

Ombuds Day – Exploring Options to Resolve Conflict *Together*

October 14, 2021 (11 AM ET – 1:30 PM ET)

Virtual Event Hosted by ABA Section of Dispute Resolution

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

11-11:15 AM ET	<p>Welcome and Opening Statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ken Skodacek, ABA Ombuds Day Subcommittee Chair
11:15-11:45 AM ET	<p>K-12 Education Sector Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armando Peri Jr. (Ombudsman for Fairfax County Public Schools) • Dr. Lisa Williams (Chief Equity Officer, Fairfax County Public Schools)
11:45-12:15 PM ET	<p>Immigration Sector Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phyllis Coven (Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman) • Ben Johnson (Executive Director, American Immigration Lawyers Association [AILA])
12:15-12:45 PM ET	<p>Technology Sector Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dina Eisenberg (Senior Director of Global Ombuds Services at Twitter) • Daniel Brennan (Vice President and Deputy General Counsel at Twitter)
12:45-1:15 PM ET	<p>Long-Term Care Sector Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mairead Painter (Connecticut State Long Term Care Ombudsman & First Vice President of NASOP) • Nora Duncan (Connecticut State Director for AARP) • Mark Miller (District of Columbia State Long Term Care Ombudsman and President of NASOP)
1:15-1:30 PM ET	<p>General Q&A with Concluding Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator - Ken Skodacek, ABA Ombuds Day Subcommittee Chair • Q&A - Panelists from all sectors

See biographies 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 now: [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](#), [2020](#), and [2021](#) and [link on Spotify \(A Conversation on the Role of Ombuds\)](#)
- [National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center](#)
- [Association for Conflict Resolution](#)

Biographies

Ken Skodacek

Ken Skodacek has been involved with the development, evaluation, commercialization, and regulation of medical devices for over 30 years. For the last 3 years, he has served as the Deputy Ombudsman for Food and Drug Administration's Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH), which regulates medical devices and radiological products. In this role, Ken provides a confidential, independent, and impartial resource that prevents and resolves disputes. He serves constituents including medical device manufacturers, regulatory and law consultants, patients, as well as CDRH staff and leadership – he understands that miscommunications and misunderstandings between these groups can inhibit the introduction of new medical technologies intended to promote and protect public health.

Prior to his current role, he has led the development and implementation of various policies and programs intended to improve patient access to high-quality medical devices of public health importance. Prior to joining FDA in 2008, he worked for ~20 years in the medical device industry, serving in engineering and leadership roles with a focus on managing teams that served as the clinical and technical interface between the company, healthcare providers, and patients.

Outside of his responsibilities at FDA, he serves as the Chair of the American Bar Association (ABA) Ombuds Day Subcommittee and Co-Chair of the ABA Ombuds Committee. He is an active member of the United States Ombudsman Association and the Coalition of Federal Ombudsman. He also has training and extensive experience in professional coaching and human-centered design, which is an approach to problem-solving that carefully analyzes problems and develops solutions by involving the human perspective throughout the process. He has used these experiences to support the Health and Human Services (HHS) Ignite Accelerator, an internal innovation startup program for Health and Human Services staff that want to improve the way their agency works using methodological coaching and guidance within a fast-paced, entrepreneurial framework. His work at FDA was captured in a book by Jeanne Liedtka titled, "Design Thinking for the Greater Good: Innovation in the Social Sector."

Armando L. Peri Jr.

Armando L. Peri, Jr. is the Ombudsman and was appointed to this position in July 2018.

Peri began his career in FCPS as a school psychologist at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, and an educational specialist in the former Office of Minority Student Achievement. He was selected for the Accelerated Certification Cohort through LEAD Fairfax and George Mason University, then was appointed assistant principal at Parklawn Elementary School and later assistant principal at Irving Middle School and most recently principal at Pine Spring Elementary. Peri began his professional career serving as a multi-lingual psychologist (Spanish and American Sign Language) in Illinois working with students within the city and suburbs of Chicago.

Peri, a Fairfax County native, earned his Bachelor of Arts in philosophy from Saint Charles Seminary in Philadelphia, and a Psy.S. in school psychology, and a Master of Arts in developmental psychology from Gallaudet University in Washington, DC.

