, state and national levels.

Begun in 1972 as a demonstration program, the LTC Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) today exists in all states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam, under the authorization of the [Older Americans Act](#). Each state has an Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, headed by a full-time state LTC Ombudsman. Thousands of designated local staff and volunteers work in hundreds of communities throughout the country as part of the statewide ombudsman programs, assisting residents and their families and providing a voice for those unable to speak for themselves.

The statewide programs are federally funded under Titles [III](#) and [VII](#) of the Act and other federal, state and local sources. The AoA-funded [National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center](#), operated

by the National Consumers' Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (or, Consumer Voice), in conjunction with the National Association of States Agencies on Aging United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD), provides training and TA to state and local ombudsmen.

The LTCOP Process Evaluation

In 2015, ACL contracted with NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) to conduct an evaluation to document the value of the LTCOP for individuals living in LTC facilities, their families and for other key stakeholders. The current evaluation focusses on program processes, such as funding, staffing, policies and procedures at the Federal, State and local levels. As part of the evaluation NORC will also draft a paper on whether and how the LTCOP is addressing and affecting the changing landscape of Long Term Supports and Services (LTSS). Questions to be answered include:

1. What are defining changes of the LTSS landscape currently and in the future?
2. How is the LTCOP preparing for, addressing/struggling with these changes?
3. What are the policy, legal, and advocacy implications of these changes and the ways that the LTCOP is adapting or not adapting?

LTCOP 2015 Data

LTC Ombudsman programs provide a person-centered alternative dispute resolution service, working with (or on behalf of) long-term care facility residents to resolve complaints. Program data for FY 2015 indicate that long-term care ombudsman services to residents were provided by 1,300.76 full-time equivalent staff and 7,734 volunteers, trained and designated to investigate and resolve complaints.

The Ombudsman program:

- Worked to resolve 199,238 complaints, initiated by residents, their families, and other concerned individuals
- Resolved or partially resolved 74% of all complaints to the satisfaction of the resident or complainant

The five most frequent nursing facility complaints handled by Ombudsman programs were:

- Improper eviction or inadequate discharge/planning;
- Unanswered requests for assistance;
- Lack of respect for residents, poor staff attitudes;

- Administration and organization of medications; and
- Quality of life, specifically resident/roommate conflict.

The five most frequent complaints in board and care, assisted living, and other residential care communities handled by Ombudsman programs were:

- Administration/organization of medications;
- Quality, quantity, variation and choice of food;
- Improper eviction or inadequate discharge/planning;
- Lack of respect for residents, poor staff attitudes; and
- Building or equipment in disrepair or hazardous.

The Ombudsman program also:

- Provided 398,057 instances of information and assistance to individuals;
- Visited 67% of all nursing homes and 27% of all board and care, assisted living and similar homes at least quarterly;
- Conducted 5,054 training sessions in facilities on such topics as residents' rights;
- Provided 122,213 instances of information and assistance to LCT facility staff and
- Participated in 22,281 resident and 2,073 family council meetings.

For more information

LTCOP/ACL

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