

An Overview of the Michigan Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

Fiscal Year 2023



MLTCOP

MICHIGAN LONG TERM CARE
OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

Role of the Ombudsman

The MLTCOP strives to improve the quality of care and quality of life for residents living in nursing homes, homes for the aged, and adult foster care homes.

We advocate for the resident, at the resident's direction, and only with consent from the resident. Services are confidential and free of charge.

Paid Ombudsmen...

- Investigate resident concerns
 - Concerns regarding abuse, neglect, exploitation, eviction/discharge, hospital dumping, functional eligibility for Medicaid (LOCD), guardianship and harm to resident are top priorities
- Respond to notices of involuntary discharge
- Attend resident care planning meetings
- Conduct regular visits to licensed homes
- Provide information and assistance to residents, families, staff, & public
- Attend resident and family council meetings
- Speak with State surveyors about concerns prior to and during a survey
- Participate in health or senior fair
- Provide training on long term care topics
- Supervise volunteer ombudsmen
- Record cases and activities in the ombudsman database

What makes us Different

- We investigate concerns **at the direction** of the resident
- Must have resident consent to take action to resolve a concern brought before the program
- Must keep residents' and complainants' identity confidential and only disclose with consent
- We are **not** mandatory reporters to APS under state or federal law
- Program-wide service delivery is reported annually to ACL through the National Ombudsman Reporting System

Who We Serve

Residents in **licensed** long term care settings regardless of age, race, income, payer source, or any other demographic

- Nursing Homes 438 homes with 46,253 beds
- Homes for the Aged 337 homes with 25,861 beds
- Adult Foster Care 3,802 homes with 31,882 beds
- Total as of **10/1/23** **4,577** homes with **104,996** beds

We do not have authority to access residents in **non-licensed** settings (e.g., senior housing, unlicensed assisted living)

Program Staff & Volunteers

State Office of the LTC Ombudsman

- 5 FTEs in the State office
 - State LTCO, Assistant SLTCO, Legal Council, Senior Legal Council, Systemic Advocacy Attorney, Administrative Manager

Local Ombudsman Representatives (as of 10/1/2023)

- 20 paid ombudsmen (3 are less than full time) = 18.75 FTE
- 11 volunteer/student intern ombudsmen (in 9 regions)
- donated a total of 592 hours of service in FY23 (.28 FTE)



Training

All Ombudsmen

- Minimum **36** hours of training and mentoring
 - self-study (assigned reading and viewing MLTCOP modules, videos, and other materials) (up to **7** hours);
 - classroom instruction including interactive discussion and exercises utilizing case examples (minimum of **16-20** hours); and
 - mentoring in the field with a Designated Ombudsman (minimum of **10** hours)
- Remote mentoring continues for 3-4 months
- Case consultation is provided weekly and when needed
- 18 hours of continuing education required each year

FY 23 Work

- Answered question for long term care staff – 1,186
- Answered questions for other individuals – 7,937
- Completed visits to long term care homes – 2,852
- Attended resident or family council meetings – 134
- Participated in nursing home survey events – 381
- Investigated and closed complaints – 3,284

**Completed
by just over
19 FTEs**

Complainants for FY23

Complainant Sources

- **Resident – 990**
- **Resident Rep, Family or Friend – 520**
- Resident/Family Council – 6
- Facility Administrator or staff – 104
- Ombudsman or Volunteer – 20
- Representative from outside agency – 73
- Concerned person - 2
- Unknown (anonymous) – 52

**85% of the time
complaints come
from residents,
their families,
friends or
representatives**

Complaints for FY23

Top Complaint Topics

- Discharge/Eviction – 405
- Staff Failure to Respond to Request for Assistance – 212
- Rights/Preferences – 192
- Personal Hygiene – 172
- Medications – 169
- Dignity, Respect & Staff Attitudes – 153
- Living in a Less Restrictive Setting – 137
- Personal Property – 112

**These issues touch
on so many
aspects of the
residents' lives**

Study on Staffing



*“6. ...The committee further recommends that the factor of **1 full-time equivalent paid staff** working as an authorized, designated ombudsman **per 2,000 long-term care beds** be used as a base indicator of performance and a unit of effort to determine **the amount of additional resources needed.**”*

Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 1995. Real People Real Problems: An Evaluation of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs of the Older Americans Act.

Link to report: <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/9059/chapter/1>

Paid Ombudsman to Beds Ratio

- Michigan's state-wide average is **1:5,600** (10/1/23)
- Individual paid ombudsman ratios
 - A low of 1:2,342 in a very large rural area
 - A high of 1:11,933 in a densely populated area
 - Twelve paid ombudsman have over double the recommended beds to serve and of those, five have more than triple the recommended beds
- To reach the recommended 1:2,000 ratio, we would need a total of 53 FTEs which would be 30 new FTEs

Current Resources

FY23 funds expended by MLTCOP

\$ 1,352,711 OAA Federal Funds (Title III and VII)

\$ 828,888 State General Funds

\$ 28,466 Local Funds (senior millage)

\$ 2,210,065

- Additional one-time (ARP Act) funds were expended at the state and local levels for a total of \$73,959 not included in total above

Other States FY19 Data

A look at other State Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs
(FY19 is most recent data available)

State	Beds	State Funds	Local FTEs (Paid)	Ratio
PA	157,254	\$ 4.3 M	53	1:2967
OH	158,355	\$ 2.17 M	79	1:2004
IL	144,287	\$ 6.38 M	71	1:2032
WI	90,696	\$ 1.45 M	31	1:2926
MN	120,391	\$ 830K	14	1:8599
MI	101,386	\$ 822K	21	1:4828

Volunteer ombudsman are not included in this calculation as they are reported at a point in time and are not reported as FTEs to ACL.

Other States

Potential program funding sources

- State General Funds
- Local funds (senior millage)
- Provider bed tax – funds quality assurance program in nursing homes
- Long Term Care line in state budget
 - % of savings for transitioning NH residents to the community – proposed in CT

Impact of More Resources

- Shorter or no wait time for callers
- Participation in more community events
- Provide staff training on rights and abuse prevention
- Residents would have more time with the ombudsman to work on a larger number of their concerns and not be limited to priority issues
- More time for in-person visits to more homes which builds relationships and accountability
- Time to recruit and manage volunteers which expands our reach
- Less chance of burn-out with more reasonable workload

Contact Information & Resources

Reach a Local Ombudsman: **866-485-9393**

Website: www.MLTCOP.org

Fact Sheets (Arabic, Chinese, English, and Spanish)
Advance Directives Booklet (free in hardcopy as well)
Look up your local ombudsman
Abuse Prevention Information
State and national resources

Salli Pung, State LTC Ombudsman

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Questions?

