



MISSISSIPPI
LONG-TERM CARE
OMBUDSMAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FFY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Shelby Walker
State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
601-359-4927 or 1-888-844-0041

OMBUDSMAN IMPACT IN 2024:



Were a part of **48** community educational events.



Conducted over **6,500** visits to facilities statewide.



Participated in over **240** surveys conducted by Mississippi Department of Health.



Ombudsmen were able to provide information to **975** individuals.



Fully resolved **1,385** out of **1,608** resident complaints to the resident's satisfaction.



Attended **268** resident council meetings.

SUCCESSES OF THE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM:

- The Mississippi Long-Term Care Ombudsman team has successfully completed Person-Centered Care Training in partnership with Mississippi State University. This training reinforces our commitment to promoting individualized, respectful, and empowering care for residents in long-term care settings. By strengthening our understanding of person-centered principles, the Ombudsman team is better equipped to advocate for care that honors each resident's preferences, dignity, and unique needs.

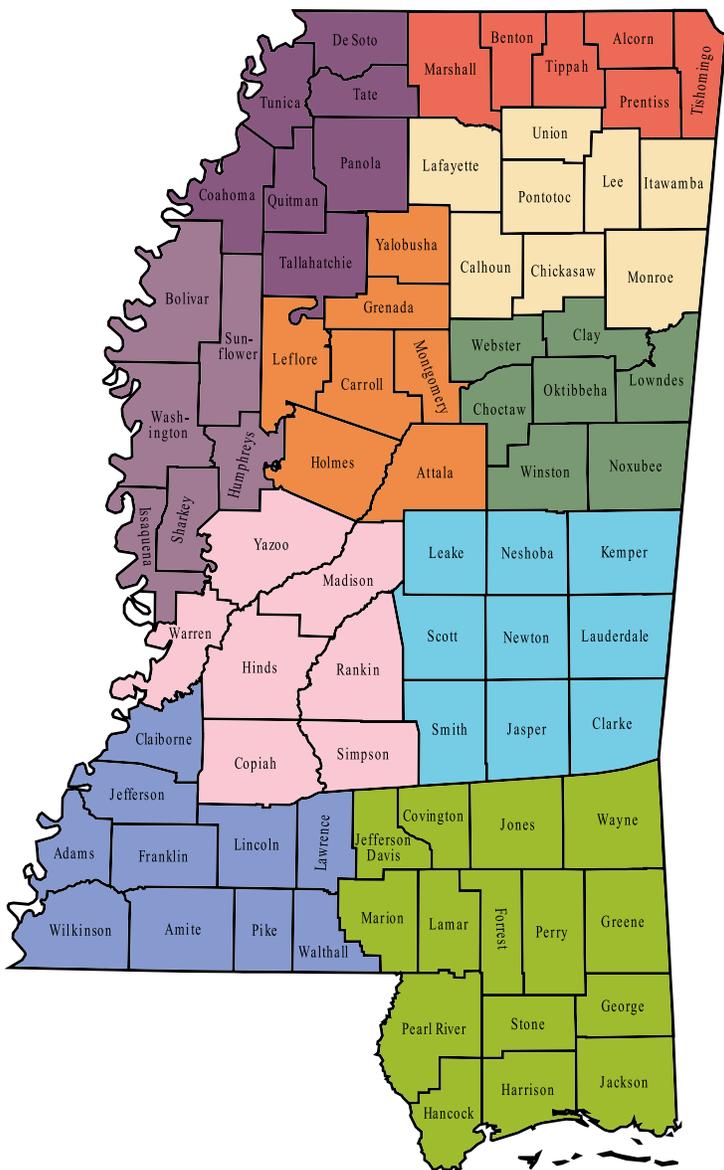
- There has been a notable increase in the percentage of complaints resolved, either partially or fully, to the satisfaction of residents. In 2023, 82.13% of complaints were resolved to the residents' satisfaction, and this figure improved to 86.13% in 2024. This upward trend reflects the ongoing dedication and effectiveness of the Ombudsman program in advocating for residents' rights and addressing their concerns promptly and thoughtfully.

