

Ombuds Day – A Recognition of the Ombuds Profession & the Value of Ombuds

October 8, 2020

10-11:30 AM ET (morning session) and 4-5:30 PM ET (afternoon session)

Are you familiar with the role of an ombuds, also known as ombudspersons, ombudsman, ombudsmen? Are you familiar with the value that ombuds programs provide to their organizations and constituents? This interactive webinar will discuss these topics and be of interest to current ombuds, those considering becoming or working with an ombuds, and leaders considering establishing an ombuds program.

Ombuds are confidential, impartial, and independent conflict management professionals in universities; federal, state, and local governments; healthcare facilities; and a variety of other organizations. However, their roles and services are relatively unknown compared to other methods of resolving conflicts such as mediation, arbitration, and litigation. Ombuds are uniquely qualified to resolve conflicts and to serve as a conduit for change through their ability to bring significant and/or repetitive issues to management's attention in a safe and confidential way, particularly with sensitive or controversial issues. They may raise issues to leadership that others cannot or will not discuss. This includes identifying unintended consequences of programs and policies that negatively affect constituents. Given the profession's versatile nature, many variations or types of ombuds practices have emerged. Some work with constituents who are external to their organization, while others work with internal constituents such as employees or students. Some investigate complaints, while others serve as advocates. While this versatility is beneficial, it can also create misunderstandings about the profession.

In 2018, the American Bar Association Section of Dispute Resolution declared the second Thursday of October as Ombuds Day. The goal of the day and webinar is to increase awareness and to improve the understanding of this relatively unknown field.

Agenda

Welcome and Opening Statements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ken Skodacek, ABA Ombuds Day Subcommittee Chair	10 minutes
Keynote Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chuck Howard, Executive Director, International Ombudsman Association	20 minutes
Panelist Discussion with Q&A <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mairead Painter• Melanie Jagneaux• Paul Sotoudeh• Stephanie Villafuerte	60 minutes

See biographies for presenters and panelists on subsequent pages.

Helpful Links and Resources

Ombuds Day

- [OmbudsDay.com](#) includes background, event/webinars, proclamations, the Ombuds Day Tool Kit, and various other resources
- [ABA Section of Dispute Resolution Ombuds Day Webpage](#)

Professional Associations for Ombuds (There are many other associations for ombuds & ADR professionals.)

- [ABA Section of Dispute Resolution](#) - Not yet an ABA or Section Member? Join us!! [AmBar.org/JoinDR](#)
- [International Ombudsman Association \(IOA\)](#)
- [United States Ombudsman Association USOA](#)
- [Coalition of Federal Ombudsman \(COFO\)](#)
- [National Association of State Ombudsman Programs \(NASOP\)](#)

Selected, Active Twitter Feeds and LinkedIn Groups for Ombuds Day and Ombuds-Related Updates

- [Ombuds Day](#), follow @OmbudsDay
- [ABA Section of Dispute Resolution Ombuds Committee](#), follow @ABA_Ombuds
- [ABA Section of Dispute Resolution](#), follow @ABA_DR
- [International Ombudsman Association](#), follow @IntlOmbudsAssoc
- [National Association of State Ombudsman Program \(NASOP\)](#), follow @LTC_Ombuds
- [The Ombuds Blog on Twitter](#), follow @OmbudsBlog
- [ABA Section of Dispute Resolution Ombuds Committee on LinkedIn](#)
- [ABA Section of Dispute Resolution on LinkedIn](#)

Other Resources

- [The Ombuds Blog](#)
- Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS) study: [One Pager](#) and [Executive Summary](#)
- [Journal of the International Ombudsman Association \(JIOA\)](#)
- [Resolutions Podcast](#) including review of Ombuds Day in [2019](#) and [2020](#)
- [National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center](#) and [National Association of Local Long-Term Care Ombudsmen](#)

Upcoming Ombuds-Related Events

October 13, 2020 1-2:15 PM ET: *Ombuds: Adding Value by Addressing Matters of Impact* [Register now](#)

October 16, 2020 1-2:15 PM ET: *Embracing Conflict: Organizational Ombuds on Campus* [Register now](#)

November 12, 2020 2-3 PM ET: *How the Child Protection Ombudsman Helps Children and Families Navigate COVID-19* [Register now](#)

Keynote Speaker & Panelists Biographies



Chuck Howard became the Executive Director of the International Ombudsman Association in September 2019. Previously, he was a Partner and the General Counsel of Shipman & Goodwin LLP. He represented organizational ombuds offices at major corporations, universities, and other organizations for almost thirty years and is the author of *The Organizational Ombudsman: Origins, Roles, and Operations - A Legal Guide*. From 2014 through 2018, he chaired or co-chaired the Ombuds Committee of the Dispute Resolution Section of the American Bar Association.

