

STATE OF NEW YORK

5746

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 28, 2025

Introduced by Sen. CLEARE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Aging

AN ACT to amend the elder law, in relation to creating the district long-term care ombudsperson council program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Subparagraph 1 of paragraph (e) of subdivision 1 of section
2 218 of the elder law, as added by chapter 259 of the laws of 2018, is
3 amended, and a new paragraph (i) is added to read as follows:

4 (1) is an employee or volunteer of the state office for the aging or
5 of a designated local [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson entity, or a member of a
6 district long-term care ombudsperson council program and represents the
7 state long-term care [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson program;

8 (i) "District council" or "district council program" shall mean the
9 district long-term care ombudsperson council program established in
10 subdivision four of this section.

11 § 2. The opening paragraph and subparagraph 7 of paragraph (d) of
12 subdivision 3 of section 218 of the elder law, the opening paragraph as
13 amended by chapter 259 of the laws of 2018 and subparagraph 7 as amended
14 by chapter 770 of the laws of 2023, are amended to read as follows:

15 The state [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson, personally or through [~~authorized~~
16 ~~representatives~~] the district long-term care ombudsperson council
17 program established in subdivision four of this section, shall:

18 (7) develop a certification training program and continuing education
19 for [~~ombudsmen~~] ombudsperson which at a minimum shall specify the mini-
20 mum hours of training, the annual number of hours of in-service train-
21 ing, and the content of the training, including, but not limited to,
22 training relating to cultural competency and diversity, federal, state,
23 and local laws, regulations, and policies with respect to long-term care
24 facilities in the state, investigative and resolution techniques, and
25 such other training-related matters as the state [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 son determines to be appropriate, for the purposes of training members
2 of the district long-term care ombudsperson council program described in
3 subdivision four of this section, such training shall also include an
4 overview of such program;

5 § 3. Subdivision 4 of section 218 of the elder law, as amended by
6 chapter 259 of the laws of 2018, is amended to read as follows:

7 4. Local long-term care ombudsman program and district long-term
8 ombudsperson council program. (a) The state [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson,
9 in accordance with applicable state contracting procedures, [~~may~~] shall
10 designate an entity to operate a local long-term care [~~ombudsman~~] ombud-
11 sperson program for [~~one or more counties~~] each assembly district, and
12 shall monitor the performance of each such entity. If the state office
13 for the aging is aware or becomes aware of any evidence that the desig-
14 nation of an entity to operate a long-term care [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson
15 program by the state long-term care [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson would
16 result in legal concerns or liability for the state office for the aging
17 or office of the state long-term care [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson, the
18 state [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson will comply with the state office for the
19 aging's determination that such designation should not be made.

20 (b) The designated entity shall be an area agency on aging, a public
21 agency or a private not-for-profit corporation which is free from any
22 conflict of interest that cannot be remedied. Any actual and potential
23 conflicts of interest shall be identified and addressed in accordance
24 with subdivision ten of this section.

25 (b-1) The state ombudsperson shall create, in each assembly district,
26 a district long-term care ombudsperson council program to coordinate the
27 volunteers of each local long-term care ombudsperson program within
28 their district. Each district council shall consist of the following
29 members:

30 (i) a trained district coordinator, appointed by the state ombudsper-
31 son, to serve as chair, who shall be paid an annual stipend of two
32 hundred dollars;

33 (ii) a trained district coordinator to serve as co-chair, appointed by
34 the state ombudsperson, who shall be paid an annual stipend of one
35 hundred fifty dollars;

36 (iii) a trained district coordinator, appointed by the state ombud-
37 sperson, to serve as secretary, who shall be paid an annual stipend of
38 one hundred fifty dollars; and

39 (iv) eight or more residents of such district, approved by the chair,
40 co-chair, and secretary of the district council, to serve as trained
41 district advocates, each of whom shall be paid an annual stipend of one
42 hundred fifty dollars.

