

## **Pierce County, Washington Ombudsman Program**

### **Screening and Selection process for volunteer ombudsmen**

1. At all presentations have brochure and interest postcard available for any interested community member. This includes presentations to family councils, service organizations and AARP local groups
2. Stay in contact with state level AARP office for opportunity to participate in their direct mailing project for the ombudsman program.
3. For all interested replies or contacts, send out application packet which includes:
  - a cover letter describing the certification process and timelines,
  - a brief description of the program (printed in The Journal, April-May, 2001),
  - a job description and
  - application form to become a certified long term care ombudsman.
4. Potential Volunteer returns completed application form. If any of the “conflict of interest” questions are completed indicating a conflict of interest, the Volunteer Coordinator calls to clarify and indicate if the potential volunteer can continue in the process.
5. Before the orientation session, a letter with a background check form goes to all who have completed the application and have expressed interest in attending the orientation. This letter tells them of the “process” details such as what happens in the orientation, there will be an interview, etc. The first “weeding out” occurs at this stage. There may be up to 50% who do not attend the orientation after submitting their application (illness, vacation, work schedule, etc).
6. At the orientation, the following occurs:
  - Break into dyads, share information about who each of the volunteers is, the skills and experience they bring and why they want to be an ombudsman. Each partner introduces each other. The Regional Ombudsman and Volunteer Coordinator introduce each other.
  - Video describing the ombudsman program (introduced by Dr. Joyce Berry)
  - The Regional Ombudsman talks about the program expectations including 4 hours per week of time visiting facility, attending at least 8 meetings/year and turning in required paper work on time.
  - Review completing the mileage reimbursement form.
  - Answering questions.
  - “Walk the line” between choice and safety. Volunteers are asked to position themselves along an imaginary line with safety (or we need to take care of you/to keep you safe) at one end and resident choice at the other. At the end of the exercise, volunteers are reminded that LTC Ombudsmen advocate for what the resident wants whether we agree with it or not. (However, later in the training it is pointed out that one resident doesn’t have any more rights than another.)

- The attendees sign up for individual interview appointments.
7. The interviews are scheduled during the week after the orientation and the first day of certification. They are with the Regional LTC Ombudsman and a member of the Advisory Council (currently the chair). The purposes of the interviews are:
- To evaluate the fit between the volunteer and the ombudsman program
  - What problem solving skills does the volunteer have? What is their background in long term care?
  - How well does the volunteer listen and then respond verbally?
  - How flexible is the volunteer concerning what the resident wants compared to what might “be good for” the resident?
  - Is there an agenda that the potential volunteer is bringing with them such as an opportunity to sell their services or product; getting back at nursing homes because “of how they treated mom?”
  - Discuss any concerns the potential volunteer might have.
  - If the interviewers judge the volunteer as meeting the requirements of the program—no conflicts, appropriate verbal skills, flexible, and valuing residents and resident choice—the candidate is given the training manual, a copy of Pierce County’s annotated resident rights law and a copy of the agenda.

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