Our Mission...

The mission of the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is to improve the quality of life for all Florida long-term care residents by advocating for and protecting their health, safety, welfare, and rights.

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A Message From the Secretary

At the Department of Elder Affairs, we are tasked with the immense responsibility of caring for Florida’s more than 4.8 million elders and fostering an environment that promotes their well-being. At the Department and across the aging network, we rely heavily on the work of dedicated volunteers who make a difference every day in the lives of elder Floridians. We are grateful for those who graciously give their time in service to benefit others, meeting their needs and improving the communities in which they live.

In a fast moving world, it can be easy for us to get tunnel vision and remain focused on the things going on immediately around us. We fail to see that we are a part of something bigger. That is not true of the volunteers of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP).

Their noble work is critical to accomplishing our goals to protect Florida seniors. LTCOP is made up of dedicated staff and volunteers whose mission it is to protect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of those residing in long-term care facilities through a collaborative resident-centered advocacy program.

Each year, ombudsmen visit more than 4,000 assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and adult family care homes to spend time with residents and families, discuss their experiences, and hear any concerns. Oftentimes, ombudsmen become the voices of the residents who may not have family or friends to assist them.

Our latest numbers show that volunteer ombudsmen donated 91,970 hours for the 2013-2014 Federal Fiscal Year. We are proud of their contributions to long-term care residents, and we are always seeking to increase the volunteer corps. With more volunteers, the program will have a higher frequency of visitations, which ensures even better outcomes for long-term care residents in Florida.

There is a saying that “there is nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer.” Volunteer ombudsmen with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program prove this to be true. I could not be more proud to stand with the staff and volunteers of this program.

Your commitment and dedication is inspiring, and I thank you on behalf of the Department of Elder Affairs.

Department of Elder Affairs Secretary Samuel P. Verghese

A Message From the State Ombudsman

In February 2014, I was given the honor of being chosen by the Secretary of the Department of Elder Affairs to serve as State Ombudsman. While traveling throughout the state this past year to attend council meetings and visit with volunteers and staff, I have witnessed firsthand the dedication they have for long-term care facility residents.

These hardworking individuals contribute their time and energy to selflessly serve others by improving the life for residents living in long-term care facilities. They are trained to work with residents and their family members to communicate concerns and resolve problems by providing advocacy, support, education, and empowerment.

Over 300 volunteer ombudsmen spend thousands of hours each year in licensed long-term care facilities, working to identify, investigate, and resolve the concerns of residents and their loved ones, and performing annual assessments in over 4,000 facilities in Florida. The program consistently empowers residents to know their rights and often provides a voice for those who may not be able to speak up for themselves.

We are proud to be a unique program whose success depends on the commitment, courage, and compassion of volunteers. Ombudsmen are the cornerstone of our program, and I am humbled to work alongside these amazing individuals as we serve Florida’s most vulnerable seniors.

State Ombudsman Leigh Davis
Games and Promotions

A Message From the Office of the Deputy State Ombudsman for Legal Affairs

The volunteers and staff of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program were very active during the 2013-2014 federal fiscal year in addressing policy and statutory changes designed to ultimately improve the quality of life of residents of long-term care facilities. Residents benefit when the barriers to the optimal operation of the Ombudsman Program are identified and removed. Two areas specific to the operation of the program that were addressed include the following:

• Revision of the form and process for conducting administrative assessments. The Ombudsman Program is statutorily mandated to perform a review of the conditions in each long-term care facility that impact on resident quality of life and care. The assessment is required to be performed annually, resulting in approximately 4,100 assessments in FFY 2013-2014. Complaints about the former assessment process from ombudsmen were consistent, and the program’s extensive reliance on the generous contributions of volunteers makes it essential to address their concerns. Volunteers collaborated with program staff to completely re-vamp the administrative assessment process. All ombudsmen were invited to participate in field testing in the development stage, making this a truly program-wide effort. The new form meets the overarching goals of complying with regulatory requirements in a manner that promotes ease of use for ombudsmen, consistent objective scoring techniques, formatting for data analysis, and coverage of high volume complaint topics. By streamlining the Ombudsman Program’s processes and forms, volunteers and staff are able to focus less on procedural paperwork and more on the needs of the long-term care residents we serve.

