



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



Volunteer Recruitment, Retention and Recognition

March 26, 2025

Heart of Texas flyer



YOU
CAN HELP PROTECT
residents' rights, their health
and their well-being.
Be an ombudsman.

Residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities can face abuse, neglect and exploitation. To make matters worse, they often have no one in their corner to stand up for them.

Ombudsmen advocate for resident rights. They help protect the quality of life and quality of care of anyone who lives in these long-term care facilities.

To be a volunteer ombudsman, you must

- Be at least 18 years old
- Have no conflicts of interest
- Complete certification training
- Have transportation

Volunteer hours are flexible, and no experience is required. Volunteers receive

- Free 36-hour certification course
- Ongoing support
- On-site experience during a three-month internship
- Continuing education

For more information:
800-252-2412
ltc.ombudsman@hhs.texas.gov
apps.hhs.texas.gov/news_info/ombudsman/

Local program contact: |

18DO232

MARCH 28, 2024

Contact:

For media inquiries only

Cheryl Hennen

651-431-2555

cheryl.hennen@state.mn.us

Volunteers needed to advocate for nursing home residents

Long-Term Care Ombudsman volunteers honored during National Volunteer Week

To coincide with National Volunteer Week in April, Minnesota's State Ombudsman for Long-Term Care is calling for more volunteers.

Long-term care volunteers bring passion and value to their work in nursing care facilities across Minnesota. With training and direction from the Office of the State Ombudsman for Long-Term Care, volunteers champion the office's mission to empower, educate and advocate for the rights of Minnesotans receiving long-term care services and supports.

Certified volunteers assist paid regional ombudsmen to investigate and advocate for residents in nursing homes and assisted living settings. Residents are often unable, uncomfortable or, in some cases, fearful to advocate for themselves. With a resident's consent, volunteers assist regional ombudsmen responding to residents' concerns through complaint investigations.

"I honor all Certified Ombudsman Volunteers for their commitment and dedication," said Cheryl Hennen, State Ombudsman for Long-Term Care. "I started my career in the Ombudsman's office

► <https://ltcombudsman.org/uploads/files/support/press-release-national-volunteer-week-april-2024-mn-ooltco.pdf>



[An urgent call for long-term care advocates \(startribune.com\)](https://www.startribune.com)

APRIL 17, 2024



, TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Opinion editor's note: [Editorials](#) represent the opinions of the Star Tribune Editorial Board, which operates independently from the newsroom.

An urgent call for long-term care advocates

The ranks of "certified ombudsman volunteers" have thinned. Their work is vital in ensuring dignity, quality of life for residents in nursing homes, assisted living. Minnesotans should step up.

By [Editorial Board](#) Star Tribune

Alexandria. International Falls. Waseca. Winona. The list of Minnesota communities in need of a vital and specialized type of volunteer — one whose mission is advocating for long-term care residents — spans the state.

The position, which is unpaid but has expenses reimbursed, is known as a "certified ombudsman volunteer." It's a program with a noble, decades long history in Minnesota but, unfortunately, one whose ranks have thinned over the years. The COVID-19 pandemic delivered a particularly unhelpful hit. In response, the state Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care has issued an urgent call for more volunteers, with the greatest need outside the Twin Cities and in the state's [eight Veterans Homes](#). The Star Tribune Editorial Board is honored to amplify this plea and urge Minnesotans to step up. It's in everyone's interest to do so. Many of us have a loved one who is in long-term [care](#), or has needed it in the past. At some point, many of us will require the care as well.

The volunteers, typically assigned to a particular facility or community, provide another layer of oversight and accountability for care providers.

Other responsibilities include providing public education about residents' rights. And attending meetings of resident and family councils at facilities that have these groups.

In turn, this important work helps ensure that residents have the dignity and quality of life that they deserve. That's a goal everyone should share.

This is an issue that "touches all of us," said [Cheryl Hennen](#), the state's long-term care ombudsman. The ombudsman office is a service of the Minnesota Board on Aging. The office does not act as the state's long-term care regulator but can advocate for residents, as well as investigate and help resolve complaints. There is no charge for this service.

Right now, there are just 22 certified ombudsman volunteers in 15 counties, Hennen told an editorial writer. At one time, the program had between 120-150 volunteers.

Other states are also struggling to find volunteers, Hennen said. The programs face stiff competition for volunteers' time, particularly in less populated regions. In addition, some volunteers who left during COVID didn't return. Prior to the pandemic, there were about 50 Minnesota volunteers.

