

Note: Needs some revision for use by mentors of local or volunteer ombudsmen.

Guidelines for Mentors of New State Long-Term Care Ombudsmen *Making the Experience Beneficial*

Purpose

The mentoring process is designed to accelerate the learning curve of a new State Long Term Care Ombudsman (SLTCO) regarding his or her role and responsibilities.

Your Role

Mentor: a wise and trusted counselor or teacher¹

Your role as a mentor is a *very important* component of the orientation for new SLTCO to the role of the SLTCO, to the National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP), and to the national ombudsman network. This relationship is a primary way to connect new SLTCO to their peers and to the advocacy world beyond their state.



Effective Mentor²

<u>Roles</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
Exemplar	Available
Supporter	Willing
Facilitator	Competent
Catalyst	Encouraging
Sponsor	Challenging
Teacher	Trustworthy
Counselor	Sincere
Guide	Positive
Advisor	
Inspirer	

Connecting With A New SLTCO, Your “Mentee”

1. **Your Orientation:** Before your first contact, take a few minutes to remember what it was like to be new in the SLTCO role. Remember that sometimes you might not have known enough to ask key questions. What helped you through your first year on the job? What do you wish someone had told you during that

¹ Random House Webster’s *Modern Office Dictionary*, 1999.

² “Creating A Mentor-Rich Environment,” presentation by Lebow, R. & Maycock, S. The Uncommon Individual Foundation. July 25-26, 1995.

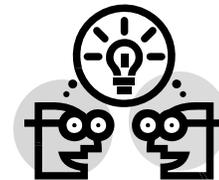
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first year? How did you become connected to NASOP and to other SLTCO?
What were your best resources?

2. **Call:** As soon as possible, phone the new SLTCO and get acquainted.
3. **Visit:** Invite the mentee to visit you or for you to go to their office. The National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center (ORC) has funds to support a visit. Check with Alice Hedt, Center Director, when you begin planning a visit.
4. **Meet:** Spend time together at regional or national training conferences. Introduce the mentee to other SLTCO and others at the conference. Help the new SLTCO know what to expect from the conference and check with the mentee to see if she/he is becoming overwhelmed during the meeting.
5. **Stay in touch monthly:** Take the initiative in reaching out to the mentee at least once a month during the first year and leave the door open for calls and questions later. You might use email to contact the mentee to supplement calls. Send pertinent information via email on a regular basis.
6. **Reach out at key times:** Consider calling the mentee near the end of the Federal fiscal year to offer encouragement and tips on compiling and using the NORS report. Call during the mentee's state legislative session to discuss systems advocacy.

Communication Tips

- ⤴ Avoid jargon and acronyms unless you check to be sure the mentee knows the terms.
- ⤴ Consider focusing on a particular topic on each call.
- ⤴ Use the calls as a time to brainstorm and improve strategies in both states. Share information with the mentee about conditions or challenges in your state.
- ⤴ Refer the mentee to pertinent ORC resources, including resources on the Center's web site whenever applicable.
- ⤴ Offer tips and wise counsel in a constructive way. Avoid discouraging or overwhelming the mentee with "war stories" of your own or those from other states. Your "real world" years of experience may be perceived as pessimistic cynicism by a new SLTCO. The mentee may find such experiences rather incredible and discount the value of what you have to share.



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Potential Topics To Discuss With Your Mentee

Many new SLTCO feel so overwhelmed by all the material that comes at them that they don't know where to begin in asking questions. The following list is based on suggestions from new SLTCO. It might give you some ideas.

Initial questions under each area might be, "Where do I start?" "What resources are available?" "How do other states do this?"



If you want ideas about what to share under these topics or what best practices might be, check the Center's web site: www.ltcombudsman.org The section under "ombudsman support" is filled with examples of resources from various states. Another key reference for you is the Ombudsman Resource List published by the Center. It, too, is available from the Center's web site. This list is annotated in case you need a memory jogger about specific resources. Be sure to check the Ombudsman Best Practices papers the Center has produced. These also are available on the web site.

Remember, as a mentor, you do not have to know all the answers. You are sharing tips on the role of a SLTCO, how to work through dilemmas, how to focus on key aspects of the job, and where to go for additional help. Do refer the new person to the Center for further assistance as needed.

Program Infra-Structure

- ⤴ The role of the SLTCO
 - ⤴ Advocate for residents
 - ⤴ Program leader and manager
 - ⤴ Employee
 - ⤴ Survival tips

- ⤴ Relationship with local programs
 - ⤴ Designation of local programs
 - ⤴ Monitoring visits
 - ⤴ Reviewing files

- ⤴ Designation of local LTCO
 - ⤴ Training
 - ⤴ Supervision

- ⤴ Access
 - ⤴ To residents
 - ⤴ To records
 - ⤴ To facilities

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- ⤴ Confidentiality
 - ⤴ In ombudsman case work
 - ⤴ In sharing information with other agencies, programs, or individuals
 - ⤴ In releasing LTCOP records
 - ⤴ Reporting of abuse

- ⤴ Use of volunteers
 - ⤴ Responsibilities
 - ⤴ Recruiting and selecting
 - ⤴ Training
 - ⤴ Supervision
 - ⤴ Designating and withdrawing designation

Advocacy

- ⤴ Specific nursing home issues
 - ⤴ Staffing
 - ⤴ Arbitration provisions
 - ⤴ Culture change

- ⤴ Systems advocacy
 - ⤴ What it is
 - ⤴ Relationships with other agencies and organizations
 - ⤴ Representing the interests of residents before governmental agencies
 - ⤴ Commenting on and recommending changes in laws, regulations, and policies
 - ⤴ Coalition building
 - ⤴ Using national resources
 - ⤴ Pitfalls to avoid

Program Resources and Information

- ⤴ Fiscal Resources
 - ⤴ Budget management
 - ⤴ Sources of funding

- ⤴ National Ombudsman Reporting System (NORS)
 - ⤴ Computer software
 - ⤴ Training staff for consistency in reporting
 - ⤴ Using NORS data for program management and advocacy

- ⤴ Program evaluation
 - ⤴ Local programs
 - ⤴ Statewide program

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LTCO Associations

- ⤴ NASOP
 - ⤴ What it can do for you
 - ⤴ What you can do for it

- ⤴ NALLTCO
 - ⤴ What it is
 - ⤴ What it can do for local LTCOPs

Contact the ORC if you have questions or need further information.

Thank you for serving as a mentor! Enjoy the experience!