



ANNUAL
REPORT
2025



NEW MEXICO
LONG-TERM CARE
OMBUDSMAN

Dear Friends of Long-Term Care (LTC) Residents,

The Ombudsman Program is mandated by state and federal law to advocate for the rights, dignity, and quality of life of all residents living in New Mexico's LTC facilities. This responsibility is carried out every day by 13 dedicated Ombudsman staff and a dozen active volunteers. Our public servants are committed to the effectiveness and the efficiency of the program, and trained volunteers who provide oversight, investigate complaints, advocate for resident wishes, and serve as a voice for individuals who are too often unheard.

In FFY25, the Ombudsman Program reached every LTC facility in New Mexico. A total of 2,320 facility visits were completed, ensuring 100% statewide coverage. This achievement reflects not only compliance with federal requirements, but also our deep commitment to consistent, in-person advocacy. These visits included both routine check-ins and responses to urgent resident concerns, with multiple follow-up visits to facilities with higher volumes of complaints.

Complaint resolution remained a central focus of our work. Of the 878 complaints received this fiscal year, 868 were resolved within 60 days—a 99% resolution rate. While the number of complaints has remained steady each quarter, their complexity continues to grow. Issues such as quality of care, staffing shortages, and residents' rights require persistent advocacy and ongoing collaboration with families, facility staff, and state partners.

This year also brought program improvements. Training for staff and volunteers expanded, and new policies and procedures were implemented to ensure stronger

oversight and alignment with federal and state guidelines. These steps allow us to respond more effectively to the needs of residents.

At the same time, challenges remain. Recruitment and retention of staff and volunteers are critical to sustaining our coverage. Geographic barriers and increasingly complex resident needs require greater coordination and resources. New Mexico's aging population is expected to grow by more than 200,000 residents aged 65 and older over the next 20 years. To address these challenges and prepare for the future, planning and innovation are essential. We continue to advocate for policy and regulatory improvements, including stronger staffing standards, enhanced care transition protocols, and expanded support for volunteer engagement.

The stories and data presented in this annual report highlight both the progress we have made and the work that lies ahead. Above all, they reaffirm our unwavering commitment: that every resident of a LTC facility in New Mexico is entitled to dignity, respect, safety, and a meaningful quality of life.

We hope this report serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, providers, families, and all who share in the responsibility of supporting New Mexico's LTC residents. We are grateful for your partnership in this important work.

Sincerely,



Angelina Flores-Montoya
Acting Long-Term Care State Ombudsman

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP)

ANNUAL REPORT – FISCAL YEAR 2025
(JULY 1, 2024 – JUNE 30, 2025)

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Activities Carried Out by the Office

During FY25, the LTCOP continued its mission of advocating for the rights, health, and well-being of residents in LTC facilities across the state. Trained volunteers, Regional Coordinators and Supervisors conducted both routine and non-routine visits, during which they checked in with residents, investigated complaints, met with facility staff, and provided presentations on residents’ rights. Ombudsman staff investigated and resolved complaints made by or on behalf of residents, tracking each case in the case management system and monitoring it to ensure timely resolution. When complex issues arose, and with residents’ permission, cases were elevated to the Health Care Authority (HCA), which allowed for more coordinated solutions. Staff and volunteers participated in ongoing training focused on documentation, complaint resolution procedures, and advocacy, while collaboration with the HCA ensured facility lists were up to date and that all active facilities were included in the visitation schedule. Regular consultation with experts helped guide the continuous improvement of program policies and procedures.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Activities	Fiscal Year 24	Fiscal Year 25
# of Community Education Sessions	33	89
# of Facility Visits	1649	2320
# of Complaints Investigated	610	878
% Complaint Resolution Rate	604 = 99%	868 = 99%
# of Facility Staff Trainings	7	25

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Analysis of Program Data

LTCOP's work in FY25 reflected steady growth in activity and impact. Ombudsmen provided 114 activities between community education and training sessions for facility staff. Staff and volunteers conducted 2,320 visits to LTC facilities, covering all 283 facilities statewide and achieving 100 percent facility coverage. Visits increased each quarter, with 471 in Q1, 563 in Q2, 625 in Q3, and 661 in Q4, representing a 40 percent increase from the beginning to the end of the year. This total marks the highest number of annual visits in the past five years, and the program exceeded federal requirements by ensuring each facility was visited at least once per quarter.

