

Wyoming Long-Term Care Ombudsman **Volunteer LTC Ombudsman Position Description**

Position Title:

Volunteer Long-Term Care Ombudsman (VLTCO)

Program Description:

A long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) seeks to improve the quality of life of residents of long-term care facilities – nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and boarding homes. Ombudsmen make every effort to communicate with all residents of their assigned facility, and with those residents' families. They identify problems, complaints, and violations of residents' rights. They work closely with facility administrators and staff members to improve the quality of residents' life, their health, and safety. The LTCO program is governed by the federal Older Americans Act. Guidelines are set by the Wyoming Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. There is no charge for services provided by the ombudsman program.

Time Commitment:

Volunteers must commit to a minimum of 2 hours, in the assigned facility, per week, a minimum of 1 year of service, and 15 minutes per week for touch base meetings with regional long-term care ombudsman or the state long-term care ombudsman. Volunteers must also maintain their certification by attending all required training.

Responsibilities: Volunteer LTCO responsibilities include:

- Successfully completed a 37-hour training course established by the Wyoming Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman.
- Attend in-service training offered throughout the year, approximately 18 times per year.
- Visit the assigned facility on a regular but unannounced schedule, at least 1 time weekly for a minimum of 2 hours.
- Assist in the protection of residents' rights.
- Educate residents and their families about the facility's responsibilities to ensure a better understanding of the services to which residents are entitled.
- Establish good working relationships with the facility's administrator and staff.
- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive information, according to the signed VOP Confidentiality Agreement document.
- Respond to referrals from the Ombudsman Office.
- Report any serious problems immediately to the Ombudsman Office.
- Work with the Ombudsman Office as a first level for various inquiries.
- Refer any unresolved complaints to the Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman serving the region.
- Provide support in order to empower and advocate for residents who are unable to do so for themselves.

- Meet with all new residents, in order to provide an introduction to the program.
- Educate residents and family members on the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.
- Observe the physical environment of the facility – including smells, noises, staffing, call lights, etc.
- Communicate with facility staff to increase problem resolution.
- When in the facility, volunteers must wear their Wyoming Department of Health issued name badge.

Supervision:

Volunteer ombudsmen are supervised by the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

Restrictions:

A volunteer ombudsman does not:

- Volunteer for the facility or participate in the facility’s social activities with the residents.
- Develop personal friendships with residents that may affect their advocacy role. While the volunteer ombudsman should be friendly, the relationship should be based in advocacy.
- Receive monetary benefits or accept gifts from families, residents, or facility staff.
- Discuss issues of confidentiality without appropriate authorization.
- Become involved with or make medical, legal, or financial recommendations.
- Perform any type of hands-on personal care, activity, or treatment for residents.
- Have regulatory authority, although volunteers are encouraged to work with OHLS, when they are present in the facility.
- Represent the Program in public, without prior approval from the SLTCO.

Evaluations:

Volunteer ombudsman will be evaluated 1 time per year by the SLTCO or his/her designee.

