

What does a volunteer long-term care ombudsman do?

The Volunteer Ombudsman Program places volunteers in long-term care facilities across Iowa to assist the state's team of Local Long-Term Care Ombudsmen carry out the duties of the Older Americans Act of 1965.

Once trained and certified, volunteer ombudsmen:

- Spend a minimum of three hours per month in unannounced, varied visits to residents at a long-term care facility;
- Observe, listen to, interact with and empower;
- Identify concerns and monitor progress toward resolution;
- Observe general conditions of a long-term care facility;
- Provide follow-up visits on cases investigated by Local Long-Term Care Ombudsmen;
- Attend Resident and Family Council meetings at the request of council members; and
- Provide general information to residents and families.

For additional information, contact the VOP Coordinator at:

866.236.1430
volunteervop@iowa.gov

Through advocacy, self-empowerment, and education by the Volunteer Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, each resident in a long-term care facility will be treated with dignity and respect and will have his or her rights and wishes honored.

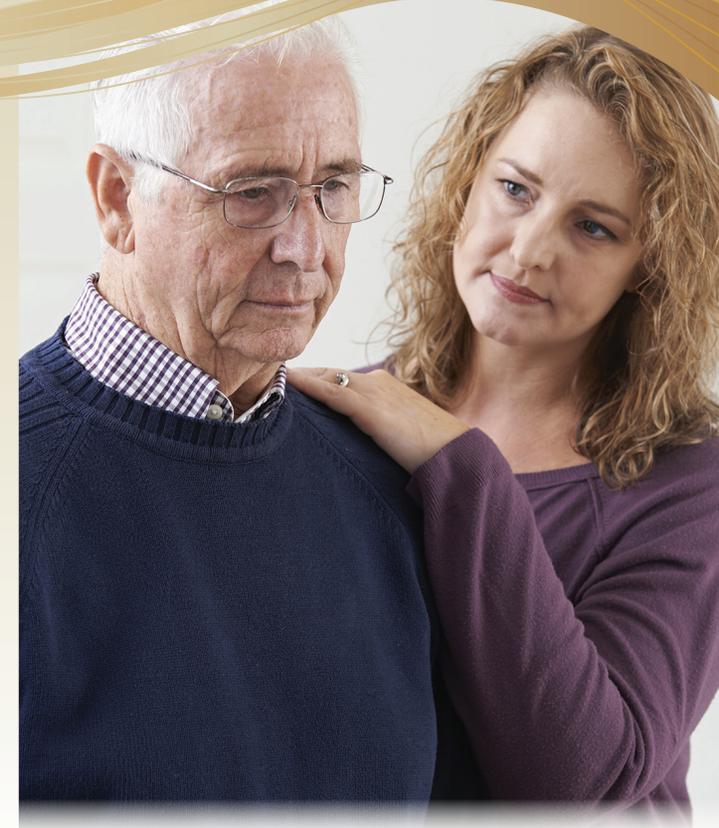
Volunteer OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM



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What is a long-term care ombudsman?

The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OSLTCO) works to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of individuals residing in long-term care by investigating complaints, seeking resolutions to problems and providing advocacy, with the goal of enhancing quality of life and care.

In Iowa, the OSLTCO employs the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and a team of Local Long-Term Care Ombudsmen to advocate on behalf of more than 54,000 residents and tenants who live in nursing facilities, assisted living programs, residential care facilities and elder group homes. As a result, the OSLTCO depends on dedicated volunteers to assist in their local communities.

How can I advocate on behalf of long-term care residents?

The OSLTCO coordinates the Volunteer Ombudsman Program (VOP) to train and certify individuals who are interested in listening, empowering and serving as a voice for long-term care residents.

The goal of the VOP is to place a volunteer in each of the state's long-term care facilities in order to ensure residents' rights are being promoted and protected across Iowa.

Unlike facility volunteers, VOP volunteers do not assist residents with daily activities. Rather, they are responsible for making several unannounced visits to a specific facility each month to talk to residents and family members and identify concerns.

What are the requirements for VOP volunteers?

To become a certified VOP volunteer, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older;
- Complete an application that includes a conflict of interest form;
- Complete a pre-screening phone interview;
- Attend a classroom training as well as pre- and post-training assignments;
- Pass criminal history and abuse registry checks conducted by the State;
- Complete a post-training consultation; and
- Complete a facility orientation with the Local Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

To maintain VOP certification, you must:

- Complete continuing education hours (10 hours in year one, six hours every year thereafter);
- Abide by program policies and procedures;
- Consistently complete facility visits and monthly reports; and
- Apply for recertification.

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