

## Kitsap County Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

The Kitsap County Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, as part of the Washington State Ombudsman Program, ensures the dignity, rights and well-being of individuals living in long-term care, providing easy access to a personal, onsite advocate.

More volunteer ombudsmen are needed to advocate for residents and their families, as the number of people residing in long-term care increases.

### What does an Ombudsman do?

Volunteers are trained to serve as Long-Term Care Ombudsman and certified by the Washington State Ombudsman Program to assist and advocate for residents of long-term care facilities, and their families, to achieve the highest level of quality of life and care, as guaranteed by law.

Ombudsmen Duties:

- Inform residents, their representatives and others about their rights, and offer and provide services to protect their health, safety, welfare and rights.
- Represent the interests of residents to government agencies and seek administrative, legal and other remedies to protect residents.
- Visit assigned facilities regularly (average is about four hours per week) to consult with residents and address questions or concerns they may have.
- Work to resolve issues identified by the residents, their relatives, friends, health care providers, agencies or other associates related to actions, inactions or decisions that may adversely affect the health, safety, welfare or rights of the residents.
- Refer potential cases of abuse, neglect, retaliation or coercion to authorities.
- Review and comment, as necessary on proposed laws, regulations and other governmental policies and actions that pertain to the rights and well-being of residents.

### Become a Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Volunteers must successfully complete 32 hours of training. Potential volunteers will be asked to complete an application, criminal background check and participate in a formal interview.

Volunteers must meet conflict of interest criteria including that no ombudsman may be currently employed or formerly employed within the past year by or participated in the management of any long-term care facility, including work as a paid consultant or independent contractor.

To learn more about volunteering as a Long-Term Care Ombudsman in Kitsap County, contact Dana Gargus, Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman, at 360-337-5714, 800-562-6418 or [DGargus@co.kitsap.wa.us](mailto:DGargus@co.kitsap.wa.us).