**CHAPTER 3**

**Office Support for Ombudsmen**

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**VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

1. ***VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES***

***(Rev. 9/23/14)***

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program relies on volunteers to conduct the Program’s advocacy work in long-term care facilities. As such, ombudsmen who join the Program are not “typical volunteers.” They are responsible for assessing long-term care facilities, visiting with residents, and investigating complaints that may have a significant range of severity, resulting in different levels of outcome. Ombudsmen may face barriers in advocating for residents that are personally trying and ombudsmen may not always be able to achieve a positive resolution for the resident. District staff should prepare ombudsmen for these possible challenges. Clarifying the role of the volunteer should begin during the interview process. Failure to clarify the role of the ombudsman may cause the DOM to recommend an individual for membership that is not appropriate for the district council. Review the Membership section of Chapter 3 for additional information on the ombudsman’s roles and responsibilities and the interviewing process.

It is important to know your ombudsmen. In the same way that a resident becomes trusting of the ombudsman, the ombudsman should become trusting of the DOM. A mutual respect and trust should be developed. Ways to accomplish this relationship may include use of the council meeting as a motivational venue, recognizing volunteers on a regular basis for their achievements, acknowledging special events or accomplishments of ombudsmen that are outside of their Program involvement, or providing direct assistance with fieldwork.

When difficult conversations must take place between the DOM and a volunteer, it is important that the DOM maintain a respectful tone with the ombudsman. This may require a special “finesse” and does involve a different set of management skills than those associated with managing paid staff. At any point, a volunteer can elect to resign from the Program. Maintaining a relationship that encourages volunteer retention is essential.

A strong volunteer manager will be able to keep their volunteers motivated by being an effective communicator, organizer, and logistician while maintaining patience and compassion. Part of being a successful DOM and maintaining a strong council is ensuring the ombudsmen are trained and have the tools necessary before they are critiqued, not critiqued before they are trained.

**MEMBERSHIP**

1. ***MEMBERSHIP***

***(Rev. 9/23/14)***

For standardized Membership information and forms, see the Program Intranet.

1. **District** **Council(s)**

The district council(s) is composed of members who reside within the local district. Each council should strive to have several professionals on the council: physicians, pharmacists, nurses, social workers, dietitians, and attorneys. Other council positions are nursing home residents or representative consumer advocates for nursing home residents and assisted living residents, adult family care home residents or consumer advocates for long-term care facility residents. There are no term limits for district council ombudsmen. The council meets once a month.

1. **Recruitment**

For standardized Program recruitment information and forms, see the Program Intranet. Available items relevant to recruitment include:

The Program has a full-time Statewide Recruitment Manager that will assist the DOM in identifying recruitment strategies specific to the local district. The DOM still maintains responsibility for recruiting new ombudsman members for their respective district. An available Recruitment Handbook has also been created for use. Suggested methods of attracting new volunteer ombudsmen include:

* Submission of the approved monthly PSA for recruitment to local newspapers.
* Submission of additional articles to the media. These additional articles may relate to special events for the district council or other approved topics. These should be routed to the Program’s Communications Director for review prior to submission.
* Media exposure (television, radio, newspaper, etc.) describing the work of the Program. Contact should be made with the Communication Director to collect talking points and other relevant items as appropriate.
* Speaking engagements before civic, church, and fraternal organizations.
* Placing recruitment brochures or flyers in public places like libraries and senior centers.
* Communication with other organizations interested in the well-being of seniors such as AARP and local Retired and Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVP).
* One Plus One (one ombudsman recruiting at least one other person to become an ombudsman).

**MEMBERSHIP**

1. **Initial Contact & Screening**

For standardized Program Initial Contact & Screening information and forms, see the Program Intranet. Available items relevant to initial contact and screening include:

* Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Volunteer Application Packet

A potential new member may be referred to the local office by the Recruitment team. Once an application has been received by the local office, the DOM is responsible for initiating the application process pursuant to the volunteer membership guidelines found on the intranet.

For applicants who contact the local office directly, the DOM will describe the Program and determine if there are any impediments to membership, such as a conflict of interest, which is reviewed annually. The DOM may use the sample talking points for new recruits (found in Appendix B), but the information will need to be personalized for the specific district. If requested, the application packet will be sent to the potential new member. The DOM should request contact information from the potential new member to include their phone number. If the completed application is not returned within 2 to 3 weeks, a follow-up call should be made to the applicant by office staff or the district council’s Publicity/Recruitment workgroup chair.

