

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



FLORIDA OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

ADVOCATING FOR QUALITY LONG-TERM CARE



A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY



The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) plays an essential role in protecting the health, safety, well-being, and rights of residents of long-term care facilities in Florida. LTCOP staff and volunteers are tireless advocates and work to enhance every resident's quality of life through a collaborative resident-centered advocacy program.

There have been several positive changes with the program in recent years, including refocusing efforts to be more resident-centered, encouraging and empowering residents to self-advocate, and giving them the counsel and tools needed to resolve their issues directly with the facility.

Additionally, volunteer ombudsmen have significantly increased their presence in the facilities, which has enabled them to assist residents earlier on before matters could escalate and become serious problems. In Federal Fiscal Year 2010-2011, ombudsmen conducted 3,250 assessments and visits, but in the recently-ended Federal Fiscal Year 2016-2017, that number was 8,800, and increase of more than 167 percent. They also investigated nearly 5,400 complaints made by or on behalf of residents.

These outstanding volunteers make a difference every day in the lives of long-term care residents and their families. We are grateful for those who choose to work or graciously give their time in service to benefit others, meeting their needs and improving the communities in which they live.

I could not be more proud to stand with the staff and volunteers of this program. Their commitment and dedication is inspiring, and I thank them on behalf of the Department of Elder Affairs.

Jeffrey S. Bragg, Secretary, Florida Department of Elder Affairs

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeffrey S. Bragg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeffrey" and last name "Bragg" clearly legible.

A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE OMBUDSMAN

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program volunteers. Without each of them the program would not be able to accomplish its mission of advocating for the health, safety, welfare, and civil rights of Florida's nursing home, assisted living, and adult family care home residents.

This year volunteers completed more visits to the state's long-term care facilities than ever before. Being present in the facilities has allowed residents more access to the Ombudsman program, and interacting more often with residents has had a direct impact on them. Ombudsmen have been able to resolve more issues for residents through these visits resulting in a decrease in the number of complaints filed. Even when a complaint has been filed, Ombudsmen have been able to resolve the issues for the residents without having to send referrals to regulatory agencies. Because of this action, fewer referrals were made overall.

On the administrative side, there have been a number of program audits successfully completed this year. In 2016, the Federal Code of Regulations 1324 was implemented. This was the first time a federal rule covered the functions of Ombudsman programs nationwide. Each state had its program audited, and Florida passed with minimal corrections needed. Also, our 2016 National Ombudsman Reporting System (NORS) report was accepted. A new section was added this reporting period requiring states to identify any actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Florida was ahead of the curve, as we had already created this report. Areas of actual or perceived conflicts were identified and remedies were implemented. Our report was ratified, and we are now working on the 2017 report.

I am proud and honored to be the Florida Long-Term Care State Ombudsman and brag about our volunteers to everyone who will listen. I look forward to working with the staff and volunteers in the coming year.



Michael Milliken, State Ombudsman

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Mike Milliken". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN



ABOVE: Outgoing State Council President, Hanna Fink, and incoming State Council President, Dennis Jefferson.

It is indeed a pleasure and honor to serve the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) and the residents of Florida's long-term care facilities as your State Council President. I have never met such a dedicated, committed, tireless group of men and women who have the primary goal of seeing to it that our long-term care residents are afforded the quality of life that can be offered to them.

I am amazed how a small act of kindness from an Ombudsman can brighten a resident's day. Life can throw hardships in our way that we aren't prepared for, especially long-term care residents. Family members become overwhelmed to the point of exhaustion; financial stress sets in; and residents are left in an unfamiliar place, often alone. Long-term care facilities are only able to do so much, and that is where we, as Ombudsmen, become a beacon of light!

As Chairman of the Florida LTCOP State Council, I challenge each of you to carry the mission of the LTCOP into the communities of your life. Share your love and support of the program with those you meet each day, so they may learn about the issues facing residents of long-term care facilities.

