

Position Summary

The organization Ombudsperson is a designated neutral and impartial dispute resolution practitioner whose major function is to provide confidential and informal assistance to constituents of [Organization Name Here] community, which includes staff, volunteers, and board members, employees, etc... Serving as a designated neutral, the Ombudsperson is neither an advocate for any individual nor the organization, but rather is an advocate for fairness, who acts as a source of information and referral, and aids in answering individual's questions, and assists in the resolution of concerns and critical situations. In considering any given instance or concern, the point of view of all parties that might be involved are taken into account. This office supplements, but does not replace, [Organization Name Here]'s existing resources for formal conflict resolution.

Reporting

The Ombudsperson function is independent of existing administrative structures and reports directly to the [TBD] of the organization. The Ombudsperson does not accept notice on behalf of the [Organization Name Here]. While maintaining confidentiality of communications with inquirers/visitors, the Ombudsperson will prepare a report to the [Organization Name Here] community at least annually. Based on anonymous aggregate data, this report discusses trends in the reporting of issues or concerns, identifies patterns or problem areas in existing policies and practices, may recommend revisions and improvements, and may assess the climate of the organization.

Critical Skills and Characteristics

Communication and Problem-Solving Skills. Ombudspersons must have outstanding communication skills and be able to communicate effectively with individuals at all levels of the organization, as well as with people of all cultures. It is imperative that the Ombudsperson has excellent problem-solving skills and be able to gather information, analyze it and, as necessary, help the inquirer develop appropriate options and actions. An Ombudsperson must be aware of how all decisions might impact the inquirer, as well as other stakeholders and [Organization Name Here]. An Ombudsperson must know how to proceed with issues, and help the inquirer assess who should be involved and at what stage.

Conflict Resolution Skills. An essential element of the Ombudsperson's role is that of facilitating the resolution of conflict between parties. It is important that the Ombudsperson have a thorough understanding of what leads to conflict, the nature of conflict, and methods of resolution. The skills used to assist inquirers to resolve their conflicts include:

- helping people learn how to deal with the matter directly if they wish to do so
- serving as a facilitator between the parties via shuttle diplomacy
- informally bringing the parties together and serving as a facilitator or mediator
- approaching the conflict issue generically within the larger environment (especially when the inquirer is afraid of retaliation)
- influencing systems change which could obviate the individual problem
- the Ombudsperson also has the ability to help the inquirer determine which conflict resolution method would be appropriate for the specific situation.

Organizational Knowledge and Networking Skills: An Ombudsperson must be knowledgeable about [Organization Name Here], its structure, culture, policies, and practices. The Ombudsperson must have excellent networking skills, understand and participate in collaboration with others, and be able to establish

and maintain broad contacts throughout the organization.

Sensitivity to Multi-culture/gender Issues: The Ombudsperson must be sensitive to working with individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures. The Ombudsperson must be open, objective, and must seek to understand issues from multiple perspectives. The Ombudsperson should be innovative in developing options that are responsive to differing needs.

Composure and Presentation Skills: An Ombudsperson should maintain a professional demeanor, should have strong presentation skills, and should be able to organize and communicate information to groups of varying size and hierarchical levels in the organization.

Integrity: An Ombudsperson should have a reputation for integrity and for dealing fairly, effectively and in a timely fashion with all constituents. An Ombudsperson office is based on the assurance of confidentiality to the extent to which the law allows. Therefore the Ombudsperson must keep information confidential in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the International Ombudsperson Association.

An Ombudsperson should not be risk-averse and should understand that this position may, on occasion, challenge even the highest levels of the organization in an effort to foster fair and just practices.