• Modernization of state statutes governing the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Proposed revisions to Part I, Chapter 400, Florida Statutes, for the 2015 Legislative session will create conformance with the Older Americans Act and efficiencies in the operation of the program that re-target ombudsman resources to complaint investigations and training that emphasizes the dignity and quality of life of residents. Such statutory updates that reallocate ombudsman resources should ensure that the ombudsmen remain qualified and informed advocates for residents of long-term care facilities.

ombudsman.myflorida.com
The Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program – Who We Are

Florida’s Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program was founded in 1975 as a result of the federal Older Americans Act, which grants a special set of residents’ rights to individuals who live in long-term care facilities such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and adult family care homes. In the state of Florida, a long-term care ombudsman is a trained volunteer who helps to improve the quality of care and quality of life for residents of long-term care settings.

Ombudsmen are community members, from all walks of life, who are passionate about improving the life for residents living in long-term care facilities. They are trained to work with residents and their family members to communicate concerns and resolve problems by providing advocacy, support, education, and empowerment. These volunteers simply want their time and talents to make a difference in improving the lives of people who may be elderly and/or disabled.

Ombudsmen receive and investigate complaints on behalf of nursing home residents and their families and serve as a voice for residents in ensuring that the facility meets mandated legal standards for every person receiving long-term care services. Examples of common issues in nursing homes include the following: discharges and evictions, medication administration, and matters of personal hygiene. Common issues in assisted living facilities and adult family-care homes include the following: menu quality, quantity, and variation; medication administration; and general housekeeping or cleanliness. Ombudsmen work to resolve residents’ concerns, to the best of their abilities, and all services are provided at no charge, and all complaints are confidential.

Ombudsmen are the heart of our program. These special individuals dedicate thousands of unpaid hours each year to ensuring that the voices of Florida’s long-term care facility residents are heard and problems resolved.

You can be trained and certified as a State of Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman and make a difference in the lives of people living in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and adult family care homes. In addition to having the satisfaction of knowing that you are improving the care of long-term care residents, you will have the opportunity to make new friends and increase your understanding of aging and the aging process.
Year In Review

Florida’s Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) achieved new milestones in success during the past year. Here are some of the highlights and accomplishments that the Ombudsman Program’s dedicated staff and volunteers have achieved:

Ombudsman Program in Numbers

- 6,077 Facility Assessments and Visitation Statewide
- 321 Volunteers
- 91,790 Estimated Unpaid Hours Worked
- 360,741 Miles Traveled (by staff and volunteers)
- $1,941,919 Estimated Average Savings

Complaint Resolution

When a complaint case is closed, a disposition code is assigned based on the resident’s perspective, e.g., resolved, partially resolved, no action needed, withdrawn, not resolved, or referred. Although complaint investigations may result in any one of these codes, the ombudsman strives to advocate for the resident to resolve each complaint to the resident’s satisfaction by working with facility staff members, family members, or other agencies on the resident’s behalf. However, some complaints require a referral to another agency.

Fiscal Year Results

- No action needed - 36%
- Resolved - 29%
- Withdrawn - 16%
- Not resolved - 4%
- Partially resolved - 10%
- Referred - 4%
- Not resolved - 4%
- Other - 1%

Quarterly Ombudsman Program Data – Fiscal Year 2013-2014

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*Reflects both initiation and closure dates that may overlap quarterly reporting periods.
Recommendations by the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Council

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program’s State Council is comprised solely of volunteers and serves as an advisory body to assist the State Ombudsman in reaching a consensus among local councils on issues affecting residents and impacting the optimal operation of the program. The recommendations from the State Council in the 2013-2014 FFY are as follows:

