Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) Annual Data Report

FFY 2025

1. Executive Summary

During this reporting period, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) closed **1,464 cases** comprising **2,693 total complaints** across nursing facilities, residential care communities, and Other Settings (OIDD and OMH facilities).

Key Performance Highlights

- **Case Resolution Rate**: **83.1%** ($2{,}431/2{,}925$ total disposition outcomes recorded) were partially or fully resolved to the satisfaction of the resident, resident representative, or complainant.
- **Primary Complaint Drivers**: Care-related issues represent the highest volume at **40.7%** ($1{,}097$), followed by Abuse/Neglect/Exploitation at **15.9%** (428) and Autonomy/Choice/Rights at **10.2%** (276).
- **Primary Intake Sources**: Facility staff generated **43.7%** (640) of all cases, followed by resident representatives/family/friends at **17.6%** (258) and representatives of other agencies at **16.1%** (236). Direct resident complaints comprised **12.7%** (186).
- **Volunteer Impact**: **91 volunteer ombudsman representatives** contributed **3,102.8 hours** of resident advocacy valued at **$96,683.25** ($31.16/hour).
- **Facility Reach & Visits**: Program staff and representatives conducted **4,289 total facility visits** across licensed settings ($1{,}775$ in Nursing Facilities and $2{,}514$ in Residential Care Communities).

2. Facility & Capacity Overview

The Ombudsman Program advocates for individuals residing in 780 licensed long-term care facilities, representing **47,798 total residents.**

Facility Type	Total Facilities	Total Resident Capacity	Avg. Capacity / Facility
Licensed Nursing Facilities	271	25,744	~95.0
Residential Care Communities	529	22,054	~41.7

3. Case Intake and Complainant Analysis

The program closed **1,464 cases** opened across three distinct setting types: Nursing Facilities (**61.7%**), Residential Care Communities (**27.3%**), and Other Settings (**11.1%**).

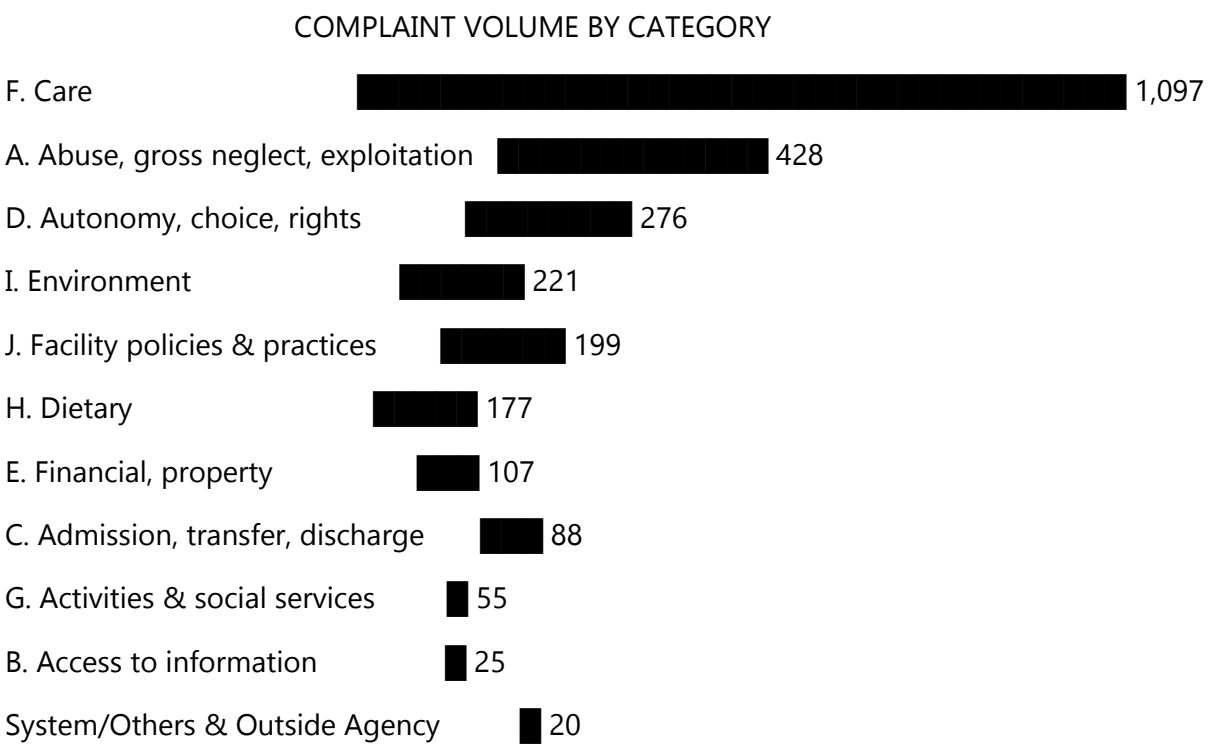
Complainant Source	Nursing Facility	Residential Care Community	Other Setting	Total Cases	Share of Total (%)
Facility staff	402	110	128	**640**	43.7%
Resident representative, friend, family	159	93	6	**258**	17.6%
Representative of other agency/org	135	88	13	**236**	16.1%
Resident	132	47	7	**186**	12.7%
Ombudsman program	53	28	4	**85**	5.8%
Unknown	17	28	2	**47**	3.2%
Concerned person	5	5	2	**12**	0.8%

Complainant Source	Nursing Facility	Residential Care Community	Other Setting	Total Cases	Share of Total (%)
Resident or family council	0	0	0	**0**	0.0%
Total Cases	**903**	**399**	**162**	**1,464**	**100.0%**

4. Complaint Analysis

A single case may contain multiple specific grievances. A total of **2,693 individual complaints** were processed across 11 category codes, averaging **1.84 complaints per case**.

