

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMS, NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS, AND OTHER RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

According to the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), “communities cannot thrive without a variety of voices and perspectives. Healthy communities value the inclusion of all people, including the growing populations of older people and people with disabilities.”¹ It is important that the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agencies and Ombudsman programs that uphold these “voices and perspectives” and advocate with and for these individuals understand each other and coordinate efforts when possible.

Both the P&A and Ombudsman program statutes require the systems to collaborate in coordination of services and both programs are a part of the U.S. HHS ACL.² The Ombudsman program is in the ACL Administration on Aging (AoA) and the P&A program is in the ACL Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD). Highlights of the commonalities and unique characteristics of each program, the resource centers, and affiliate organizations are provided in this brief.

THE PROGRAMS

Protection and Advocacy System

The Protection and Advocacy (P&A) system comprises a nationwide network of congressionally mandated, legally based disability rights agencies. A P&A agency exists in every state and territory. There is also a Native American P&A in the four corners region of the Southwest. P&A agencies have the authority to provide legal representation and other advocacy services, under all federal and state laws, to all people with disabilities in all settings.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Under the federal Older Americans Act (OAA) every state is required to have an Ombudsman program that addresses complaints and advocates for improvements in the long-term care system. Each state has an Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (Office), headed by a full-time State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (Ombudsman) who directs the program statewide. Across the nation, staff and thousands of volunteers are designated by State Ombudsmen as representatives to directly serve residents. The Ombudsman program advocates for residents of nursing homes, board and care homes, assisted living facilities, and other similar adult care facilities. State Ombudsmen and their designated representatives work to resolve individual concerns and effect change at the local, state, and national levels to improve quality of care. Ombudsman programs provide information about how to find a facility and help residents, family members, and others understand residents’ rights and support residents in exercising their rights guaranteed by law.

¹ *Why Community Living Matters*. Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). http://www.acl.gov/About_ACL/Overview.aspx

² 42 USC § 15043 (a) (2) (D) (ii) and 42 U.S.C. 3058g (h) (6)

THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS

National Disability Rights Network

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) is the non-profit, voluntary membership association for the P&A and Client Assistance Program (CAP) agencies. NDRN's mission is to promote the integrity and capacity of the P&A/CAP national network and to advocate for the enactment and vigorous enforcement of laws protecting civil and human rights of people with disabilities. NDRN also provides training and technical assistance to the P&A/CAP network through the Training and Advocacy Support Center (TASC). TASC is a federal interagency project of the U.S. HHS ACL AIDD, the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), the Social Security Administration (SSA), and the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA).

National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center

The National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC) provides support, technical assistance, and training to the 53 State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs and their statewide networks of almost 600 regional and local programs. The Center's objectives are to enhance the skills, knowledge, and management capacity of the State programs to enable them to handle residents' complaints and represent resident interests (in both individual and systemic advocacy). Funded by the U.S. HHS ACL AOA, the Center is operated by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, Consumer Voice, in cooperation with the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD).

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Administration for Community Living

<http://www.acl.gov/>

National Disability Rights Network

<http://www.ndrn.org/index.php>

National Disability Rights Network- P&A/CAP Network

<http://www.ndrn.org/en/about/paacap-network.html>

National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center

<http://ltombudsman.org/home>

National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

<http://theconsumervoice.org/>

National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities

<http://www.nasuad.org/>

Note: This resource is part of series of materials regarding Ombudsman program and P&A collaboration, visit the NORC [website](#) for additional information on this topic.

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