

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 21, 2005
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 99 : VOLUNTEER OMBUDSMEN IN ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES

This memorandum is in response to Councilman Gaines' question about the cost to the City, if any, associated with increasing the number of volunteer ombudsmen at assisted care living facilities.

The federal Older Americans Act requires each state to have a Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. In Virginia, the programs are managed through local Area Agencies on Aging. The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman (NVLTCO) serves Alexandria and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William. The NVLTCO employs five professional staff members, one of whom is a Volunteer Coordinator. The Director of Alexandria's Office of Aging and Adult Services, in the Department of Human Services, is a member of the policy board for NVLTCO. The board meets quarterly to discuss complaints that have been lodged in their respective jurisdictions and other issues. The policy board recently discussed the need for more volunteers.

A volunteer ombudsman is a friendly advocate who visits a long-term care facility and actively represents the needs of the residents. Volunteers must attend an initial three-day training and make a commitment of four hours a week for one year. Some additional in-service training is required throughout the year.

There are ten licensed long term care facilities in Alexandria. As of April 18, 2005, three of these facilities had a volunteer ombudsman assigned.

Alexandria's representative on the policy board will advocate to strengthen NVLTCO's volunteer recruitment program. DHS staff will assist the NVLTCO Volunteer Coordinator with outreach and recruitment efforts by regularly providing information to the Alexandria Volunteer Bureau, placing information in the City's eNews, and in the Alexandria Gazette Packet's "Prime Time" section.

There should be no costs associated with these ongoing outreach and recruitment efforts.