



COALITION OF FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time: February 10, 2016, 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Location: Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th St SW, Room 7-B516

Agenda:

1. Update on the election of Executive Officers
2. Discussion of case tracking system
3. CHI Resolutions and ACUS study

Highlights:

1. Update on the election of Executive Officers

Election committee members, Kakeisla Qaasim and Stephanie Luckam announced the new 2016 – 2018 COFO Executive Officers: Scott Deyo (Chair), William Maurer (Vice-Chair), Paul Sotoudeh (Vice-Chair), Riley Barrar (Co-Secretary), Sara Roberts (Co-Secretary), Tyler Smith (Co-Coordinator), Guy Weber (Co-Coordinator). COFO extends a special thank you to the election committee and a welcome to the new executive committee members. The exec committee will meet in the near future.

2. Discussion on Case Tracking Systems: Feedback and Insights

A few externally facing ombuds programs noted two key programs, ZenDesk and VU Apps. ZenDesk is used in a high volume, consumer help center. It is a web-based, multi-user application. A user can email directly into this system and the consumer/complainant can track his/her own complaint. The internal users can see all cases. The system is date based. VU Apps is another web-based application but is ombuds entry and view, rather than customer facing.

Another outward facing program that is helpful for document heavy cases is through Active Network and is called Citizen Request. The entire log is available to the public. ISight, through the Customer Expressions Corporation, is utilized by a couple of organizational ombuds programs. This application is ombuds entry and view. The ombuds office can customize the program to meet the data needs of their office. You can also run reports. There is a multi-user login and there is a web-hosting cost. Other methodologies mentioned by organizational ombuds are excel spreadsheets, Access databases, and the organizations web-hosting platforms.

3. Questions about the ACUS Survey

Carole Houk, Mary Rowe, and Lauren Marx from CHI Resolutions were available to answer questions regarding the U.S. (ACUS) Study.

- a. What data and findings will be reported to ACUS?

After running raw data through a database, aggregated and non-attributable data will be provided in a report form to ACUS. CHI will not attribute to any specific agency without the permission of that agency. At this time, the length is unknown. The data is meant to be descriptive of the industry and profession and not a comparison or judgment.

- b. Can an agency only answer parts of the survey?
Answer all that you possibly can. Do not answer if you are not comfortable. In relation to questions regarding frequency data, CHI cited that even if you are not comfortable providing that information, yes/no responses are still helpful to the study.
- c. What confidentiality protections are in place with regard to the interviews?
The interview is an opt-in, not opt-out option. No office will be identified unless permission is specifically granted. An interview may be done by the CHI team or graduate students at Kenessaw University. "Off the record," anonymous interviews are allowed. Anyone can request an interview.
- d. Will this information be used beyond the ACUS study?
Possibly. IRB requires that the data be retained and protected for three years, then destroyed. There may be other publications that come out utilizing the aggregate data that was found to discuss ombuds systems. Two hypothetical examples that were given were: Ombuds systems in relation/comparison to Integrated Conflict Management Systems (ICMS), or, How ombuds accomplishments and successes illuminate the value of ombuds programs.
- e. Can I submit a partially completed study?
This is not ideal but yes, CHI prefers a partial submission to none at all.
- f. Dates and deadlines?
Interviews with agency heads are in completion in February. For those who are not agency heads, but who requests an interview, please request and complete by the end of March. Specific case study submission is open until May/June 2016. CHI will provide an initial draft to ACUS in July. The study will go to full conference in December. Anyone hired within an agency can request to speak to a team member.
- g. Can one designee fill out two surveys? (The agency head runs two programs.)
Yes

Meeting adjourned.

Attendees in person:

Riley Barrar, Department of State

Dawn Bedlivy, Department of Defense (DoD)

Mollie Berg, DoD, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

Karen Dean, Department of Commerce, US Patent and Trademark Office

Scott Deyo, DoD, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

William Doyle, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), United States Secret Service

Claire Heffernan, DHS, Transportation Security Administration
Michael Janson, Federal Communication Commission
Stephanie Luckam, DHS, Transportation Security Administration
Sherry Tross, Organization of American States
Lauren Marx, chiResolutions

Attendees by phone:

Sharon Asar, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Virginia Behr, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Food and Drug Administration
Brian Bloch, Department of the Interior, Special Trustee for American Indians
Kathy Breeden, Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration
Felicia Bunns, Department of Energy
Kimberley Day-Lewis, DHS, US Coast Guard
Ayanna Epps, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Tasha Fleming, Department of Justice, Bureau of Prisons
Jennifer Gartlan, Federal Maritime Commission
Lula Mae Gray, HHS, Food and Drug Administration
Kimberly Guay, Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Robert D. Harris, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Patrick Holman, Department of Energy
Carole Houk, chiResolutions
Clint Janes, Department of Commerce, US Patent and Trademark Office
Wendy Kamenshine, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Andy Kirkpatrick, General Services Administration
Sarah Kith, DHS, Transportation Security Administration
Becky Kurtz, HHS, Administration for Community Living
Robin McCullough, Federal Communications Commission
Carrie McGuire, National Archives and Records Administration, Office of Government Information Services
Katie Manderson, Department of State
William Maurer, Department of Energy
Celeste Merrix, DHS, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
Allison Monyei, HHS, Food and Drug Administration, Center for Tobacco Products
Kakeisla Qaasim, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Sara Roberts, DHS, Transportation Security Administration
Mary Rowe, chiResolutions
Melissa Sage, HHS, Center for Devices and Radiological Health
Tonya Sibley, DHS, Transportation Security Administration
Tyler Smith, HHS, National Institutes of Health
Paul Sotoudeh, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Roberta Valdez, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Dale Vergott, DoD, Defense Intelligence Agency
Guy Weber, DoD, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency
Frederick Whittington, Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General
Tom Zrubek, DoD, Inspector General