Share the role of what you do as an Ombudsman with others so if they have a loved one facing life's hurdles, they will know where to look for help. Use your volunteer heart to share a smile with a resident of a facility who may not have anyone else to smile upon them. That is powerful!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each person who has supported the Florida LTCOP and those we serve. It is because of your efforts and all of us working together that we can fulfill our mission:

"To improve the quality of life for all Florida long-term care residents by advocating for and protecting their health, safety, welfare, and rights."

Thank you all for your volunteer heart. Let's continue to share the message of the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program with the world!

Dennis Jefferson, State Council Chairman



PICTURED LEFT:

State Council Annual Face-to-Face Meeting, TOP ROW: Valerie Nubi-Collins, Marty Weissman, Choice Edwards, Angela Andrews, Jim Lynch SECOND ROW: Jane Spencer, Jaen Anastasi, Mary Darling, Michael Milliken, Anthony Taylor THIRD ROW: Mike Phillips, Wanda Harrison, Lisa Ramirez Bottom Row: Dr. Mable Sherman, Lucilla Huerta, Dennis Jefferson, Marilyn Kane, Joanna Emerson, Hanna Fink.

State Council Recommendations and Completions for the LTCOP in Federal Fiscal Year 2017:

Recommendation: Work toward promoting regulations that require assisted living facilities to provide the LTCOP with copies of all discharge notices.

Outcome: In the 2018 Legislature two bills were introduced to require assisted living facilities to provide the Ombudsman with a copy of the resident's 45-day discharge letter.

Recommendation: Institute a new online training program for incoming Ombudsmen.

Outcome: A new, updated initial training was released.

Recommendation: Survey small assisted living facilities for staffing challenges.

Outcome: This survey was conducted during the annual assessment process. The majority of residents had no issues with the staffing levels at their facility.

Recommendations: Make direct deposits available for Ombudsmen to facilitate faster reimbursement of travel expenses.

Outcome: Direct Deposit was made available to all volunteers.

State Council Recommendations for the LTCOP in Federal Fiscal Year 2018:

- Strengthen and support facility Resident Councils.
- Convert 13 part-time OPS staff positions to full-time Career Service.
- Develop a Florida Long-Term Care Resident/Family Council Handbook to assist Ombudsmen and residents.

SUCCESSES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Ombudsman Involvement Helps Resident Find Freedom

The Ombudsman's office was contacted by a friend of a resident stating the resident was being denied visitation rights by the emergency temporary guardian. The Ombudsman visited the resident and confirmed the denial of visitation. The resident requested the Ombudsman's assistance.

Upon investigation, the Ombudsman was informed there was a court order authorizing the restriction. Furthermore, it was discovered the petition to restrict visitation was submitted

by the resident's own court appointed attorney – without the resident's knowledge and against the resident's wishes. There was evidence the resident was possibly being exploited by a resident's family member, using the Baker Act and the guardian statutes to do it. The Ombudsman asked permission to contact the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit for possible involvement, and the resident agreed.

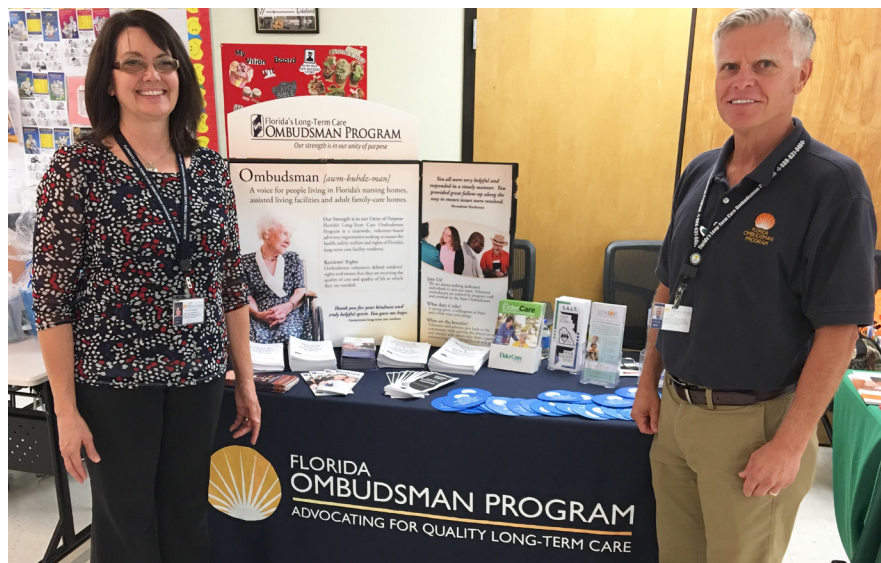
The Attorney General's (AG) office visited the resident to get