Once the membership application is returned to the district office, an interview time will be set up with the DOM. The DOM should remind the applicant to bring a résumé including both professional and volunteer work for submission with the application. The DOM may request input or participation by the council chair or other council leadership in the interview process of new potential ombudsmen. Input from volunteer council members may be considered, but the decision to accept or reject a potential member rests with the DOM.

Once accepted by the DOM (following the interview), applicant references will be checked before the approved application packet is submitted to the Membership Coordinator at

Central Office (a minimum of three references must be completed). A file should be created at the local office for both accepted and declined applicants.

1. **Applicant Interview**

For standardized program applicant interview information and forms, see program Intranet. Available items relevant to applicant interview include:

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* [Ombudsman Interview Questions](file:///C%3A/Documents%20and%20Settings/user/Desktop/DOMOM/Chapter%203/District%20Office%20Operations%20Manual/The%20NEW%20DOOM/Section%202%20-%20Office%20Support%20for%20Ombudsmen/Appendix%20and%20Intranet%20Support/Intranet/Ombudsman%20Interview%20Questions.pdf)
* [Attestation of Good Moral Character](file:///C%3A/Documents%20and%20Settings/user/Desktop/DOMOM/Chapter%203/District%20Office%20Operations%20Manual/The%20NEW%20DOOM/Section%202%20-%20Office%20Support%20for%20Ombudsmen/Appendix%20and%20Intranet%20Support/Intranet/Attestation%20of%20Good%20Moral%20Character.pdf)
* [Statements of Agreement](file:///C%3A/Documents%20and%20Settings/user/Desktop/DOMOM/Chapter%203/District%20Office%20Operations%20Manual/The%20NEW%20DOOM/Section%202%20-%20Office%20Support%20for%20Ombudsmen/Appendix%20and%20Intranet%20Support/Intranet/Statements%20of%20Agreement.pdf)
* Public Information Release Form
* Social Security Statement
* Background Screening Appointment Directions
* Background Screening Appointment Form (LTCOP)
* [Applicant Denial Notification Letter](file:///C%3A/Documents%20and%20Settings/user/Desktop/DOMOM/Chapter%203/District%20Office%20Operations%20Manual/The%20NEW%20DOOM/Section%202%20-%20Office%20Support%20for%20Ombudsmen/Appendix%20and%20Intranet%20Support/Intranet/Applicant%20Denial%20Notification%20Letter.doc)

The DOM will conduct the interview using the standard interview questions. The DOM will describe the program including ombudsman requirements and district goals. The applicant should be encouraged to ask questions related to the program.

At the conclusion of the interview, the DOM will determine the applicant’s acceptance or non-acceptance. The DOM makes the final determination of acceptance or non-acceptance, but the ROM for the district can also be called upon for assistance in this decision.

If the applicant is declined, a denial notification letter should be sent to the applicant by the DOM. A sample letter is available in Appendix B. If the applicant is accepted, the DOM should complete the initial paperwork with the applicant, as listed on the Program Intranet. The DOM should also schedule an appointment for fingerprinting, ensure the completion of the online W-9 with the applicant, provide the online certification training links, and input the applicant’s information in the database. The recommendation for appointment, including all relevant paperwork, should be forwarded to the Membership Coordinator at the Headquarters office. Classroom and field training plans may be coordinated for the new member to become certified. An applicant cannot enter the field, even with the DOM or a certified ombudsman, until their background screen has come back with no areas of concern. The background screening status letter sent by Central Office will identify the activities in which the applicant can participate.

For more information, review the Training section.

1. **Ombudsman** **Retention** **and** **Recognition**

Retention of volunteers is essential in maintaining a stable council with experience to advocate for residents effectively and to train new ombudsmen. Recognition of ombudsmen and successful volunteer management strategies can assist with retention of

**MEMBERSHIP**

volunteers. Keep in mind that recognition does not always have to be a public event and may be conducted on an individual basis.

Every year, each district council may select their Ombudsman of the Year at the February monthly council meeting. Data should be gathered by office staff with the assistance of district council leadership and prepared per the Ombudsman of the Year criteria and procedures. The State Ombudsman will recognize local Ombudsmen of the Year for their contributions to the Program. Each Ombudsman of the Year will be considered for the Excellence in Advocacy award given by the State Council.

District opportunities for ombudsman recognition include:

* Recognition of individual special achievement at monthly meeting (certificates can be made).
* Nomination and recognition as the statewide “Ombudsman of the Month,” based on nominations received from peer ombudsmen or Program staff.
* Congratulations on certification at monthly meeting.

