



# COALITION OF FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN

## MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting Date/Time:** December 14, 2016, 1:30pm – 3:00pm

**Location:** Consumer Financial Protection Board, 1275 First Street NE

### **Agenda:**

1. ACUS Update
2. 2017 COFO Conference Planning
3. Visiting Ombuds – Bank of Italy
4. Open mic

### **Highlights:**

#### 1. ACUS Update

ACUS Recommendations approved today, 12/14/2014. The finalized recommendations were voted in this morning and will be posted publicly on the ACUS website. It will then be filed as a Federal Register Notice which will include the entire ACUS report with their approved recommendations. Expectation is on the federal ombuds community to share the information in the Federal Register

- 16 recommendations in the document
- COFO concerns were raised and addressed throughout the process but not during the Plenary Session.
- A section in the Preamble and Recommendation 16 were changed. These two complementary provisions were discussed at length as the designator for oversight of this committee. Now it states that an entity should be designated as a central resource for Congress but does not specify which agency should create the entity.
- The title is Organization/Cross Agency \_\_\_\_\_. Removed presidential authority and oversight. An entity should be designated as a central resource
- Title and use of “Ombudsmen” has been changed throughout the document to be “ombuds.”
- COFO next step: Provide support to the implementation, provide additional information for the standards, and market the standards.

2. 2017 Annual COFO Conference

- Will be held on Tuesday, October 24, 2017
- The COFO Executive Committee is considering a half-day pre-conference the day before on Monday, October 23, 2017 to provide information to agencies interested in creating an Ombuds Program more information on federal ombuds and COFO.
- If you are interested in helping out with the pre-conference and conference, please reach out to anyone on the executive committee. We will be creating a conference committee.

3. Visitor Kiara Cavalari from the Bank of Italy, Consumer Protection Anti-Laundering Committee

- Ombudsman established by law and started to practice in 2009. Ombudsman has three panels. Each panel has 5 members that are appointed by the bank of Italy. This number will increase over the next few years. Ombudsman decisions are not legally binding but they are published without the name of the customer or the bank. But if the banks refuse to comply, it is published on their website. This is an externally facing ombudsman program. The ombuds follow the European Directives set out by the European Union that have codified into legislation by each individual country.
- The panel selection is done by the ombudsman entity that supports the panels. Individuals can apply for the positions. The panel serves for three years and makes the decisions on who is selected.

4. Open Mic

- Status of the COFO Standards? – Was put on hold pending outcome of ACUS' Recommendations. The plan now is to support the standards that ACUS recommended. Goal is to revise and share with the COFO community by the end of January.
- Attending Holiday Parties as an Ombuds? – Can make exceptions for certain social events that are in the building
  - o One way to attend an all-hands town hall. Do not be seated with any other entity, whether its leadership or any specific group.
  - o If an external ombuds, you could be on committees that are of public interest to the group but does not pertain to the ombuds role such as a security committee or a recycling committee.
  - o What to do with holiday cards? – A few ombuds discussed accepting the cards but not displaying the cards in the office to support impartiality.
  - o Marketing ideas – Attending an employee engagement council. Being available/visible. Posting information on a blog or sharepoint site. Videos. Welcome email to new hires. Brochures and materials about the office.
  - o Final points from the Chair and Vice-Chair: Finding the balance between being approachable and friendly but not aligned with any one person or group. There's no one-size fits all process. Ask your peers and work with COFO on these questions. Be mindful of the standards when approaching these questions. Being an ombuds is a

work in progress much like an art-form; each question should be handled on a case-by-case basis.

**Attendees:**

In-Person

Cavalari, Kiara – Bank of Italy  
Drefchinski, Megan – Federal Reserve Board  
Kamenshine, Wendy - Customer Financial Protection Bureau  
Maurer, Bill – Department of Energy  
McNeil – Tracey – U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission  
Qaasim, Kakeisla - Customer Financial Protection Bureau  
Sotoudeh, Paul – U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

Phone

Anderson, Jeffrey – Department of State  
Barrar, Riley – Customer Financial Protection Bureau  
Bedlivi, Dawn – National Security Agency  
Behr, Virginia – Department of Health and Human Services  
Bookstein, Monique – Department of Justice  
Brown, Andrea - U.S. Patent and Trademark Office  
Bunns, Felicia – Department of Energy  
Dodson, Shireen – Department of State  
Fox, Angela - USDA  
Gordon, Laurel – US Marshals Service  
Guay, Kimberly – Department of Justice  
Kurtz, Becky – Department of Health and Human Services  
Little, Time – Department of State  
Merrix, Celeste – Department of Homeland Security  
Mills, Laurel – Department of Justice  
Patel, Bina –NGIC  
Reiley, Kevin – National Aerospace and Space Administration  
Roberts, Sara – Department of Homeland Security  
Stukes, Jock – National Reconnaissance Organization  
Teixeira, Rachel – Department of State  
Weber, Guy – Department of Defense  
Zrubek, Tom – Department of Defense