their consent to obtain medical records. The court-appointed attorney became aware of the visit and filed a motion to have the AG representative and the Ombudsman appear in court to show cause as to why they were not in contempt. The Ombudsman informed the court that under federal law, Ombudsmen have unfettered access to residents.

The hearing for the resident resulted in the court finding the resident had the capacity to tend to the resident's own affairs.

OUR MISSION

To improve the quality of life for all Florida long-term care residents by advocating for and protecting their health, safety, welfare, and rights.



Thankful for Ombudsmen

Please accept my belated thank you for your email and the follow-up phone call. I contacted the director of the facility with another reminder and then forwarded your email. That finally got his attention, and he emailed me a scan of the check that has been written to be mailed to me. I'll never know if they would have issued the refund without seeing the Ombudsman program's involvement.

I have been reading in the newspaper about all the new proposed laws about oversight over the elder population, and I have an even greater appreciation for what you, your staff, and volunteers handle. My family's small financial issue pales in comparison to the many health and wellbeing problems you deal with.

Thanks again for your help!
~ E.R.

Ombudsman Volunteer Advocates for Residents

The Ombudsman Program was notified of a variety of issues affecting the health, safety, and welfare of residents at a facility. There were so many complaints by residents and family members that an "all residents case" was opened.

Hitting many walls with the facility's administration, Ombudsmen began visits to the facility every two weeks to observe progress. Residents and family members were very upset after continuously receiving letters from the facility every two weeks telling them corrections couldn't yet be made, but they would have them completed within the next two weeks.

The Ombudsman's office contacted the facility's corporate office. A corporate officer was dispatched to the facility. Within the next two weeks, many of the issues were corrected. Within the following two weeks, 97 percent of the issues had been addressed.



"I have an even greater appreciation for what you, your staff, and volunteers handle."

2016-2017 QUARTERLY OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM DATA				
	OCT -DEC	JAN -MAR	APR - JUNE	JUL -SEP
Number of Beds	181,234	182,571	185,488	184,984
Number of Certified Ombudsmen	282	276	281	299
Number of Volunteers in Training	54	58	59	52
Facility Assessments**	1,654	830	574	674
Facility Visitations**	233	1,172	1,286	1,272
Complaint Investigations*	2,185	1,952	2,026	1,765

