

The California Long-Term Care Ombudsman Association (CLTCOA), respectfully urge the state to conduct an evaluation of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Additionally, we are seeking your commitment to the investment of resources required to implement meaningful changes as identified through the evaluation process and in collaboration with OSTLCO and CLTCOA leadership and the local programs. Your investment in identifying and implementing best practices ensures the viability of a critical needed advocacy program for older adults and adults with disabilities who live in long-term care as the demands on the program increase with the increasing older adult population.

Targeted areas of focus the association have identified for consideration:

### **Program Structure**

- What are the risks and benefits of each type of current program structure?
  - Direct Service AAA within the County
  - Direct Service Non-Profit AAA
  - Contracted Service Single Purpose Non-Profit Organization
  - Contracted Service Multi-purpose Non-Profit Organization
    - Multi-purpose providers with emphasis on older adult and adults with disabilities
    - Multi-purpose provides with programs for all ages
- What are the risks and benefits of local programs contracting directly with OSTLCO?
- Is there an optimal number of beds or facilities per Ombudsman program to generate sufficient funding for optimal advocacy activities?
- Is there an optimal number of staff positions to promote professional career ladder, and support succession planning?
- What are the risks and benefits to resident outcomes/program stability if local programs utilized shared services:
  - regional or central live phone intake services
  - ombudsman recruitment and/or certification training
  - ongoing delivery of required Continuing Education Units trainings
- Does the current program structure produce consistent, measurable and professional outcomes, for all facilities residents, regardless of Ombudsman program size or location within the state (ie rural, or urban)?

### **Program Funding**

- Is the current funding level sufficient to provide Ombudsman services in each service area?
- What are the risks and benefits of the current funding formula?
- Are there alternative funding formulas that should be considered?
  - What are the risks and benefits of each alternative funding formula?

### **Program Oversight**

- What are the risks and benefits of how the local Ombudsman programs are currently evaluated?
- Do the local Ombudsman programs have sufficient checks and balances to ensure service delivery to facility residents?
  - Review the current roles and responsibilities of the fiscal agents for risks and benefits to program

- What is the benefit or potential for redundancy within the current system of ongoing oversight and annual fiscal monitoring by the CDA and the AAAs?
  - Is there evidence to support that the current contract and invoicing system reduces fraud and waste?
  - What organizational or local program structures could increase the speed at which funds are made available to the local programs?
- Review of the varying data collection requirements between AAAs, with analysis as to how the data could be most effectively collected and the purpose or utilization of the data being collected.

### **Program Staff Recruitment and Retention**

- What is the current turnover rate for Ombudsman Program Coordinators and staff throughout the state? Is the turnover consistent for other like professions in the region?
  - The turnover rate should be broken out by:
    - ☐ Direct Service AAA within the County
    - ☐ Direct Service Non-Profit AAA
    - ☐ Contracted Service Single Purpose Non-Profit Organization
    - ☐ Contracted Service Multi-purpose Non-Profit Organization
      - Multi-purpose providers with emphasis on older adult and adults with disabilities
      - Multi-purpose provides with programs for all ages
- Is there a minimum salary and benefits range that contributes to lower turnover rates?
  - Conduct salary surveys for like professions within the region.
- Identify the desired level of education or experience for optimal program leadership,
- What are the current risks or benefits of the current system of program leadership stability and continuity of service delivery for smaller programs that are not scaled to support succession planning?
- What are the risks and benefits (considering the recent trends of greater than 30% turnover annually) with "New Program Coordinator Training" occurring once every 12 months?
- What is the effect of Ombudsman staff turnover on facility residents?
- What is required to promote Ombudsman career pathway option?
  - Are there funding options for stipends for interns, similar to stipends provided to MSWs to incentivize working with older adults within the APS program?

### **Use of Volunteers**

- Analyze best practices for the utilization of staff versus volunteers, including identifying what activities are best suited for staff or volunteers, i.e., witnessing, complaint investigations, information and referrals, support and attendance of resident and family counsels, conducting unannounced facility monitoring, discharge fair housing hearings?
- What is the current turnover rate for certified Ombudsman Volunteers throughout the state?
  - The turnover rate should be broken out by:
    - ☐ Direct Service AAA within the County
    - ☐ Direct Service Non-Profit AAA
    - ☐ Contracted Service Single Purpose Non-Profit Organization

- Contracted Service Multi-purpose Non-Profit Organization
    - Multi-purpose providers with emphasis on older adult and adults with disabilities
    - Multi-purpose provides with programs for all ages
- What are the risks and benefits of the current program structure of volunteer base with some staff support?
- What are the risks and benefits of the current use of volunteers in the program?
- What are best practices for volunteer recruitment and retention?

### **Program Services**

- How well is the Ombudsman program in California meeting service requirements?
- What innovation is needed and available to assist local Ombudsman programs with service delivery?
- How does the program increase consistency and better utilization of technology?
  - the collection and sharing of data and the vehicles for managing such data,
  - the availability of "live intake"
  - access to online state and federal regulatory code libraries
- Review the risks or benefits of tracking skilled nursing facility-initiated discharge notices through auto-populated electronic faxing systems.
- Review the risks or benefits of the state 24-hour hotline:
  - managed by certified ombudsman representatives
  - the ability for hotline requests for assistance inputted into ODIN directly

### **Office of the State Ombudsman**

- What are the risks and benefits of the current State Ombudsman staffing structure?
  - How are State Ombudsman staff supporting local Ombudsman programs?
    - Review the risks and benefits of state analysts providing local in-person support for new coordinators, trainings, and emergency field support?
- What would be the risks or benefits of state office providing:
- Ombudsman staff with appropriate MSW certification to oversee MSW Internships within local programs
  - Specialized staff "Ombudsman on call" to assist in live time local Ombudsman complaint investigation questions

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