

Ohio Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Federal Authority: Older Americans Act of 1965 As Amended (US Code 3058(g))
45 CFR 1324

State Authority: Ohio Revised Code 173.14 – 173.28
Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 173-14

Mission

The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman advocates for excellence in long-term services and supports wherever consumers live.

Governing Principles

Subject to: ▪ Ohio Ethics Law ▪ Ombudsman Code of Ethics



Structure

The Office is a decentralized, but unified entity including:

- **A state office** with nine staff employed by the Ohio Department of Aging; and
- **Twelve regional programs** designated by the State Ombudsman with 80 paid staff and 200 volunteers.

All staff and volunteers are certified by the State Ombudsman and undergo rigorous training and examination to represent the Office.

Key Ombudsman Functions

- Handle complaints
- Provide professional development for representatives of the office
- Provide advocacy services
- Provide public or community education and information
- Manage volunteer resources
- Overall program administration
- Establish a presence in long-term care facilities with consumers and with long-term care providers
- Review and comment on any existing and proposed laws, regulations and other government policies and actions that pertain to the rights and well-being of long-term care consumers

Confidentiality

Ombudsman representatives may not disclose identities without consent or a court order, nor any information contained in ombudsman records. Ombudsman services are documented in a secure web-based system on a central server; access is managed by the State Ombudsman.

Complaint Process

1. Intake from any complainant, including the ombudsman based on observation
2. Investigation to identify extent of problem, verify facts, look for root cause
3. Resolution through negotiation, mediation, education and referral
4. Follow-up to determine effectiveness and sustainability of resolution

Unique Functions in Ohio

- **MyCare Ohio:** Regional ombudsman programs in the demonstration area for MyCare Ohio (financial alignment demonstration) advocate for members, who include community-well individuals, as well as those who are consumers of long-term services and supports.
- **Advocacy for Consumers of Home and Community-Based Services:** Ohio is one of 13 states that expand the work of the Office to assist consumers living in their own homes.