



The National **Long-Term Care Ombudsman** Resource Center



*Volunteer Retention and Recognition Tips!*

March 25, 2026

# Welcome

- ▶ This call is being **recorded**.
- ▶ Use the **chat feature or raise your hand** for questions for the speakers.
- ▶ **Links** to slides and resources will be provided in the chat.

# Agenda

- ▶ Overview
- ▶ Recognizing Volunteers
  - ▶ Liz Adamshick, Volunteer Coordinator, Ohio Office of the SLTCO
  - ▶ Lindsay Luebbering Deputy Long-Term Care Ombudsman, MO Office of the SLTCO
  - ▶ Liza Morrow, Volunteer Services Supervisor, Wisconsin Office of the STLCO
  - ▶ Lin Chao, Ombudsman Services Coordinator, GA Office of the SLTCO
  - ▶ Marie Kessler, Volunteer Coordinator, MN Office of the SLTCO



# Overview

# Volunteer Appreciation Week

April 19 – 25, 2026

- ▶ National Volunteer Week is an opportunity to recognize the impact of volunteer service and the power of volunteers to tackle society's greatest challenges, to build stronger communities and be a force that transforms the world.
- ▶ Each year, we shine a light on the people and causes that inspire us to serve, recognizing and thanking volunteers who lend their time, talent, and voice to make a difference in their communities. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) could not be its best without the volunteers who help carry out the mission of advocating for long-term care residents.
- ▶ **Thank your volunteers and recognize their work publicly by sending NORC brief messages of appreciation for their dedicated advocacy (e.g., examples of their advocacy, years of service, photos). We will highlight the submissions on social media. Email your submissions to [ombudcenter@theconsumervoice.org](mailto:ombudcenter@theconsumervoice.org).**

# ▶ Volunteer impact by the numbers

- ▶ [2024 NORS data](#): 3,598 volunteers = about 2.17 volunteers for every 1 FTE staff.
- ▶ Volunteers donated a little over 293,000 hours- 81 hours a year- almost 7 hours a month
- ▶ [According to USAfacts](#): The average is 66 hours per person/ 5.5 hours a month
- ▶ **We rely heavily on volunteers for program delivery and community engagement.**
- ▶ **Volunteer Ombudsmen are extremely dedicated to this work.**

# ▶ Recognition

- ▶ Think of recognition as *year-round retention!*
- ▶ How do you show appreciation?
- ▶ How do you maintain connection throughout the year?
- ▶ How do you stay engaged?
- ▶ How do you do it on a budget?



# Recognizing Volunteers

# ▶ Messages of Gratitude

- ▶ Annual Thank-a-Thon: staff thanks volunteers for their hard work and dedication.
- ▶ Gathering impact quotes and artwork from residents: Collecting artwork and messages from residents to create notecards, booklets, posters.
- ▶ Service anniversary or acknowledgement cards: highlights key impact data

Liz Adamshick, Volunteer Coordinator, Ohio Office of the SLTCO

# Innovative ways to recognize

- ▶ Message boards!!!
- ▶ <https://recocards.com/>



Lindsay Luebbering Deputy Long-Term Care Ombudsman, MO Office of the SLTCO

# Innovative ways to recognize cont.

- ▶ Monthly Advocate Academy education hour
- ▶ Splurging on a speaker during volunteer appreciation week/month
- ▶ Creating special meaningful awards- Louise Abrahams Yaffee Volunteer Advocate Award
  - ▶ Winner selected by Board of Directors
  - ▶ Ceremony at an annual event- 1,000 in attendance
  - ▶ <https://boaltc.wi.gov/Pages/Volunteer/YaffeAward.aspx>

Liza Morrow, Volunteer Services Supervisor Wisconsin Office of SLTCO

# Community Engagement

- ▶ Obtain Governors Proclamation!
  - ▶ Make request online
  - ▶ Complete form
  - ▶ Do it in advance



Lin Chao, Ombudsman Services Coordinator, GA Office of the SLTCO

# Recognition on a budget



- ▶ Acknowledging volunteers during smaller events throughout the year
  - ▶ Notecards with a packet of seed \$2 each
  - ▶ Recipe book- compiled together with book rings (\$13.89 for 50 Walmart)
  - ▶ “Getting to Know you Bingo Game- Winner gets bragging rights! (*Priceless!*)

Marie Kessler, Volunteer Coordinator, MN Office of the SLTCO

# NORC Resources

- ▶ [Become a Volunteer Ombudsman recruitment video](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer Ombudsman Program Representative Intake Toolkit](#)

## VOLUNTEER LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM REPRESENTATIVE INTAKE TOOLKIT <sup>1</sup>

This intake toolkit is designed to assist Long-Term Care Ombudsman programs with the application and screening process for potential volunteer Ombudsman program representatives. The toolkit includes several templates that Ombudsman programs can adapt to meet their individual program requirements.

Volunteer Ombudsman program representatives are invaluable, but due to the unique role and responsibilities of the Ombudsman program there are potential risks that need to be addressed. These risks should be evaluated prior to making changes to a program's intake and screening process and policies and procedures should be evaluated periodically. The [Volunteer Risk Management Considerations for Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs](#) worksheet highlights areas of risk and tips for reducing risk to help programs identify potential risk, review current program practices, and develop recommendations for improvements.<sup>2</sup>

While it can be challenging to find individuals who are willing to volunteer as Ombudsman program representatives, the purpose of the intake process is to ensure that this is a good fit for both the individual and the program. Through the information received on the application form, interviews, and references, this is the time when both parties can determine whether to proceed. Ombudsman programs should not hesitate to decline a potential volunteer that is not a good fit for this unique position, as it is better to do this upfront than to have a situation arise later when the individual has access to residents.

If the program determines the person would be better placed in another role within the program than as an Ombudsman program representative visiting residents, the individual may be able to use their skills for other valuable tasks. Other tasks or projects may include: creating promotional materials, assisting with content for the program's social media accounts, developing community education materials and training, and participating in community outreach events.

### Intake Toolkit Table of Contents

- I. Letter to Prospective Volunteer
- II. Key Points for Minimum Volunteer Requirements
- III. Volunteer Application Form
- IV. Volunteer Reference Interview Form
- V. Ombudsman Program Representative Conflict of Interest Form
- VI. Volunteer Acknowledgement Form
- VII. Interview Questions
- VIII. Additional Resources

<sup>1</sup> Examples of volunteer application and screening tools from State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs and local Ombudsman entities were used in the development of this toolkit. Many of those examples are referred to in the "Resources" section of the toolkit and are available on the NORC website: [http://ltcambudsman.org/omb\\_support/volunteer](http://ltcambudsman.org/omb_support/volunteer)



Discussion/Q&A

# Join Us Next Month!

- ▶ Let's talk about burnout, compassion fatigue, and tips for taking care of yourself!
- ▶ April 29, 2026
- ▶ [Register](#)



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**Ombudsman** Resource Center

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# Connect with us!

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 [ltcombudsman.org](https://ltcombudsman.org)

 [ombudcenter@theconsumervoice.org](mailto:ombudcenter@theconsumervoice.org)

 The National LTC Ombudsman Resource Center

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