



COALITION OF FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN

COFO MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

What: COFO Monthly Meeting

When: Wednesday, August 10, 1:30 - 3:00 pm (ET)

Where: WebEx information below

Participants: Jeff Anderson (DOE), Jason Baker (NIH), Leona Bedrossian (NIH), Mollie Berg (NGA), Andrea Brown (United States Patent and Trademark Office), Cherina Coffman (NGA), Kim Davidson (George Mason University), Marcella DeBerry (NSA), Bill Doyle (Secret Service), Elisa Enriquez (Los Alamos Laboratory / DOE), Aaron Footman (USPTO), Sarah Gill (FINRA), Sheldon Gnatt (NSA), Laurel Gordon (DOJ / U. S. Marshals Service), Jasmine Harley (National Credit Union Administration), Claire Heffernan (TSA), Caitlan Hendrickson (FEMA), Emilee Hopkins (NGA), Nathan Hurley (FDA / Center for Tobacco Products), Syreeta Jarrett (DIA), Erica Katherine (FDA), Noreen Kinnavy (USAGM), Steve Lawrence (DHS Office of Intelligence & Analysis), Laurie Lenkel (FDA), Madison Leonardi (DOE Intern), Dan Levenson (NARA), Lisa Levine (DOJ / Executive Office of Immigration Review), Katie Manderson (VA), Carrie McGuire (NARA / OGIS), Christine Megee (DOD / Education Activity), David Michael (NIH), Ellen Miller (IOA), Heather Milner (CFPB), Allison Monyei Whaley (DOD / OIG), Sandi Moore (NRO), Chauncenette Morey (FBI), Bina Patel (USPTO), Jamie Piziali (EPA), Belinda Robinson (FBI), Nick Rojas (DOD / DIA), Lewis Roth (NRO), Mary Rowe (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Alina Semo (NARA), Ken Skodacek (FDA), Julie Smith (Census), Tony Smith (Census), Tyler Smith (NIH), Paul Sotoudeh (USPTO), Marcus Stergio (Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs / DOL), Shameka Sutton (NCUA), Ronnie Thomson (Sandia National Laboratories), Sarah Trujillo (USDA), Chris Vermillion (DOE), Guy Weber (DOD / NGA), Francine Woodcock (NSA), Deanna Yuille Banford (DOD / Defense Human Resources Activity)

Minutes:

1. COFO 2022 Annual Conference – Friday October 14th – still seeking committee volunteers and presenters!
2. New COFO Website is live – [ADR.gov/COFO](https://adr.gov/cofo)
3. COFO Email Account – federalombuds@gmail.com
4. Ombuds Day 2022 is October 13th
5. Voluntary Leave Transfer Initiative reminder
6. Next Ombuds Supporting Ombuds (OSO) meeting 8/24
7. Midyear report: Wendy and CFPB up online now: <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/cfpb-ombudsman/ombudsman-annual-reports/>
8. General Questions - Space for new and emerging practitioners and programs to ask questions and get feedback from the COFO community in a short discussion format

- How to do outreach, externally and internally? Planning an internal agency conference, and looking to other ideas
 - One idea: Relationship building before issues arise
 - Another thought: There is a finite universe of folks to reach out as an internal ombuds; for external: hard to be comprehensive, could be anyone impacted by work, so outreach can be hard; perhaps focus on sectors or regions of the country can help chunk out; conferences where stakeholders gather, go; if there are events, see if you can go speak to them
 - Another idea: Currently in the middle of outreach campaign; “partners in resolution”; did branding campaign; one page flyers; hub and spoke model with ombuds in the center; educational outreach on things like resiliency; collaborating with EAP
9. Discussion Topic
- How do you handle inappropriate behavior by an external stakeholder, whether towards agency employees or ombuds personnel, when reporting the behavior would create potential issues for the agency in working with or managing the external stakeholder or the company they work for?
 - CEO of company was inappropriate and made personal comments that made the agency staff member uncomfortable
 - Question: what leverage does agency have to enforce compliance on these kinds of behaviors?
 - Visitor is not interested in formal process or wants to talk to person directly but wants behavior to somehow stop
 - Awkward for visitor to enforce norms for meetings moving forward
 - Sometimes it's a decision for visitors to have to face: reporting creates risk, but behavior may not spontaneously change without risk to visitor
 - Consider writing a letter to external person
 - Regulation piece of this?