

Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Position Description for Volunteer Long-Term Care Ombudsman

POSITION TITLE:

Volunteer Ombudsman

TIME COMMITMENT:

- a) A minimum of four (4) hours each week for one year. Visits should occur primarily during the business day, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Occasional evening and weekend visits are permitted. The four hours *do not* include travel time. Allowances are made for vacations and illness.
- b) Approximately 45 minutes to an hour each month to complete activity reports.
- c) At least 4 of the 5 or 6 two-and-one-half hour educational in-services throughout the volunteer year.

QUALIFICATIONS:

The Volunteer Ombudsman must:

- be at least 21 years of age;
- provide personal references;
- have the ability to get from place to place;
- not be employed by or volunteer in a long-term care facility or home health agency;
- not have a financial interest in a long-term care facility or home health agency.
- be able to say NO when agency policy requires it;
- be non-judgmental.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Promote the Residents' Bill of Rights among the residents, their families and the facility staff and monitor its implementation by the facility.
2. Assist residents and families to advocate for themselves, e.g., encourage them to utilize the internal grievance procedure within the facility.
3. Help the residents and/or their families understand the rules or regulations under which the facility operates.

4. Seek out the hard-to-reach resident.
5. Advocate on behalf of residents who cannot speak for themselves, by observing and monitoring their welfare.
6. Attend Resident and Family Council meetings if they function in the facility and if you are invited to attend. Where they do not exist, encourage their formation.
7. Negotiate and assist in resolving residents' complaints within the facility, **utilizing help from the Ombudsman Program staff when necessary.**
8. Notify Ombudsman staff and contact person in facility of unresolved problems/complaints at least monthly. **Immediately inform ombudsman staff of critical events, such as suspicions of abuse, neglect or exploitation.**
9. Work closely with the staff of the Ombudsman Program to develop a strong sense of teamwork and mutual support.
10. Strive to establish professional relationships with staff of the facility, characterized by trust and cooperation.
11. Maintain current written records of contact with residents. Keep such records secure and destroy when no longer needed.
12. Submit to the office a monthly report of your activity using the Activity Summary and Complaint Case forms or formats.
13. Adhere to the Volunteer Ombudsmen Rules of Conduct, confidentiality guidelines and other policies and procedures set forth by the Ombudsman Program.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION:

1. Completion of an initial three-day training program to become familiar with program goals and to develop advocacy skills is mandatory.
2. Attendance at regular in-service training programs **is required.**
3. Ongoing supervision and support will be provided primarily by the Volunteer Specialist, but also by other Ombudsman staff. Additional support may be available from Volunteer Ombudsman Mentors.
4. It is understood that the volunteer may not always be informed of formal investigations being conducted by Ombudsman staff at one's assigned facility.

The Ombudsman Program reserves the right to ask a volunteer to resign for any of the following reasons: breach of confidentiality, adversarial approach, or failure to follow program guidelines.