

Format for the Volunteer Ombudsman Placement Meeting

INTRODUCTIONS

1. Meet the Administrator and contact person(s), learn about their backgrounds.
2. Discuss briefly history and features of the facility.
3. Discuss briefly volunteer's interest in serving and background.

OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUNTEER OMBUDSMAN'S ROLE

1. Day-to-day duties (see attached—*Volunteer Ombudsman Responsibilities & What is Our Role?*)
2. The role of contact person, possible back-up and 15 minute time limit (see *What is a Contact Person?*)
3. Confidential handling of resident complaints (the volunteer needs permission from resident prior to speaking to contact).
4. Follow-through on both the volunteer's and contact person's part; turnaround time (see *Communication Form*)
5. How suspicions or allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation will be handled (see *Volunteer Ombudsman's Protocol*).
6. Under the HIPAA Privacy Rule the Ombudsman Program is a "health oversight agency" (see *Memorandum dated 4/8/03 from the Virginia Dept. for the Aging*).
7. The volunteer is not permitted to reposition residents nor push wheelchairs.
8. The volunteer will have a name badge, business cards and brochures.
9. The volunteer will not release home phone # to residents or families; they and facility staff can call the Ombudsman Program office to get in touch with volunteer.
10. How volunteer's role differs from ombudsman staff role (Volunteer may not always be aware of formal investigations being conducted at the facility.)
11. The volunteer will try to regularly attend the resident council as an observer. Will promote and support active participation in the council.

INFO TO HELP ORIENT THE VOLUNTEER OMBUDSMAN

1. Facility's grievance procedure. Resident handbook.
2. List of residents & room numbers

• Office 703-324-5861 • Fax number 703-324-3575 • E-mail address nvltop@fairfaxcounty.gov •
TTY 703-449-1186 • Web address www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ombudsman •

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through their Area Agencies on Aging

3. List of staff department heads
4. Literature describing the home and sample contract

OTHER

- Does the facility have a family council? When do this and the resident council meet? Who organizes the meetings?
- A mailbox for the volunteer might prove useful.

SUGGESTIONS TO PUBLICIZE THE VOLUNTEER'S PRESENCE

1. Introduce Ombudsman or announce his/her presence at staff meetings.
2. Include an article/picture in staff newsletter or on staff bulletin board (see *template article*).
3. Include an article/picture about the volunteer in resident and family newsletters.

THE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM STAFF

- Rita Schumacher, Director
- **Nancy Cavicke, Assistant Ombudsman & Coordinator of Volunteers**
Direct line: 703-324-5435
- Laura Nichols, Assistant Ombudsman
- Yolanda Thompson, Assistant Ombudsman
- Jacque Woodruff, Assistant Ombudsman

Program main number/intake line: 703-324-5861

Program fax number: 703-324-3575

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

1. **Residents' Rights Posters.** *Rita Schumacher* should be shown as the local Northern Virginia Ombudsman on facility posters.
2. **Incident Reports.** Should you wish to inform the Ombudsman Program of an incident, any written report should be submitted to the office rather than to your assigned volunteer. See fax number above.

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VOLUNTEER OMBUDSMAN 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. Encourage and assist the residents and families 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 facilities operate.
4. Assist residents and families to advocate for themselves.
5. Seek out the hard-to-reach resident.
6. Advocate on behalf of residents who cannot speak for themselves, by observing and monitoring their welfare.
7. 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.
8. Mediate and assist in resolving residents' complaints within the facility, utilizing help from the ombudsman program staff when necessary.
9. Adhere to the ombudsman program mandates regarding confidentiality.
10. Develop confidence in ombudsman program and establish cooperative and trusting relationships with staff of facility.
11. Maintain current written records of contact with residents.
12. Notify Ombudsman staff and contact person in facility of unresolved problems/complaints at least monthly.

2/2005

**VOLUNTEER OMBUDSMEN:
WHAT IS OUR ROLE?**

WHAT WE ARE:

Advocates

Mediators

Observers

Sounding Boards

WHAT WE ARE NOT:

Paralegals

Management Consultants

Social Workers

Employee Advocates

Friendly Visitors (in the strict sense)

Detectives

Chauffeurs/Drivers

Activities Assistants

Caregiver