- Develop a more targeted consent form that will provide prompts to lead the ombudsman to the correct individual with the authority to provide informed consent to proceed with an investigation;
- Develop an ombudsman tool explaining the various legal representatives and their authority to make decisions about the person or property of the resident, including common scenarios and suggested solutions;
- Develop and implement a condensed visit form;
- Streamline the program exit interview process, format, method of collection, and rate of response upon exiting;
- Develop more effective and efficient activity reports;
- Update all current online training modules;
- Provide additional continuing education credit opportunities;
- Develop and implement an award system that recognizes the hard work performed by volunteers;
- Increase recruitment efforts by developing an outreach list of contact information for churches statewide for the new volunteer poster;
- Increase statewide public awareness of the program by providing general presentations at local events;
- Update the current program public service announcement for both radio and print media; and
- Continue with updating program electronic and written materials such as brochures, posters, and webpage.

Ensuring the health, safety, welfare, and rights of long-term care facility residents.
The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Announces Statewide Ombudsman of the Year

Each year, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program announces the State Ombudsman of the Year award recipient, honoring the ombudsman volunteer with a certificate of appreciation at his or her local council meeting and award presentation given by the State Ombudsman. State Ombudsman Leigh Davis recently announced Linda O’Leary, an ombudsman volunteer in the West Central Office, as State Ombudsman of the Year.

“Our volunteers are critical to the success of the program and are advocates for the seniors we serve every day,” said Davis. “Through her hard work, Linda consistently demonstrates her dedication to the role of ombudsman.”

Linda joined the program as a volunteer in August 2011 and has served as the West Central Council Chair and training mentor since 2012. She was selected by her peers with the program’s West Central Council as their Ombudsman of the Year for her tremendous contributions to the council and the residents they serve. From there, she was selected by members of the State Council.

Linda received a certificate of appreciation and a gift from West Central District Ombudsman Manager Lynn Penley at a council meeting earlier this year and was recently presented with an award by State Ombudsman Leigh Davis and former Department of Elder Affairs Secretary Charles Corley at the annual staff training conference for her outstanding service to the program.

“Linda continually seeks out opportunities through speaking engagements to inform the public about the Ombudsman Program and to recruit volunteers. Through her numerous assessments on facilities within her area, she has demonstrated her passion for residents and her commitment to ensuring their needs are properly being met,” said Lynn Penley, District Ombudsman Manager.

If you would like to learn more about the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program or talk with someone about becoming a volunteer, please call our toll-free number at 1-888-831-0404 or visit our website at http://ombudsman.myflorida.com/Volunteer.php.
2014 District Ombudsman of the Year Award Winners

Ombudsmen volunteers are critical and essential to the success of the program. Their service as advocates for long-term care facility residents is invaluable. Every year, volunteers from each local council choose one of their peers as an Ombudsman of the Year for their area. That individual is then nominated for Statewide Ombudsman of the Year, which is determined via a majority vote by the State Council. We would like to recognize and congratulate the following 2014 Ombudsman of the Year winners for each local council. Congratulations to all who won!

Brevard – Virginia Sines (March 2010)
“Virginia is a tremendous resource to the Brevard County Council. Serving as the Council Chair, she not only provides advice to active and new ombudsmen, she also provides a level of insight into ombudsman work that only an experienced professional can give. Having worked in the long-term care industry, Virginia knows what it takes to ensure that the rights of the residents are respected and upheld. Virginia cares deeply about the program and goes above and beyond the call of duty to advocate for the long-term care residents of Brevard County,” said Kevin McKeown, District Ombudsman Manager.

Broward – Hanna Fink (February 2013)
“Hanna is always willing to assist with whatever the program needs. She is persistent in getting satisfaction for the residents,” said DeLois Williams, District Ombudsman Manager.

East Central – Maritza Ramos-Pratt (May 2008)
“Maritza is a wonderful example of what an ombudsman should strive to be. She consistently puts the needs of the program first and has an ability to bring people together through positive communication. We are proud to have Maritza represent the East Central Florida council as our Ombudsman of the Year,” said Kevin McKeown, District Ombudsman Manager.

First Coast – Millicent Dangerfield (December 2005)
“Millicent always goes above and beyond the call of duty. She is very dedicated to the residents as their advocate and ensures they receive the quality care they deserve,” said Michael Milliken, District Ombudsman Manager.

