

# Who We Are

## What is an Ombudsman?

“Ombudsman” (om-budz-man) is a Swedish word meaning citizen’s representative. In Illinois, ombudsmen promote residents’ rights and quality of life in long-term care homes. Volunteers are the eyes and ears of the Ombudsman Program.

## What does a volunteer Ombudsman do?

As a volunteer, you will work to improve the lives of long-term care residents by making unannounced visits to care communities, talking with residents to identify concerns, and then advocating at their direction. Volunteers report their activities to their designated ombudsman supervisor.

*“The Ombudsman Program gives me the opportunity to continue to serve others.*

*-Angel, Volunteer Ombudsman*

## Ombudsmen make a difference!

Here are examples of ways ombudsmen have helped residents live their lives in the ways that they want to.

- Advocated to add a resident’s morning routine into his care plan.
- Improved the Resident Council by sharing best practices.
- Helped a resident who had experienced abuse file a formal complaint.
- Helped residents when they had disagreements with their loved ones.
- Advocated to legislators to increase the Personal Needs Allowance in Nursing homes.

## How do I advocate on behalf of long-term care residents?

Ombudsmen take the resident’s direction when advocating, and often speak to staff, family members, or others to ensure that the resident’s voice is heard.

Ombudsmen are provided training to ensure that you are prepared to serve as a voice for residents. If you get stuck on a problem, the ombudsman team will help.

## What are the requirements to be a volunteer ombudsman?

- Attend Initial Certification Training which includes two days of classroom style training.
- Complete 10 hours of mentoring in long-term care facilities.
- Pass a background check
- Be free of conflicts of interest
- Have compassion
- Have excellent communication skills
- Receive ongoing training in elder rights, law, and advocacy.

## What is the commitment, and how often do I visit?

Due to training and certification requirements, volunteers are asked for a one to two-year commitment.

Volunteers will usually visit residents in a few care communities near their home for a few hours every month. For the most part, volunteers make their own schedule.

*Quote from a resident about the LTCOP*

*-Anne, LTC Resident*

YES! I want to make a difference as an Ombudsman!

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