**Reflects both initiation and closure dates that may overlap quarterly reporting periods.*

***Number does not reflect assessments and visits conducted during quarterly period and not entered until a later date.*



8,832

Facility Assessments
& Visitations



11,188

Consults to
Individuals



353

Volunteers



49,128

Volunteer Hours



297,609

Miles Traveled

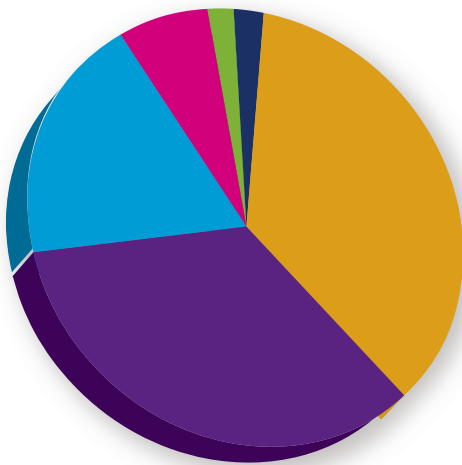


358

Resident Councils
Attended

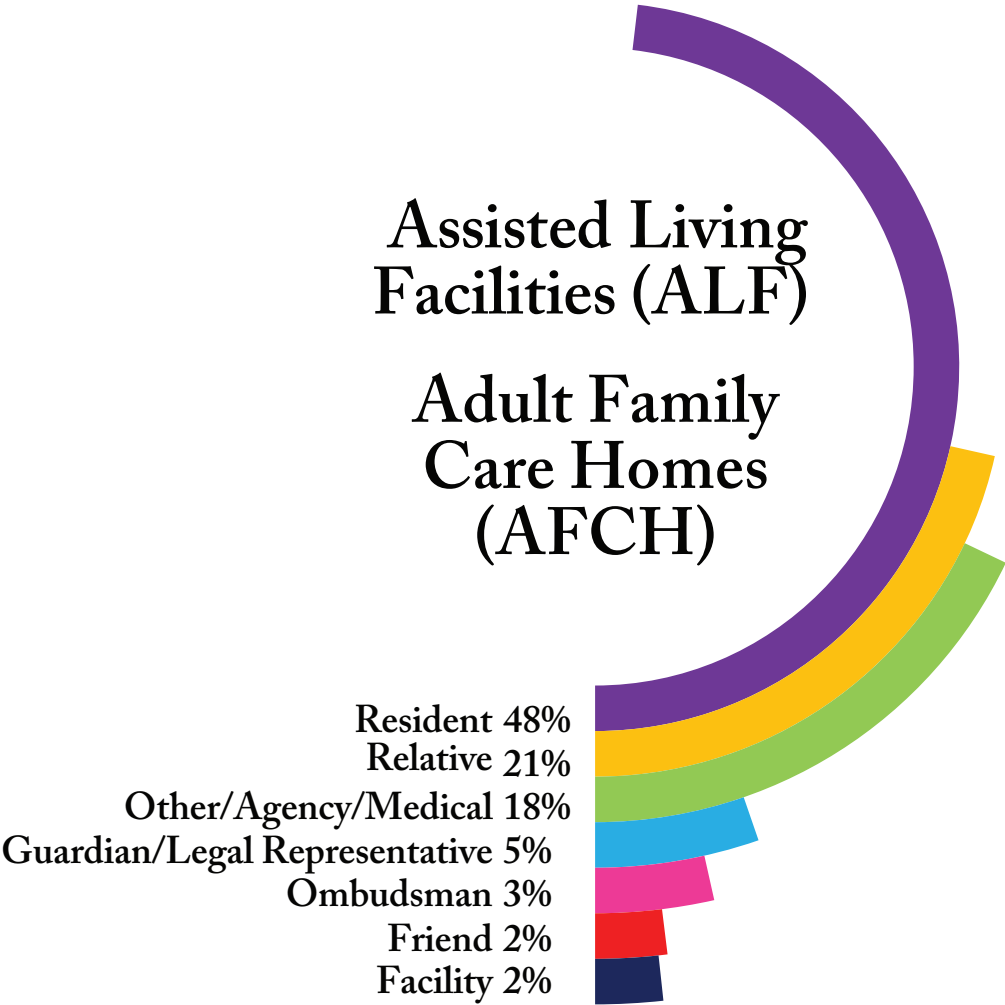
Complaint Resolution

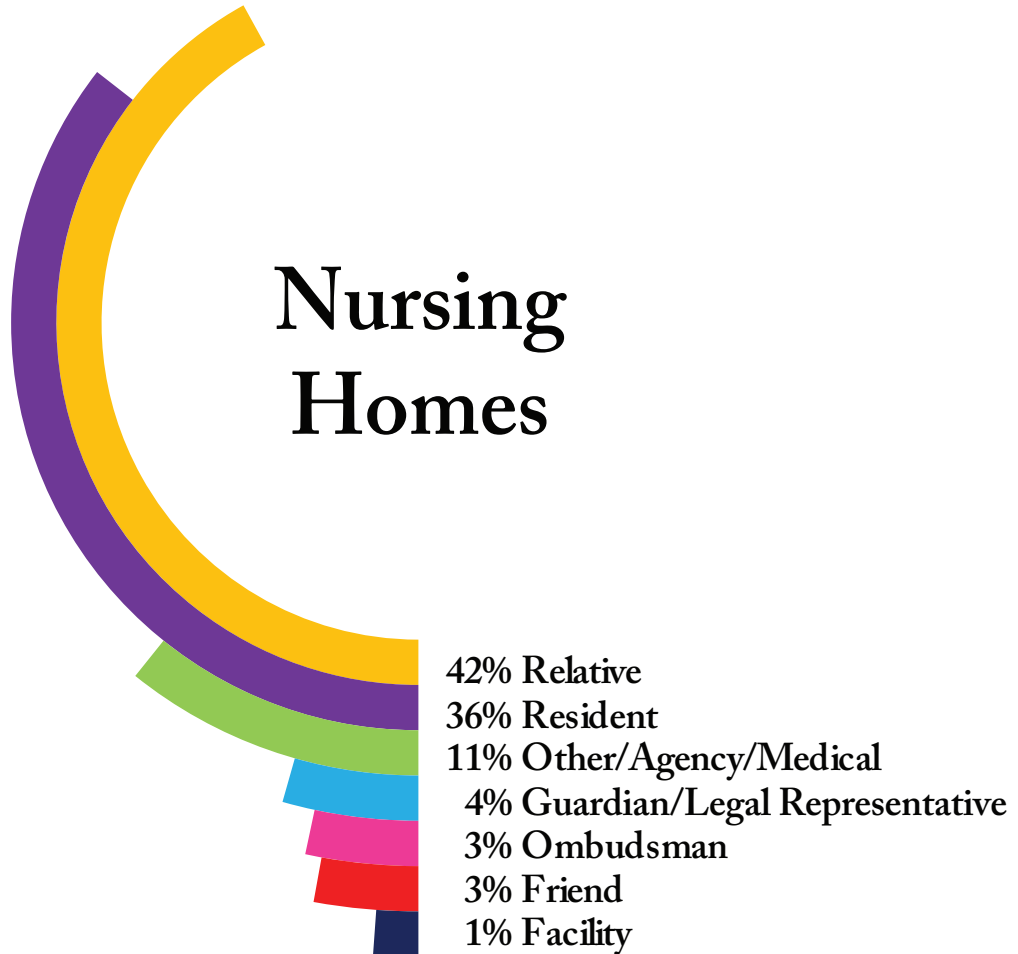
A complaint is closed when the issue is addressed to the satisfaction of the resident or complainant. The following chart shows what types of disposition codes were assigned to closed cases in Federal Fiscal Year 2017.



- No action needed - 34%
- Resolved - 38%
- Withdrawn - 17%
- Partly resolved - 7%
- Not resolved - 2%
- Referred - 2%







Ombudsman Volunteer Says “It’s All About the Residents”

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Volunteers believe Floridians should be allowed to age with dignity, purpose, and independence. That includes ensuring residents of long-term care facilities have rights and the ability to exercise them.

Valerie Healey, Southwestern District 10, has volunteered for the Ombudsman program for over 10 years. She mentors new trainees and takes on extra work in facilities whenever additional volunteers are needed.

She recently visited a facility where residents were left without supervision for an extended period, and the licensed capacity of the facility was exceeded. After speaking with the residents and explaining their rights, Valerie assessed the facility and found many issues.