Ideally, Hennen said, there would be a volunteer in every licensed Minnesota facility. In addition to the four communities listed above, there are 24 other greater Minnesota cities where there's an acute need for volunteers, including Detroit Lakes, Eveleth, Moorhead, Northfield, Fergus Falls, Faribault, Worthington, Luverne, Red Wing and Silver Bay.

Program requirements allow for a broad range of people to contribute. "Volunteers must be at least 18 years old, have reliable transportation, and enjoy working with older adults and people with disabilities," [according](#) to the ombudsman's office. They must also pass a background screen, sit for an interview and complete an initial 36 hours of orientation training.

"Volunteers must dedicate at least 6 hours every month to visiting their assigned facility. We also ask that volunteers commit to at least 1 year of service," the ombudsman office states.

Hennen emphasized that those who serve report a great deal of satisfaction from their work as an advocate. "They know how much of a difference they are making in terms of quality of life and quality of care," she said.

For more information on how to volunteer, go to mn.gov/ooltc/volunteerwithus. Those interested may also call 651-890-6308 or email the program's volunteer coordinator at marie.l.kessler@state.mn.us. opinion@startribune.com

The Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care

The Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care is a program of the Minnesota Board on Aging. Regional ombudsmen and volunteers work to enhance the quality of life for people receiving long-term care, services and supports through advocacy, education and empowerment.



For more information visit
<https://mn.gov/ooltc/>



or

No English?

mba.ooltc@state.mn.us / 651-431-2555

Become a Certified Ombudsman Volunteer

Advocate • Educate • Empower
Make a Difference!



Office of
Ombudsman for
Long-Term Care

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The National Long-Term Care
Ombudsman Resource Center



Certified Ombudsman Volunteer (COV)

Do you want to enhance the lives of residents living in long-term care through advocacy, education and empowerment? If you responded yes, the Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care invites you to make a difference by becoming a Certified Ombudsman Volunteer (COV).

As a volunteer, you will be assigned to a local long-term care facility, providing regular visits, ensuring residents' rights are protected, and helping to resolve complaints.

What does a COV do?

- Provides regular visits in long-term care facilities and builds strong relationships with residents
- Supports complaint investigations and assists residents in resolving concerns
- Educates residents, family members and care providers
- Advocates for changes to improve residents' quality of life and care
- Provides information and assistance to residents about resident rights, care issues, and services
- Attends resident and family council meetings
- Dedicates 6 hours every month visiting assigned facility and 18 hours every year to continual education training

Becoming a COV

To become a COV, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Complete an application including a conflict of interest form
- Complete an interview
- Pass a background screen
- Provide two references
- Complete orientation training
- Have reliable transportation

Contact us!

Marie Kessler
Volunteer Coordinator
651-890-6308

OOLTC.Volunteer@state.mn.us

Become a Certified Ombudsman Volunteer

Advocate • Educate • Empower • Make a Difference!



The Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care (OOLTC) is a program of the Minnesota Board on Aging.

Regional ombudsmen and certified ombudsman volunteers (COV) work with individuals, their families, health care and service providers and public agencies to ensure the health, safety, well-being and rights of long-term care consumers.

Contact us!

Marie Kessler
Volunteer Coordinator
651-890-6308
OOLTC.Volunteer@state.mn.us



Office of
Ombudsman for
Long-Term Care

What does a COV do?

- Visit residents in a long-term care facility
- Support residents' complaint investigations and assist in resolving concerns
- Educate on resident rights
- Advocate for improved quality of life and care
- Attend resident and family council meetings

Becoming a COV

To become a COV, you must:

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For more information, visit
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The National Long-Term Care
Ombudsman Resource Center

Heart of Texas training



Texas

Heart of Texas Ombudsman Program - Newsletter

Welcome to another exciting edition of the Heart of Texas Ombudsman Program Newsletter! 🌞 We're thrilled to share the latest happenings and important reminders with you. Remember, your involvement makes a huge difference in our community, especially in our nursing facilities. Let's dive in!

Last week

What a fantastic week we had! 🦋 We kicked things off with a valuable CE training session on Mental Health First Aid. This training is essential for equipping our volunteers with the skills to support residents effectively. We also welcomed a new Volunteer Intern, Christy H, to our team—let's give them a warm welcome! 🤝 Just a friendly reminder to please turn in your activity reports by the end of the month. Your contributions are vital to our program!

