**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Volunteers Urgently Needed in Northeast Tennessee**

**JOHNSON CITY, Tenn.**—The First Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability’s Long-Term Care Ombudsman program advocates for the rights of thousands of residents in more than 60 nursing homes, assisted-living facilities, and homes for the aged in Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington counties. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman program is funded through the Older American’s Act.  FTAAAD Ombudsman staff consists of one District Ombudsman and trained volunteers.

Trained, certified Ombudsman volunteers regularly visit long-term care facilities where they spend time with residents, monitor conditions, investigate complaints, and educate regarding abuse and neglect to protect residents’ rights. The program offers mediation, complaint resolution, and public education for both residents and their families.  Now that COVID restrictions are being lifted, the need for independent, objective observation and reporting is greater than ever.

The FTAAAD Long Term Care Ombudsman program is actively recruiting for volunteers in the eight counties of Northeast Tennessee. Volunteer applicants must pass a background check and attend virtual training spread over a three-day period. The next training session will be held May 12–13, 2021.  Those interested in volunteering have until Friday, May 8, 2021 to contact the program by sending an email to dmorrell@ftaaad.org or by calling 423-979-2599.

**About First Tennessee Development District Area Agency on Aging and Disability**FTAAAD’s mission is to improve the quality of life for older adults and adults with disabilities who live in the eight counties of Northeast Tennessee by advocating, setting policy, identifying local needs, providing services, coordinating resources, and providing information to promote a continuum of care which supports independence, choice, and empowerment for those we are committed to serve. For more information, call 423-928-3258 or visit [www.ftaaad.org](http://www.ftaaad.org)

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