



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Advocating to Improve Transparency and Accountability in Nursing Home Finances and Ownership Project

Overview:

For many nursing home residents, the quality of care they receive leaves much to be desired. Research, data, and investigative reports show that nursing homes do not have enough staff to meet the needs of its residents. Additionally, residents, families, advocates, and others bemoan the lack of, and low quality, food and supplies provided. Yet, nursing homes receive each year nearly \$100 billion from Medicare and Medicaid alone. Nursing home owners and operators, however, claim lack of resources and inadequate reimbursements for why they cannot hire more staff or provide better care and resources. Where does the money go?

For decades, advocates have called on federal and state governments to increase scrutiny on how nursing homes spend Medicare and Medicaid dollars. With the use of related party transactions, complex ownership structures, and other financial tricks, many nursing homes have become adept at hiding how they spend public dollars. At the same time, federal and state governments have not taken steps to increase disclosure requirements, resulting in little to no accountability for nursing home owners and operators. These conditions have resulted in the increased involvement of private equity investors in the nursing home industry.

Transparency is needed to ascertain the true cost of providing high-quality care to residents. Thousands of nursing homes are currently providing high-quality care with adequate staffing. Why are some homes able to provide adequate staff while others are not?

Subsequent to the COVID-19 pandemic and its disparate and devastating impact on nursing home residents, many state governments began to take action, requiring increased disclosure on Medicaid cost reports, even requiring that a portion of every dollar paid to nursing homes go towards direct care. Advocates in states like California, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey have fought hard to have state legislatures pass laws requiring increased scrutiny of Medicaid spending or have helped draft regulations. Other states have shown an interest in the issue, as well.

Project:

Consumer Voice has received a two-year grant from Arnold Ventures to provide direct support, technical assistance, and training to **two** states interested in advocating at the state level for increased transparency and accountability in nursing home finances and ownership. Consumer Voice will work closely with selected state advocates to help them develop and implement state-level advocacy strategies to achieve increased transparency and accountability in nursing home finances and ownership.

This project will provide training and technical support that includes:

- Identifying effective advocacy strategies;
- Data, including data from Medicare cost reports, nursing home ownership, staffing, and other data;
- Training on how to interpret and analyze data, and how to use it effectively in advocacy;
- How to advocate for increased transparency with legislators, policymakers, and other stakeholders;
- Technical support and peer-to-peer learning throughout the project, including at least monthly calls;
- Sample legislation or regulations;
- Issue briefs and other resources.

Selected States will be required to:

- 1. Identify** a lead individual(s) that will work with Consumer Voice throughout the tenure of the project.
- 2. Research and identify** the current state of transparency in nursing home finances and ownership in the state, including current laws, policies, and practices.
- 3. Learn** the complicated area of nursing home finances, including how to read cost reports and identify relevant data. This data will help inform advocacy strategies in the state.
- 4. Develop** an advocacy plan, in conjunction with Consumer Voice, that identifies achievable goals for state advocacy. This plan will help shape the path and progress of the project.
- 5. Participate** in a kick-off meeting and training with partners and project staff on interpreting and analyzing data, and effectively using it in advocacy.

6. Participate in monthly conference calls, and in-person meetings during the Consumer Voice conference, to discuss progress with project staff, to strategize, and discuss obstacles, problems, and successes. In the initial stages of the project, we expect there will be heightened meeting frequency.

7. Participate in a project evaluation that identifies obstacles, problems, successes, lessons learned to share with other states.

8. Engage in advocacy and educational activities that will promote the adoption of policies to increase transparency and accountability for nursing home finances and ownership. Examples of activities could include: cultivating relationships and meeting with policymakers and other stakeholders, raising public awareness, engaging the media, promoting legislation and/or regulations, etc.

This is a 2-year project. The time commitment for project state participants is estimated to average 10-20 hours per month throughout the project, depending on goals, advocacy plan, and activities.

There is no cost to the state for any of the activities related to this project. In-kind contributions, including provision of a conference or training room, assistance with logistics, etc., for kick-off meetings and trainings are welcome.

Who Should Apply?

Individuals or organizations interested in advocating for policies and practices that improve transparency and accountability of nursing homes (i.e., long-term care ombudsman programs, citizen advocacy organizations, advocacy coalitions, or others). Successful applicants should identify partners with whom they will work on this project.

Timeline & How to Apply

Complete the [application form](#). Applications are due no later than **March 15, 2024**. Consumer Voice will work with states to accommodate schedules for the project activities.

Direct questions to Sam Brooks, Director of Public Policy,
sbrooks@theconsumervoice.org