

Doing Good, Does You Good: Be an Advocate for Residents in Long-Term Care

Thousands of residents of long-term care (LTC) facilities in Kentucky depend on LTC ombudsmen to advocate for them. We need more LTC ombudsmen! It may surprise you to learn that most LTC ombudsmen across the country are volunteers, and they perform incredibly important work. They are ready and willing to help residents with any care concern, no matter how big or small. There is no one else in long-term care doing what a LTC ombudsman does. We have reached a critical point in Kentucky, and to keep the LTC Ombudsmen Program running effectively for all residents of long-term care in our state, we must find and train more volunteers to do this important and fulfilling work.

A new training curriculum was released this year, and we are excited to use this interactive, informative curriculum to train our newest certified volunteer ombudsmen in Kentucky. The new curriculum involves classroom training, independent study, and work in the field to fully prepare a new ombudsman. In Kentucky there is a local long-term care ombudsman program in each of the 15 area development districts, each of whom manages their own district program with staff and volunteers. We will offer classroom training via Zoom to qualifying volunteers across the state. You could be in class with aspiring ombudsmen from Pikeville to Paducah and Covington to Glasgow! Our classes will be planned for June and July.

Would you consider becoming a certified volunteer ombudsman? If you care about the Kentuckians who live in long-term care communities, this may be the perfect new role for you. You would have the opportunity to meet some amazing people who have served our commonwealth and now live in long-term care communities. You could help to ensure that these residents are receiving the care and attention they need and deserve. And you could be helping yourself! Recent studies have suggested volunteers over the age of 55 found significant decreases in levels of depression, functional limitations, and feelings of isolation through volunteering. Volunteering gave them a shared sense of purpose, and they strengthened ties to their communities.

If you are interested or want to learn more about becoming a certified volunteer ombudsman, please visit the KY State Long-Term Care Ombudsman's website <https://ombuddy.org/certified-volunteer-ombudsman/> or call (800) 372-2991. Email or call your local District LTC Ombudsman. A complete listing of all 15 local ombudsman programs and the counties they serve is available here <https://ombuddy.org/find-an-ombudsman/>. Your District Ombudsman is happy to talk with you and answer any questions you may have about local opportunities to serve.

We are looking forward to training new certified volunteer ombudsmen who will advocate for the thousands of Kentuckians living in long-term care!