Accountabilities

Dispute Resolution, Consultation, and Referral

1. Provide, delegate and/or refer impartial and confidential conflict resolution services to members of the organization community who are aggrieved or concerned about an issue.
2. Remain independent, neutral and impartial, and exercise good judgment.
3. Assist inquirers in obtaining and providing relevant information regarding [Organization Name Here] policies and procedures.
4. Assist inquirers in clarifying issues and generating options for resolution.
5. Facilitate the inquirer's assessment of the pros and cons of possible options.
6. If direct action by the Ombudsperson is an appropriate option, obtain the inquirer's agreement and permission before proceeding.
7. If necessary, and while maintaining confidentiality, engage in informal information gathering in order to better understand an issue from all perspectives.
8. Consult with department managers and appropriate individuals to develop cooperative strategies for resolving concerns and complaints.
9. With the inquirer's permission, consult with all parties to clarify and analyze problems, focus discussions, and develop a mutually-satisfactory process for resolution.
10. When appropriate, facilitate group meetings, use shuttle diplomacy, or negotiation skills to facilitate communication among parties in conflict.
11. Encourage flexible administrative practices to maximize the institution's ability to meet the needs of all members of the [Organization Name Here] community equitably.
12. Whenever possible and appropriate, provide inquirer with referrals to other available resources.
13. Follow up with inquirers as appropriate to determine outcome and further need of assistance.
14. The Ombudsman has sole discretion over actions they may wish to take regarding concerns brought to their attention; the Ombudsman may, at their discretion, accept or decline to consider issues.

Policy Analysis and Feedback

15. Serve as an organizational resource for officials in formulating or modifying policy and procedures, raising issues that might surface as a result of a gap between the stated goals of the institution and actual practice.
16. Act as a liaison between individuals or groups and the organizational leadership structure, serving as a communicator or informal facilitator, as appropriate, and providing upward feedback.
17. Function as a sensor and recorder within the organizational community to identify problems or trends that affect the entire community or significant parts of the community; if appropriate, recommend creative ways to address these concerns.
18. Provide early warning of new areas of organizational concern, upward feedback, critical analysis of systemic needs for improvement, and make systems change recommendations.

Organizational Community Outreach and Education

19. The Ombudsperson is responsible for ongoing education and communication about the office's role to all potential inquirers including [Organization Name Here] leadership.

Establish/Maintain Office of the Ombudsperson

20. Supervise other Ombuds as necessary. Formulate, manage and monitor the overall goals, direction, programs and budget of the office.
21. Ensure that the integrity of the office is maintained by all Ombuds practitioners through independence, fair process, neutrality, impartiality, confidentiality, and timely attention to the resolution of issues while treating people with dignity and respect.
22. There is currently [\$ budget description] allotted for the [Organization Name Here] Office of the Ombudsperson

Professional Membership and Ongoing Development

- Maintain active membership in relevant professional associations, such as the International Ombudsperson Association, in order to stay on the leading edge of critical Ombudsperson issues, such as confidentiality and privilege.
- Ombudsperson skills should be continually enhanced through training courses offered by these professional associations.

Education, Language(s) and Work Experience

- The Ombudsperson will have a Bachelor's degree in a related focus; however, an advanced degree combined with relevant dispute resolution training or Ombudsperson experience is preferred.
- Experience working with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures is also desired.
- Qualifications appropriate to the role of Ombudsman, including demonstrated participation in professional development instruction from the International Ombudsman Association.
- International Ombudsman Association (IOA) Basics 101 course certification is required.
- IOA CO-OP Certification written test - passing grade is required.
- Certification in a recognized and relevant coaching practice is required.

- Most of the work of the Ombuds is done virtually via online video and phone platforms. The Ombuds will have experience in these tools and their best practices and will have the ability to instill confidence in visitors to be comfortable with the technology when appropriate.
- At least 5 years experience of providing Ombudsman services, mediation services or assisting in the resolution of work and team related issues, preferably with management or dispute resolution experience
- Excellent communication and report writing skills in English
 - Language Requirements: English required. Knowledge of other languages will be an asset.
 - [TBD] may not act as an Ombudsperson for [Organization Name Here].
 - Experience working with multiple time zones will be helpful.
 - This position has the potential for some international travel. Experience in international travel is an asset.