Mid and South Pinellas – Shelia Ramsdell (July 2011)
“Sheila goes above and beyond and always puts the resident first. Residents comment on how they feel cared for and heard when Sheila is working with them. She always helps wherever she is needed,” said Annette Perry, District Ombudsman Manager.

North Central – Dana Darby (November 2007)
“Dana consistently represents the Ombudsman Program in a positive manner and is dedicated to the causes that the program represents. This is her second nomination, as she was also named the 2009 Ombudsman of the Year by the North Central Florida District Council,” said Adele Evans, District Ombudsman Manager.

North Central – Johnny Brown (November 2011)
“Johnny has an extensive working background in public and environmental health. He really enjoys speaking with residents and advocating on their behalf,” said Adele Evans, District Ombudsman Manager.
North Dade – Shirlee Leifert (November 2006)
“Shirlee is one of the most consistent and dedicated ombudsmen I have worked with during my time as a district manager,” said Ramon Keppis, District Ombudsman Manager.

Northwest – Sarah Ballew (November 2012)
“Sarah is a remarkably intelligent, compassionate, and caring lady and is a tremendous asset to Florida’s Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. We are indeed privileged to have her advocating for our residents in Northwest Florida,” said Mike Phillips, District Ombudsman Manager.

Palm Beach – Ellie Rosen (June 2009)
“Ellie is dedicated to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and the long-term care residents she serves. She is an inspiration to all,” said Jo-Ann Quiles, Regional Ombudsman Manager.

Panhandle – Barbara Brandt (March 2012)
“Barbara is passionate about her role as a long-term care advocate. She demonstrates the program’s mission, and desires to make a difference in the lives of those she meets,” said Janice Harvey, District Ombudsman Manager.

Pasco and North Pinellas – Lorraine Domanski (November 1999)
“Lorraine always shows the residents how much she cares in the way she communicates and works tirelessly to advocate for them. She will contact whomever she can to fully understand the resident’s issue and works together with other agencies to resolve the complaint to the resident’s satisfaction,” said Annette Perry, District Ombudsman Manager.

South Central – Robert Bettis (February 2012)
“Robert is one of those individuals who everyone looks to for advice and mentoring. He is constantly informing friends, family, and neighbors about the program and actively seeks recruits. He is very committed to his role as an ombudsman,” said Terre Anne Lindstamer, District Ombudsman Manager.

South Dade – Kathleen Kitteriell (September 2012)
“Kathleen was inspired to become an ombudsman after her own personal journey helping to care for her mother who became a resident in a nursing home. She cares deeply about the welfare of seniors and is committed to insuring they receive the quality of care to which they are entitled,” said Alicia Salinas, District Ombudsman Manager.

Southwest – Jack Barghausen (October 2012)
“Jack is dedicated to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and the long-term care residents he serves. He is a tireless, caring resident advocate who believes that each resident is entitled to receiving the care they deserve,” said Barbara Pohl, District Ombudsman Manager.

Treasure Coast – Dr. Valerie Nubi-Collins (September 2007)
“Valerie is dependable, caring, responsible, and eager to serve where needed. She truly has a heart for the residents,” said Terre Anne Lindstamer, District Ombudsman Manager.

Withlacoochee – Dr. Millie Perrault (July 2007)
“Millie always displays a positive attitude and assists and inspires fellow ombudsmen. She is extremely committed to the program and residents,” said Adele Evans, District Ombudsman Manager.
"The most rewarding experience I have ever had."
- Volunteer Ombudsman

"An incredible way to make a difference in the life of a senior."
- Volunteer Ombudsman
Volunteer Appreciation Month

Established in 1974, National Volunteer Week is a program of Points of Light. Points of Light encourages volunteerism through four programs: HandsOnNetwork, GenerationOn, AmeriCorp Alums, and the Points of Light Corporate Institute. National Volunteer Week began in 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed an executive order establishing the week as an annual celebration of volunteering.

