



COALITION OF FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time: April 11, 2018, 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Location: USDA, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, 1st Floor, Room 1052(c) and Dial-in

Agenda:

1. Listserv Technical Issues
2. IOA Annual Conference reminder and Government Sector meeting update
3. NARA Records Schedule Group Update
4. ABA Ombudsman Committee Report
5. Annual COFO Conference update
6. Mentoring Program Update
7. Announcements
8. Discussion Topic: Resolution of Interagency Conflict

Highlights:

1. Listserv Technical Issues

- a. Functional issues have emerged in recent weeks with the COFO Listserv approval process.
- b. Emails submitted to the listserv are supposed to be automatically forwarded to the COFO Chair and Coordinators for distribution approval – this has not been occurring as designed.
- c. Technical personnel at the federal agency responsible for hosting the Listserv have been contacted and the problem is being investigated.
- d. If you need any assistance posting to the Listserv, please reach out to Paul Sotoudeh (Paul.Sotoudeh@uspto.gov), Heather Milner (Heather.Milner@cfpb.gov), or Tyler Smith (Tyler.Smith@nih.gov)

2. IOA Government Sector Meeting Update

- a. The 2018 International Ombudsman Association Conference, to be held April 23-25 in Richmond, VA, will include a number of concurrent sector-specific meetings, including one focused on government ombuds. This meeting will be held from 9:30 – 10:30am on Tuesday, April 24.
- b. A small group of COFO members designed the framework for the government sector meeting around the theme “Tools in Times of Change”.
- c. Session participants will separate into small groups focused on one of four sub-topics: Addressing Systemic Issues, Keeping Above the Fray, Serving as a Courageous Ombudsman, and Building Relationship with the New Team.

- d. Group discussions will enable participants to ask questions and share best practices and lessons learned, while networking with fellow government sector ombuds.
- e. Opportunities to continue networking/discussions amongst government sector ombuds will be promoted, including Tuesday's conference-hosted lunch and an informal offsite lunch on Wednesday. Opportunities will be advertised on Whova, IOA's conference app for mobile devices.
- f. Feedback from COFO members indicated some interest in continuing discussions of the sub-topics at future COFO monthly meetings.

3. NARA Records Schedule Group Update

- a. Thank you to those volunteering to assist the Executive Committee in working with NARA on developing standard record schedules for ombuds programs.
- b. The COFO Chair has reached out to those who have volunteered with final determinations. If you volunteered and were not contacted, please contact the Chair.
- c. COFO membership will be provided updates on progress at future monthly meetings.

4. ABA Ombudsman Committee Report

- a. Each February, the American Bar Association's Ombuds Committee is featured in ABA's Just Resolutions e-newsletter. The February 2018 edition may be viewed here - https://www.americanbar.org/groups/dispute_resolution/publications/JustResolutions/feb2018-e-news.html. Anyone may contribute an article to the newsletter for consideration.
- b. The ABA Board recently approved an Ombuds Committee proposition to establish October 11, 2018 as "Ombuds Day". Activity planning is underway, and will include both on-line and in-person engagements, including a panel discussion at the ABA.
 - i. The planned outcome of "Ombuds Day" is to spread knowledge and encourage greater interest in ombuds, engaging a wide variety of stakeholders and topics.
- c. The ABA Ombuds Committee meets every fourth Tuesday on the month at 4pm EDT. You do not need to be an ABA member to attend. If you have any questions, please contact Wendy Kamenshine (Wendy.Kamenshine@cfpb.gov).
- d. The ABA's Women in Dispute Resolution Committee has been considering the efficacy of diversity elements leveraging work done by the State of New York, which may have some interest to COFO members. Updates will be provided in future meetings.

5. COFO Annual Conference Update

- a. The COFO Annual Conference is tentatively planned to be held at the US Patent and Trademark Office (Alexandria, VA) in October.
- b. A conference planning volunteer group is being put together to assist in generating ideas for topic areas and speakers. Volunteers are also sought for logistical support on the day of the conference.
- c. A Listserv message will go out with relevant contact information. COFO members interested in joining are asked to identify themselves to Bina Patel (Bina.M.Patel.Civ@mail.mil) and Tyler Smith (Tyler.Smith@nih.gov) by April 30.

6. Mentoring Program Update

- a. The purpose of the program is to promote best practices and encourage cross-fertilization amongst COFO members and their organizations.

- b. Program design is complete and has been shared with a small group of reviewers before submission to the Executive Committee.
- c. Some key parameters –
 - i. Mentors should have three years' experience as practicing ombuds; Mentees should be practicing ombuds.
 - ii. Applicants to both positions will apply to a mentoring committee for acceptance; the committee will match mentors with mentees based on function and other parameters. There will be 2 matching rounds per year (January and June)
 - iii. Generally speaking, designers are looking at 2 hour/month commitments for 6-12 months of both mentors and mentees.
- d. If you have any questions, please contact Wendy Kamenshine (Wendy.Kamenshine@cfpb.gov) and David Michael (David.Michael@nih.gov).

7. Announcements

- a. **Ride-sharing for the IOA Conference** – please reach out to the Listserv if you are interested in ride-sharing to the IOA Conference in Richmond, VA.
- b. **Shared Neutrals Program** – It was announced in the April 11 Interagency Dispute Resolution Working Group that HHS will discontinue its coordination support for the Shared Neutrals Program for the National Capital Area due to budget constraints. A path forward for continuing the service has not been determined. Questions included whether there was a possible COFO role in encouraging the program's continuation.

8. Discussion Topic: Resolution of Interagency Conflicts

- a. To what degree do ombuds offices work across agencies to resolve differences of opinion or to promote clarity – for example, when there is disagreement on taking credit for accomplishments?
- b. From the discussion, there does not appear to be wide spread, interagency engagement. In at least one case, an office was chartered to support such engagements but had not yet exercised that authority.
- c. Related questions arose, including –
 - i. Implications for neutrality if an ombuds for one agency is engaged to assist the resolution of an interagency dispute.
 - ii. Implications for making ombuds services available to others not directly affiliated with your organization (e.g., a stakeholder group).

Attendees:

In-Person

Brown, Amy – Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Gordon, Laurel – Department of Justice
Holman, Patrick -- Department of Energy
Maurer, Bill – Department of Energy
Pritzker, David – Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Sotoudeh, Paul – United States Patent and Trademark Office

Call-In

Achuko, Devara – Department of Homeland Security
Balick, Howard – Department of Health and Human Services
Behr, Virginia – Department of Health and Human Services
Daramola, Tangita – Department of Health and Human Services
Fox, Angela – United States Department of Agriculture
Garmon, Felisa – Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Gartlan, Jennifer – Federal Maritime Commission
Green-Phillips, Angela – National Center for Chronic Diseases Prevention and Health
Kamenshine, Wendy – Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Kelly, John – Small Business Administration
Larkins, Marcia – Department of Health and Human Services
Majdiak, Sarah – Community Relations Service
Marx, Lauren – Chi Associates
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
Milner, Heather – Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Morey, Chauncenette – Department of Justice
Patel, Bina – National Ground Intelligence Center
Peak, Todd – Department of the Treasury
Raines, Eric – Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Semo, Alina – National Geospatial Intelligence Agency
Smith, Tyler – Department of Health and Human Services
Valdez, Roberta – Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Walker, Don – Department of Defense
Watson, Michelle – Department of Defense
Wolfe, Lexi – Small Business Administration
Wright, Donald – US Department of Agriculture
Wynder, Rea – Department of Homeland Security
Zeller, Jessica – Department of Health and Human Services
Zrubek, Tom – Department of Defense