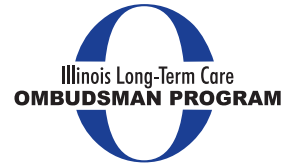




FACT SHEET: Resident Councils in Nursing Homes



What is a nursing home resident council?

A resident council is an **independent** group of nursing home residents who meet at a minimum of once a month to discuss concerns and suggestions and to plan activities that are important to them.

What can effective resident councils accomplish?

- Improve communications that allow residents to know the facts about what is happening in the home.
- Help identify problems early, when it is easier to do something about them.
- Serve as a sounding board for facility programming and improvements.
- Help individuals speak out about what's bothering them, because speaking up as a group is easier than as an individual.
- Improve residents' quality of life by helping to plan activities and events.
- Create opportunities for residents to work in small groups and get to know each other, develop friendships, and appreciate each other's skills and ideas.

Do residents have a right to meet as a council?

Yes. Illinois and Federal laws give residents the right to meet as a council. Illinois law requires all skilled and intermediate care facilities to have a resident council. The home must also provide space for meetings and give assistance to residents who need help getting to the meetings.

Resident councils have the right to meet privately or to invite staff members, family, friends, the ombudsman, or members of community organizations to participate in the meetings. The home must designate a staff person to work with the council, to attend council meetings if invited, and to provide needed support services and assistance, such as taking minutes, but the residents remain in charge.



How are resident councils organized?

The structure of a resident council can be the key to its success. Resident councils are operated as open meetings for all interested residents and their representatives. Each resident council must elect a President or Chairperson and a Vice President or Vice Chairperson who run the meetings. There may be a steering committee to help plan meeting agendas and to follow-up on decisions made by the council.

Larger homes often have councils made up of representatives who are responsible for seeking the concerns and suggestions of residents in their area and for bringing this information to the meetings.

No employee or affiliate of any facility may be a member of a resident council. However, staff may attend if invited by the members of the resident council to discuss specific concerns or ideas.

Where can one get more information about resident councils?

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman can answer questions, help set up a resident council, or speak about a long-term care topic at a council meeting.

Illinois Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

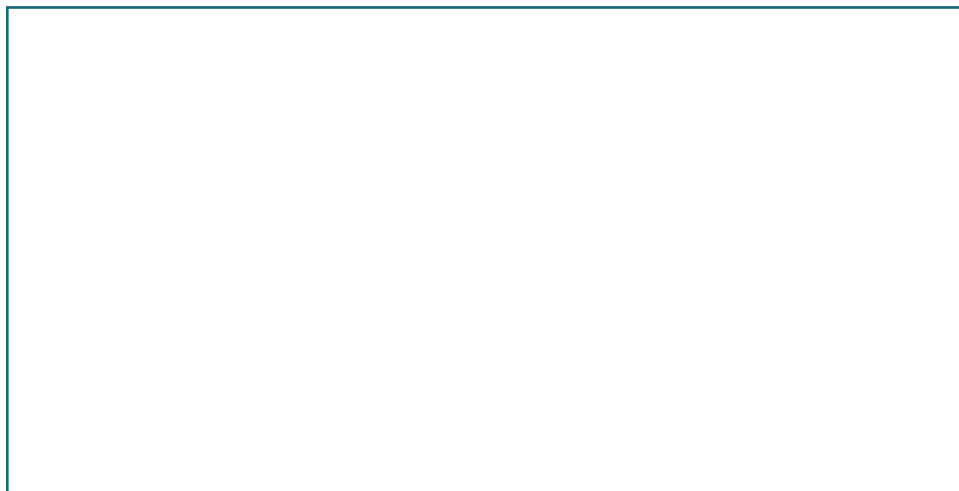
1-800-252-8966 (TTY & Voice)

www.illinois.gov/aging

Email: Aging.SLTCOProgram@illinois.gov

Website: www.illinois.gov/aging/ProtectionAdvocacy/LTCOmbudsman

LOCAL OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM:



The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you have a right to file a complaint with the Illinois Department on Aging. For information call the Senior HelpLine: 1-800-252-8966; 1 888 206-1327 (TTY).