As a litigator for almost forty-five years, he has been included in Best Lawyers in America® and recognized as a “Connecticut Super Lawyer®.” In 2019, he received a Lifetime Achievement Award and a New England Trailblazer Award from the Connecticut Law Tribune and Law.com. He graduated from the School for Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and the University of Virginia School of Law.



Mairead Painter is the Connecticut State Long Term Care Ombudsman, Co-Chair of the Coalition for Elder Justice in Connecticut and 1st VP of National Association of State Ombudsman Programs (NASOP). Prior to becoming State Ombudsman, Mairead was a Social Worker in long-term care, Child Protective service Social Worker, Regional Ombudsman and also a Social Worker at the Department of Social Services (DSS). While at DSS, she became a Program Manager within the Strategic Planning Unit working on the Money Follows the Person demonstration program. In that position, Mairead was responsible for overseeing several initiatives including nursing home diversification grants, Rightsize Rebalancing, and the Informed Choice process for all nursing home closures as well as 2 pilot nursing homes. Mairead views one of her biggest success as furthering the Informed Choice Process in Connecticut Nursing homes and advocating for Person Centered Care.

As the State Ombudsman, she promotes and protects quality of life for older adults and individuals with disabilities, while overseeing the Program’s advocacy work. She serves more than 30,000 individuals residing in skilled long-term care nursing facilities, residential care homes, and assisted living/managed residential communities. Ms. Painter has an extensive background working on Connecticut’s long-term care continuum.

As State Ombudsman, Ms. Painter identifies issues, develops policies, regulations and legislation to improve quality of life for residents receiving long-term care services and support services. Ms. Painter is committed to advocating for person centered care and informed choice for individuals, no matter their age and/or disability. She actively participates in a variety of stakeholder workgroups, legislative task forces/committees and National Consumer Voice.



Melanie Jagneaux is Ombudsman Director for Baylor College of Medicine and President of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA). As Ombudsman, Melanie serves as the designated neutral, available to all members of the Baylor Community to assist in addressing workplace conflict and concerns. Melanie is committed to developing and growing communication and conflict management skills across the organization while maintaining the independence, neutrality, informality and confidentiality of the ombuds office. Prior to her role here, Melanie served as Principal Ombuds at Baker Hughes, for which she oversaw all aspects of the company's organizational ombuds office operations to ensure that it was performing effectively and delivering on its mission and goals. Before that, Melanie designed, implemented and successfully managed the conflict management system for employment disputes at Coca-Cola Enterprises. For ten years, this system produced measurable success by improving employee satisfaction and morale, lowering turnover, reducing EEOC investigations, equipping employees and managers with greater skills to manage conflicts and saving millions of dollars in costs associated with conflict.

Melanie earned a law degree from South Texas College of Law in Houston, Texas and is licensed to practice law in Texas. In addition, she obtained a BA in Political Science from Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana and an MBA from Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia.



Paul Sotoudeh is the Chief Ombudsman at the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and the Chair of the Coalition of Federal Ombudsman (COFO). Prior to joining USPTO in January 2017, Paul served three years as an Associate Ombudsman at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Ombudsman's Office, six years as a Senior Assistant Ombudsman for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and 3 1/2 years as a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Specialist and acting FOIA Operations Manager in the TSA FOIA Office. Additionally, Paul served as the president of the Screaming Eagles, an approximately 1200-member 501(c) (4) organization, from 2007-2011, and as a member of its board of directors from 2004-2017. Paul has received ombudsman training from the U.S. Ombudsman Association and International Ombudsman Association as well as mediation training from the Justice Center of Atlanta and the Northern Virginia Mediation Service. He earned his B.A. in Political Science from the University of Rochester and his J.D. from the Washington & Lee University School of Law.



Stephanie Villafuerte was appointed to serve as the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman in 2015. She also serves as Co-Chair of the Children and Families Chapter of the United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) and the USOA Liaison to the ABA Ombuds Committee. For the past 25 years, Ms. Villafuerte has dedicated her legal and public policy career to improving the plight of abused and neglected children.

Prior to being appointed as the Ombudsman, Ms. Villafuerte served for five years as the Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Children’s Law Center, a 30-year-old non-profit organization dedicated to providing quality legal services and public policy advocacy for abused and neglected children. In this capacity Ms. Villafuerte worked extensively with the state’s juvenile courts, human service providers and non-profit agencies to address the myriad of needs of this vulnerable population.

Ms. Villafuerte also has an extensive public policy and legislative background on children’s issues and has worked 12 years in the Colorado state legislature advocating on behalf of maltreated children. Finally, Ms. Villafuerte has a distinguished legal career serving as child abuse prosecutor for 14 years in both the Denver District Attorney’s Office and the Colorado United States Attorney’s Office.

Ms. Villafuerte has received numerous awards for her contributions to the field including: the Aspen Institute Children and Families Health and Human Services Fellowship 2017, the Denver Business Journal Outstanding Women in Business Lifetime Achievement Award 2015, and the Colorado Women’s Bar Association Raising the Bar for Children Award 2013.