Dr. Lisa Williams

Dr. Lisa Williams became the Chief Equity Officer in late 2020. She provides policy guidance, professional development, and counsel on how to close the achievement gap, while also working to increase diversity among the teaching pool.

As the Chief Equity Officer, Dr. Williams oversees the Ombudsman Office, the Office of Professional Learning and Family Engagement, the Hearings Office, and admissions for Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.

Before coming to Fairfax County Public Schools, Dr. Williams was the executive director of the Department of Equity and Cultural Proficiency in Baltimore County (Md.) Public Schools for 11 years. She provided district-wide leadership in the implementation of educational equity policy and training and professional development to the Board of Education and superintendent. She led the district on the topic of anti-racist teaching, learning, and other topics related to social justice in schools. She also worked to improve college readiness for underserved populations, to close the achievement gap for students in grades K-8, and to attract a more diverse group of teachers. In addition, she played a significant role in helping the system all but close the achievement gap in the graduation rate between Black and White students.

Dr. Williams had previously served as director of the Office of Title I at Baltimore County Public Schools. She has also served as a consultant with the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, and as an adjunct instructor at Notre Dame University of Maryland, McDaniel College, and York College.

Dr. Williams earned her doctorate in education in urban educational leadership from Morgan State University, a master's degree in counseling psychology and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Towson University, and a bachelor's degree in biology from Morgan State University.

Phyllis Coven

Phyllis A. Coven officially entered on duty as the seventh Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman (CIS Ombudsman) on March 14, 2021. She brings more than two decades of experience working for both the federal government and international organizations leading a wide range of immigration, asylum and refugee initiatives.

Previously, Ms. Coven served as District Director for the two largest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) District Offices located in New York and Los Angeles; as Acting and Deputy Director of the Office of Detention Policy and Planning within U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and overseas as Officer in Charge of USCIS Offices in Amman, Jordan and Johannesburg, South Africa. She also served as Director of the Office of International Affairs under the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), where she was responsible for the operations of the INS's overseas offices and refugee and asylum divisions. Additionally, she served as Deputy Associate Attorney General and as Special Assistant to the Attorney General at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Prior to returning to the U.S. Government, Ms. Coven worked for the International Organization for Migration in Geneva, Switzerland as a Policy Liaison and Advisor on the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration. Most recently, she supported the United Nations Syria humanitarian response as Senior Coordinator of the Interagency Program on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Ben Johnson

Benjamin Johnson is the Executive Director of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) in Washington, DC. AILA is the national association of more than 15,000 immigration lawyers established to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members.

Mr. Johnson has studied and worked in the immigration field for more than 20 years. A former immigration attorney, Mr. Johnson joined the American Immigration Council (The Council) in Washington, DC in 2003, eventually serving as its Executive Director. The Council is one of the nation's leading non-profit, educational organizations in the field of immigration dedicated to increasing public understanding of immigration law and policy and the role of immigration in American society. Prior to that, Mr. Johnson served as the Associate Director of Advocacy for AILA in Washington, DC from 1999 to 2003, working directly with members of Congress and the Administration on legislation to reform immigration laws. He has written extensively on immigration law and policy and has been invited to present testimony on immigration issues before the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. He is a frequent guest commentator on television and radio, with appearances on programs including CNN, MSNBC, ABC News, Fox News, BBC World News, National Public Radio, and C-SPAN. He has been quoted by print outlets such as The New York Times, USA Today, The Washington Post, and Bloomberg.

A native of Arizona, Mr. Johnson was the co-founder and legal Director of the Immigration Outreach Center in Phoenix. Prior to becoming involved in immigration issues he was a public defender and civil litigation attorney in San Diego, CA. He earned a J.D. from the University of San Diego School of Law and studied International and Comparative Law at Kings College in London.

Dina Eisenberg

Dina Eisenberg, a former lawyer, developed and launched the first Ombuds program for a social media outlet. She leads Global Ombuds Services, where she also serves as the inaugural Ombuds. Formerly, Dina was the CEO and Founder of YourOmbuddy, a consulting firm that provided outsourced Ombuds services. During her 24 years in the profession, Dina has served in a variety of settings from Berklee College of Music, where she developed their inaugural program, to Bank of America where she served as SVP and supported 60K employees throughout the domestic United States. Dina is honored and excited to bring the benefits of Ombuds services to the tech Community.

