

## What does the Wisconsin Long Term Care Ombudsman Program do?

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program plays a critical role in addressing the **health, safety, welfare** and **rights issues** that older adults face. Ombudsmen respond to complaints lodged by or on behalf of residents and work with them to protect their rights and well-being. They also serve as consultants and educators to providers and citizens on any number of specific issues, including resident rights, preventing abuse, and the state's managed long-term care programs, Family Care and IRIS.

### Our program...

- ✓ **investigates complaints** on behalf of long-term care consumers
- ✓ **provides consultations** to long-term care providers
- ✓ **educates** the public, family members, long-term care consumers, and long-term care providers
- ✓ **protects** the rights of residents in long-term care facilities

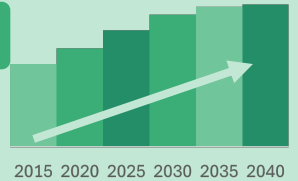
### Charged to Serve

**125.6k+** people living in long-term care facilities, managed care, and the IRIS program

**6,000+** long-term care facilities throughout the state of Wisconsin

### Changing Demographics

**up to 72%** projected increase in Wisconsin's 65+ population between 2015 and 2040



**70%** of Wisconsin residents ages 65+ will require long-term care services

## A Leader in Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs

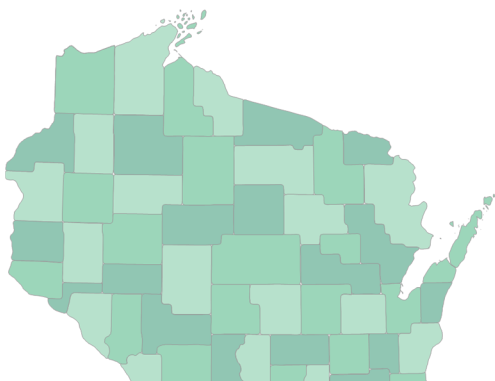
Wisconsin was **one of the first** of five states to pilot the Ombudsman Program under President Nixon in 1972.

Five years later, the 1978 Amendments to the Older Americans Act required all states to develop an ombudsman program. Wisconsin's program was later moved to the Board on Aging and Long Term Care in 1981, where it continues to operate as an effective, responsive, and trusted resource for older adults.

### In 2024, Wisconsin's Ombudsman Program:

- Investigated **2,903** case complaints.
- Partially or fully resolved **77%** of all complaints to the satisfaction of the resident or complainant.
- Provided **1,861** consultations to long-term care providers.
- Provided **4,575** consultations to individuals.
- Completed **60** trainings for facility staff.
- Engaged in **129** community education opportunities.

The Ombudsman Program is essential to ensure the health, safety and well-being of current and future older adults in Wisconsin. **Thank you for strengthening your commitment to supporting older adults in our state.**



## The Impact of Wisconsin's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is essential in addressing the safety and well-being of older adults in Wisconsin. The following accounts highlight the impact of the Ombudsman Program, illustrating its essential function for older adults and those living in long-term care facilities within our state.



### Remaining Safely at Home

**A client** with multiple sclerosis, living independently and enrolled in home and community-based services, requested a bathroom modification to safely bathe and use the toilet. His request was denied. Suggested alternatives increased the risk of injury and could have forced him out of his home. When he appealed, he was told to consider moving to assisted living instead. The ombudsman helped with the appeal and proved that a one-time modification would cost less than moving to assisted living. The client was able to remain safely in his home and maintain his independence, while also using the most cost-effective option.



### Protecting Resident Rights

**Ombudsmen continue to** receive calls periodically about long-term care facilities still restricting visitors when there is a Covid or other outbreak. Ombudsmen resolve each case individually by promoting the residents' right to have visitors and educating providers about the dangers of social isolation. Ombudsmen equip residents and families with language they can use to stand up for their rights and assist in resolving resident rights violations.



### Focusing on Resident Safety and Well-Being

**While making an unscheduled visit** to an assisted living facility, an ombudsman noticed padlocks on the outside of bedroom doors on the second floor, which is a fire and safety hazard. The padlocks were near the top of the door. Staff said the locks were used for residents who wouldn't stay in bed at night and kept them from helping themselves to food from the refrigerator, which also had a padlock on its door. The ombudsman remained in the home until the locks were removed and reported the provider to the regulatory agency.