43 (b-2) The positions of long-term care ombudsperson program volunteer
44 and district long-term care ombudsperson council program advocate shall
45 be listed with the human resources departments of the department of
46 health, state office for the aging, and any other relevant agency. Such
47 listing shall be included on each such agency's website and marketing
48 materials, and such listing shall be displayed on the department of
49 labor website and in state run care facilities.

50 (b-3) Information about the role and responsibility of the district
51 council program and the contact information of the members of such
52 district council program providing services to a long-term care facility
53 shall be included in the welcome packet of all new residents to such
54 facility alongside the patient bill of rights.

55 (c)(1) Each local long-term care [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson program
56 shall be directed by a qualified individual who is employed and paid by

1 the local entity and who shall have the duties and responsibilities as
2 provided in regulations, consistent with the provisions of this section
3 and of Title VII of the federal Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended.
4 Such director shall work with the district council to carry out the
5 requirements of this section. In addition, upon designation, the entity
6 is responsible for providing for adequate and qualified staff, which may
7 include trained volunteers to perform the functions of the local long-
8 term care [ombudsman] ombudsperson program.

9 (2) No local program staff or district council staff, including the
10 supervisor and any volunteers, shall perform or carry out the activities
11 on behalf of the state long-term care [ombudsman] ombudsperson program
12 or the district ombudsperson long-term council program unless such staff
13 has been verified as completing the training program developed by the
14 state [ombudsman] ombudsperson and has been approved by the state
15 [ombudsman] ombudsperson as qualified to carry out the activities on
16 behalf of the local program or district council program.

17 (3) For purposes of the district council such trainings shall be given
18 annually for all new recruits to such program and shall be available in
19 both in-person and online formats. Each council member shall also be
20 required to complete two or more professional development trainings
21 annually. Such professional development trainings shall be developed by
22 the state ombudsperson.

23 (d) When the state [ombudsman] ombudsperson determines that a local
24 long-term care [ombudsman] ombudsperson program does not meet the stand-
25 ards set forth in this section and in any related regulations, the state
26 [ombudsman] ombudsperson, in coordination with the state office for the
27 aging, may refuse, suspend, or remove the designation of the local
28 [ombudsmen] ombudsperson entity. Prior to taking such action, the state
29 [ombudsman] ombudsperson shall send to the affected local program a
30 notice of the state [ombudsman's] ombudsperson's intentions to refuse,
31 suspend, or remove the designation; provided, however, if the state
32 office for the aging is aware or becomes aware of evidence that the
33 designation or continued designation of an entity to operate a long-term
34 care [ombudsman] ombudsperson program would result in legal concerns or
35 liability for the state office for the aging or the office of the state
36 long-term care [ombudsman] ombudsperson, the state ombudsman will comply
37 with the state office for the aging's determination that such desig-
38 nation should not be made or that such designation be refused,
39 suspended, or removed.

40 (e) The state [ombudsman] ombudsperson shall develop a grievance proc-
41 ess to offer an opportunity for reconsideration of any decision to
42 refuse, suspend, or remove the designation of a local [ombudsman] ombud-
43 sperson entity. Notwithstanding the grievance process, the state
44 [ombudsman] ombudsperson shall make the final determination to designate
45 or to refuse, suspend, or remove the designation of a local [ombudsman]
46 ombudsperson entity; provided, however, if the state office for the
47 aging is aware or becomes aware of any evidence that the designation of
48 an entity to operate a long-term care [ombudsman] ombudsperson program
49 by the state long-term care ombudsman or that the failure of the state
50 [ombudsman] ombudsperson to refuse, suspend, or remove the designation
51 of a local [ombudsman] ombudsperson entity would result in legal
52 concerns or liability for the state office for the aging or the office
53 of the state long-term care [ombudsman] ombudsperson, the state [ombuds-
54 man] ombudsperson will comply with the state office for the aging's
55 determination that such designation should not be made or that such
56 designation be refused, suspended, or removed.

1 (f) Each district shall receive the sum of eight hundred ten thousand
2 dollars annually for the purposes of administrating the district long-
3 term care ombudsperson council program.

