

LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

Recruitment Toolkit



FLORIDA
OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

ADVOCATING FOR QUALITY LONG-TERM CARE

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SEND AN INITIAL EMAIL

You might choose to reach out to an interested volunteer initially by phone or email. If you choose to send an email, consider something along these lines.

Sample Subject Lines:

Learn more about becoming an ombudsman

Become an advocate for seniors

Body Copy:

Dear **<insert name>**,

Greetings! You recently indicated that you would like to learn more about helping Florida seniors as a volunteer ombudsman. My name is **<insert name>**, and I am the **<insert title>**.

The process to become a volunteer is fairly rigorous, because our top priority is to keep our seniors safe. The first step is for you to complete the application. Then you will interview with me, giving us a chance to learn more about you and you a chance to ask any questions you have. At that time, I'll tell you more about the next steps, which include passing a background screening.

Once your training is complete, you will receive a certificate and official badge allowing you to enter a long-term facility at any time and without notice.

Although you work alone, the Florida Ombudsman Program staff will be a responsive resource throughout your time as a volunteer. Also, ombudsmen meet monthly to share insights, craft solutions for each other's tough cases and recognize just how much we are all fighting the same fight. It's amazing to watch us come together and rally to help seniors.

Ombudsmen have a powerful responsibility, because we are the last line of defense for senior citizens. We're excited about the possibility of having you join us.

I'm available on **<insert days>** next week. Do you have any availability to meet for an xx-minute interview? Let me know by email or call me at the number below.

Thanks again,

<insert name>

<insert phone number>

ombudsman.elderaffairs.org

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

Sometimes a person simply misses the first email or needs a gentle reminder. Here is a sample email to send to a contact that doesn't respond to your first invitation — preferably 1-2 weeks after your initial email.

Greetings, **<insert name>**!

I recently sent an email with more details about how to join the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. I wanted to tell you a little more about what makes this volunteer role so impactful.

Ombudsmen are voices for seniors. We advocate for change when necessary. We help ensure that residents get the care they need in a timely fashion. We ask, "How can we prevent this from happening again?" until we get the right answer.

Often, a long-term care facility would prefer to hear feedback from our ombudsmen so that they can make improvements before being cited by a regulatory agency.

Many of our ombudsmen become interested in the program after a loved one spends time in a long-term care facility. Seeing the challenges, these volunteers decide to advocate not just for one loved one but for many.

I'd love to talk to you more to see if this program might a good fit for you. I'm available on **<insert days>** next week; could you talk then? Let me know by email or call me at the number below.

Thanks again,

<insert name>

<insert phone number>

ombudsman.elderaffairs.org

CUSTOMIZABLE BUSINESS CARD

Existing ombudsmen may appreciate having a business card to leave behind with facilities and residents. After you confirm what information they would like to share, use this downloadable template to customize a business card.

[DOWNLOAD](#)

ACCESS PROVISIONS
Under state and federal law, long-term care facilities are required to provide representatives of the LTCOP access to facilities, residents, and records without interference. 42 U.S.C. § 3058g and sec. 400.008.
The LTCOP has been classified as a health oversight agency under

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DOWNLOADABLE POSTER

Do you know someone who might make a great candidate? Have an upcoming event? Do you post promotional materials at your workplace or community center? Download our ready-made poster to help us recruit volunteer ombudsmen.

[DOWNLOAD](#)



helpfloridaseniors.com



DURING A PHONE CALL

Whether you are taking a phone call from a prospective ombudsman or reaching out to one for the first time, it can help to have some talking points prepared. Speak from your own experience but feel free to supplement with these prepared points.

1. What is an ombudsman?

An ombudsman is a person who investigates and attempts to resolve complaints and problems. Our ombudsmen are advocates for people who live in nursing homes, assisted living facilities and adult family care homes.

2. What does a volunteer ombudsman do?

Ombudsmen investigate complaints and conduct quarterly visits. We inform residents about their rights. In weeks without site visits, ombudsmen can catch up on paperwork, file mileage, or take continuing education classes.

Ombudsmen are voices for whatever change we want to see. We help ensure that residents get the care they need in a timely fashion. We ask, "How can we prevent this from happening again?" until we get the right answer. Often, a long-term care facility would prefer to hear feedback from our ombudsmen so that they can make improvements before being cited by regulatory agency.

3. Why are you looking for more volunteers?

Our number of ombudsmen has recently declined, but the need has not. Florida is seeking volunteers in both high-population and rural areas to ensure no volunteer has to drive too far to make an impact.

The need for ombudsmen is greater in Florida than other states, because it is home to so many retirees whose grown children live far away.

The volunteer ombudsmen we have are passionate about what they do, and they are rightfully proud. We know that if we had more qualified volunteers, we could do even more good for Florida's seniors.

4. What does the typical ombudsman look like?

People of all backgrounds are welcome to volunteer. A lot of our volunteers are retirees, but not all. Our ranks include former healthcare workers, teachers, pharmacists, attorneys, accountants and more.

Many of our ombudsmen become interested in the program after a loved one spends time in a long-term care facility. Seeing the challenges, these volunteers decide to advocate not just for one loved one but for many.

5. What makes the ombudsman program so effective?

What sets us apart is that our sole focus is on the resident. Where other organizations are bound by regulations, we can get creative. We offer solutions: Have you tried this? We can be consistent. We can visit as often as we like and build impactful relationships that get real results.

6. What qualities are you looking for in an ombudsman?

Compassion is the No. 1 requirement. Other helpful traits include good communication, a desire to help and tenacity. You must be willing to do paperwork and volunteer at least 15 to 20 hours a month.

7. What's the application process like? What's next?

After you express interest in becoming a volunteer ombudsman, you will need to fill out an application, interview with a program representative and pass a level 2 background screening. From there you will attend about 17 hours of online training plus site visits. Afterward, you will receive a certificate and official badge allowing you to enter a long-term facility at any time and without notice.

8. Do I mostly work alone?

Yes, you work alone, but we won't let you go until we are both sure you are prepared. We at the Florida Ombudsman Program will always be here as a responsive resource throughout your time as a volunteer.

Although we work alone, we meet monthly to share insights, craft solutions for each other's tough cases and recognize just how much we are all fighting the same fight. It's amazing to watch us come together and rally to help seniors.

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

We find that our current ombudsmen make excellent ambassadors for our program and sometimes help recruit new volunteers. Tell your ombudsmen that they can use their social media to tell others about their experience. Here are some sample social posts that they can adapt and use.

[DOWNLOAD](#)

1	2	3
<p>Do you know what an ombudsman is? It's me! I investigate and attempt to resolve complaints and problems for senior citizens living in long-term care facilities. We need more volunteers, so tell me if you're interested and I can answer your questions. helpfloridaseniors.com</p>	<p>You may already know that I volunteer with the Florida Ombudsman Program as an advocate for senior citizens. We're looking for more people with tenacity and compassion. Learn more here: helpfloridaseniors.com</p>	<p>Florida's senior citizens have earned dignity, love and support. Unfortunately, some seniors who live in long-term care facilities experience inadequate care that jeopardizes their health and quality of life. Join me in helping them as an ombudsman. helpfloridaseniors.com</p>