Fiscal Year 2025 Total Facility Visits



Alongside this achievement, the program received 878 complaints, of which 868 were resolved within 60 days. This reflects a 99 percent resolution rate, with performance remaining consistent throughout the year and sustaining compliance with federal timeliness benchmarks. The strength of this resolution rate demonstrates the program's effectiveness in case management, its emphasis on monthly reviews, and its investment in continuous staff training.

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Program Expenditures

Source	2024	2025
Federal	622,792.22	795,418.79
State	210,470.66	403,581.81
Total	833,262.88	1,163,000.60
Administrative Services (Federal)	105,345.41	191,693.78

The figures above are drawn from the general ledger and accounts payable reports for fiscal years 2024 and 2025. In FY24, federal expenditures totaled \$622,792.22, while state funding amounted to \$210,470.66, with \$105,345.41 allocated to administrative services. In FY25, federal expenditures increased to \$795,418.79, state funding rose to \$403,581.81, and administrative services totaled \$191,693.78.

Overall, the Ombudsman Program demonstrated growth in funding and continued cost-effectiveness across both fiscal years.



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Evaluation of Problems and Complaints

The most common concerns reported by or on behalf of residents involved quality of care, with issues such as insufficient staffing levels, delays in care, and medication errors frequently cited. Transitions of care, particularly during hospital discharges or transfers between facilities, often created confusion and stress for residents and families. Residents also raised concerns about the loss of personal property, billing and charges; their rights, including restrictions on visitation, autonomy, and choice in daily living activities. Facility environment issues were another recurring theme, with complaints focusing on maintenance, food service quality, and access to activities.

Many of these complaints required follow-up visits to ensure that problems were fully resolved. Residents regularly expressed appreciation for the Ombudsman's presence, noting that in-person visits offered both reassurance and timely advocacy.

Number of Complaints Resolved Fiscal Year 2025

FY25 Q1	FY25 Q2	FY25 Q3	FY25 Q4	Average
208 of 208 = 100%	202 of 203 = 99%	247 of 251 = 98%	211 of 216 = 98%	868 of 878 = 99%

Complaints by Type

Percentage

Care (<i>response to request for assistance, accidents and falls, medications, personal hygiene, assistive devices or equipment</i>)	32%
Admission, transfer, discharge, eviction	13%
Dietary	10%
Autonomy, Choice, Rights	9%
Abuse, Gross Neglect, Exploitation	9%
Financial, Property	8%
Environment (<i>housekeeping, accessibility, supplies, and building structure</i>)	8%
Activities, Community Integration and Social Services	4%
Facility Policies, Procedures and Practices	4%
Access to Information	3%
Others	1%
Total	100%

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Recommendations

Maintaining staffing standards are vital to the quality of care in facilities. As of September 2025, CMS has drafted an interim final rule proposing to repeal the minimum staffing standards adopted in 2024. If implemented, this would remove the requirement for 24/7 RN coverage and eliminate fixed hours-per-resident-day ratios, creating uncertainty for providers. Until the repeal is officially published and effective, facilities should continue to follow current standards while monitoring CMS updates and surveyor guidance ([Consumer Voice Condemns CMS Plan to Rescind the Minimum Staffing Rule in Nursing Homes - The Consumer Voice](#)).