4 § 4. Subdivision 14 of section 218 of the elder law, as amended by
5 chapter 776 of the laws of 2022, is amended to read as follows:

6 14. Annual report. (a) On or before March thirty-first, two thousand
7 five, and annually thereafter, the state [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson shall
8 submit to the governor, commissioner of the federal administration on
9 aging, speaker of the assembly, temporary president of the senate,
10 director of the state office for the aging, commissioner of the depart-
11 ment of health, and the commissioner of children and family services a
12 report and make such report available to the public:

13 [~~(a)~~] (i) describing the activities carried out by the office of the
14 state long-term care [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson during the prior calendar
15 year;

16 [~~(b)~~] (ii) containing and analyzing data relating to complaints and
17 conditions in long-term care facilities and to residents for the purpose
18 of identifying and resolving significant problems, including an examina-
19 tion of any recurring complaints to determine if there are systemic
20 issues in such facilities;

21 [~~(c)~~] (iii) evaluating the problems experienced by, and the complaints
22 made by or on behalf of, residents;

23 [~~(d)~~] (iv) containing recommendations for appropriate state legis-
24 lation, rules and regulations and other action based on data collected
25 pursuant to this section, concerns raised by residents and families of
26 residents, and observations made when visiting long-term care facili-
27 ties, to improve the quality of the care and life of the residents,
28 protecting the health, safety and welfare and rights of the residents
29 and resolving resident complaints and identified problems or barriers;

30 [~~(e)~~] (v) containing an analysis of the success of the long-term care
31 [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson program, including success in providing
32 services to residents;

33 [~~(f)~~] (vi) describing barriers that prevent the optimal operation of
34 the [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson program;

35 [~~(g)~~] (vii) describing any organizational conflicts of interest in the
36 ombudsman program that have been identified and the steps taken to
37 remove or remedy such conflicts;

38 [~~(h)~~] (viii) containing all complaints received by the state [~~ombuds-~~
39 ~~man~~] ombudsperson relating to long-term care facilities including but
40 not limited to complaints that suggest the possible occurrence of phys-
41 ical abuse, mistreatment, neglect or Medicaid fraud, listed by type of
42 complaint, facility name and by region;

43 [~~(i)~~] (ix) containing the number of visits to each long-term care
44 facility, listed by facility name and by region, and names of long-term
45 care facilities that did not receive any visits in the prior year; and

46 [~~(j)~~] (x) any other matters as the state [~~ombudsman~~] ombudsperson, in
47 consultation with the director of the state office for the aging, deter-
48 mines to be appropriate.

49 (b) On or before March thirty-first, two thousand twenty-seven, and
50 annually thereafter, each district long-term care ombudsperson council
51 program shall submit to the attorney general a report and make such
52 report available to the public:

53 (i) describing the activities carried out by the district council
54 program during the prior calendar year;

1 (ii) containing and analyzing data relating to complaints and condi-
2 tions in long-term care facilities and to residents for the purpose of
3 identifying and resolving significant problems;

4 (iii) evaluating the problems experienced by, and the complaints made
5 by or on behalf of, residents;

6 (iv) containing recommendations for appropriate state legislation,
7 rules and regulations and other action to improve the quality of the
8 care and life of the residents, protecting the health, safety and
9 welfare and rights of the residents and resolving resident complaints
10 and identified problems or barriers;

11 (v) containing an analysis of the success of the district council
12 program, including success in providing services to residents;

13 (vi) describing barriers that prevent the optimal operation of the
14 district council program;

15 (vii) describing any organizational conflicts of interest in the
16 district council program that have been identified and the steps taken
17 to remove or remedy such conflicts;

18 (viii) any other matters as the district council determines to be
19 appropriate; and

20 (ix) in the cases of new nursing homes that are opening in a partic-
21 ular district under a different name or with ownership from a previous
22 facility that was closed or cited for issues by the department of
23 health, provide recommendations for the nursing home to be approved for
24 opening.

25 § 5. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after
26 it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amend-
27 ment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implemen-
28 tation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and
29 completed on or before such effective date.