



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 173-14-23 Initial designation of regional long-term care ombudsman programs: process.

Effective: November 10, 2025

The SLTCO may designate a sponsoring agency as a new regional long-term care ombudsman program (regional program) only if the sponsoring agency complies with all the structural standards established in paragraph (B) of rule 173-14-22 of the Administrative Code and submits a complete ombudsman plan that is approved by the SLTCO in accordance with paragraph (D) rule of this rule.

The SLTCO may designate a temporary regional program as needed.

The SLTCO may designate a program as provisional on its initial designation.

(A) The SLTCO shall adhere to the following process when designating a sponsoring agency to serve as a new regional program:

(1) Issue a request for proposal (RFP), in consultation with the AAA, that does all of the following:

(a) Seeks sponsoring agencies willing to serve as the regional program.

(b) Identifies all the standards that a sponsoring agency needs to qualify for designation as a regional program.

(c) Establishes a deadline of thirty days after responding to the RFP for the sponsoring agency to provide the SLTCO with an ombudsman plan and documents to support the sponsoring agency's claim to meet the standards under paragraph (A)(1)(b) of this rule.

(2) Conduct an on-site visit to each of the eligible agencies responding to the RFP to verify the facts presented in each proposal and, at the SLTCO's discretion, include the AAA serving the region to participate in the on-site visit.

(3) Review the ombudsman plans of all proposals submitted and, at the SLTCO's discretion, consult



with the AAA, then choose the agency that is most appropriate to serve as the regional program.

(4) Notify the AAA and responding agencies of the SLTCO's decision and the right of every agency not chosen to request a hearing to appeal the SLTCO's decision according to Chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

(5) Notify the chosen agency of its designation year.

(B) Any sponsoring agency receiving initial or temporary designation as a regional program shall enter into a contract with the AAA or the SLTCO that, at a minimum, specifies the following:

(1) The regional program's geographical region.

(2) A requirement for the regional program to comply with all state and federal laws, regulations, policies and procedures governing the office of the SLTCO.

(3) A requirement for the regional program to comply with all AGE policies and procedures relating to contractors.

(4) A requirement for the regional program to comply with all of the reporting requirements in rule 173-14-19 of the Administrative Code.

(C) Summary and action plans:

(1) The SLTCO shall develop a summary and action plan in conjunction with the initial or temporary designation of each newly designated regional program to address areas of positive practices and concern and specify actions for the regional program to take to correct problem areas or any violation of the law or the structural standards that are discovered during the initial designation process.

(2) Once the summary and action plan has been issued, the regional program's director, AAA, or sponsoring agency involved in the designation process has fourteen calendar days to provide written or electronic comments to the SLTCO on the content of the summary and action plan. If these parties



do not provide written or electronic comments to the SLTCO within fourteen calendar days, the summary and action plan takes effect on the fifteenth day. If these parties provide written or electronic comments to the SLTCO within fourteen calendar days, the SLTCO shall take the comments into consideration when finalizing the summary and action plan.

(3) The SLTCO shall provide the technical assistance or conduct the visits under the terms of the summary and action plan. If appropriate, the SLTCO may perform a program review to monitor the implementation of the summary and action plan.

(D) The sponsoring agency shall submit an ombudsman plan for regional programs seeking initial or temporary designation that addresses the following:

(1) Complaint handling, including, intake, screening, complaint investigation, complaint resolution, and follow-up activities.

(2) Provide a regular presence, including increasing awareness of the program and its functions to clients, sponsors, providers, social services, and the aging network.

(3) Public education and information, including increasing awareness of the program and long-term care issues.

(4) Identify systemic issues, monitor the development and implementation of policy by agencies that impact client's lives, coordinate and advocate with relevant agencies and the legislature, and document the progress of systemic reform.

(5) Representation at hearings and legal representation, including defining the types of hearings in which a regional program ombudsman provides representation and develop how the regional program ensures legal representation is provided to clients in other cases.

(6) Training ombudsman staff, including assuring that a volunteer ombudsman can pass the appropriate certification exam, and develop a continuing education program targeted to the needs of the ombudsman.



- (7) Recruit, screen, retain, and supervise a volunteer ombudsman, including increase the number of volunteer hours and increase the capacity of volunteers to do such activities as complaint handling, establish presence, observe, monitor issues and providers, and provide information to the public.
- (8) Fundraising, including identifying where additional resources are needed, and developing fundraising strategies to meet those needs.
- (9) Program administration, including developing the ombudsman plan; increasing the skills of administrative staff in such areas as fund-raising, accounting methods, performance appraisals, supervising personnel, and similar administrative activities.
- (10) Internal quality assurance process, including identifying problems in the delivery of core ombudsman services and developing objectives, action steps with timelines, and outcome standards for correcting the problems.
- (11) Core services.
- (12) Optional services, if approved by the SLTCO, including defining those services delivered by the regional program that are not core services and developing goals, objectives, action steps with timelines, and outcome standards for measuring the success and impact of the services.
- (13) Each provision under paragraphs (A) and (B) of rule 173-14-24 of the Administrative Code.
- (14) Other areas of program operation identified by the SLTCO.