

## *Is this the volunteer experience for you?*



Office of the State  
Long Term Care  
Ombudsman



Do you have an interest in the quality of life for those living in nursing homes and adult care facilities?

You can help by becoming a certified Ombudsman!

### Who is a Certified Ombudsman?

Certified Ombudsmen are over 18 years of age, have passed a background check, and can volunteer at least 2-6 hours per week on a flexible schedule. They may be employed or retired, but cannot have a conflict of interest with any long-term care facility. By protecting the rights, dignity, and safety of residents in nursing homes, adult care homes, and assisted living facilities, Ombudsmen help improve quality of life issues for residents. Ombudsmen have many different professional and personal backgrounds, but the one thing they share is their passion for improving quality of care and advocating for the rights of the residents they serve.

### What do Ombudsmen do?

**Certified Ombudsman Volunteers** are advocates who visit the residents of long-term care facilities and explore complaints or concerns on their behalf, with residents' permission. They work independently to investigate these complaints and work with the staff to resolve problems, advocating from the residents' point of view.

Ombudsman Volunteers raise program awareness and educate others about the important role of being an Ombudsman. After completing a thorough training which includes facility tours, written and verbal monthly documentation requirements, and shadowing experiences, volunteers are assigned to facilities and visit with the residents on a regular basis. Certified Ombudsmen monitor resident care by talking to residents, documenting complaints, and resolving residents' issues. They also educate residents, families, and facility staff about resident rights. Abuse and neglect cases are referred to other agencies for resolution. ***All Ombudsman services are free and confidential to the residents we serve.***

## Where does an Ombudsman volunteer?

After training, Ombudsmen and their Coordinator work together to choose from available facilities close to where they live, work, or visit. We make every effort to place Ombudsman volunteers in convenient facilities and make sure they are comfortable with their placements. In-service trainings are typically held once a month and locations may vary based on the training provided.

## When do Ombudsmen volunteer?

Certified Ombudsmen work independently with support from paid staff Coordinators. They make their own schedules for visiting their assigned facilities. Volunteers visit residents, make follow-up phone calls, attend four in-service trainings per year, complete documentation and reports, and travel to/from facilities. There may be times when a volunteer spends more time on a particular case or resident, but there is flexibility with this volunteer experience also. You can set your own schedule although we ask that volunteers not to make visits at the same time or on the same day of the week if possible. Some volunteers donate much more time to the program, but the average is 3-6 hours a week. Volunteers can request a leave of absence for vacations, illness or other personal matters. You may need to retrain depending on the length of time away as a volunteer.

## What benefits are there for volunteers?

Volunteers enjoy being able to make a direct impact on the quality of long-term care in their community, as well as being able to learn and navigate the systems. They have a chance to use or learn new skills in advocacy, public speaking, and conflict resolution. Training and continuing support is available monthly and at annual events. Mileage reimbursement for traveling is also something the program offers. Most of all, volunteers meet new people, keep active and find the work rewarding.