6. **Ombudsman** **Resignation** **and** **De-Certification**

At any point, an ombudsman may elect to no longer continue with the Program. The ombudsman should notify the DOM of their intent to resign from the local council. The DOM should determine if there is a way to keep the ombudsman as an active part of the local council, after considering the possibility of granting a leave of absence to the ombudsman or a reduced work load. If the decision is for the ombudsman to resign despite flexibility provided, the DOM should determine if the ombudsman has any outstanding cases, assessments or returned quality assurance items that need to be submitted to the office. The ombudsman should submit a letter of resignation to the DOM for forwarding to the Program’s Membership coordinator. The DOM may then de-active the ombudsman from the database by marking inactive, entering an exit date and reason for resignation. The members name and contact information should be forwarded to the Recruitment Manager for an exit survey.

All Ombudsmen who leave the LTCOP, must return their LTCOP identification card, any case information they possess, and must receive a letter from the Membership Coordinator reminding them of their obligations, confidentiality, and HIPPA.

Additionally, an ombudsman may stop being an active participant of the local council. This lack of activity may include not communicating with the local office, not being available for

**MEMBERSHIP**

new assignments, not attending monthly council meetings, etc. If the DOM determines that the ombudsman is no longer active, the DOM should determine what interest the ombudsman has to remain on the local council by contacting the ombudsman. If attempts to contact are not successful, the DOM may request the ombudsman be de-designated by sending a request to their ROM with dates of contact attempts made. If approved, the ROM will forward this request to the Deputy State Ombudsman for Legal Affairs and State Ombudsman. Once the final request is passed along to the State Ombudsman and approved, the ombudsman can be deactivated in the database and is no longer considered a part of the local council.

Ombudsmen who elect not to continue with membership or who are de-designated should be reminded to return all Program materials (manuals, shirts, ID badge, etc.) to the district office as soon as practicable. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to return information.

Any standardized forms for Membership may be found on the Program’s intranet website.

**De-Certification of Ombudsman process**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Section 712(a) (5) of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended in 2006, specifies that the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is solely responsible for the designation and de-designation of Ombudsmen.

PURPOSE

The State Ombudsman’s consideration to de-certify an ombudsman, except for egregious conduct and other situations as described in this procedure.

SCOPE

The de-certification process applies to all ombudsmen.

RECOMMENDING DE-CERTIFICATIION

* Development of a conflict of interest
* Inappropriate conduct
* Unresponsiveness
* Failure to perform Ombudsman duties

**MEMBERSHIP**

* Violations of the Code of Ethics, program policies, or other signed statements of agreements.
* Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information

DE-CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The following outlines the de-certification process, but not limited too.

1. REQUEST FOR DE-CERTIFICATION

When a district manager considers the de-certification process of an ombudsman, he/she must contact the ombudsman and should discuss the reason(s) for the request. The Ombudsman should be given the opportunity to comment orally or in written format to the district manager.

1. DISTRICT MANAGER DECISION

If the district manager makes the determination that de-certification is suggested, he/she must submit the request with all supporting documentation to the regional ombudsman manager.

1. REGIONAL MANAGER REVIEW

If the regional manager determines that the request for de-certification has merit, he/she must submit the request and supporting documentation to the State Ombudsman and Deputy of Legal Affairs

1. STATE OMBUDSMAN AND FINAL DECISION

The State Ombudsman shall review the request for de-certification, the written comments submitted by the ombudsman (if any) and render a decision. The State Ombudsman’s decision is final.

**MEETINGS**

1. ***MEETINGS***

***(Rev. 11/25/14)***

There are two basic types of meetings in which ombudsmen are expected to participate; monthly council meetings, and for state representatives, the State Council meetings. Meetings serve important functions: the meetings satisfy needs of individuals that volunteer in creating unity and camaraderie within the program; provide a venue to impart knowledge and training in program policies and procedures and continuing education topics; and meetings provide a forum for discussion of best practices in resolving complaints. The following sections discuss program requirements for ombudsman meetings.

1. **Sunshine Law**

The open sessions of local council meetings and the entire State Council meeting must be conducted in accordance with the Florida Sunshine Law.

