



## COALITION OF FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN

---

### COFO MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting Date/Time:** April 13, 2022, 1:35-2:40 pm (EST)

**Location:** Video/telephone

**Attendees:** Anderson, Jeff; Baker, Jason; Berg, Mollie; Brown, Amy; Brown, Donna; Cecil, Tina; Coleman, Jean; Davidson, Kimberly; Doyle, Bill; Enriquez, Elisa; Footman, Aaron; Garmon, Felisa; Ginn, Bradley; Green, Veronica; Hartman, Jessie; Heffernan, Claire; Hendrickson, Caitlan; Hopkins, Emilee; Kamenshine, Wendy; Kashdan, Mark; Katherine, Erica; Kinnavy, Noreen; Kiraithe-Muchene, Irene; Lawrence, Steve; Levenson, Dan; Levine, Lisa; Lewis, David; Lewis, Mark D.; Lloyd, Brenda; Magnus, Vicki; Marcotte, Dan; Maurer, Bill; McGuire, Carrie; Michael, David; Miller Sander, Dawn; Milner, Heather; Mitchell, John; Moore, Sandi; Morey, Chauncenette; Munoz, Edgar; Reed, Janay; Ried, Kimberlee; Robinson, Belinda; Rojas, Nick; Rowe, Mary; Skodacek, Ken; Smith, Julie; Smith, Tyler; Sotoudeh, Paul; Stergio, Marcus; Taylor, Lelar; Vermillion, Chris; Villafane, Jacqueline; Voloshin, Victor; Walker, Olivia; Weber, Guy; Wolfe, Lexi

- Discussion Topic
  - In advance of a session on this topic at the ABA Dispute Resolution Spring Conference, a discussion on the value of online education for ombuds. From ABA DRS Ombuds Subcommittee Chair Ken Skodacek: "From my perspective, especially related to Ombuds Day, an online format has allowed us to engage a larger audience and has also allowed us to have speakers that would otherwise be difficult to coordinate in more traditional, in-person, sessions. I have also benefited from online training from USOA, IOA, and COFO. I would like to hear your thoughts on this important topic. What are the benefits of online education for ombuds? What experiences and insights do you have to share about online education? What's the future of online education, especially post-pandemic?"
  - Benefits include: ability to watch videos from other sessions later, online polls, breakout rooms, chat boxes, ability for international audience to attend, makes it more affordable. Feels easier to connect with people online now.
  - Challenges include: Loss of interpersonal connections, when networking is so important. Sessions often not long enough for interactions. Have to accommodate different time zones. Being on the computer all day can be draining.
- ABA Spring Conference; session includes ombuds from diff sectors/countries, "Growing Into Ombuds Role"
- COFO 2022 Annual Conference. Vote on potential themes:
  - Ombuds: Resilience, Respect, Resolution
  - Slaying Conflict Every Day the Ombuds Way—How Can We Help You Flourish Today?
  - Planting Seeds of Resilience
  - Ombuds: Promoting Dignity and Fair Treatment for All

UNCLASSIFIED

- COFO Website status – seeking new long-term home, and possibly short-term home. Ideas from group included: Consider ACUS, Use LinkedIn company page
- IOA Annual Conference recap – the IOA Annual Conference was held April 4-6<sup>th</sup>, we'll provide a quick recap and open the floor for your perspectives on experiences or things you heard that might be helpful or valuable for federal Ombuds. Comments from group included:
  - Avatar was interesting but also a bit clumsy
  - Excellent group work session with COFO members
  - Schedule meetings outside of Gathertown
- Social Media Committee update, next meeting April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2-3:30 pm
- Ombuds Day 2022 is October 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Peer Practitioner Network update. Now permanent program.
- Voluntary Leave Transfer Initiative reminder
- Next Ombuds Supporting Ombuds (OSO) meeting 4/27/22
- DOL has an opening.
- COFO LinkedIn Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8731777/>