Expanding access to mental health resources, especially by creating incentives to attract and retain providers in rural areas, is another priority. In addition, the program recommends dedicating resources to address substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders among younger residents, a growing concern that directly impacts safety and well-being of all residents in facilities. Finally, increased funding and support for both staff and volunteer recruitment will be essential to ensuring ongoing statewide coverage and strong program capacity. Creating clear career development opportunities within the Ombudsman Program is essential to retaining skilled staff.



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Analysis of Program Success

The most significant success of LTCOP during this FY25 was ensuring that every LTC facility in the state received a visit at least once per quarter. This level of outreach not only maintained compliance with federal requirements but also strengthened resident access to advocacy services. The program also sustained a 99 percent resolution rate within 60 days, confirming its effectiveness in addressing and resolving complaints in a timely manner. Facility engagement increased throughout the year as the number of visits grew steadily, improving visibility and resident trust.

During this year, LTCOP expanded volunteer recruitment by using social media to direct prospective ombudsman advocates to our online application. Staff actively engaged with applicants, responding to inquiries and guiding them through program requirements. This targeted outreach has resulted in many applicants being scheduled for certification training in FY26, advancing them from associates to fully certified advocates. By increasing the program's visibility on social media, LTCOP has strengthened its ability to attract volunteers. Interested individuals can apply via an online web portal:

<https://www.aging.nm.gov/ombudsman/advocate-opportunities>

In addition, the Policy and Procedures for the LTCOP was compiled and drafted by a consultant, the Acting State Ombudsman, the Deputy State Ombudsman, and the Regional Supervisors, with review provided by the Office of the General Counsel. This manual reflects extensive effort and numerous revisions, which encompass a wide range of subject matters: from citations of the Older Americans Act, federal regulations, and the New Mexico Administrative Code, to the program's mission statement, record maintenance, and facility closure procedures. It is intended to guide the program in the years ahead, subject to approval by the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. The updates were implemented to reflect recent changes to the Older Americans Act and to ensure that procedures for training, certification, and continuing education are consistent with standards established by the Office of Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

The Policy and Procedures incorporate best practice approaches to advocacy, clarify the functions and responsibilities of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, and define the duties of representatives of the Office. In addition, the revisions provide clearer guidance for identifying and addressing potential conflicts of interest, strengthen consistency of practice across the state, and ensure that the program continues to operate with fairness, accountability, and transparency. Collectively, these updates are intended to support staff in their roles as advocates and to reinforce the program's mission of protecting and promoting the rights of residents in long-term care facilities.

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Program Opportunities

Despite some achievements, the program continued to face barriers that limited its ability to operate at maximum capacity. Staffing and volunteer recruitment and retention remained challenging, reducing the potential for more frequent facility visits. The complexity of complaints also grew, with issues such as residents with substance use and mental health disorders, care transitions and medical decision-making requiring significant time and resources. Updates to protocols created ongoing training demands, while geographic challenges made it difficult to maintain equitable access to advocacy services in remote and rural areas. Addressing these barriers will be critical to sustaining the program's effectiveness and expanding its reach in future years.



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Closing Summary

As we conclude this year's report, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program remains committed to advocating for New Mexico's older and disabled adults residing in long-term care facilities. We are inspired by the progress we have made and the partnerships that continue to strengthen our work. Residents, their families, friends, and caregivers entrust long-term care and nursing facilities to provide safe environments that meet standards of care and provide a quality of life. If ever they fall short, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman offers an avenue for expressing and resolving concerns. Each milestone achieved in the Ombudsman Program reflects the dedication of our team, the commitment of our volunteers and partners, and the trust of the communities we serve. We look forward to building on this foundation in the year ahead, continuing to advocate for our residents, and expand our impact.

Our advocates visit assisted living facilities and nursing homes on a regular basis advocating for rights, investigating complaints, exploring solutions, and ensuring quality of care. To report facility abuse, neglect, or exploitation, call our hotline 1-800-432-2080 or visit our website for more resources and information <https://www.aging.nm.gov/ombudsman>.



New Mexico Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

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