Essential elements of the Sunshine Law are:

* A meeting notice is posted in the Florida Administrative Register.
* A written agenda is developed and distributed.
* The Open Session (public session) provides for input from the public.
* Meeting minutes are recorded and are kept indefinitely.
* Council members are prohibited from discussing issues that may come before the full council with another council member outside of a publicly noticed council meeting.
* During the meeting, member discussions must be audible to all present and members cannot pass written notes.
* Voting: All votes must be public or available to the public. All members present must vote unless there is a declared conflict of interest. If ballots are used in the voting process, ombudsmen must sign their completed ballot, ballots must be read aloud, and the votes attributed to the ombudsman.

The Deputy State Ombudsman for Legal Affairs, through the Legal Assistant, is responsible for posting notices of meetings in the Florida Administrative Register (FAR). The Department of State operates FAR and charges the program a fee for each posting. At various times of the year, the Legal Assistant will solicit input from DOMs on local meeting dates, times, and locations for development of the required notice. Meeting notices must be posted in FAR no less than 7 days prior to the meeting in order to meet requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act, although generally, the LTCOP posts notices much greater than 7 days before a meeting. Once meeting information has been posted in the

**MEETINGS**

FAR, changes to meeting dates, times, and locations are strongly discouraged unless unavoidable because of the cost involved in posting corrected notices.

1. **Local** **Council** **Meetings**

For standardized Meeting forms, see the Program Intranet. Available items relevant to the Local Council Meetings include:

* Minutes Template
* Agenda Template
* Open/Closed Session Statements

The DOM should send the meeting notice, including the proposed minutes from the previous meeting and the upcoming meeting’s agenda, to all council members, agency representatives, and other interested persons who attend or may have an interest in attending the local council meeting no less than 7 days prior to the meeting date.

Local council meetings are held monthly and consist of an Open (Public) Session and a Closed (Confidential) Session. Opening statements must be read to attendees for both sessions. The public may attend the Open Session but must not be present for commencement of the Closed Session.

A Closed Session is held for ombudsmen to discuss and review confidential complaint cases. Agencies approved by the State Ombudsman to attend the Closed Session are listed below:

* The Agency for Health Care Administration
* Adult Protective Services

However, it should be noted that consent to discuss confidential case information with representatives of AHCA and APS is required before that information can be discussed during the closed session when partner agency representatives are present.

All local council meetings may be conducted in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order or any similar method that ensures an orderly meeting. Minutes are meant to be only summary in nature and should not reflect a verbatim transcript of the meeting. Standard templates for meeting minutes and agendas are available on the Program Intranet and should be used. The instructions for navigating and completing the templates are as follows:

Minutes form:

* Navigate using the mouse and clicking on the fields. You cannot “tab” to the next field, you have to use your mouse to click on the field.  Start typing the information to complete the field and the field identifier will disappear.

**MEETINGS**

* Complete the fields for [District Name], [Council Name], and [Ombudsman Program Representatives – this includes volunteers and staff]. Then save the document as your template.
* To add more council member names, you have to add more rows to the table and copy and paste the “present” box in the correct column.  Delete rows that are not needed. Once council member names are added, save the form as your template and then just make additions or subtractions as members come and go in the council.
* After saving the document as a template, click the mouse over [Date] at the top of the form and select the date from the drop-down calendar.
* Continue inputting information as indicated.
* Minutes approved – click the mouse over [Date] and select the date from the drop-down calendar. (if multiple minutes from previous meetings are approved, you will have to add the dates separately yourself).
* Body of document – after clicking on and completing the [name] fields, you must use the arrow keys on your keyboard instead of the <tab> or <enter> key to navigate through this section and type in the details. To create subsequent bullets, just press <enter> after the first line of text.
* Training - insert the name of the presenter, the topic or title of the training, and the number of approved CE credits, if any. The minutes with the listing of council members in attendance serves as proof of an ombudsman attending training and receiving CE credit.
* Announcements – in addition to announcements, this section can be used as a “catch-all” to briefly summarize council discussion that does not fit into another category.
* General – delete any sections that you do not use. For example, if the State Council Representative has no report, delete that section instead of stating “none”; if there are no public comments, delete that section instead of stating “none”.

Agenda form:

* Follow the basic navigating instructions from above.

**MEETINGS**

* The only required input is indicated by the fields. For example, you are not required to put any more detail in the open session description than what is already on the form. However, if you want to add detail, you may do so.

Once a council meeting has concluded, the DOM should submit the draft version of the meeting minutes and the next meeting agenda to the ROM. The ROM will review for appropriateness, consistency, grammar, and forward to the Legal Assistant for additional review and posting on the Ombudsman Program website.

Two positions serve as leadership on the local council: the district council chair and the state council representative. Each serves in an elected position by the local council.

