

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §16-5L-8

§16-5L-8. Long-term care ombudsman volunteers; qualifications; duties.

(a) The regional long-term care ombudsman programs shall each create and maintain a volunteer program to effect the purposes of this article, pursuant to rules promulgated by the state long-term care ombudsman and the state commission on aging.

(b) A long-term care ombudsman volunteer shall have demonstrated interest in the field of aging and long-term care issues and be able to communicate effectively orally and in writing.

(c) No long-term care ombudsman volunteer nor any member of his or her immediate family shall have, or have had within the two years preceding his or her employment under this section, any pecuniary interest in the provision of long-term care. Nor shall any long-term care ombudsman volunteer perform his or her duties in any specific facility in which an immediate family member of the long-term care ombudsman volunteer is or has been a resident or applicant of that specific facility. For the purposes of this section, the term "immediate family" shall mean the spouse, children, natural mother, natural father, natural brothers or natural sisters of the long-term care ombudsman volunteer.

(d) The long-term care ombudsman volunteer shall perform only those duties assigned by the regional long-term care ombudsman, including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) Regularly visiting and talking with residents of long-term care facilities, and inspecting all public areas of the facility;

(2) Interviewing residents, family members and employees of long-term care facilities to ascertain the nature and facts of a complaint;

(3) Preparing reports for the regional long-term care ombudsman's review or approval relating to complaint interviews and the health, safety, welfare and rights of residents of long-term care facilities;

(4) Informing residents as to the availability of ombudsman services;

(5) Establishing and maintaining a cooperative working relationship with employees of long-term care facilities;

(6) Working to establish and maintain resident and family councils to encourage interaction among residents, their families and long term care facility staff; and

(7) Performing other duties as assigned by the regional long-term care ombudsman which are not contrary to this article, to any applicable federal law, or to rules promulgated by the state long-term care ombudsman and the state commission on aging.

(e) Notwithstanding the duties described above, no ombudsman volunteer may undertake or be assigned duties involving complaint investigation activities, as defined in section ten of this article, except for information gathering to ascertain the nature and facts of a complaint for the ombudsman's review. No ombudsman volunteer, during the course of his or her volunteer service, may initiate or pursue legal proceedings, actions or remedies on behalf of a resident or long-term care ombudsman program relating to a long-term care facility, its employees, or its residents.