

Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman Program- Advocates for Residents in Long Term Care

The office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman investigates complaints about services in long term care facilities, mediates disputes, offers information/referral about long term care, provides advocacy services, technical assistance, and consultation to senior citizens, public agencies, legislators, and care providers.

North Carolina General Statutes direct the Long Term Care Ombudsman to ensure that long term care residents have full opportunity to exercise their basic rights, which include--civil and religious liberties, the right to independent personal decisions and knowledge of available choices.

The Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman provides support and assistance to Local Community Advisory Committees.

Helpful Resources:

Your local Police Department

Your local Better Business Bureau

North Carolina Department of Justice
877-566-9001 (toll free in North Carolina)



AREA AGENCY ON
AGING

**Piedmont Triad Council of
Governments**

2216 West Meadowview Road
Wilmington Building, Suite 201
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Service Area:

Alamance, Caswell, Davidson, Guilford,
Montgomery, Randolph, and Rockingham
Counties

Piedmont Triad Council of Governments
Area Agency on Aging
**REGIONAL LONG TERM CARE
OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM**

Be on Guard- Against Mail Fraud!

When it sounds too good
to be true!



CONTESTS, SWEEPSTAKES AND PRIZES

You've just gotten a post card in the mail that says you've won an award. To guarantee quick delivery of your prize, it says you must send in \$6.99 processing fee. But don't send in any money yet. Under North Carolina law, a company offering a contest or sweepstakes cannot require you to pay or purchase anything in order to win a prize. The offer could even be a scam.

Before you respond to a mailing, telephone call or e-mail that says you are a "guaranteed winner," consider these tips:



- **Buying something does NOT improve your chances of winning a sweepstakes.**

They may make it *sound* like you have to buy something to improve your chances of winning, but you don't. You have an equal chance of winning regardless of whether or not you buy anything.

- **Read the fine print!**

Bulk mailings go out to millions of people and try to make every person feel like a winner. So don't let words like "Finalist,"

"Congratulations," or "Personal and Confidential" fool you. Read the entire post card or email message carefully. There may be condi-

tions or qualifications for winning written in tiny type or on the back of a mailing. If you're unsure of the wording or it sounds too good to be true, run it by a friend or relative.

- **Check the postage.**

"Bulk rate" or "presorted first class" on an envelope or a postcard means that the same mailing has gone to thousands or even millions of people - you are not really a specially selected finalist.

- **Look at the odds of winning.**

Some of the major sweepstakes operators use "Sweepstakes Facts" to disclose the odds. If you read that "Awards and odds are:

\$15,000 (1:4,000,000)," then your odds of winning are one in four million. Your

chances of winning in a sweepstakes are like everyone else's - very, very slim. Almost everybody is a sweepstakes *loser*, not a sweepstakes winner.



- **Look for "No purchase is necessary."**

Remember, by law you do not have to buy anything to enter a sweepstakes.

- **Protect your personal information.**

Never give away your credit card, bank

account or social security numbers on an entry form or to a telephone solicitor.

- **Be cautious.**

If you participate in a sweepstakes, your name, address and phone

number may be sold to other solicitors.

- **Never send money to telemarketers who say you've won a prize.**

Any prize award that requires you to first send money to cover taxes or other costs before the prize can be sent to you is a scam.

If you are being bombarded with sweepstakes offers you don't want, here's how to reduce the number you receive:

- ⊙ Don't enter any sweepstakes or buy anything through a sweepstakes. Just throw the mailings away.
- ⊙ Write the company running the sweepstakes and ask to be put on its "do not contact" list.
- ⊙ Contact the Direct Marketing Association at the addresses below and request that your name be taken off mail marketing lists:

Direct Marketing Association

Mail Preference Service

Post Office Box 643

Carmel, New York 10512

If you believe you are a victim of mail fraud, contact your local law enforcement immediately!