



CODE OF ETHICS

PREAMBLE

The International Ombuds Association (IOA) is dedicated to excellence in Organizational Ombuds¹ practice. The Code of Ethics provides Practice Principles and Standards² that are the foundation for the IOA Standards of Practice.

IOA's Code of Ethics reflects IOA's commitment to the establishment of independently structured Ombuds programs, ethical conduct by Ombuds, and the integrity of the Organizational Ombuds profession.

CORE VALUES

The Ombuds role requires Ombuds to conduct themselves as professionals. The following Core Values are essential to the work of Ombuds:

Act with honesty and integrity;

Promote fairness and support fair process;

Remain non-judgmental, with empathy and respect for individual needs;

Promote dignity, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging;

Communicate accurate understanding through active listening;

Promote individual empowerment, self-determination, and collaborative problem-solving; and

Endeavor to be an accessible, trusted, and respected informal resource.

INDEPENDENCE

For individuals to feel safe to express their concerns, Ombuds must be independent from the organization they serve. Independence refers to the Ombuds' right to make decisions about their own work, free from interference or influence by others.

INFORMALITY

The Ombuds role is informal, confidential, and non-adversarial. The Ombuds is not a member of the organization's hierarchy, does not evaluate the organization's performance, and does not make recommendations to the organization. The Ombuds is responsible for maintaining confidentiality. The Ombuds is informed of the organization's mission and policies, but does not have authority to change them. The Ombuds may provide feedback to the organization on its policies and practices, but does not have authority to change them. The Ombuds may provide feedback to the organization on its policies and practices, but does not have authority to change them.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Ombuds is bound by law and professional ethics to maintain confidentiality of all information received during the course of their work.