

## What if abuse, neglect or exploitation is happening to a resident of a long-term care facility?

Ombudsmen work with the resident to resolve issues to the satisfaction of the resident. In cases of abuse, neglect or exploitation, ombudsmen determine if the resident would like the complaint referred to law enforcement or to the Illinois Department of Public Health, which regulates most long-term care facilities.

## Do ombudsmen help people who live at home?

Yes. The Home Ombudsman Program advocates for older adults and persons with disabilities who live in the community and receive managed care services through the Medicare-Medicaid Alignment Initiative (MMA) or who live in the community and receive Medicaid waiver services.

## What about adults who reside in a facility but are abused or exploited from someone they know outside the facility?

Effective January 1, 2019, the APS Act expanded the definition of an “eligible adult” to include individuals otherwise excluded from the definition of “domestic living situation.” That means that if an individual is allegedly abused outside of a facility by a family member, caregiver or another person with a relationship to them, the APS Program may respond. Further, if a resident of a long-term care facility is allegedly financially exploited by a family member, caregiver or another person with a relationship with them, the APS Program may respond. The resident may choose to work with the APS Program and/or the Ombudsman Program in this situation.

## What if abuse, neglect or exploitation is happening to someone in their home?

When APS receives a report that an adult with a disability or an older adult is being abused, neglected or exploited, a caseworker investigates the situation. The types of abuse covered by the program are: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, confinement, passive neglect, willful deprivation, financial exploitation and self-neglect.

If the person being abused accepts help, APS involves the older adult or disabled person in the development of the intervention or case plan. The caseworker explains options such as a range of legal, medical, and social service options to them.

To report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation, call the Illinois Department on Aging’s Senior HelpLine: **1-800-252-8966**. Do not let someone continue to endure any type of abuse.

**We can help or direct you to the assistance you need based on your own situation!**

**For more information, visit:**

[www2.illinois.gov/aging/Engage](http://www2.illinois.gov/aging/Engage)



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).

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State of Illinois  
Department on Aging

## Illinois Department on Aging’s Adult Protective Services & Ombudsman Programs



**What You Need to Know About  
Abuse of Older Adults  
and Adults With Disabilities**

# #ENGAGE 2 CHANGE

## 1-800-252-8966



## **Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Program**

Illinoisans need to #Engage2Change the fact that older adults and adults with disabilities can be abused, neglected and exploited wherever they live, whether they live in their own home or in a long-term care facility. This brochure is designed to educate you about two statewide programs operated by the Illinois Department on Aging to address abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disabilities age 18-59 or a person age 60 or older.

These programs are:

### **The Adult Protective Services Program – Helping Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities Who Live at Home or Reside in Long-Term Care Facilities**

And

### **The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program – Helping Residents Residing in Long-Term Care Facilities**

**These programs have much in common. Both:**

Protect the health, safety and welfare of those they serve;

Help people based on their agreement and involvement;

Consult with the family unit support system whenever possible;

Discuss the situation, alternatives, and consequences;

Respect the person's right to confidentiality;

Make the person's interests the first concern;

Give information that helps individuals make informed decisions;

Preserve independence;

Speak to individuals in the language they understand best;

Deter and address abuse either physically, verbally, mentally, financially or sexually; and

Help individuals participate in their own care plan

### **What is the Adult Protective Services Program?**

The Adult Protective Services Program (APS) responds to reports of alleged abuse, neglect and exploitation of older adults and adults with disabilities who live at home or who live in a facility, but the abuser is from outside the facility, such as a family member or friend. In FY 2020, more than 20,000 reports were made.

### **What is the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program?**

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program protects and promotes the rights and quality of life for those who live in long-term care facilities. These include licensed facilities like a nursing home, assisted living or shared housing establishment, supportive living, sheltered care, ICF-DD, MC-DD, or a specialized mental health rehabilitation facility. The Ombudsman Program is available to assist with alleged abuse, neglect and financial exploitation by an abuser living in or working for the facility. In FY 2019, there were over 1,600 such facilities in Illinois with over 144,000 beds.

Ombudsmen work to resolve complaints on behalf of people who receive long-term care services. In

addition, ombudsmen provide routine visits in long-term care facilities, respond to requests for information and assistance, assure the interests of residents are represented to policy makers, provide education sessions for the general public and facility staff, and work to support resident and family councils.

### **You have rights**

Whether you live in the community or in a long-term facility, you and your loved ones have the rights to safety and good care.

### **How can an ombudsman help myself or my loved one living in a long-term care facility?**

Many long-term care residents have issues and complaints they bring to the attention of an ombudsman. The most common complaint investigated by the Ombudsman Program is related to improper discharges initiated by a long-term care facility. Some examples of this would be that the long-term care facility discharged a resident to a hospital, homeless shelter or other inappropriate setting and refused to allow the resident back. Facilities must provide proper notice when planning to discharge a resident. Other complaints may relate to poor care or how the resident is treated by staff.

### **What can an ombudsman do to help address a complaint?**

The Ombudsman can consult with a resident to understand the nature of his or her complaint and help work with the resident, the long-term care facility and others to resolve the situation. Regardless of the source of the complaint, the resident is always the ombudsman's client.