

Principles Governing ORM's Ombudsman



Confidentiality: The Ombudsman does not disclose any information from employees, whether managers or staff, without prior consent or unless required by law.

Impartiality: The Ombudsman does not represent the interests of individual managers or employees in resolving workplace issues, but will advocate for fair processes and their fair administration.

Independence: The Ombudsman is independent of ORM managers and supervisors and reports directly to the DAS/RM.

Informality: The Ombudsman promotes the resolution of disputes — at the lowest organizational level and at the earliest time — to avoid formal disputes, such as grievances, complaints of unlawful employment discrimination, or adverse action appeals.



Other Dispute Resolution Processes



ORM's Ombudsman complements other formal and informal dispute resolution, including ADR, processes by focusing on early intervention, prevention, and resolution.

ORM's Ombudsman may pursue any matter where another formal or informal statutory or administrative dispute process is initiated only with the consent of affected parties and subject to the Ombudsman's discretion.

Therefore, if an employee or applicant becomes or is involved in a grievance, informal EEO complaint, adverse action appeal, or other ADR process, the Ombudsman typically will not intervene unless agreed upon by the employee and management and the Ombudsman determines that intervention is appropriate.

Provided: The Ombudsman shall be involved in formal dispute processes for complaints of employment discrimination brought under Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regulations only with the DAS/RM's specific approval.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

ORM Ombudsman
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Department of
Veterans Affairs

Ombudsman Services



Confidential
Neutral
Independent
Informal

*“Working to solve
workplace problems”*

ORM's Ombudsman

ORM's Ombudsman is an impartial and independent official who confidentially and informally assists other employees to prevent or fairly resolve work-related issues and to prevent the need for formal conflict resolution processes. The Ombudsman also may provide informal reports to senior management on the work environment and make recommendations to improve operations.

ORM's Ombudsman is available to employees or applicants for employment who believe they have been adversely affected by an ORM action, policy, or workplace issue. Other VA employees or applicants may use ORM's Ombudsman, as determined by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management (DAS/RM).

Services Available from ORM's Ombudsman

The Ombudsman may, as an impartial party...

- ▶ Informally assist disputing parties to identify interests and resolve disputes.
- ▶ Listen to employee concerns and facilitate communication between parties.
- ▶ Bring employment issues to the attention of ORM's management or employees, as appropriate.
- ▶ Meet with all parties, up to and including the DAS/RM, to address workplace disputes.
- ▶ Expedite decision-making that affects workplace issues.
- ▶ Provide information and guidance on policies and procedures related to workplace problems.
- ▶ Make recommendations to improve policies that may adversely affect the workplace.
- ▶ Collaborate with other ORM and VA offices on workplace dispute resolution.

Services not Available from ORM's Ombudsman

ORM's Ombudsman may not...

- ▶ Advocate for the interests of any individual employee.
- ▶ Directly or indirectly identify the source of information, except with the consent of the employee providing the information or as required by law.
- ▶ Make decisions in any conflict.
- ▶ Implement Ombudsman recommendations.
- ▶ Conduct formal investigations or issue formal reports on any case, unless authorized by the DAS/RM.
- ▶ Make or change any policy, regulation, or law.



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