

Certified Volunteer Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) Program (VOP)

The Volunteer LTCO will assist the Office of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman in carrying out the duties described in the Older Americans Act. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and will be required to pass criminal history and abuse registry checks conducted by the State prior to acceptance into the VOP. Volunteers will be assigned to facilities and monitored by the VOP Coordinator.

The Volunteer LTCO:

- Spends a minimum of three hours per month in unannounced and varied visits to residents on any day of the week.
- Observes, listens, and interacts with persons living in the facility and identifies concerns.
- Aids and empowers residents in resolving concerns and complaints.
- Observes general conditions of the facility and keeps a log of observations.
- Refers all concerns, questions, or unresolved complaints to the VOP Program Coordinator.
- Seeks to establish a positive working relationship with facility staff.
- Conducts initial inquiries regarding complaints made to the Office.
- Provides follow-up visits on cases investigated by Local Long-Term Care Ombudsman and monitors facility progress.
- Attends Resident and Family Council meetings at the request of council members.
- Provides general information to residents and families.

The Volunteer LTCO DOES NOT:

- Volunteer for the facility or participate in the facility's social activity with residents.
- Establish personal friendships with residents that will affect their advocacy role. While all volunteer LTCO will be *friendly*, their relationship with residents is through advocacy. The relationship is deliberately planned, objective, purposeful, and controlled.
- Act as a Local Long-Term Care Ombudsman.
- Receive a paycheck or accept gifts from families, residents, or facility staff. This includes free meals on a routine basis.
- Discuss issues of confidentiality.
- Disclose issues or resident concerns to administrators or facility staff, unless resident permission has been given.
- Interpret medical, health, or financial information for residents.
- Become involved with or make medical, legal, or financial recommendations.
- Perform any type of hands-on personal care, activity, or treatment for residents, including: offering a resident a drink/snack, transferring them from one location to another (e.g., from bed to chair).
- Have regulatory authority, but will be encouraged to interact with DIA surveyors.
- Volunteer in any capacity other than a Volunteer Ombudsman at assigned facility, or as an Ombudsman for any facility other than that assigned by the VOP.

Training provided by the Volunteer Ombudsman Program is required for certification, including a combination of the following:

- Eight hours of classroom training
- Pre and post phone interviews
- Self-study
- Site orientation