A quorum (simple majority) of the council is required to vote on any council matter, including elections for district chair and state council representative. Only Certified Ombudsmen may vote. See “voting” under Paragraph 1., Sunshine Law, above.

The local chair is elected by the district council to serve a one-year term. There are no limits to the number of terms the chair may serve. The chair appoints the vice-chair. The chair conducts the monthly meeting in coordination with the DOM. Other responsibilities may include: reporting to the council at the monthly meetings, and conferring with the DOM on local issues. The vice chair acts as the chair when the chair is unavailable. If the chair resigns in the middle of a term, the vice chair will be responsible for conducting the next meeting until an election can be held and a new chair can appointed.

The state council representative election is held at the monthly council meeting proceeding the last month of the current state council representative’s first term. The state council representative is elected by the local council to serve a three (3) year term on the State Council and may serve, if re-elected, a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms. The state

council representative participates in the State Council quarterly meetings and presents issues and recommendations from his or her respective local council.

1. **Quarterly State Council Meetings**

The State Council meets on a quarterly basis, generally in February, May, August and November. The State Council may meet in person (usually in a centralized location such as Orlando) or by teleconference. State council meetings are open to the public; there is no closed session and no confidential information is discussed at the State Council meetings.

One position serves as the formal leadership on the State Council: the State Council Chair. Additionally, chair positions exist for any workgroups that the State Council Chair creates.

**MEETINGS**

A quorum (simple majority) of the council is required to vote on any council matter, including elections for State Council Chair. See “voting” under Paragraph 1., Sunshine Law, above.

The State Council chair is elected by the State Council to serve a one-year term. The State Council chair, if re-elected, may only serve two consecutive terms. The State Council chair appoints the vice-chair. The State Council chair conducts the quarterly meeting in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order or any similar method that ensures an orderly meeting, may call additional meetings as necessary, and generally oversees the work of the State Council. The vice chair acts as the chair when the chair is unavailable.

**OMBUDSMAN TRAINING & CERTIFICATION**

1. ***OMBUDSMAN TRAINING & CERTIFICATION***

***(Rev. 10/14/14)***

For standardized Training & Certification information and forms, see the Program Intranet. Available items relevant to Training & Certification include:

* Online Certification Training Modules
* Classroom Training Modules
* Certification Checklist
* CE Approval Form
* CE Conflict Acknowledgment Form
* Ombudsman Training Log
1. **Certification Training**

Approval for membership requires clearance of the Level 2 background screen and approval from the State Ombudsman. The trainee may begin the online modules prior to approval for membership. The DOM will notify the trainee of the availability of the online training modules at a time the DOM deems appropriate. This may be immediately following the interview process or may be held until the background screen returns with no areas of concern. The trainee may complete the online modules at home, or with the use of district office equipment. The trainee should notify the district office when the online modules have been completed. The DOM should then review the trainee’s quiz scores to determine if additional review is necessary of the online material.

The trainee must complete classroom training, Modules 8 & 9, as well as three field investigations and three field assessments, with the DOM or a certified ombudsman before being considered for certification.

When the online, classroom, and field training is complete, the DOM will send the appropriate Certification Checklist to the Membership Coordinator at the Central Office, where it will be reviewed for approval by the State Ombudsman. An electronic photo of the prospective ombudsman should be sent along with the Certification Checklist.

**Five year background screening requirement on active volunteers:** A monthly report of active volunteer ombudsman, including the date of last background check, is provided to the Membership coordinator for review and identification of any renewal of process. Years of service are verified monthly by the membership coordinator. District Ombudsman Manager is notified via email with Regional Ombudsman Manager being cc’d of any volunteers that reach 5 years of service and need to be rescreened pursuant to Florida Statue 430.0402(6) . FDLE website is monitored by membership coordinator weekly and the DOM is notified of the clearance or if other appropriate action needs to be taken.

1. **Continuing Education**

Once certified, ombudsmen are required to complete ten (10) hours of continuing education (CE) training each year. A ‘training year’ is October 1 through September 30 of the year following certification. All CE training must be approved by the State Ombudsman in order for the training to count for CE credit. Presentations developed by the State Trainer and approved by the State Ombudsman will be made available for the DOMs to utilize for monthly council meeting training. The DOM may also elect to schedule outside presenters. All such presenters and presentations must be submitted and approved in advanced in order to qualify for CE credit. See the LTCOP CE Approval Request form available on the Intranet.