Subsequently, she reported her concerns to her District Manager. After review the District Manager referred the concerns to the Agency for Health Care Administration



Left to Right: Valerie Healey, Robin Baker, Marilyn Cane, and Barbara Brayton.

(AHCA). After the agency investigated, the license for the facility was revoked. Valerie took the time to assist each resident with their placement into a new facility. Once at their new facility, she continued to visit the residents to assure they were settled and happy. Due to Valerie’s assistance, the residents are now living in a safe, new facility and are aware of their rights.

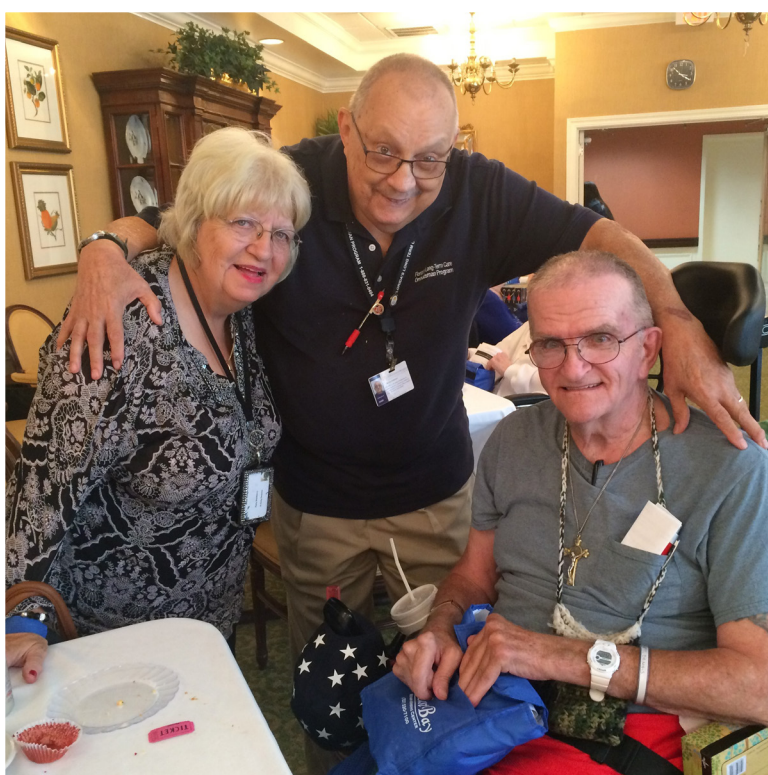
One resident did not have family or friends close by, so Valerie continued to visit her. Because of all the time, work, and heart Valerie put into helping her move into a new facility, the resident considered Valerie to be a good friend. The resident recently passed away, but lived the last days knowing there was someone close by that she could rely on.



VOLUNTEER TODAY!

1-888-831-0404

ombudsman.myflorida.com





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The map of Florida is divided into 12 regions, each with a distinct color and star icon:

- Northwest:** Light blue, red star.
- Panhandle:** Light green, green star.
- North Central:** Light green, green star.
- West Coast:** Light blue, green star.
- West Central:** Light blue, green star.
- Southwest:** Light blue, green star.
- North Region:** Light green, green star.
- First Coast:** Light green, green star.
- First Coast South:** Light green, green star.
- East Central:** Light green, green star.
- South Central:** Light green, green star.
- East Region:** Light pink, pink star.
- Palm Beach:** Light pink, pink star.
- Broward:** Light pink, pink star.
- North Dade:** Light pink, pink star.
- South Dade & the Keys:** Light pink, pink star.

Counties labeled on the map include: Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Washington, Bay, Calhoun, Holmes, Jackson, Gadsden, Leon, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, Suwannee, Columbia, Baker, Duval, Nassau, Santa Johns, Clay, Union, Bradford, Alachua, Putnam, Flagler, Volusia, Marion, Levy, Dixie, Gilchrist, Citrus, Sumter, Lake, Seminole, Orange, Brevard, Pasco, Hillsborough, Polk, Indian River, Okeechobee, St. Lucie, Martin, Glades, Hendry, Collier, Monroe, South Dade, North Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, De Soto, Hardee, Manatee, Sarasota, Pinellas, and Pasco.

