

Draft
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**Long-Term Care Ombudsman
Program
Basic Training
Trainer Manual
Prototype Edition**

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Volunteers-The Most Significant Dimension of an Effective Program

Volunteer ombudsmen are the cornerstones of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Without volunteers, we could not begin to fulfill our responsibilities toward vulnerable residents in nursing homes. -Larry A. Brewer, Bi-Regional Administrator, Administration on Aging, 1999.

Most of the participants in the regional program training sessions will be volunteers, although occasionally you will be training paid staff. It is essential that you have a very high opinion of volunteers and consider them, in all ways equal in knowledge and skills to paid staff. They should be considered as an equal professional in assuming the duties of a community ombudsman. If you do not believe that volunteers can do this work with support, you need to study successful volunteer programs and how they operate. There are not enough funds in the Illinois Ombudsman Program to provide residents with a "meaningful access" to ombudsman services without volunteers. If you are unable to shift to what may be a new paradigm for you, that ombudsmen are critical to a successful program, you need to identify your perceived barriers and address them with persons who have successful volunteer programs.

You must believe that volunteers can be successful before you begin to train volunteers.

Volunteer trainees are unique and very special individuals who are entitled to be treated with the respect, kindness, and dignity that they so richly deserve. These individuals are dedicating their time and effort to promoting residents' rights. In many respects, it is they who are leading the crusade for quality care of residents in nursing homes.

Issues to bear in mind while training volunteers

Trainees come from all types of backgrounds and experiences:

- Some have earned college degrees
- Some have not graduated from high school
- Some have or have had medium or high-level professional positions
- Some have not worked outside the home
- Some will feel self-conscious about their background or lack of education
- Some may think that they already know everything about the job.
- Some will be comfortable with the discussion format
- Some will be reluctant to offer an opinion
- Some will favor writing
- Some will prefer talking or role-playing
- Some will be nervous about being "right"
- Some will be afraid to put down main points lest theirs be "wrong" or different from others
- Some will not like the discussion method
- Some will want to do two or more things at one time
- Some do not like group activities

One of the responsibilities of the trainer is to be sure that the participants do not feel "wrong". Let them know that they will not be graded on whether they get all the important points "right" or not. The trainer wants to know that they have thought about what they think is important. Let them know that different people may have different points. Having them write the major points, however, gives them the opportunity to write what they are getting out of the training. This allows them to think and reflect on the materials. These activities of thinking, reflecting, and writing are critical to what they will be doing as ombudsmen. These activities also contribute to their sense of confidence.

Volunteers need to feel confident about what they are doing. During the training, the use of positive reinforcements, verbal and body affirmations and encouraging words will all bolster the volunteers' confidence. It is essential that volunteers possess a high degree of confidence in order to perform well and empower others.

Professional Relationships

The trainer must always maintain a professional relationship with the ombudsman trainees. It is important that the trainees view the trainer as a resource. She must be approachable, knowledgeable, have a confident attitude and be able to handle problems with expertise. She must be able to provide constructive criticism when necessary, but in a way, that does not demean the volunteers.

The ombudsman program and concern for residents should be the primary concern and interest of the trainer and trainee at all times. Neither the trainer nor the trainee should be using the program for other purposes such as to develop close personal friendships or relationships. All people in the program are equal professionally; the trainer is not superior to the trainees. Requests for personal favors not related to program needs should not be made. And if made, they should be denied. (Examples of these kinds of requests include such things as asking to borrow money, spend the night with another ombudsman, etc.)

The ombudsman program is designed as a volunteer program. Volunteers should not be taken advantage of or taken for granted.

Notification of training

To increase awareness and promote advocacy for residents, an ombudsman program should initiate a sustained public relations effort to recruit volunteers. One component of this is to publicize initial and in-service training dates. The program should utilize as many modes of communication as possible. Media notices of the training should occur approximately two weeks to six weeks before the training.

Presentations also serve to inform the public of upcoming training sessions. Making presentations to various organizations, groups or clubs are also beneficial. The request for volunteers should be included in every presentation that you make about the ombudsman program. A follow-up letter should be mailed to every group where you made a presentation. This letter should contain information on the next training session. Examples of organizations include:

- Service clubs
- Church groups
- College organizations
- Civic organizations

Use of the media (print, television, radio, Internet) is another technique that always should be utilized to announce a training session. Examples of media include:

- Local newspapers
- Organizational newsletters
- Church bulletins
- Cable access channels
- Public Service Announcements
- Local radio and television talk shows
- A web site

In addition, prominent display of ombudsman program posters in the local community is essential. Examples of locations to display posters include:

- Senior centers
- Senior apartment complexes
- Assistive and independent living centers
- Hospitals and medical complexes
- Churches
- Nursing homes
- Colleges
- Coffee shops
- Public bulletin boards
- Beauty salons and barber shops

Location of training

A training location should be comfortable and accessible to all individuals. It is important to reserve a location early as some communities have a limited number of choices that do not charge for a room. Churches, hospitals, libraries and schools are often good choices. At times, banks or other businesses will provide meeting rooms for the public.

