**COALITION OF FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting Date/Time:** January 10, 2018 2:30pm – 4:00pm

**Location:** USDA, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, 1st Floor, Room 1052(c)

**Agenda and Highlights:**

1) Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). Do you use FEVS data in your work as an ombuds? If you do, please tell us about your experiences.

- USPTO - As an internal ombuds this data is publicized and it's noticed by leadership. Ombuds offices may be called upon to respond to trend data.
- DOS – collaboration opportunities with various offices.
- DODIG – Uses with individual visitors, use the results/trends as the bases of a dialogue or systemic trends. Also meets with senior leadership to help translate the numbers into action plans and how to sustain improvements.
- FDIC – uses the results with their workplace councils and steering committees to improve/focus on employee engagement/organizational development initiatives. From the Ombuds perspective, sometimes tied into a "pulse check" assessment or analysis. Estimates that they spend about 50% of their time working with this data.
- DOA – Has identified three potential areas of improvement for the department and is reviewing the FEVS results to see if the results can inform these identified areas in any way. One example, customer service.
- NIH – In the past few years there is an increasing focus by senior executives on the FEVS. The survey results prompted outreach to the ombuds office from an agency leader. Management uses this as a proactive tool to leverage ombuds resources.
- SBA – Lobbied for the addition of some additional questions to FEVS to be a more accurate assessment for externally facing agency.
- DOE – Ombuds was successful in gaining access to FEVS results as a more granular level. This info was offered but they negotiated that access; process wasn't a heavy lift – found the right POC, justified their request and the request was honored – it was a matter of just asking the question.
- CFPB – For external ombuds, be aware of how to direct questions about the survey to right people in your agency, to be aware of the morale and issues facing the agency when engaging in inreach or feedback, and for multi-person ombuds offices to be aware that they may be experiencing the same concerns.

2) Naming our Visitors.  How can we maintain awareness of the language we use with visitors and the people with whom you work?

- Defining unique ombuds language and explaining those terms.
- Reviewing the tracking categories to make sure their meanings are clear with the agency and visitors.
- Discussion around the differences between mediation and facilitation and clearly defining those terms for the agency while also accurately reflecting the legal definitions.

3) Records Management.  Do you have a NARA approved records schedule for your office? Can you share advice or guidance for those who are either going through the approval process or are yet to start the process?

- Discussions about process best practices for agency records schedule. The conversation evolved to the blanket GRS proposal that's on the table. It sounds like several Ombuds offices have an approved NARA schedule and there's possibly a lack of communication between NARA appraisers and possibly appraisers who drafted the current GRS proposal. COFO will continue to look into this issue.
- TSA has received communication from the Department of Homeland Security to establish a records schedule and a request to change the current records schedule. NARA expressed interest in having a comprehensive uniform records disposition schedule for all ombuds offices.
- NGA – In detail, established a charter and records schedule. Idea came about to create a records schedule for all ombuds in DHS. Was on track to have a comprehensive schedule for all in DHS
- In NARA discussions with PTO's new records schedule, this idea was not raised.
- CFPB – Concerned about a general schedule, especially for offices that have had records schedules in place for longer periods of time. At CFPB it was developed with the records officer and did not interface with NARA.
- Can NARA dictate the terms? – Yes.
- Executive Committee concerned by what they saw in this situation and is quickly working on this issue with an update at the next meeting. As a call to COFO members, if anyone has any additional knowledge that could be proposed, please let us know.
- Identifying the importance and unique need for temporary records.
- It took one agency two years to negotiate a records schedule that worked for the office. It was key to have multiple examples and support in the agency. Meeting with NARA in person was also helpful.
- COFO Chair – A reminder that a lot of people still do not know what we do. Continue to support and share information with each other.

4) Issue Tracking.  If you track concerns and issues, how adaptive are your categories?  Do you update or change categories?

- Most offices use IOA categories as a base but modify to reflect the nature/scope of their work. There was a follow-up question about what systems offices use; Excel, Access, iSight (contact NIH for more info).
- CFPB has created their own issue tracking categories. We review them once a year for changes. We try to make sure they are broad enough to be inclusive but also check in to think of things we have been seeing or may see in the next year. The format is similar to other office but the nature, type, and scope of issues is specific to CFPB.

5) Update on upcoming election of COFO Officers and other ongoing activities.

- Tim Little provided a summary of email communication. Survey monkey survey will go out today so you can submit your votes; voting ends on January 30th and the results will be shared at the next COFO meeting.

6) Additional topics raised by Members (please include suggested topics or Ombuds Challenges with your RSVP).

- Joanne Dea -  Human Centered Design Workshop at OPM
- COFO get together to follow meeting

**Attendees:**

<u>In-Person</u>
Achuko, Devara – Department of Homeland Security
Barrar, Riley – Customer Financial Protection Bureau
Berg, Mollie – Department of Homeland Security
Dea, Joanne – United States Department of Agriculture
Drefchinski, Megan – Federal Reserve Board
Heffernan, Claire – Department of Homeland Security
Hill, Gary – Department of Defense
Holman, Patrick – Department of Energy
Kinnavy, Noreen – International Broadcasting Bureau
Lenkel, Laurie - Department of Health and Human Services
Little, Tim – Department of State
Luckam, Stephanie - Department of Homeland Security
Maurer, Bill – Department of Energy
Palosky, Dania – Smithsonian
Smith, Julie – Department of State
Sotoudeh, Paul – U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
Wolfe, Lexi – Small Business Administration
Zeller, Jessica – Health and Human Services

<u>Phone</u>

Adams, Joanne - United States Department of Agriculture
Asar, Sharon - Customer Financial Protection Bureau
Balick, Howard - Department of Health and Human Services
Brown, Andrea - U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
Doyle, Bill – Department of Homeland Security
Epps, Ayanna – Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Fleming, Tasha – Department of Justice
Garmon, Felisa - Customer Financial Protection Bureau
Gartlan, Jennifer – Federal Maritime Commission
Gleason, Peggy – Department of Homeland Security
Harris, Robert - Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Herling, Jasmine – National Credit Union Administration
Hurley, Nathan - Department of Health and Human Services
Kamenshine, Wendy - Customer Financial Protection Bureau
Larkins, Marcia - Department of Health and Human Services
Levine, Lisa – Department of Justice
Manderson, Katie – Department of State
Marquigny, Beckie – U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
McGuire, Carrie – Office of Government Information Services
McNeil, Tracey – U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
Merrix, Celeste – Department of Homeland Security
Michael, David - Department of Health and Human Services

Patel, Bina – NGIC
Pritzker, David - Customer Financial Protection Bureau
Raines, Eric - Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Reilly, Kevin – National Aerospace and Space Administration
Reinfurt, Sandy – Department of Justice
Roberts, Sara – Department of Homeland Security
Semo, Alina – National Archives and Records Administration
Smith, Tyler – National Institute of Health
Walker, Don – Department to Defense
Weber, Guy – Department of Defense
Williamson, Cathleen – Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Zrubek, Tom – Department of Defense