Each year, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program celebrates Volunteer Appreciation Month by selecting our Statewide Ombudsman of the Year and participating in various local events throughout the state. This year’s winner of the Statewide Ombudsman of the Year Award went to Linda O’Leary from our West Central Office. Linda was selected by her peers and unanimously voted as the winner by the state council representatives.

During the East Central Office’s council meeting for April, staff presented volunteers with a certificate of appreciation and recognition for their hard work, dedication, and advocacy in serving long-term care facility residents throughout Brevard County. Staff with the North Central Office also presented volunteers with a cake and certificates of appreciation.

The Panhandle Office held its annual appreciation luncheon on April 16 where volunteers were provided tokens of appreciation from the Department, and the following special presentations were given: District Ombudsman of the Year, Leadership Award, Most Assessments Completed, Most Resident Visitations Completed, and other awards. Additionally, all volunteers received a flower pot with a plastic egg filled with candy.

While the program works hard to recognize our volunteers each day, Volunteer Appreciation Month in April is an extra special time to showcase all of their hard work and dedication as advocates for the numerous seniors we serve statewide throughout the year.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer and would like additional information, please visit our website at http://ombudsman.myflorida.com/Volunteer.php or call toll-free 1-888-831-0404.
Older adults have made countless contributions and sacrifices to ensure a better life for future generations. Since 1963, communities across the country have shown their gratitude by celebrating Older Americans Month each May. This celebration recognizes older Americans for their contributions and demonstrates our nation’s commitment to helping them stay healthy and active.

In 2014, the theme for Older Americans Month was “Safe Today. Healthy Tomorrow.” It focused on injury prevention and safety to encourage older adults to protect themselves and remain active and independent for as long as possible.

Accidents involving this population result in at least six million medically treated injuries and more than 30,000 deaths every year. With an emphasis on safety during Older Americans Month, we encourage older adults to learn about the variety of ways they can avoid the leading causes of injury, such as falls.

Safety tips to help prevent injuries include the following:

- Exercise regularly to improve endurance, strength, balance, and coordination.
- Have your vision checked regularly.
- Be aware of how your medications interact with other prescription and over-the-counter drugs, certain foods, alcohol, and other medical conditions.
- Learn how medications may make you unsteady on your feet or impact your ability to operate a motor vehicle.
- Create a medication schedule or use a scheduler box to make sure you take no less or more than prescribed.
- Install handrails and grab bars wherever they are helpful, especially around stairs and in bathrooms.
- Ensure ample lighting inside and outside of your home, particularly around frequently used walkways.
- Choose shoes with non-slip soles that provide support without bulk that could cause you to trip.
- Set your water heater to 120 degrees to prevent scalding.
- Be sure you have a smoke alarm in or very near your cooking area. Alarms should also be installed in all bedrooms.
- Do not smoke in your home, especially if oxygen therapy is used.
- Limit your trips to daytime and good weather conditions. Wear your seat belt, even during short trips.

While Florida’s Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program provides services, support, and resources to older adults year-round, Older Americans Month offers an opportunity for us to provide specialized information and services around the important topic of injury prevention. This information will help older adults take control of their safety and live longer, healthier lives.

Throughout May, Florida’s Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program encourages communities and long-term care facilities to celebrate this special month, conducts activities to honor older Americans, and provides tips on how to avoid injury. To learn more about Older Americans Month and how you can participate in future events, contact your local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Office by visiting ombudsman.myflorida.com or calling 1-888-831-0404 to find ongoing opportunities to celebrate and support older Americans.
The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program held its first staff training conference in several years for district and regional managers and Central Office the week of September 9-12 in Orlando. With all of the changes the program has experienced this year, State Ombudsman Leigh Davis felt that it was essential to conduct a training conference. The goals for the conference were to create unity among staff, learn new skills as managers, review procedures related to the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), and introduce the new Operations Manual.