MAP LEGEND		WEST COAST	SOUTH WEST
West Region North Region East Region	 Regional & District Offices	(727) 588-6912 11351 Ulmerton Road, Ste. 303 Largo, FL 33778 Fax: 727-588-3648 Serving: Pasco & Pinellas Counties Mid & South Pinellas Council (6) Pasco & N. Pinellas Council (7)	(239) 338-2563 2295 Victoria Ave., Rm. 152 Ft. Myers, FL 33901 Fax: 239-338-2549 Serving: Charlotte, Collier, Desoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee, & Sarasota Counties Southwest Council (10)
	 District Offices		
NORTH WEST	FIRST COAST	WEST CENTRAL	SOUTH CENTRAL
(850) 916-6720 1101 Gulf Breeze Pkwy, Bldg. 3, Ste. 5 Gulf Breeze, FL 32561 Fax: 850-916-6722 Serving: Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, & Walton Counties Northwest Council (1)	(904) 391-3942 Midtown Centre Office Park, 3300 Bldg. 4161 Carmichael Ave. Ste. 141 Jacksonville, FL 32207 Fax: 904-391-3944 Serving: Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, & St. Johns Counties First Coast Council (5)	(813) 558-5591 701 W. Fletcher Ave., Ste. C Tampa, FL 33612 Fax: 813-375-3932 Serving: Hillsborough & Manatee Counties West Central Council (8)	(863) 413-2764 200 N. Kentucky Avenue, #224 Lakeland, FL 33801 Fax: 863-413-2766 Serving: Hardee, Highlands, & Polk Counties South Central Council (17)
PANHANDLE	FIRST COAST SOUTH	PALM BEACH	NORTH DADE
(850) 921-4703 4040 Esplanade Way Tallahassee, FL 32399 Fax: 850-391-1382 Serving: Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Liberty, Leon, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla, & Washington Counties Panhandle Council (2)	(386) 226-7846 210 N. Palmetto Ave., Ste. 403 Daytona Beach, FL 32114 Fax: 386-226-7849 Serving: Flagler & Volusia Counties First Coast South Council (15)	(561) 837-5038 111 S. Sapodilla Ave., #125A-B-C West Palm Beach, FL 33401 Fax: 561-650-6885 Serving: Palm Beach, Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, & St. Lucie Counties Palm Beach Council (11) Treasure Coast Council (16)	(305) 273-3294 9495 Sunset Drive, Ste. B100 Miami, FL 33173 Fax: 786-336-1424 Serving: N. Miami-Dade (North of Flagler St. All Hialeah & N.E. & N.W. Addresses) North Dade Council (13)
NORTH CENTRAL	EAST CENTRAL	BROWARD	SOUTH DADE
(352) 620-3088 1515 E. Silver Springs Blvd., #203 Ocala, FL 34470 Fax: 352-732-1797 Serving: Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Sumter, Suwannee, & Union Counties North Central Council (3) Withlacoochee Council (4)	(407) 245-0651 400 W. Robinson St., Ste. S709 Orlando, FL 32801 Fax: 407-245-0653 Serving: Brevard, Orange, Osceola, & Seminole Counties East Central Council (9) Brevard Council (18)	(954) 597-2266 8333 W. McNabb Rd., Ste. 231 Tamarac, FL 33321 Fax: 954-597-2268 Serving: Broward Broward Council (12)	(305) 273-3250 9495 Sunset Drive, Ste. B100 Miami, FL 33173 Fax: 305-671-7247 Serving: Monroe & S. Miami-Dade (South of Flagler St. All S.E. & S.W. Addresses) South Dade & Florida Keys Council (14)



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ADVOCATING FOR QUALITY LONG-TERM CARE

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STATE OF FLORIDA