Time of training

Through phone calls or letters, the trainer should be aware of some of the trainee's schedules (Are they employed or retired?), so that a time convenient for the training can be arranged. A regional program may find it necessary to schedule night or weekend training for those who are employed. The initial training for Modules #1 through #5 is ordinarily all-day training, but may be held in two or more sessions. All-day training typically is held from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., with lunch being provided while continuing the training.

Invitations

Some type of personal contact should be made with any individual who has expressed a desire to attend a training session. At times, individuals interested in the ombudsman program will contact the ombudsman program's office and express an interest in coming to a training session. The program should keep a listing of these individuals and contact each one by phone or letter, preferably both, about upcoming training sessions.

Personal invitations to potential volunteers for the program should always be included during and after presentations about residents rights and the ombudsman program to service groups or organizations such as Retired Teachers Association Units, local AARP chapters, social work organizations, church groups and other retiree and civic-minded groups.

Individuals who are certified as ombudsmen should be informed about all initial training sessions, as they may know of someone who may want to come. The best way to secure volunteers is for the program's volunteer ombudsmen to ask their friends and neighbors. Additionally, all training sessions, including the initial training sessions should be open to all of the program's volunteers, if they think that they would like to attend to review what they have learned prior.

Individuals who are invited to initial training sessions for volunteer ombudsmen should be informed that they are under no obligation to either complete the training or become a volunteer ombudsman. Inform them that after they take the training, only then they can make an informed decision about becoming a volunteer ombudsman.

Individuals who express an interest in attending the training should be mailed a volunteer ombudsman application to be filled out and returned when they come to the initial training session.

Refreshments and breaks for training sessions

Snacks and drinks are important amenities to the initial training sessions. The physical environment of the location needs to be checked to see if refreshments can be served, e.g., outlets for coffee makers, tables, etc. The type and amount of refreshments will vary according to the time and duration of the training session. Coffee, tea and soda along with a snack of cake or fruit would be ample for a three-hour session of training. For an all-day training session, a light lunch should be provided for the trainees as well. Drinks, including water, should be available as long as a training session is taking place. Trainees should be encouraged to take breaks and/or get refreshments whenever they wish.

Various types of refreshments should be offered due to dietetic needs. For example, fruit for diabetics, decaffeinated drinks for non-caffeine drinkers, etc.

Training Box Materials

A "training box" can be helpful to a trainer to make certain that nothing is forgotten in what may be a "rush to go" to the training site. A training box is simply a box or carton containing all forms, applications, brochures, modules, etc., that will be needed during training sessions. As an example, the following is a list of suggested contents of a training box:

- Initial training sign-in sheets
- Job description forms
- Application forms
- Department of Public Health posters
- Ombudsman program posters
- Brochures of residents' rights and residents' rights for the developmentally disabled
- Guide to choosing a nursing home booklet
- Supplemental Materials
- Blue and gold ribbons and safety pins
- Regional program newsletter.
- Family council information
- Temporary name tags
- Plastic holders for name badges
- Modules
- Brochures for residents
- Brochures for staff
- Department on Aging brochures
- **Monthly Activity** form or local agency monthly report
- Department on Aging **Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Activity Form (IL-402-0660)** and instructions for this form
- **Release of Information Form (IL-402-0779)**
- **Access to Records of Incapable Residents of Giving Consent (IL402-0999)** forms
- **Notice of Concern to Administrator** forms (**an I CARE form**)
- **Ombudsman Program Case Recording (IL-402-0661)** forms
- Expense vouchers (for travel reimbursement, if necessary)
- Pens, pencils and markers to highlight materials
- Extra copies of Module #3
- Videos of choice

In addition to material in the training box, the trainer needs to determine if any equipment or appliances (coffee maker, VCR, etc.) will be necessary for a training session.

Preparation for using the modules

The trainer must be familiar with all material presented during a training session. For example, be prepared to define the words such as taxonomy, survey, prototype, module, etc.

A good training session involves the trainees talking, listening, reading and writing. It does not involve a lecture. Individuals assimilate information better when there is an environment of cooperative learning that allows for active involvement of the trainees.

