

Department: Area Agency on Aging
Reports to: Long Term Care Ombudsman III

General Statement of Duties

Performs complex, professional advocacy, investigative, program education and promotional work to protect residents' rights and enhance the quality of care and quality of life for older adults, disabled and mentally ill in the Land of Sky regions facilities.

Distinguishing Features of the Class

An employee in this class is responsible for serving as an advocate for residents' rights in long term care facilities, investigating complaints and mediating disputes, keeping case information confidential, providing technical assistance, and educating long term care staff, residents and the community at large to help improve the quality of life for older adults. Work includes reviewing and identifying complaint trends and issues, documenting individual cases and other advocacy work, and building relationships with volunteers, community agencies and organizations, local and state officials and legislators. Work requires considerable knowledge of the Federal Older Americans Act, federal and State program laws and regulations, facilities' licensure requirements, Long Term care systems and programs for the aging. Tact, diplomacy, sound judgment and initiative are required in the performance of the work. Difficult or precedent setting situations/cases are discussed with the Lead Ombudsman and/or the State Ombudsman. Work is supervised by the Lead Ombudsman and is reviewed through the Ombudsman documentation system, annual reports to the State Ombudsman, regular reports to the Area Aging on Aging's Advisory Board and the Aging and Volunteer Services Director, workshop evaluations and resident, volunteer, complainant and general public feedback.

Duties and Responsibilities

Essential Duties and Tasks

- Works under the supervision of the Senior Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman
- Collaborates with other Ombudsmen to advocate for systemic changes to improve the quality of life for people living in long term care in Region B through collaborative projects emphasizing local and regional involvement. Supports the work of the Senior and Lead Ombudsman through letter writing, email correspondence, brochure design, tracking in-kind donations, scheduling, and event coordination.
- Investigates complaints from long term care residents or others on their behalf, regarding care issues, violation of residents' rights, or concerns over services or benefits, complaints against a facility, other service provider or government agency; and mediates/resolves complaints on behalf of residents.
- Observes and gathers evidence regarding care and/or complaints; documents findings; meets with facility management to report findings and negotiates a plan of correction and a timeline; refers serious findings to the appropriate state agency; prepares a final report and maintains related files; and maintains confidentiality of clients during the investigation of complaints. Never reveals personal resident or complainant information without consent. Completes required documentation and reporting of investigations and all other records and reports as needed.
- Offers in-service education for facilities on a variety of topics including resident rights.
- Works closely with Community Advisory Committees (CACs) as assigned; attends CAC meetings; orients and provides ongoing continuing education for Community Advisory Committee (CAC) volunteers; provides updates on current trends and issues; receives CAC visit reports and provides feedback to CACs about reports; makes facility survey reports available to CACs. Compiles CAC data for all committees under the ombudsman program and where required enters data into the Ombudsman Documentation Information System (ODIS).
- Continually grows computer skills especially in the areas of Excel, Word, Publisher and ODIS to fulfill ombudsman requirements and as a support service to the Lead and Senior Ombudsmen.
- Responds to a high volume of calls covering complaints, requests for advocacy and general information, navigation of the Long Term care system, and technical assistance to community volunteers, facility staff, members of the public, media, and elected officials; disseminates information regarding legislation and regulations governing the rights of people living in Long Term care.
- Develops effective working relationships with county commissioners, facility administrators, local departments of

health and human services (DSS in some counties) and mental health, councils on aging, and others involved with Long Term care issues.

- Stays abreast of laws, regulations, policies, procedures and actions affecting people living in Long Term care facilities; participates in the quarterly training for regional Ombudsmen in the Raleigh area.
- Serves as a resource to the public, legislators, media and health care professionals; gathers data on changes in provider and resource information; represents program and long term care population at hearings and professional meetings; does public speaking to help the community understand the service.
- Promotes elder abuse awareness and prevention to long term care residents, staff and families and within the greater community through presentations, community forums, and distribution of materials and education.
- Develops and implements programs to educate the public on Long Term care issues and promotes increased community involvement in Long Term care facilities.
- Monitors Long Term care facilities to ensure that residents' rights are being honored.
- Provides information to facility surveyors regarding facility practices.

Additional Job Duties

- Performs related duties as required.

Recruitment and Selection Guidelines

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Considerable knowledge of federal and state laws, rules and regulations regarding Long Term care facility licensure and reimbursement, Medicare, Medicaid, residents' rights and other aging services.
- Considerable knowledge of local and state structure and agencies involved with the older adult population, and the physically disabled and mentally ill population.
- Knowledge of adult learning theories, principles and methodologies necessary for conducting effective training.
- Working knowledge of computers and skills in using personal computers for word processing, spreadsheet, presentation software, email, and Internet.
- Skill in making public presentations and speaking before legislative groups, community organizations, volunteers, etc.
- Ability to investigate and resolve a complaint including interviewing a variety of people, listening carefully, maintaining confidentiality and advocating for the resident.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with local officials, advisory committees, legislators, facility administrators, local agency staff, council on aging, state and local regulatory agencies, volunteers, older adults, families, coworkers, supervisors and the general public.
- Ability to conduct training and to make presentations utilizing methods that fit the needs to different groups.
- Ability to communicate effectively, in written and oral forms, with a wide variety of people.
- Ability to organize the work and exercise independent judgment with minimum supervision.
- Ability to mediate varied problem situations.
- Capacity to complete successfully the certification requirements for the position.

Organization Conformance Standards for all positions:

- Perform quality work within deadlines with or without direct supervision.
- Interact professionally and courteously with other employees, customers and partners.
- Work effectively as a team contributor on all assignments.
- Understand the necessity to efficiently and effectively interact, communicate and coordinate work efforts with other employees and organizations in an effective manner to accomplish common task.
- Function in highly stressful circumstances.
- Maintain a high level of professionalism and to conduct business in an ethical manner at all times.
- Maintain regular and punctual attendance.

Physical Requirements

- Must be able to physically perform the basic life operational functions of fingering, talking, hearing, and repetitive motions.
- Must be able to perform sedentary work exerting up to 10 pounds of force occasionally and/or a negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to lift, carry, push, pull or otherwise move objects.
- Must possess the visual acuity to prepare and use data or figures, to read extensively, and to operate a computer.
- Must be able to travel to facilities and access resident rooms and common areas.

Desirable Education and Experience

- Master's degree in social work, or related human service field and considerable experience with aging, Long Term care or related field; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Masters' degree in Social Work preferred.

Special Requirements

- Ability and willingness to successfully complete the Regional Ombudsman certification by the State Division of Aging and Adult Services.
- Possession of a valid North Carolina Driver's license and have access to a car on a regular basis for the performance of work functions.

Land of Sky Regional Council - 2013

Special Note: This generic class description gives an overview of the job class, its essential job functions, and recommended job requirements. However, for each individual position assigned to this class, there is available a completed job questionnaire with a physical abilities checklist which can give further details about that one specific position. Those documents should be reviewed before initiating a selection process. They can provide additional detailed information on which to base various personnel actions and can assist management in making legal and defensible personnel decisions.