



COALITION OF FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time: July 10, 2019 1:30pm – 3:00pm (EST)

Location: CFPB – 1700 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20552

Agenda:

1. Announcements
2. COFO Mentoring Committee Update
3. Discussion Topics:
 - a. Follow Ups: How often do you follow up with a call or email to see how things went after someone has visited your office? If so, when do you do so and how do you set expectations for both yourself and the inquirer about how it will work?
 - b. Ombudsman Websites: How do you organize the content? What information is most important to post? What have your experiences been in redesigning or updating your sites?
4. Job/Training Announcements

Highlights:

1. **Announcements**
 - a. ROI Institute: ROI Institute is offering a certified training on 19 August at FEMA Headquarters in Washington D.C. The training will focus on how to measure ROI for soft skills. For questions, please contact Vik Kapoor: vikram.kapoor@fema.dhs.gov
 - b. Tyler Smith, Associate Ombuds NIH, former Co-Chair, COFO Conference FY2019 will be leaving federal service to enter academia. We wish Tyler a lot of success and happiness. We will miss him greatly! COFO members took the opportunity to thank Tyler for his commitment, hard work during his time with COFO and in the federal service.
 - c. Kennesaw State University: Participants shared best practices and their experience from the Summer Institute Workshop hosted by KSU in Savannah, GA. Participants enjoyed the workshops and speakers, specifically topics that addressed ombudsing in the age of “Me, Too” and racial profiling. Participants also mentioned that they enjoyed topics related to mindfulness that involved fruitful discussions and interactive exercises; but preferred the duration of the sessions was longer than the allotted time.
2. **COFO Mentoring Committee Update**

The Mentoring Committee is working diligently to host new mentorship orientations for our second round cohort. If you have any questions, please contact COFOMentoring@nih.gov
3. **Discussion Topics**

- a. Follow Ups: How often do you follow up with a call or email to see how things went after someone has visited your office? If so, when do you do so and how do you set expectations for both yourself and the inquirer about how it will work?
 - i. Participants shared best practices stating that follow ups vary per ombuds. For example, a few participants agreed that follow ups are primarily conducted when closing out on cases, including reporting case numbers in databases to ensure that the case can be closed out. Others mentioned that follows up are primarily situational based and dependent on each case. For instance, if an individual requests coaching/mentoring regarding career progression the ombuds may provide guidance, recommendations, thereafter conducting a follow up. Harder issues such as sexual harassment may require the ombuds to proactively follow up with their visitor before the case becomes formal. Additionally, ombuds may request follows up be conducted by visitors.
 - ii. Follows up are unique opportunities in building relationships, rapport and trust between visitors and ombuds; for both external and internal practicing ombuds. Externally practicing ombuds conduct follow ups with customers by providing them a status of their case, while taking the opportunity to work with internal staff on the cases.
- b. Ombudsman Websites: How do you organize the content? What information is most important to post? What have your experiences been in redesigning or updating your sites?
 - i. Participants engaged in a robust conversation sharing best practices such as posting articles on the agency intranet pertaining to themes and topics reported in the media, which may spillover into the workplace. Others reported on sharing TEDTalks on topics such as emotional agility, emotional intelligence, leadership and generational differences. Participants further mentioned trainings and briefings conducted by the ombuds office are posted on the intranet. Most if not all topics shared on internal/external sites are non-controversial.
 - ii. For internal and external sites, participants stated that types of services, bios of ombuds and benefits/processes are listed; including additional information such as Q&A.

4. Announcements

- a. **Conferences:** U.S. Ombuds Association Conference will take place in Honolulu, Hawaii from 18-20 September 2019. Registration is now open.
- b. **Job Announcements**
 - i. Department of State has posted a Pathways Internship, GS05. The position is posted on USAJobs.gov
 - ii. Department of Energy: Organizational Ombuds Position, GS14/15 has closed. The panel is awaiting the list of applicants. More information to follow.
 - iii. Department of Interior: Organizational Ombuds Position, GS13/14 has been posted. The position is a 2 year term appointment.
 - iv. House of Representatives: Whistleblower Ombuds Position, HS 13-15 has been posted on USAJobs.gov

Attendees

In person	
Sheila Aguello	OIG State Dept
Riley Barrar	CFPB
Mary Chavez-Rudolph	DOI
Scott Deyo	DOE
Veronica Green	OIG State Dept
Gary Hill	NGA
Stephanie Klein	
Richard Kurtz	HUD
Lisa Levine	DOJ
Bill Maurer	DOE
Rozmyn Miller	FMCS
Paul Sotoudeh	USPTO
Jean Whyte	Federal Reserve

Dial in	
Howard Balick	FDA
Virginia Behr	FDA
Andrea Brown	USPTO
Kimberly Day-Lewis	FLETC
Andrew Delpesche	USSS
Ayanna Epps	FDIC Internal
Laurel Gordon	US Marshals
Claire Heffernan	TSA
Jasmine Hurley	NCUA
Vikram Kapoor	FEMA
Erica Katherine	FDA Office of Reg Affairs
Noreen Kinnavy	US Agency for Global Media, VOA, and Office of Cuba Broadcasting
Julie Land	NSA
Christa Lemelin	NARA OGIS
Joseph Leone	NSA
Carrie McGuire	NARA OGIS
Tracey McNeil	SEC
Celeste Merrix	FLETC
David Michael	NIH
Chauncenette Morey	FBI
Bina Patel	NGIC
Arielle Patno	FDA Ctr for Tobacco Products
Alina Semo	NARA OGIS
Robert Shinn	US Forest Service
Ken Skodacek	FDA Ctr for Devices and Radiological Hth
Tyler Smith	NIH
Steve Streifel (? – not sure about last name sp)	MEDCOM Pacific
James Sung	DHS OIA

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Roberta Valdez	FDIC External
Chris Vermillion	TSA
Donald Walker	MEDCOM
Guy Weber	NGA
Karen White	National Guard Bureau
Lexi Wolfe	TSA
Deanna Yuille	FDA