The following statement contained on the LTCOP Continuing Education Training Conflict Acknowledgment form must be signed and acknowledged by ombudsmen in regard to CE training that is prepared and presented by persons other than representatives of the LTCOP. This statement should be signed annually in October and retained in the volunteer’s file.

I Hereby Acknowledge that training I receive from sources outside the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program such as presentations prepared or presented by other entities, may conflict with Ombudsman Program interpretations, duties, jurisdiction, or policies. In such instances, I will follow the approved Ombudsman Program policies, guidance, and procedures.

The LTCOP Continuing Education Training Conflict Acknowledgment form is available on the Intranet.

CE training must be relevant to appropriate ombudsman topics, as identified in Chapter 400, Part I. The required training topics for ombudsmen include (but are not limited to):

* resident confidentiality
* guardianships and powers of attorney
* medication administration
* care and medication of residents with dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease
* accounting for residents’ funds
* discharge rights and responsibilities
* cultural sensitivity
* or any other topic recommended by the Secretary of the Department.

 Additional appropriate training topics for CE credit are:

* Residents rights, abuse, neglect and exploitation;
* Laws, rules, and regulations governing the operation of NH, ALF, AFCH;
* Medicare, Medicaid, and HIPAA;
* Investigation techniques and principles of documentation;
* Communication skills, mediation, and conflict resolution;
* LTCOP policies and procedures re: complaint investigations, administrative assessments, visits; and

**OMBUDSMAN TRAINING & CERTIFICATION**

* Other relevant topics affecting the health, safety, welfare, and rights of long-term care residents.

There are several ways to accomplish obtaining 10 hours of CE credit:

* Attend approved training provided at monthly council meetings. The approval for the training will specify the number of hours of CE credit awarded.
* Attend local monthly council meetings. All ombudsmen attending a council meeting will automatically qualify for .5 hours of continuing education credit, in addition to any other specific approved training presented at the meeting.
* Attend training relevant to ombudsman work or resident concerns provided by other agencies, universities and organizations that have been approved by the State Ombudsman.
* Attend online webinar trainings provided or approved by the State Ombudsman.
* Review training materials and modules posted on the Program’s training website, located at <https://sites.google.com/site/ombudsmanadditionaltraining/welcome>
* Additional training topics or methods should be approved by the State Ombudsman as appropriate.

In order to receive CE credit, the DOM is responsible for ensuring that training attended by the ombudsmen is approved in advance by the State Ombudsman utilizing the CE Training Approved Request Form. The DOM is also responsible for ensuring that training (once completed) is logged for each ombudsman on the individualized training log.

Any standardized forms for Ombudsman Training & Certification may be found on the Program’s intranet website.

**TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS**

1. ***TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS***

***(Rev. 9/23/14)***

For standardized Travel Requirements information and forms, see the Program Intranet. Available items relevant to Volunteer Travel Requirements include:

* Power Point – Instructions for Processing Travel Vouchers – November 2012
* Memorandum re: Travel reimbursement guidelines for volunteers
* Memorandum re: Travel reimbursement guidelines for staff
* Travel voucher spreadsheet suite
* Other than travel voucher
* Form for Monthly Staff travel
* Form for Volunteer Travel Submission log
* Florida Substitute W-9

Travel and meals may be reimbursed for ombudsman business when certain requirements are met. These requirements may be found in the Power Point presentation “Instructions for Processing Travel Vouchers – November 2012,” which can be found on the Program Intranet.

If an ombudsman’s address changes, the DOM should notify the Deputy State Ombudsman for Headquarters Operations in order for the FLAIR entry to be updated.

For travel associated with training, there are some important requirements to take into consideration. After identifying a training session, submit the training approval form along with any handouts or online information about the training session to your immediate supervisor. Volunteer ombudsmen should send the form and information to the District Ombudsman Manager. Staff members should send the information to their supervisors. Supervisors will send the training approval form, along with any additional information describing the training, to the State Trainer who will review it to determine eligibility for continuing education credit.

* 1. All field office staff travel expenses are to be submitted electronically and mailed the next working day after the travel was incurred.
	2. Monthly travel logs are due on the 25th of each month. (hard copy and electronically)
	3. All volunteer travel expenses are to be submitted within three working days of the council’s monthly meeting, along with the Travel Submission logs. (Please share this with your council members)
	4. All headquarters staff travel expenses are to be submitted no later than 2 working days after the travel was incurred.

**TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS**

Supervisors hold the responsibility of ensuring that all staff and volunteers follow these guidelines.

**Prior Approval**

When possible, please conduct business via telephone, conference call or go-to meetings.

