

Appendix B
GEORGIA LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN (LTCO) REPRESENTATIVE
CERTIFICATION TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

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I. CERTIFICATION – TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

A. Certification Training Process

The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OSLTCO) provides for training and certification of Ombudsman Representatives as required by state and federal law. Classroom and on-site training and examinations are done under the direction of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman SLTCO. **The certification process consists of 13 days of training plus examinations, and, for Ombudsman Representative staff, the examinations must be completed within six months after attending the classroom training provided by the SLTCO.**

B. Required Training Topics

Required training for candidates for Long-Term Care Ombudsman Representative certification includes, but is not limited to, the following topics and content areas:

1. Processes of aging
2. Characteristics of long-term care residents
3. State and federal long-term care regulatory system
4. History and overview of long-term care facilities
5. Long-term care reimbursement systems
6. Residents' rights
7. Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
 - a. History of program
 - b. Federal and state statutes
 - c. Policies and procedures, including:
 - Duties and responsibilities
 - Confidentiality
 - Conflict of interest
8. Communication and interviewing skills
9. Complaint investigation skills and procedures
10. Reporting and record-keeping
11. Aging network - Ombudsman Representative role

These topics are presented in a combination of classroom, long-term care facility or other appropriate settings.

C. Classroom Training – 3 days

Classroom training (**3 days**) provided by the SLTCO is required for all Ombudsman Representative staff and is available to volunteers and other interested parties as space is available. Local Ombudsman entities may provide equivalent classroom training for volunteers, subject to pre-approval by the SLTCO.

D. Training in Long-Term Care Facilities

As required by Georgia law, the certification process includes on-site training of **7** equivalent work days in a nursing home and **3** equivalent work days in a personal care home.

1. **Training in Nursing Facilities—7 days**

a. **Staff Ombudsman Trainees**

The 7 days shall consist of:

- i) **2 days** under SLTCO supervision at a nursing home;
- ii) **3 days** observation of an HFR standard survey in a nursing home (with written submission to the SLTCOP describing observations); and
- iii) **2 days** of observation (which can be done with supervision or independently, at the discretion of the SLTCO and Ombudsman Representative Coordinator) which may include, but is not limited to the following:
 - A). Interviews with nursing home department heads, such as:
 - Administration
 - Social services
 - Nursing
 - Dietary
 - Activities
 - Rehabilitative services
 - Billing and reimbursement
 - Laundry and housekeeping
 - B). Observation of the following:
 - Resident care planning
 - Resident council meeting
 - Staff provision of services to and interaction with residents
 - C). Interviews with residents

Written summaries describing all observations and interviews shall be submitted to the OSLTCO for review within 10 days of the observation/interview.

Trainees are required to participate in consultations/discussions of field observations and interviews. The OSLTCO shall determine the number and frequency of the discussions, i.e. bi-weekly, monthly, etc.

b. **Senior Certified Volunteer Ombudsman Representative Trainees**

Associated Certified Volunteer Representatives who wish to become a Senior Certified Volunteer Ombudsman Representative trainees must have successfully served in the position for at least six months prior to admission into the Certification Training Program.

Senior Certified Volunteer Ombudsman Representative trainees are not required to attend the SLTCO-supervised home observation or HFR survey,

but are required to complete **7 days** of observation in a nursing home as indicated above.

2. **Training in Personal Care Homes/Community Living Arrangements—3 days**

a. **Staff Ombudsman Representative Trainees**

The 3 days shall consist of:

- i) 1 day under SLTCO supervision in personal care homes/community living arrangements;
- ii) 1 days observation of an HFR complaint investigation **or** standard survey in a PCH/CLA (with written submission to the SLTCOP describing observations) within 10 days of the observation); and
- iii) 1 day of observation (which can be done with supervision or independently, at the discretion of the SLTCO and Ombudsman Representative Coordinator) which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

A) Interviews with PCH/CLA staff, regarding:

- Administrative philosophy of the provider/manager
- Description of services provided (and not provided) by the home
- Admission and discharge processes
- Billing practices

B) Observation of the following:

- Staff provision of services to and interaction with residents
- Daily routine of residents
- Resident interactions with staff and with other residents
- Services provided
- Activities provided and extent of resident involvement
- Food service

C) Interviews with residents

Written summaries describing all observations and interviews shall be submitted to the OSLTCO for review within 10 days of the observation/interview.

Trainees are required to participate in consultations/discussions of field observations and interviews. The OSLTCO shall determine the number and frequency of the discussions, i.e. bi-weekly, monthly, etc.

b. **Senior Certified Volunteer Ombudsman Representative Trainee**

*Associated Certified Volunteer Ombudsman Representatives who wish to become a **Senior Certified Volunteer Ombudsman Representative** must have successfully served in the position for at least six months prior to admission into the Certification Training Program.*

Senior Certified Volunteer Ombudsman Representative trainees are not required to attend the SLTCO-supervised home observation or HFR survey but are required to complete **3 days** of observation in personal care homes/community living arrangements as indicated above.

