

Georgia Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
Advisory Council Charter
Revised August 13, 2015

I. BACKGROUND

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is authorized by the Federal Older Americans Act, (Public Law 89-73, as amended; 42 U.S.C. § 3058g) and Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §§ 31-8-50, et seq.). The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (Office of the SLTCO) operates as a separate office within the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services. The Division of Aging Services, on behalf of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, contracts with Area Agencies on Aging to provide ombudsman services throughout the state in accordance with the Older Americans Act.

As a separate office, the Office of the SLTCO relies upon the Advisory Council of the Office of the SLTCO (Advisory Council) to ensure its accountability, advocacy and effectiveness.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Advisory Council shall assist the Office of the SLTCO by:

1. Providing advice regarding the operation of the Office of the SLTCO.
2. Serving as a sounding board to the Office of the SLTCO.
3. Enhancing community understanding of the purpose and services of Georgia's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP).
4. Assisting the Office of the SLTCO to identify resources to benefit the LTCOP and long-term care facility residents.
5. Developing an understanding of long-term care issues and assisting the Office of the SLTCO in its efforts to advocate for improvements for long-term care residents.
6. Providing a forum for dialogue with other public agencies and programs, providers, and policymakers regarding the operations of the Office of the SLTCO and the LTCOP.

The advisory council shall not make binding decisions for, or otherwise serve as a governing body of, the LTCOP.

III. COMPOSITION OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Advisory Council shall consist of a minimum of 12, and no more than 20, members, all of whom shall serve in a volunteer capacity. At all times, the majority of members shall consist of residents or their representatives, persons with disabilities, elders, and/or consumer advocates (which may include staff or volunteer long-term care ombudsmen from community programs).

At a minimum, the membership shall include:

- 5 members from any of the following groups:
 - residents of long-term care facilities or their representatives,
 - elders,
 - persons with disabilities,
 - consumer advocates for elders,
 - consumer advocates for persons with disabilities;
- 1 community LTCO staff person, who may be recommended by the Council of Community Ombudsmen (COCO);
- 1 LTCO volunteer, who may be recommended by COCO;
- 1 Area Agency on Aging director, who may be recommended by the Georgia Association of Area Agencies on Aging (G4A);
- 1 representative of an agency which houses a community ombudsman program; and
- 1 representative of the Division of Aging Services, who may be recommended by the Director of the Division of Aging Services.

Additional members may represent these or other interests or relevant organizations but may not have a conflict of interest with the LTCOP.

IV. APPOINTMENT OF ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. The Advisory Council may appoint members to fill vacancies after soliciting and considering recommendations of the groups indicated and the SLTCO. The Director of the Division of Aging Services shall be provided with an opportunity to comment on nominees prior to their appointment.
2. If the Advisory Council fails to fill any vacancy which has been held vacant for six months or more, the Director of the Division of Aging Services may appoint members to fill vacancies after soliciting and considering recommendations of the relevant group(s) indicated and the SLTCO.

V. TERMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

1. An Advisory Council member shall serve a two-year term. Each member is expected to:
 - a. Participate (either in person or by telephone) in a minimum of two meetings per year;
 - b. Actively participate in the functioning and responsibilities of the Advisory Council; and
 - c. Proactively seek ways to further the mission and strengthen the effectiveness of the LTCOP.

2. Three or more Advisory Council members with expertise in fundraising shall serve on a Committee for Resource Development. The Committee shall examine opportunities to enhance resources to benefit the LTCOP and long-term care residents in Georgia.

VI. OFFICERS AND STAFF SUPPORT

The Advisory Council shall have the following officers:

1. Chair -- who shall facilitate meetings, set agendas in collaboration with the Office of the SLTCO, provide leadership to the Advisory Council, and serve on the Executive Committee.
2. Vice-chair – who shall facilitate meetings in the absence of the chairperson and serve on the Executive Committee.
3. Secretary – who shall assure distribution and approval of minutes of Advisory Council meetings and serve on the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee shall represent the Advisory Council when needed to assist the Office of the SLTCO in determining strategy for the Advisory Council and in making time-sensitive decisions when the full Council is unable to meet.

The Office of the SLTCO will provide staff support for the Advisory Council, including, as needed:

- assistance with transportation arrangements;
- accommodation of Council members with special needs or disabilities;
- reimbursement for mileage for Council-related business as funds are available.