

DOI CADR OMBUDSMAN ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

➤ **What's an Ombudsman? What do they do?**

- An independent and neutral person with whom all employees at all levels – supervisors and non-supervisors - may speak confidentially, informally and off-the-record about work-related concerns or questions.
- Offers a safe alternative for all employees at all levels - supervisors and non-supervisors - to discuss concerns and understand their options in a completely confidential* way.
- Facilitates two-way, informal communications to resolve issues that might otherwise escalate into adversarial, time-consuming, expensive formal processes.
- Provides training, coaching, and facilitation, when appropriate.
- Serves as an information and referral resource.
- Someone to talk to when you don't know where to go or with whom you can discuss your concerns.
- Acts neutrally and objectively in all interactions.
- Works to complement, never to duplicate efforts with - or to replace - other available resources, such as HR, EEO, SOL, Ethics, SEOD, EAP, Unions, and Human Capital.

➤ **What the Ombudsman can do:**

- Clarify the Ombudsman role and services.
- Listen to you without judging you.
- Help you navigate interpersonal disagreements.
- Mediate, or use shuttle diplomacy, when appropriate.
- Ask strategic questions to understand your perspective.
- Help you figure out complex situations without having to go on record.
- Provide information about policies, options and resources available.
- Promote respectful dialogue and effective communication.
- Help you make informed decisions and think through your next steps.
- Provide training and skill building in conflict management.

➤ **What the Ombudsman cannot do:**

- Tell people what they should do.
- Direct anyone's actions (i.e., issue orders, mandate actions).
- Register or accept notice of complaints.
- Participate in any formal processes, internal or external.
- Take sides in, or form opinions about disagreements and disputes.
- Share information with others without an individual's permission.
- Take corrective action.
- Control any informal or formal grievance or complaint process.
- Perform or participate in any investigations.
- Serve as a whistleblower or as an advocate for anyone.
- Make, enforce, suspend, waive, or change policies.

For more information regarding DOI Ombudsman Service, please contact J. Fernando Caetano: (202) 494-2907
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**Confidentiality does not apply to instances of imminent risk of serious physical harm.*