Next week

📅 Looking ahead, if you can, please attend your assigned facility Resident Council Meeting. If you notice that Regulatory is in your facility, don't hesitate to introduce yourself and share any concerns or issues you may have. This is another great opportunity to advocate for our residents and resolve any complaints. Lastly, if you know anyone who might be interested in volunteering for our program, please encourage them to join us! Let me know if you have any leads.

Things to remember

As we move forward, let's keep in mind the importance of volunteering in our nursing facilities. Your time and effort can bring joy and support to those who need it most. 🌸 Also, remember to stay engaged with our upcoming events and keep those activity reports coming!

Until next time!

Thank you for being such an integral part of our program! Your dedication and enthusiasm inspire us all. Let's continue to make a positive impact together! 🌈 Have a wonderful week ahead!

Happy National Volunteer Week!

"Volunteering is an act of heroism on a grand scale.
And it matters profoundly.
It does more than help people beat the odds; it changes the odds."
-William J. Clinton

Thank you for taking such an active role in helping give the residents a source of understanding and hope. **David Christianson** | Regional Ombudsman

"We love our COVs and the support and empowerment they give to residents in nursing homes and assisted livings around the state." **Genevieve Gaboriault** | Deputy Ombudsman

"We could not do our jobs without all of you, thank you for all that you do!!!" **Deb Vizecky** | Regional Ombudsman

Our volunteers are the heart of what our office encapsulates, it's the dedication to help others because of the calling not the duty. #heart **Jami Nyberg** | Regional Ombudsman

"Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in." -Unknown. Thank you to each and every one of our certified ombudsman volunteers! **Paula Weczorek** | Regional Ombudsman Supervisor

Thank you so much to all of our COVs—you provide a front-line, person-centered support to our Residents and we (and they) are so lucky to have you! **Amanda Caillier** | Regional Ombudsman

COVs have a strong passion and dedication to residents, resident rights, and ensuring they have equal access to ombudsman services. We simply can't do it without them. **Dana Manteufel** | Data Analyst

Your simply the best!
Tammy Hollingsworth | Self-Advocacy Specialist

Thank you. Thank you for not only for the advocacy and assistance you provide, but for the comfort of also knowing there are others out there willing to be with our fellow humans in their time of need. **Christopher Bonander** | Regional Ombudsman

Thank you, COV's, for all the great work you do and how wonderful you are to work with. **Parichay Rudina** | Legislative Specialist

Thank you Volunteers for all that you do for the Residents you support
You are the Best!!!
Jane M. Brink | Regional Ombudsman Supervisor

Thank you for all you do to advocate for the rights of residents in Minnesota. **Kate Selseth**, MPH, HCA/MBA, LNHA | Regional Ombudsman

Our COV's are priceless—they offer individual advocacy, devoted time, and perhaps most importantly, a listening ear and support to those who may feel alone. **Sally Schoephoerster** | Regional Ombudsman