No two training sessions are alike. The trainer will always learn something new at each training session. It is crucial for the trainer to apply what she has learned to improve future training sessions. An awareness of the differences in the trainees and the ability to be flexible in training will help ensure successful training sessions. Training is always evolving and you, as a trainer, will always try new approaches.

At all times, the trainer should maintain a positive attitude and keep the focus on advocacy of residents.

Training session - the beginning

A cordial welcome is given to each person attending. Before the training begins, the trainees are requested to sign a registration sheet, which requires their name, address, phone number, and email address (this helps to check the spelling of the trainees' names later.) The trainer should provide each with a temporary name badge to facilitate the trainees communicating with each other, using their preferred name.

Some individuals will have completed a volunteer ombudsman application and mailed it to the regional office. Those individuals who have not completed the application will need to do so prior to the beginning of training.

Individuals must also complete a conflict of interest statement, and a statement of assurance that they have never been convicted of a felony. The trainer should check to see that all of the trainees' signatures and forms are in order.

Start the training on time even though some may not have filled out all of the forms. Offer another cordial welcome. The next sentence should be a hearty, sincere and enthusiastic statement about their coming to the training session. At the outset, briefly go over the "housekeeping information" such as when lunch will be served, invitation to take individual breaks, the location of restrooms, telephones, areas where smoking is allowed (if any), and refreshments. Trainees should be told to take breaks and get refreshments as they wish.

The trainer should introduce herself and speak briefly about her commitment to residents having quality care and to the ombudsman program. The trainer should then invite each trainee to introduce himself and tell of his interest in volunteering for the ombudsman program. Each individual should speak for no more than 2-3 minutes. Rapport among the group often occurs prior to the training session and continues throughout the training, especially during introductions. In addition, it should be stated that individuals are under no obligation to complete training or become an ombudsman.

The trainer must keep the training "on schedule." Some individuals, during their introductions or later in the training, will want to discuss personal stories of friends or relatives in nursing homes. While this is clearly important to the individual, this should not take time away from training. When an individual begins to tell of a bad experience with a nursing home, the trainer may wish to use phrases such as, "I'm sorry that happened" or "That should never have happened. Perhaps you can tell me more about it at lunch."

Many trainees will assume training will consist of a lecture, a video(s) and a questions and answer session. It is important to take time to fully explain the format of training using the modules as a "read and discuss" method. The following areas should be explained:

- What is a module and how a module is organized:
- How many modules will be covered:
- Goals and objectives:
- What will be requested of individuals during training, e.g., discussion, writing of major points and questions; and
- Timeframe of the training

Some trainees may already know much of the information presented in the training. The information that these people have can be beneficial to the others as they go through the training. It should be explained to all the trainees that the modules were written for the inexperienced individual and a medical background is not a requirement for being a volunteer ombudsman. Assure them that when medical advice is needed, a nurse or doctor will be available for technical assistance.

Process for using the modules

Six modules and three facility visits comprise the Initial Basic Training. These modules are:

- ***Module #1, Getting Started***
- ***Module #2, Residents' Rights***
- ***Module #3, Beginning Resolutions***
- ***Module #4, Communication***
- ***Module #5, Observations***
- ***Module #6 Documentation Is Accountability***

The modules can be completed in two sessions, which last approximately a day and a half: one session requires visiting a facility and then completing the information in Module #6 on documentation. After completing Module #6, the trainee should accompany an experienced ombudsman at least two more times to a facility. Support needs to be provided until the trainee feels comfortable entering a facility and visiting residents as an ombudsman.

The trainer should explain that many concerns of residents are complex. This initial training will only give ombudsman trainees basic information on how to visit with residents and identify and handle simple concerns. Specifically, this basic training series will allow ombudsman trainees to:

- Inform residents of their rights
- Inform facility staff and other publics about the ombudsman program
- Ask questions in a manner to determine if there are problems in a facility
- Be able to identify a concern or problem when a resident relates it
- Know what initial questions to ask of residents, family and staff, when a concern is raised
- Observe the operation and environment of a facility in a manner that would identify systemic facility problems, such as lack of staff
- Document residents' concerns: and
- Know when to call the ombudsman supervisor

This basic training will not give the ombudsman trainees all the strategies needed to investigate or resolve all residents' concerns. The ombudsman supervisor must always be available to answer or assist ombudsmen. Initially, all ombudsman trainees will need to contact the supervisor in order to resolve nearly all concerns.

It important that the trainer emphasize that ombudsman trainees are not expected to handle any concern on which they have not had sufficient training. The trainer needs to stress the fact that support is always available to ombudsman trainees.