Prior approval for travel from the SLTC Ombudsman must be obtained in the following instances:

1. Attendance at a conference.
2. Attendance as a presenter/speaker
3. Appropriate justification demonstrating benefit to the program must be included.
4. The attendee must demonstrate how he/she will impart the knowledge gained at the conference to the Ombudsman program.

**Monitoring of reimbursement documents**

Monitoring procedures will include:

1. Perform a monthly review of random selection of travel documents by a minimum of two SLTCO staff for accuracy of documentation and explanation of mileage in excess of the mapped trip distance.
2. Prepare a monthly log which will be maintained of those reviewed, all any variances will be reported to the responsible manager.
3. Additionally, the Division of Financial Administration will also review all SLTCO travel for compliance with Department policy and procedure.

**NATIONAL OMBUDSMAN REPORTING SYSTEM (NORS)**

1. ***NATIONAL OMBUDSMAN REPORTING SYSTEM (NORS)***

***(Rev. 9/23/14)***

* 1. **Administration on Aging (AoA)**

On the federal level, the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program receives funding from the Older Americans Act through the U.S. Administration on Aging. In order to receive this funding, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is required to submit a yearly statistical report to be blended into the National Ombudsman Reporting System (NORS).

District office staff need to be aware of items included in this report. The district office should tabulate the data at the local level on a monthly basis and store their data on the district’s tab of the regional report. The quarterly district NORS report is then reviewed by the ROM for the respective district. The ROM is responsible for compiling a regional report for submission to Headquarters. This report should include information from October 1 through September 30 and should be submitted no later than mid-November to Headquarters for review and submission to the AoA. It is important that the district office have all documentation entered into the database for the NORS year as quickly as possible following September 30.

* 1. **State NORS Report**

The State Ombudsman or designee is responsible for submitting a statewide NORS report to the Administration on Aging at the beginning of each calendar year for the state’s previous reporting period (October 1 – September 30). If data appears incorrect, the State Ombudsman may be asked to explain the change in data from comparisons with previous year NORS reports. It is important for the local district to be aware of any significant changes in their local report to assist the State Ombudsman with answering these questions. A copy and instruction guide for the State NORS report can be found on the AoA website. DOM’s should follow the instructions given to them by their ROM’s.

* 1. **District NORS Report**

For standardized District NORS Report information and forms, see the Program Intranet. Available items relevant to District NORS Report include:

* NORS Data Collection Spreadsheet
* Training Log

The district NORS report requests a variety of information about ombudsman activities. This information includes:

* training received and given
* consultations to facilities and individuals
* participation in Agency for Health Care Administration exit surveys
* work with resident and family councils

**NATIONAL OMBUDSMAN REPORTING SYSTEM (NORS)**

* community education
* work with media
* and any other activity done on behalf of the Program.

One standard required Program form is used to gather some of this data, and is called the ombudsman and staff training log.

It is important to keep tracking mechanisms in place that facilitate the preparation of the monthly NORS report on the district level. Examples of these mechanisms can be found in Appendix B and include suggested Monthly Ombudsman Activity Reports, district office calendars, and district phone logs.

Any standardized forms for NORS may be found on the Program’s intranet website. Appendix B includes tools that may be useful for the DOM to consider related to NORS items. These tools include:

Sample monthly ombudsman activity form

Sample district office calendar

Sample district phone log

 NORS tracking log

**DISASTER RECOVERY**

1. ***DISASTER RECOVERY***

***(Rev. 9/23/14)***

District Ombudsman Managers are responsible for the following items regarding disaster preparedness:

* Establishing district emergency preparedness plans
* Securing their local office
* Ensuring their own personal safety
* Contacting their ombudsmen, as appropriate
* If necessary, coordinating the process of contacting facilities/residents

For instructions regarding securing the local district office before and after an emergency, refer to the LTCOP Office Closure Procedures guide. If conditions warrant it, a DOM, in coordination with their ROM, may determine whether or not they are able to operate from their local district office, or if they can operate safely from home. If the ROM is unable to be contacted, the DOM should follow the program’s chain of command and contact the Deputy State Ombudsman for Operations.

Refer to DOEA Policy #415.30 – Office Closure Policy Statement for more information on office closures during an emergency.

* 1. **Advanced Preparedness**

ROM’s/DOM’s must follow the instructions of the State Ombudsman and Deputy of Operations in the event of an emergency disaster.

DOMs should maintain a Disaster Recovery Ombudsman List that tracks the name and information of ombudsmen who have expressed a willingness to participate in contacting facilities or visiting residents after a disaster/emergency.