Daniel Brennan

Daniel Brennan is Vice President, Deputy General Counsel at Twitter in San Francisco, where he leads the Commercial, Corporate, Intellectual Property, Marketing/Content, and Employment legal teams. He helped to launch the Ombuds Office at Twitter earlier this year.

Previously Daniel was Executive Director, Legal, for the Global Services business unit of Dell in Austin. Prior to Dell, Daniel was an intellectual property attorney with the Austin office of Arnold, White & Durkee, where he practiced all aspects of patent, trademark and copyright law. Before attending law school, Daniel was a software engineer for the IBM Corporation.

Daniel holds a J.D. with Honors from the University of Texas School of Law, and a B.S. in Computer Science from Bucknell University.

He is @danielbrennan on Twitter.

Mairead Painter

Mairead is the Connecticut State Long Term Care Ombudsman, Co-Chair of the Coalition for Elder Justice in Connecticut, Co-Chair of the Connecticut Medicaid Long Term Services & Supports Rebalancing Initiatives Steering Committee, and 1st VP of National Association of State Ombudsman. She is a graduate of the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, CT. Prior to becoming State Ombudsman, Mairead was a Social Worker in long-term care facilities, Child Protective Service Social Worker, Regional Ombudsman, and Social Worker at the Department of Social Services (DSS). While at DSS, she became a Program Manager within the Community Options, Strategic Planning Unit. In that position, Mairead was responsible for overseeing several initiatives including nursing home diversification grants, Right-size 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/Person Directed Care.

As the State Ombudsman, she promotes and protects residents' rights, quality of life and person-centered care, while overseeing the Program's advocacy work. She serves 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 and has moved to using virtual connections to provide outreach, education and keep residents and family members well informed.

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, including choices related to end of life. She actively participates in a variety of stakeholder workgroups, legislative task forces/committees and National Consumer Voice.

Nora Duncan

Nora Duncan has extensive public affairs experience in Connecticut's nonprofit sector and Executive Branch with expertise in grass roots advocacy, government relations, nonprofit management, volunteer engagement and strategic communications.

Since joining AARP in 2012 as Connecticut's state director, she has led her staff and team of active volunteers in developing localized plans that reflect metrics-based goals and seamlessly contribute to national priorities in outreach, education and advocacy. She has led successful campaigns to increase health care access, protect people from consumer fraud and identity theft, open access to workplace retirement savings to 600,000 Connecticut workers, enhance workplace flexibility for 459,000 Connecticut family caregivers and make communities more livable for all ages.

Nora represented over 1,000 nonprofit organizations for nine years as Public Policy Director at the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits where she helped secure approximately \$270 million for cost of living adjustments for human services staff, passed juvenile justice reforms and negotiated state contracting reforms that

protected the interests of the nonprofit sector. She joined the Policy and Legislative Affairs Team in the Office of Governor M. Jodi Rell where she negotiated the nation's most comprehensive mortgage crisis relief legislation, UConn Health Center expansion, criminal justice reforms and large-scale dairy farm preservation. She also served as Executive Director of The Arc CT where she spearheaded the first major development program in decades, turning a forecasted budget deficit into 20% surplus in under one year.

Nora has been recognized by the National Council of Nonprofits for nonprofit advocacy leadership, locally for volunteer excellence by Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters and the City of Hartford, and was named a Hartford Business Journal "40 Under Forty". She is a graduate of the University of Connecticut and attended the Harvard Law School Executive Education Program on Negotiation & Leadership.

Mark Miller

Mark Miller has been involved in the field of aging and long-term care since 1984, when he established a local ombudsman program in Charlottesville, Virginia. From 1992 to 2000 he served as the Virginia State Long Term Care Ombudsman and was instrumental in the establishment of the Virginia Elder Rights Coalition to promote coordinated advocacy assistance to older long-term care consumers and their families.

From 2000 – 2008 he served as an Elder Rights Specialist with the National Association of State Units on Aging. In 2008, he was appointed the New York State Long Term Care Ombudsman, and, in July 2016 he was appointed as the State Long Term Care Ombudsman for the District of Columbia, with the Legal Counsel for the Elderly. Mr. Miller also currently serves as the President of the National Association of State Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP).

Over his 40-year career, Mr. Miller has worked to strengthen the ombudsman program's capacity to improve and protect the health, safety, and rights of residents of long-term care facilities across the country.