



# CODE OF ETHICS

## PREAMBLE

The International Ombuds Association (IOA) is dedicated to excellence in Organizational Ombuds<sup>1</sup> practice. The Code of Ethics provides Practice Principles and Standards of Practice that are the foundation for the IOA Standards of Practice.

This Code of Ethics reflects the IOA's commitment to the establishment of consistently 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

Ombuds make independent, objective, and confidential assessments of complaints. The Ombuds maintains a position of independence from management, employees, and other staff members. The Ombuds is responsible for the investigation of complaints and may be required to report findings to management or other staff members.

## IMPARTIALITY

The Ombuds is impartial in all interactions with complainants, staff, and management. The Ombuds does not discriminate against any person based on race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, or any other protected class.

## INFORMALITY

The Ombuds is informal in all interactions with complainants, staff, and management. The Ombuds uses language that is clear, direct, and conversational. The Ombuds uses active listening to fully understand the complainant's perspective. The Ombuds uses a problem-solving approach to address complaints. The Ombuds is approachable and accessible to complainants, staff, and management.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

The Ombuds maintains the confidentiality of all information received during the course of the investigation. The Ombuds does not disclose information about the complainant or the investigation to anyone outside the organization without the complainant's permission, except as required by law.