E. Certification Examinations

1. Written Examination

The SLTCO provides to the trainee a written open-book examination. The examination is designed to assess the trainee's ability to apply the complaint investigation process to sample cases by:

- a. Identifying issues involved
- b. Applying relevant statutes/regulations
- c. Developing a plan of action that demonstrates:
 - (i) An awareness of the appropriate Ombudsman Representatives' role, and
 - (ii) Appropriate resolution strategies and rationales.

The written examination will be evaluated by the SLTCO on a pass/fail basis. If the trainee does not pass the first or second time taking the exam, the SLTCO may identify additional work to be done on the examination needed to pass. The trainee must complete and return a passing written examination within two months of its receipt in order to become certified. Trainees may submit the written examination no more than three times during the two month period. If the trainee does not pass by the third attempt, the trainee will not be certified.

2. Oral Examination

When all other certification activities have been satisfactorily completed, the oral examination is administered by the SLTCO.

- a. The purpose of this examination is to evaluate the following:
 - (i) Knowledge of LTCOP policies and procedures and federal and state enabling statutes,
 - (ii) Demonstration of the skills necessary to provide adequate services to long-term care residents,
 - (iii) Knowledge of relevant laws and regulations necessary to fulfill job responsibilities, and
 - (iv) Understanding of the Ombudsman Representatives' role in complaint processing.
- b. The examination will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis. If the trainee passes the oral examination and meets all other requirements for certification, the SLTCO may certify the trainee as an Ombudsman Representative. If the

trainee does not pass the oral examination, the trainee shall not be certified. The SLTCO may identify activities or training needed to improve competency in areas which the SLTCO has found the trainee deficient. The trainee will be notified of his/her certification status within five (5) working days of the examination. If the trainee does not pass the oral examination, the trainee may request the opportunity to go through the certification process again from the beginning. The Local Ombudsman Entity must make such a recommendation for the SLTCO to consider the request. The SLTCO has discretion to approve or deny the request to go through the certification training again.

F. Failure to Complete Training Requirements

The SLTCO has the authority to refuse to designate an individual as an Ombudsman Representative should he or she fail to satisfactorily complete the training requirements for certification, as set forth in the LTCO policies and procedures manual.

II. NOTIFICATION OF CERTIFICATION

When a trainee meets the required training requirements, the SLTCO may certify him or her as a certified Ombudsman Representative. Such certification constitutes a designation by the SLTCO of the individual as an Ombudsman Representative. At the time that the trainee is certified, the SLTCO will issue an identification card to the Ombudsman Representative, which shall be presented upon request by the Ombudsman Representative whenever the Ombudsman Representative is working in an Ombudsman Representative capacity.

THE ENTIRE CERTIFICATION PROCESS SHALL NOT EXCEED SIX MONTHS AFTER COMPLETION OF INITIAL CLASSROOM TRAINING.

III. CERTIFICATION – CONTINUATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Requirements for Maintaining Certification

1. Compliance with LTCO Policies and Procedures

In order to maintain certification, the Ombudsman Representative must comply with the requirements of the LTCO policies and procedures.

2. Program Affiliation

In order to maintain certification, the Ombudsman Representative must remain affiliated with a designated Local Ombudsman Entity.

3. Continuing Education Requirements

- a. **Ombudsman Representative Staff – 60 hours per two year recertification period**

- i) Each staff Ombudsman Representative shall attend a minimum of 60 hours of in-service training per two year recertification period.
- ii) Each staff Ombudsman Representative shall attend all state-wide trainings provided by the SLTCO, which will count toward the fulfillment of the 60 hour requirement. Any circumstance that prevents attendance at required trainings must be approved in advance by the SLTCO. **Note:** If the SLTCO does not provide 60 hours of training in a two year recertification period or if a staff Ombudsman Representative is unable to attend training provided by the SLTCO and has received SLTCO approval for the absence, the remainder of the training requirement may be satisfied through other training related to ombudsman duties and approved by the SLTCO. Failure to obtain SLTCO approval for absence from required training is grounds for decertification.
- iii) Excess training hours cannot be carried over from one recertification period to the next.
- iv) In cases where an Ombudsman Representative fails to meet recertification requirements due to extenuating circumstances, consideration may be given to requests for a one calendar quarter grace period.
- v) Failure to meet the recertification requirements by the designated deadline is grounds for decertification.

b. Senior Certified Volunteer Ombudsman Representatives - 20 hours per two year recertification period

- i) Each **Senior Certified Volunteer Ombudsman Representative** shall receive a minimum of 20 hours of in-service training per two year recertification period.
- ii) Each **Senior Certified Volunteer Ombudsman Representative** shall attend, when possible, one statewide LTCO training provided by the SLTCOP. Attendance at in-service training programs provided or arranged for by the Local Ombudsman Entity with which the volunteer is affiliated may fulfill this requirement either in whole or in part. The SLTCO shall approve such volunteer training programs.

B. Recertification

In order to continue to carry out his/her duties, each Ombudsman Representative, whether staff or volunteer, must be recertified every two years by the SLTCO. Certification records are maintained by the SLTCO. Upon renewal of certification, the SLTCO will issue a new LTCO certification card.

C. Withdrawal of Designation

If an Ombudsman Representative or volunteer fails to meet these requirements to maintain certification, the SLTCO may initiate withdrawal of designation proceedings as set forth in the LTCO policies and procedures.