

**BUDGET: \$300,000 - 400,000**

**Raise Public Awareness of  
Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program**

Submitted by: Andrea Valdez, Georgia Gerontology Society

**The problem:**

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) Program was created to offer an unbiased advocate for those living in long-term care (LTC) settings. They provide advocacy and informal resolution of concerns of residents in long-term care facilities. Ombudsmen work on behalf of the resident. The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the fragility of the population living in LTC and although the sheltering in place was ordered for the safety of these settings, it also led to the negative effects of social isolation on these residents.

Although the first LTCO program began in 1972 and is now required in all 50 states, many consumers still do not know that this free program is available to them and is a right of all residents living in LTC. Recruiting additional volunteer ombudsmen in Georgia would be helpful because of the number of LTC facilities and the increase in the aging population. Because the State LTCO tracks the number of contacts, there could be a comparison pre-campaign and post-campaign to measure the effectiveness and impact of the funds.

**What other states are doing:**

No other active awareness campaigns are in other states, but there was a recent national webinar promoting ideas about raising awareness of the LTCO.

**What this funding would do:**

Funding of \$300,000 to \$400,000 would allow a Public Relations firm to create a public awareness campaign for LTCO. This would include the creation of collateral and media materials to be used in various outreach methods including radio, TV, print ads and billboards, bus and MARTA train wraps and more. The materials could be used after the campaign also.

**Any opposition:**

Challenging budget times post-COVID could limit the ability for new budget requests to be funded.

**Helpful Resources:**

Melanie McNeil - State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Mary Lea Boatwright Quinn – Alzheimer's Association, Georgia Chapter

Nancy Pitra, AARP Georgia