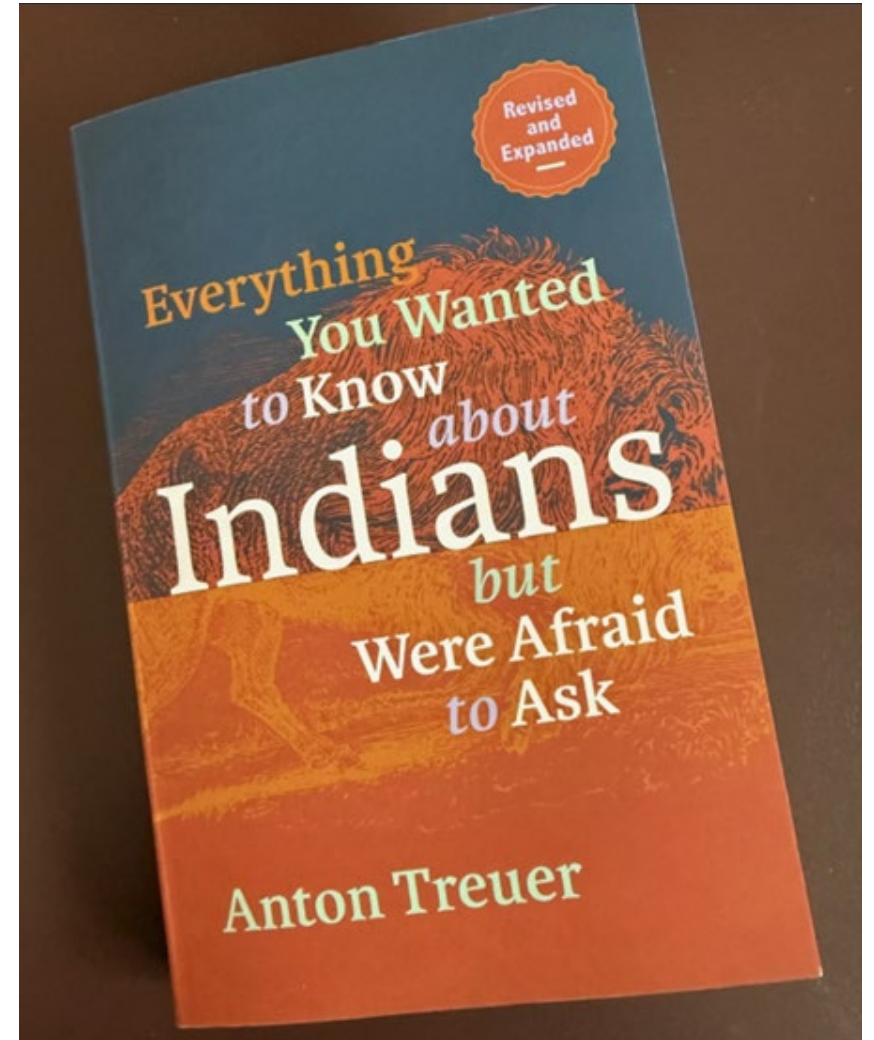
Our volunteers give residents a friendly face to talk with which allows them to feel safe and share their concerns with us. **Dan Tupy** | Regional Ombudsman

Your volunteer work has proven that one person can make a significant difference. On behalf of the entire Ombudsman's Office of Long-Term Care and every resident you've helped, thank you for being so passionate about making the world a better place.

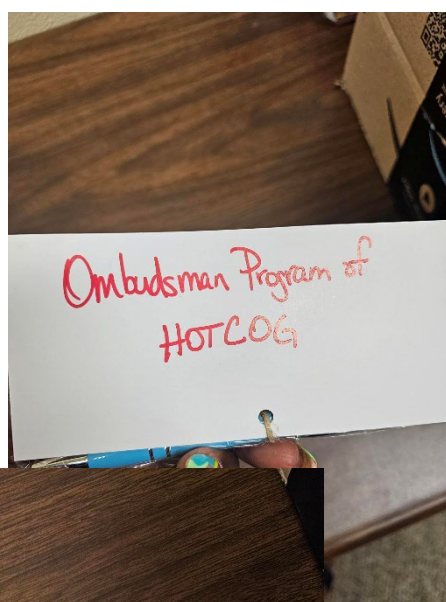
I am so grateful

We are so grateful for the Certified Ombudsman Volunteers who bring a robust and well-rounded volunteer base to the much needed

Minnesota Volunteer Recognition Gifts



[Minnesota Volunteer Recognition Video 2024](#)



NORC Resources

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Volunteer Representative Recruitment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pz5FFL0oNYE&t=7s>

**THEY NEED
YOU**



QUICK TIPS

Volunteer Program Assessment, Retention, and Program Expansion

This tip sheet provides specific points to consider during assessment of your current volunteer program, recruitment of potential volunteers, and the development of volunteer positions that will suit your volunteers' interests and strengths to benefit your program. This document also identifies resources regarding volunteer recruitment and volunteer role development.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Who are your volunteers?

- What is the demographic information of your current volunteers?
 - How many of your volunteers are retired, work part-time or work full-time?
 - How does this affect your volunteer training and meetings?
 - Are your volunteers Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen Xers (Generation X) or Millennials (Generation Y)?
 - What does this mean for their volunteer experience and your program management approach?
- Are you experiencing high turnover?
 - When do your volunteers leave the program?
 - What is the average length of volunteer service?
- Why do volunteers leave the program?
 - Do your volunteers experience burnout or compassion fatigue?
 - Do you know how to prevent burnout, identify signs of burnout and address burnout?

<https://ltcombudsman.org/uploads/files/support/quick-tips-volunteer-assessment-final.pdf>

View a thank you [video](#) from ACL



Connect with us!

- 🌐 ltcombudsman.org
- ✉ ombudcenter@theconsumervoice.org
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