



COALITION OF FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time: January 11, 2017 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Location: In-person and Dial-in

Agenda:

1. The COFO Standards post ACUS Study-How to support the findings and fill in the gaps. Should the emphasis be on the formal Standards or a less formal approach such as guidelines and informational resources.
2. Transitions-As we prepare for a change in Government Leadership. Is there anything you need during this change, if this is not your first transition, what can you share with the group, do you have any stories, experiences, or tips for the group?
3. 2017 COFO Annual Conference Update.
4. Position Openings and Ombuds News.
5. Additional topics raised by Members (please include suggested topics or Ombuds Challenges with your RSVP).

Highlights:

1. The COFO Standards post ACUS Study-How to support the findings and fill in the gaps. Should the emphasis be on the formal Standards or a less formal approach such as guidelines and informational resources.
 - a. Question to the group regarding the COFO Standards document, emphasis on a formal document or guidelines that point to/reference the ACUS study?
 - i. Less formal document that contains/references ACUS recommendations with practice notes added; maybe something that supports/endorse the recommendations.
 - ii. High level overview with the core standards then create fact sheets.
 - iii. Note of caution to continue to include both internal and external facing Ombudsman.
 - iv. ["A Guide for Federal Employee Ombuds: A Supplement to and Annotation of the Standards for the Establishment and Operations of Ombuds Offices Issued by the American Bar Association"](#).

2. Transitions-As we prepare for a change in Government Leadership. Is there anything you need during this change, if this is not your first transition, what can you share with the group, do you have any stories, experiences, or tips for the group?
 - a. Change in leadership may trigger questions about the value added of an Ombudsman office. It's good to not assume new leaders/constituents know the function of an Ombudsman and how they help the organization and maybe what the office doesn't do. Look internally for metrics (i.e. number of visitors, accomplishments) and dust off your elevator speech.
 - b. This may be the first time offices are transitioning between political parties.
 - c. New executives coming in with military backgrounds; there's a difference in the role of the Ombudsman in military organizations. Consider reviewing ACUS chart explaining the different roles of an Ombudsman in different organizations.
 - d. Getting smart about who's coming in may help you flex to their style. Be prepared to share systemic concerns.
 - e. Notion of "savings to our workforce" assigning a quantifiable savings to the benefits of having an Ombudsman's office. Consider looking at cost savings from costly, formal processes (EEO complaints, FOIA requests). "A good Ombuds is likely to prevent problems/concerns" which may be challenging to capture quantifiably. Idea of tracking most serious concerns which may articulate the far-reaching consequences of those conflicts.
 - f. Working group for 2017 (internal/external) 1-2 pages on each type of Ombudsman illustrating illustrious cases that gives the picture of the worth. It's not just cost savings but the loss of soul and retention. Mary Rowe, consider reaching out to Chi Team and MR can provide a draft for the first 1-2 pages about why and Ombudsman is beneficial. Circulate the document. See ACUS website for list of all federal ombudsman offices (see full report for details).
3. 2017 COFO Annual Conference Update.
 - a. Still looking for volunteers to serve on the Conference Committee.
 - i. Pre-Conference: Leaders and supporting agencies are looking for info on the benefits of having an Ombudsman; 2-3 hours answering questions for that audience. ACUS may speak about their research. Panel discussion with senior executives/practicing Ombuds.
 - ii. Conference: Feedback about how the conference was perceived by members and topics of interest. Going into 2017, we want to be responsive to the group's needs. Any thoughts on topics, please share with the committee/Executive Committee. How much creativity would members give to the Executive Committee regarding topics? No comments from members.
4. Position Openings and Ombuds News. N/A
5. Additional topics raised by Members (please include suggested topics or Ombuds Challenges with your RSVP).
 - a. Sharon (CFPB) – please respond to "what characteristics of your physical office space are in keeping with the Ombudsman tenets". CFPB is procuring new office space and is looking for feedback on what's working/ideas.

Attendees:

In-Person

Anderson, Jeffrey – Department of State
Asar, Sharon – Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Barrar, Riley – Department of State
Bloch, Brian – Department of Interior
Little, Tim – Department of State
Maurer, William – Department of Energy
Qasim, Kakeisla - Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Sotoudeh, Paul - Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Teixeira, Rachel – Department of State

Call-In

Abiy, Desta – Department of Health and Human Services
Berg, Mollie – Department of Homeland Security
Brady, Jen - Department of Homeland Security
Clayborn, Samuel – General Services Administration
Currier, Patricia – National Aerospace and Space Administration
Doyle, William - Department of Homeland Security
Epps, Ayanna – Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Franklin, Rita – Department of Energy
Fox, Angela – Department of Agriculture
Gartlin, Jennifer – Federal Maritime Commission
Heffernan, Claire - Department of Homeland Security
Kamenshine, Wendy - Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Kinnavy, Noreen – Food and Drug Administration
Larkins, Marcia – Department of Health and Human Services
Lee, Joy – National Credit Unions Administration
Leibman, Melissa – Department of Justice
Lenkel, Laurie – Department of Health and Human Services
Levine, Lisa – Department of Justice
Luckam, Stephanie - Department of Homeland Security
Manderson, Katie – Department of State
McGuire, Carrie – Office of Government Information Services
Milner, Heather - Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Patel, Bina – National Ground Intelligence Center
Prout, Vanessa – United States International Development Agency
Raines, Eric – Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Serrano, John –
Smith, Tyler - Department of Health and Human Services
Stukes, Jock – National Reconnaissance Organization
Roberts, Sara - Department of Homeland Security
Valdez, Roberta – Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Weber, Guy – Department of Defense
Zeller, Mandy - Department of Health and Human Services