The DOM should make certain to provide the local AHCA field office with accurate contact information in the event that AHCA needs the assistance of the program after an emergency/disaster if instructed by the Deputy of Operations/State Ombudsman.

The DOM may need to ensure access and registration with ESS (Emergency Status System) through the Agency for Health Care Administration. For more information on registering with this system, contact the ROM or visit <http://ahca.myflorida.com/MCHQ/Emergency_Activities/index.shtml>

**DISASTER RECOVERY**

* 1. **Optional Advanced Preparedness**

Contact with county Emergency Operation Centers (EOC) coordinators can be beneficial to the District Manager in preparing for an emergency/disaster. DOMs are encouraged to maintain contact with local EOC coordinators, have face-to-face meetings to understand limits and capabilities of both organizations, and to develop resource lists for emergency shelters, transportation for the disabled, etc.

* 1. **During** **the Emergency**

Staff and ombudsmen should take necessary precautions to ensure their personal safety and that of their family members and friends. Evacuate, if necessary, and only return to the area when it is safe. If possible, DOMs should notify the ROMs of their evacuation plans.

* 1. **After the Emergency**

After a disaster/emergency, the DOM, using the Disaster Recovery Ombudsman List, should contact ombudsmen who have indicated their willingness to assist in emergency disaster recovery.

Given available ombudsmen volunteers and staff members, the district manager should decide how resources may best be utilized in consultation with the Regional Ombudsman Manager and Deputy State Ombudsman for Field Operations.

Any standardized forms for Disaster Recovery may be found on the Program’s intranet website. Appendix B includes tools that may be useful for the DOM to consider related to Disaster Recovery items. These tools include:

LTCOP Office Closure Procedures guide

Disaster Recovery Ombudsman List - sample

Ombudsman Disaster Plan (2009)

Sample Guide – Links to important information regarding disaster recovery:

Reference to NH, ALF, & AFCH disaster preparedness *Nursing home panning criteria is available here:* [*http://ahca.myflorida.com/MCHQ/Long\_Term\_Care/LTC/Misc/emergency\_management\_planning.pdf*](http://ahca.myflorida.com/MCHQ/Long_Term_Care/LTC/Misc/emergency_management_planning.pdf)*. See § 400.23(2)(g), Fla. Stat.; r. 59A-4.126, Fla. Admin.*

*Code. Assisted living facility planning criteria is available here:* [*http://ahca.myflorida.com/MCHQ/Long\_Term\_Care/Assisted\_living/pdf/alfempcriteria.pdf*](http://ahca.myflorida.com/MCHQ/Long_Term_Care/Assisted_living/pdf/alfempcriteria.pdf)*. See § 429.41, Fla. Stat.; r. 58A-5.026, Fla. Admin. Code. No criteria is available for adult family-care homes on the Agency’s website; however, rule*

**DISASTER RECOVERY**

*58A-14.0091, Florida Administrative Code, provides, that the home shall have a written plan which specifies emergency and evacuation procedures for fires and natural disasters.*

**Helpful Informational Links:**

Florida Division of Emergency Management: <http://floridadisaster.org/cemp.htm>

National Ombudsman Resource Center, “Emergency Preparedness” (see especially [***Ombudsman Role in Nursing Home Closures and Natural Disasters***](http://www.ltcombudsman.org/sites/default/files/norc/NORC-Ombudsmen-in-NH-Closures.pdf)): <http://www.ltcombudsman.org/issues/emergency-preparedness#Resources>

Administration on Aging “Emergency Preparedness and Response”: <http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Preparedness/index.aspx>

AHCA Emergency Resources: <http://ahca.myflorida.com/MCHQ/Emergency_Activities/index.shtml>

**INTERNSHIPS**

1. ***INTERNSHIPS***

***(Rev. 9/23/14)***

Currently, the program utilizes the work of student interns to assist in the program’s mission of advocacy. Students pursuing social work, human service, or other health-related degrees may receive, upon approval from the Recruitment Manager, Communications Director and State Ombudsman with necessary education staff, academic credit for a semester-length internship as a certified long-term care ombudsman.

The student intern will proceed with the certification process prior to the beginning of their semester and will report to the District Ombudsman Manager as their supervisor. The student intern should be utilized to fit the needs of the district, as determined by the District Ombudsman Manager, while also considering the student intern’s academic requirements.

Any standardized forms for the Internship will be provided by the Recruitment Manager.