The two-and-a-half-day training conference featured LTCOP presenters as well as Kim Smoak with the Agency for Health Care Administration and Felipe Martinez with the Department of Elder Affairs. A huge thank you to the following presenters who helped make this training conference a success:

- **Kim Smoak** with the Agency for Health Care Administration for her Long-Term Care Ombudsman Updates presentation;
- **Felipe Martinez** with the Department of Elder Affairs for his Communication Skills for Supervisors presentation;
- **Susan Anderson** for her ALF Rule Changes, Referrals, Working with Ombudsman Councils, Administrative Assessment and CE Training, and Legal Issues presentations;
- **Therese Schroer** for her Budget/Data/Travel Overview and NORS presentations;
- **Helen Anderson** for her NORS presentation;
- **Bryan Morgan** for his Recruitment and Retention presentation;
- **Shannon Knowles** for her Media Relations presentation;
- **Mike Milliken** for his ALF Rule Changes presentation;
- **Betsy McAllister** for her Administrative Assessment and CE Training presentation; and
- **Nancy King** for her Working With Ombudsman Councils presentation.

In addition to training, time was set aside to honor an outstanding program volunteer with a presentation of the State Ombudsman of the Year Award. State Ombudsman Leigh Davis, alongside former DOEA Secretary Charles Corley, presented the award to Linda O’Leary, an ombudsman with the West Central Office.

The training conference provided staff the opportunity to sharpen their skills, learn new ones, and maintain comradery. With the help of the Regional and District Managers, along with numerous staff, Leigh and Susan worked hard to streamline current processes and eliminate those that simply did not benefit the program. Staff and volunteers are excited at the positive direction the program is headed through our renewed partnerships with state agencies such as AHCA, DCF – Adult Protective Services, and the continued support from DOEA. These relationships, along with dedicated staff and volunteers, are crucial to our mission to improve the quality of life for all long-term care residents by advocating for and protecting their health, safety, welfare, and rights.
Office Locations

Northwest
1101 Gulf Breeze Parkway
Building 3, Suite 6
Gulf Breeze, FL 32561
(850) 916-6720

Panhandle
4040 Esplanade Way
Suite 380
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850) 921-4703

North Central
1515 E. Silver Springs Boulevard
Suite 203
Ocala, FL 34470
(352) 620-3088

First Coast
Midtown Center Office
Center Park, Bldg. #3300
4161 Carmichael Avenue
Suite 141
Jacksonville, FL 32207
(904) 391-3942

West Coast
11351 Ulmerton Road
Suite 303
Largo, FL 33778
(727) 588-6912

West Central
701 W. Fletcher Avenue
Suite C
Tampa, FL 33612
(813) 558-5591

South Central
200 N. Kentucky Avenue
Suite 224
Lakeland, FL 33801
(863) 413-2764

Southwest
2295 Victoria Avenue
Room 152
Ft. Myers, FL 33901
(239) 338-2563

Palm Beach
111 S. Sapodilla Avenue
#125 A-B-C
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
(561) 837-5038

Broward
8333 W. McNab Road
Suite 231
Tamarac, FL 33321
(954) 597-2266

North Dade
7270 NW 12th Street
Suite 520
Miami, FL 33126
(786) 236-1418

South Dade
7300 N. Kendall Drive
Suite 780
Miami, FL 33156
(305) 671-7245

South Dade & the Keys
7300 N. Kendall Drive
Suite 780
Miami, FL 33156
(305) 671-7245

South Central
200 N. Kentucky Avenue
Suite 224
Lakeland, FL 33801
(863) 413-2764

Map Legend
- West Region
- North Region
- East Region
- Regional & District Offices
- District Offices
Organizational Structure

- Secretary, Department of Elder Affairs
  - State Ombudsman
    - State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Council
      - Regional Ombudsman Manager
        - Deputy State Ombudsman for Legal Affairs
          - Deputy State Ombudsman for Operations
            - Communications Director
              - District Ombudsman Manager
                - Volunteers

JOIN OUR TEAM!
Become a volunteer today.

Call toll-free 1-888-831-0404 or visit http://ombudsman.myflorida.com/Volunteer.php
FLORIDA OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM
ADVOCATING FOR QUALITY LONG-TERM CARE

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