

North Carolina Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman Mentorship Program

The mentor program was established in 1997 as a mechanism for new Ombudsmen to have direct access to another Ombudsman for support and information during their employment. It is meant to provide a meaningful introduction for a new Ombudsmen and give the veteran Ombudsman an opportunity to share their skills and expertise.

What is a Mentor?

A mentor is a teacher, coach, confidant and a peer who encourages and supports a protégé or mentee to reach their highest potential. The best mentors are people whose own enthusiasm for their work is so contagious that they inspire others just by doing what they enjoy most.

What are the expected duties of the Mentor and Mentee?

The Mentor:

- Make the commitment of time and be readily assessable to the mentee
- Keep communication with their mentee confidential
- Adjust the goals to meet the needs of the mentee
- Help build self-confidence
- Encourage professional behavior
- Offer friendship
- Provide encouragement and support as needed
- Provide growth experiences
- Assist the mentee during critical situations
- Trigger self-awareness of their role as an Ombudsman when the mentee's values may differ from those of a resident
- Share personal experiences

The Mentee:

- Be open to learning
- Accept the assistance and feedback of a mentor
- Communicate needs to mentor
- Ask questions to clarify understanding
- Be willing to attempt new methods of approaching situations.

Selection of a Mentor

- Assignment of a mentor will be made by the State Ombudsman's office within a month of a new Ombudsman starting work.
- The mentor and mentee will be from two separate regions with consideration taken for proximity.
- A potential mentor will be contacted by phone to confirm availability & desire to serve as a mentor.
- Once a mentor has been assigned both the mentee and the mentor will be notified by mail from the State Ombudsman's office.

Setting up the relationship

- The mentor will contact the mentee within one week of receiving written notice of being appointed a mentor.
- Both the mentor and mentee will notify their supervisors of the mentorship.
- The full cooperation and support of both supervisors is important for a successful mentorship.
- Mentors and mentees determine the best location, time, and frequency of meetings based on their needs and availability.
- Communication can be conducted by phone, email and as often as possible in person.
- The mentor should provide prompt responses to mentee questions and alternative contact information made available
- Develop goals for the mentorship will be based on the mentee's identified needs.
- Shadowing the mentor during facility visits, in-services and CAC meetings is encouraged.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential and will be maintained so both parties are able to freely discuss concerns and opinions.

Evaluations

Mentor evaluations will be sent to both parties from the State Ombudsman's office at six and 12 months. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of mentorship.

How long should the mentorship continue?

The formal mentorship will be for one year. The evaluations will assist in determining the effectiveness of the mentorship. Ideally, the relationship formed during a successful experience will continue beyond the formal mentor-mentee term.

What happens if the mentorship match isn't working to either party's satisfaction?

- If the mentorship relationship is not a good match of personalities
- The mentor's work load becomes too busy to fulfill their duties or the mentor is on a leave of absence

In this situation, either the mentor or the mentee can contact the office of the State Ombudsman and request a change.

Suggested topics to address during the mentorship

- Case Management & Documentation
- Attend a Community Advisory Committees, a resident and family council meetings with the mentor
- Presenting In-services Training for Facility Staff
 - Community Advisory member orientation training
 - Resident's Rights
 - Sensitivity Training
 - Ombudsman Complaint Tracking System
 - Conducting a facility visit
 - Medicaid Uniform Screening Tool (MUST)