

Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration

47 CFR Part 301

As mandated by the federal Older Americans Act and, the mission of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is to seek resolution of problems and advocate for the rights of residents of long-term care facilities with the goal of enhancing the quality of life and care of consumers. The National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs represents the State Ombudsman in each state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. We appreciate the effort that NTIA has made to try to address the needs of facility residents and offer the following comments on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding 47 CFR Part 301.

Recommended changes:

Sec 301.2 Definitions

1. Amend household definition:

"Household" consists of all persons who currently occupy a house, apartment, mobile home, group of rooms, or single room that is occupied as separate living quarters and has a separate U.S. Postal address. A household does not mean a Post Office Box.

Add: Individuals who reside in long-term care facilities are considered to be a household.

2. Add new definition:

Add: "Long-term care facility" includes a facility licensed or certified

by state or federal government including nursing homes, assisted living facilities, group homes, intermediate care facilities, and state schools.

Sec. 301.3 (a) (2)

3. Add (C) to read:

(a) To apply for and receive a coupon, an Eligible Household must:

(1) provide the name of the person submitting the request

(2) provide a United States Postal Service mailing address

(A) a Post Office Box will not be considered a valid mailing address unless (2)(B) applies

(B) residents of Indian reservations, Alaskan Native Villages and other rural areas without home postal delivery may be requested to supply additional information to identify the physical location of the household, as required.

(C) an Eligible Household member may be a resident of a long-term care facility. In these settings, one coupon will be awarded per resident.

Comments on NTIA's proposed administration of the coupon program for long-term care residents

A resident of a long-term care facility is a consumer equal to any other member of the public. Additional measures to reduce the risk of coupon fraud should not impose unnecessary burden. We propose NTIA add a field to the existing application. This field will collect information on the type of address entered. This field may include options such as: individual home (apartment, house, duplex); nursing home; assisted living facility; intermediate care facility; licensed group home; and state school. All other application questions would remain the same. An additional signature option could be added stating, "I am completing this application for a resident in a long-term care facility." This information would allow NTIA to search available databases for verification of the address as a licensed facility and provide only one coupon to the applicant. Residents in long-term care facilities should not be asked to provide unnecessary identifying information, such as a Social Security number, nor should a facility Administrator or relative of the resident.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have additional questions, please contact Beverley Laubert, NASOP President, at blaubert@age.state.oh.us or 614-644-7922.

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