Categorical Distribution of Complaints



Complaints by Setting and Category

Category Code & Description	Nursing Facility	Residential Care	Other Setting	Total Complaints	Category Share (%)
F. Care	733	284	80	**1,097**	40.7%
A. Abuse, gross neglect, exploitation	280	97	51	**428**	15.9%
D. Autonomy, choice, rights	160	75	41	**276**	10.2%
I. Environment	123	90	8	**221**	8.2%
J. Facility policies, procedures, practices	107	61	31	**199**	7.4%
H. Dietary	110	60	7	**177**	6.6%
E. Financial, property	52	50	5	**107**	4.0%
C. Admission, transfer, discharge, eviction	50	37	1	**88**	3.3%

Category Code & Description	Nursing Facility	Residential Care	Other Setting	Total Complaints	Category Share (%)
G. Activities, community integration, social services	33	19	3	**55**	2.0%
B. Access to information	11	10	4	**25**	0.9%
L. System and others (non-facility)	8	7	0	**15**	0.6%
K. Complaints about an outside agency	4	0	1	**5**	0.2%
Total	**1,671**	**890**	**232**	**2,693**	**100.0%**

5. Disposition Outcomes

The disposition reflects the resolution status upon case closure.

Disposition Outcome	Nursing Facility	Residential Care	Other Setting	Total Dispositions	Outcome Share (%)
Partially or fully resolved to satisfaction	1,524	730	177	**2,431**	83.1%

Disposition Outcome	Nursing Facility	Residential Care	Other Setting	Total Dispositions	Outcome Share (%)
Withdrawn / no action needed	116	48	55	**219**	7.5%
Not resolved to satisfaction	31	12	0	**43**	1.5%
Total Tracked Disposition Records	**1,671**	**790**	**232**	**2,693**	**100.0%**

6. Program Certification & Educational Activities

Long Term Care Ombudsman Certification and Training

- Initial Certification Training Conducted: 72 hours
- Annual Maintenance Training Required: 20 hours per representative
- Newly Certified Individuals: 5 representatives

Volunteer Ombudsman Representatives

Volunteer representatives expand program coverage by providing regular, unannounced visits and individual resident advocacy:

- Active Volunteer Representatives: 91 volunteers
- Total Dedicated Advocacy Hours: 3,102.8 hours
- Estimated Independent Sector Value: $31.16 / hour
- Total Estimated Economic Value Delivered: $96,683.25 ($3{,}102.8$ hours $\times$ $\$31.16$/ hr)

Facility Training & Technical Assistance

Program representatives (LTCO) provided direct education and consultations to facility administration, clinical staff, and management:

Activity Metric	Nursing Facility	Residential Care	Total Activities
Training sessions for facility staff	23	20	**43**
Information and assistance consultations to staff	692	462	**1,154**

7. Facility Visits and Resident Engagement

Facility Access Rates

Access & Engagement Activity	Nursing Facility	Residential Care Community	Combined Program Total
Facilities receiving 1+ visits	250 (92.3%)	430 (81.3%)	**680 (87.2%)**
Total facility visits conducted	1,775	2,514	**4,289**
Facility Survey Participation	235	11	**246**
Resident Council meetings attended	49	29	**78**
Family Council meetings attended	7	11	**18**

LTCOP Advocacy Milestones and Systemic Capacity Challenges

Across the state, Long-Term Care Ombudsmen continued advocating for residents in nursing facilities, residential care settings, and programs managed or contracted by the Office of Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and the Office of Mental Health.

Despite these ongoing efforts, the long-term care landscape faced significant challenges due to the permanent closure of 20 Community Residential Care Facilities. This led to a net loss of 625 beds, many of which were supported by Optional State Supplement funds that enable low-income residents and individuals with disabilities to access essential care.

Key Achievements:

Doubling the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA)

Until recently, South Carolina was one of only two states where the Personal Needs Allowance for nursing home residents had remained unchanged since 1987—capping monthly incidental funds at just $30 for items like clothing, shoes, hair care, and snacks. Through joint advocacy efforts between long term care residents, the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, and AARP South Carolina, state policy was updated to double the PNA to $60 per month, effective October 1, 2025.

Race for the Ages

Annually, the South Carolina Department on Aging hosts a fun walk/run to generate funds for vulnerable adults in long-term care settings—specifically supporting residents facing facility closures and individuals assisted by the Vulnerable Adult Guardian ad Litem Program. In its second year, the event raised funds that will go directly toward purchasing essential personal items, including clothing, footwear, hygiene products, and storage boxes, for residents navigating facility relocations.