



**State of South Carolina**  
**Department on Aging**

Henry McMaster  
Governor

Connie D. Munn, MSW  
Director

January 31, 2025

The Honorable Joseph Jefferson  
Subcommittee Chair, Healthcare and Regulatory Subcommittee  
304B Blatt Building  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Chairman Jefferson,

In accordance with the reporting requirements of the House Oversight Legislative Audit Report submitted in August 2023, SCDOA is providing the following response to Recommendation #11, which states *"In coordination with the Department of Administration's Division of State Human Resources, evaluate the merits of consolidating the agency's volunteer recruitment responsibilities under the Human Resources division. This division would assume responsibility for developing a volunteer recruitment strategy for the Vulnerable Adult Guardian ad Litem program, Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, and the State Health Insurance Program."*

We have consulted with the Division of State Human Resources and the SC Department of Administration to assess the benefits of consolidating the agency's volunteer recruitment responsibilities under the Human Resources division. Currently, both agencies have indicated that they do not have any volunteer programs in place; however, they do offer internships.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman and State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) volunteers operate under the direction of the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). All divisions—SHIP, Vulnerable Guardian ad Litem (VAGAL), and Ombudsman—collaborate and share recommendations for potential volunteer candidates. The South Carolina Department on Aging (SCDOA) Human Resources Division is willing to share volunteer recruitment practices as needed.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (LTCOP) Rule (45 CFR Part 1324) outlines the role of volunteers in long-term care ombudsman programs. The rule also defines the responsibilities of ombudsmen and their representatives. The rule defines the role of volunteers as designated representatives of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Like paid staff, volunteers are responsible for carrying out the duties of the Office.

Since August of 2023, VAGAL SC has actively worked to retain volunteers by:

- Continuing to host bimonthly regional meetings, annual volunteer appreciation events, and continuing education training events throughout the year.
- Scheduling the first post-COVID online new volunteer training.
- Reassigning staff based on their skillset resulting in an increase in volunteers in the Lowcountry and better management of volunteer recruitment, training, and retention events.
- Continuing to use Volunteer Match which has been a very effective means of recruiting volunteers.
- Providing opportunities for volunteers to assist with activities outside of serving as a GAL. Such as the SCDOA Race for the Ages 5K which increased awareness of the SC Department on Aging and the Vulnerable Adult Guardian ad Litem Program and raised over \$5,000 to support vulnerable adults through the SC Vulnerable Adult Fund.

We anticipate that these actions will result in an increase in the number of VAGAL volunteers for FY 2025.

After careful review, we have decided that the recommended functions of SHIP and VAGAL volunteer recruitment responsibilities should remain within the appropriate divisions. As per the rule cited above, the LTCO volunteer program must remain in the long-term care ombudsman programs.

Respectfully



Connie D. Munn. MSW