- The former State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and Deputy State Long-Term Care Ombudsman developed a Resident Council Toolkit designed to assist facilities in establishing resident councils. This valuable resource empowers residents to organize, advocate for their needs, and drive positive change within their communities, ultimately enhancing the quality of life in long-term care settings.

GOAL FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR:

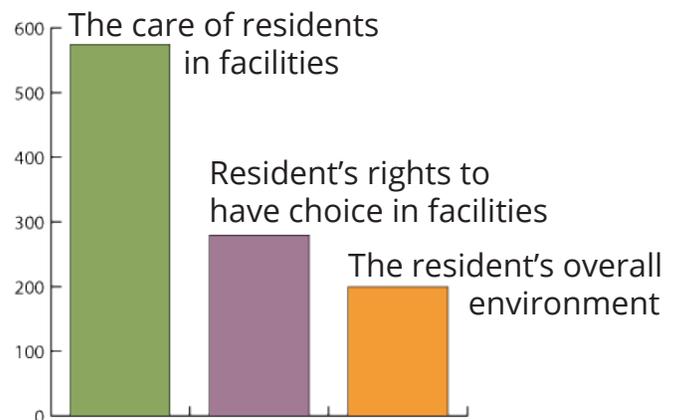
- I would like to begin working toward increasing the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) for long-term care residents in Mississippi. At present, the PNA remains at just \$44 per month, a rate that has not been adjusted since 1998. This amount is intended to cover essential personal expenses that are not included under Medicaid or provided by the facility, such as toiletries, clothing, communication needs, and other everyday items that support dignity and quality of life. Initiating conversations with state legislators about raising the PNA is an important step toward ensuring that long-term care residents have the means to maintain a basic level of personal comfort and autonomy. An increase would reflect both the rising cost of living and our collective commitment to honoring the needs of some of Mississippi's most vulnerable citizens.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING COMPLAINTS BY REGION



53	● Northeast Bessie Greer	171	● Southwest Macy Quinn
245	● Three Rivers Cindy Collums	168	● Central MS Paige McGee (Rankin) Matthew Terrell (Hinds, Copiah, Simpson) Illivia Jackson (Hinds, Madison, Yazoo) Patricia Hunt (Warren)
39	● Golden Triangle Cindy Thompson	43	● South Delta Sonya McKinley
397	● East Central Nicole Hamilton (Clarke, Jasper, Newton, Lauderdale) Martina Bell (Smith, Scott, Leake, Neshoba) Robyn Hopson (Lauderdale, Kemper)	33	● North Central Mary Smith (Attala, Carroll, Grenada, Holmes, Leflore, Montgomer, Yalobusha) Lorene Miller (Attala, Grenada, Holmes, Leflore)
481	● Southern Annette Wiley (Forrest, Pery, George, Greene, Stone, Pearl) Greg Payne (Harrison, Hancock, Jackson) Tonya Bates (Covington, Marion, Jefferson Davis, Lamar, Jones, Wayne, Forrest)	85	● North Delta Elgalene Close

MOST FREQUENT COMPLAINTS HANDLED BY OMBUDSMEN



BARRIERS OF THE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM:

- Fear of retaliation from staff can significantly hinder the effectiveness of the Ombudsman program. When residents are afraid that reporting concerns or grievances might lead to negative consequences—such as mistreatment, neglect, or reduced quality of care—they may choose to remain silent rather than seek help. This reluctance undermines the Ombudsman's ability to identify and address problems within long-term care facilities, ultimately limiting their capacity to advocate effectively on behalf of residents. Without open and honest communication, it becomes challenging to ensure residents' rights are protected and that their quality of life is maintained.
- There is a pressing need for additional local Ombudsmen in Mississippi. With 406 nursing and assisted living facilities statewide, housing a total of 28,408 beds, the current Ombudsman workforce is stretched thin. Increasing the number of Ombudsmen would enable more frequent visits to facilities, allowing residents to receive the attention and support they deserve. Moreover, a larger team would facilitate quicker resolution of complaints and concerns, ultimately enhancing the quality of care and advocacy for long-term care residents across the state.