Using the modules

The trainer should spend a short amount of time explaining the concept of a module and telling the trainees that they will find that some topics are repeated in different modules. Also, the trainer should explain or note the *Purpose of the Module* and any introduction that is part of the module. The trainer may want to use her own introduction, such as giving a brief overview of each module. The remainder of the module will be read and discussed by the trainees.

The format for use of the modules depends on the number of people at the training session. The trainer may or may not remain in the room, but should be readily available to answer trainees' questions. The following is a suggested strategy for using the modules:

- Separate into groups of approximately three to five people.
- The trainer should explain the process to be used in learning the information in the modules. In rare cases, the discussion process has not been the most appropriate for the group. The trainer needs to be prepared to use part lecture and discussion in completing the modules, if needed.
- The trainer should read the *Purpose of the Module* aloud, introduce the module, and ask if there are any questions before the discussion leader is assigned.
- Each group will designate a leader, or the trainer may designate the leader.
- Each member of the group is given the same module, which covers a distinct topic. Sometimes, the group asks for all the modules at the beginning. Do whatever the trainee group wants to do.

- Each group should start with Module #1. The modules are self-contained learning components and as such, Modules #2, #3, #4 and #5 may be used in any other order with the same process. The modules were developed to allow flexibility at the discretion of the trainer. Module #6 must be presented after a visit in a facility.
- As an introduction to Module #2 on residents' rights, the trainer should introduce the Department on Aging long term care ombudsman poster, the Department of Public Health hotline poster, the official residents' rights brochures and other brochures, including the telephone numbers that are found on these documents. This is important because of the different terms used to identify the phone numbers, for example, Central Complaint Registry vs. Department of Public Health Hotline.
- The group leader will assume the role and ask the others in the group if he or she prefers to read any part of the module: otherwise, the group leader assigns sections of the modules to the trainees.
- The trainees are encouraged to mark parts of the module as they read using a highlighter or underline with a pen.
- The trainees will read silently for about 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the number of pages (typically 3-4 pages).
- If most of the members of the group have completed the reading assignment, the leader will begin the discussion by asking each person to report what he or she has read.
- Any assigned portion that was not read will be reassigned.
- It is not important if not all group members have read every page during the training session. The materials are to be taken home and read and used as reference.
- After each person has read the material, he will report on the main points or ideas contained in the section of the module he read.
- Group members are encouraged to ask questions to clarify main ideas.
- Group members are encouraged to "talk it out." As each member of the group reports the major points of the section of the module he read, other group members are encouraged to ask questions and participate in the discussion.
- The trainer will generally leave the room but will inform trainees of her availability. Initially, the trainer will, periodically, step into the room to see how the discussion is progressing and ask the individual groups about the difficulty of the materials, if they have questions, etc.
- Approximately 30-40 minutes should be allowed for discussion. It should take an average of one hour to complete each module. Modules #1, #3 and #6 are longer than the others. Module #4 has the least amount of information to cover, but may provoke more discussion because most trainees are unsure of how to communicate with residents who have a disabling condition affecting the ability to have a meaningful conversation.
- This process continues until all the modules except Module #6 have been read and discussed.

- Following completion of each of the first five modules, each ombudsman trainee will write five major points and at least five questions about the material covered. They may use the modules as a reference when they write.
- If trainees do not finish writing the major points and questions, the trainer should encourage them to complete this at home and bring the written points and questions to the next session of training.
- Having the trainees write the major points of each module as well as any questions he or she may have serves a purpose. It most often prompts the trainees to ask questions of the ombudsman trainer. In addition, trainees who are not comfortable with writing or are "out of practice" begin to feel confidence in this area.
- If all five modules are not thoroughly discussed by the trainees during the first all day session, the trainer should encourage the trainees to read all the material in the modules as this information is basic information they must know. Some trainees will be able to read all of module content during the discussion time.

The trainer may decide to incorporate videos into the training session. Videos, however, are not a substitute for discussion of any part of any module. While there are some good videos available, it is suggested that these be shown during the lunch break. If the trainer decides to show a video, it is important to explain to trainees the purpose of the video and what the trainees should expect to see. Time should then be allowed for the trainees to summarize what was important in the video to them.

Concluding the training session

Shortly before the conclusion of the training session, the trainer should:

- Collect any major points and questions completed by the trainees;
- Discuss and set the date, time and location of the next session of initial training;
- Encourage trainees to contact the program office with any questions;
- Explain the next session of training and what will be covered;
- Explain to trainees that, until they receive their official ombudsman certification cards from the Department on Aging, they should not visit a facility as an ombudsman, but should feel free to visit as a private citizen; and
- Most importantly, thank the participants for their work, their energy and their commitment to advocating for residents.

Just as it is important to begin the training session on time, it is important to conclude the training at or before the stated ending time.