



USOMBUDSMAN

Promoting and supporting fairness, accountability, and equity in government through the public sector ombudsman.

Summer 2006

Inside This Issue



Getting Ready For The 2006 USOA Annual Conference 1, 2

President's Page 2

Conference Registration Form 3

The Office of Children's Ombudsman (OCO) 4

Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman Discuss Office Innovations at June Meeting 5

Land Use / Property Rights Omduding: Hopeful Developments 6

City Ombudsman From Cape Town and Portland Meet 6, 7

Effective Resolution of Problems in Virginia 7

Chapter Reports 8

2005-2007 Board Members 8, 9

2005 New Members 10 & 11

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GETTING READY FOR THE 2006 USOA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

By Gerald Papica, Ed.D., Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman for Children & Families
Tennessee Commission on Children & Youth



As we announced a few months ago, this year's 27th USOA annual convention will take place at Embassy Suites Hotel on the River in Des Moines, Iowa on September 12-15. For 2006, the theme or title of the event is, "Ombudsmen at the Crossroads: Broadening Our Horizons."

André Marin has confirmed to deliver the keynote speech. In April 2005, André became the 6th Provincial Ombudsman in Ontario. Prior to this new assignment, he was Canada's first Ombudsman for the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces (DND/CF) for six-and-a-half years. André is an active member of the USOA and has helped the organization in a variety of ways for the past few years.

David Vaudt, Iowa Auditor of State, will help open the conference with some welcome remarks. The State Auditor's Office helps ensure that government is open and accountable to its citizens, by providing independent, accurate, and timely audits of the financial operations of Iowa's state and local governments, and by reviewing government activities to help ensure they are conducted in an effective, efficient and legal manner. Governor Tom Vilsack and Lt. Governor Sally Pederson can not attend.

The conference planning committee has arranged several concurrent workshops and plenary sessions to highlight the spirit of the convention. The gathering will feature two day long pre-conference workshops entitled, "New Ombudsman Orientation" and "Advanced Dispute Resolution Processes and Techniques." Although subject to last minute changes, the committee has also arranged a number of very interesting and highly intriguing



Continued on the next page



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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

By Ruth Cooperrider
USOA President
State of Iowa - Office of
Citizens' Aide/Ombudsman



With the USOA 27th annual conference less than six weeks away, it is timely to focus attention on the conference. I have been serving on the Conference Planning Committee in my dual roles as President and as Deputy Ombudsman of the host office – the State of Iowa’s Office of Citizens’ Aide/Ombudsman. While I am really excited about helping to host the 27th Annual Conference on September 12–15 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Des Moines, Iowa; it is the program that I look forward to the most.

The Conference Planning Committee did well in concentrating first on developing the program sessions; it then selected the conference title or theme around the sessions. In arriving at the session topics, the Committee considered ideas suggested from its members and past attendees. It also looked at current or potential issues and some basic skills or tools that would help ombudsman do their jobs better. Once the sessions topics were chosen, the Committee determined some dealt with ongoing issues and skills (like report writing, communications, policy and procedures, business plan, and standards) and others dealt with concepts and practices not discussed before (like power of apology, whistleblower protections, and ethics and civility) – hence, the title “Ombudsmen at the Crossroads: Broadening our Horizons.”

The two pre-conference workshops have something for practitioners with different levels of experience. Besides the recurring “New Ombudsman Orientation” for the new or newer ombudsman, the other all-day workshop is designed to further hone your knowledge of and techniques used in dispute resolution.

Aside from this interesting program, I think you will enjoy your visit to Des Moines and stay at the Embassy Suites Hotel on the River. While it may not seem as exciting as Hawaii or the Gaylord Opryland Resort, there are a variety of events and activities you can take advantage of in your free time – nearby are the quaint East Village shopping area, Court Avenue bars and restaurants, downtown Des Moines, and Farmers Market on Court Avenue (Saturday); Science Center with its IMAX theater; Prairie Meadows Casino – to name a few. Most of all, you will experience genuine hospitality from the Heartland, and you will find this to be a comfortable setting to meet new ombudsmen or get reacquainted with colleagues and friends.

As USOA President and member of the host office, I sincerely invite all our members to attend the 27th Annual Conference. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

2006 USOA ANNUAL CONFERENCE CONTINUED

Continued from the front page

presentations that will include “Strategic Planning for an Ombudsman,” “Formal or Chloroformal Report Writing,” “Ombudsman Policy and Procedures Manual: Theory and Practice,” “Dealing with People who Monopolize Your Resources,” “Civility in the Public Arena,” “Complaints from and Protection of Whistle blowers,” “The Power of Apology,” and “USOA Standards: Your Professional Compass.” During the Chapters meeting, the Education Chapter will present “Ombudsman in the School System” and the Healthcare Chapter will present “Federal Ombudsman Program for Medicare Beneficiaries.”



These topics aptly reflect the “broadening of our horizons” needed by public sector ombudsmen who have reached the “crossroads” of their profession. A USOA Chapters meeting is also scheduled to provide support for ombudsmen working in various settings or structures.

While the traditional conference banquet is slated to happen at the State of Iowa Historical Building, an optional Tour of the Capitol is also being organized on Thursday evening, September 14th. Additionally, a reception welcoming all conference attendees is scheduled to take place on Tuesday evening, September 12th.

The conference Registration Packet is now available and can be downloaded via www.usombudsman.org. It is not too late to register for the conference! The Registration packet on the website also provides information on hotel accommodations.

As the committee finalizes the nuts and bolts of the conference, additional information about the gathering will be made available to interested individuals through the USOA website and listserv announcements.



One crucial question still remains: Are you motivated enough to learn, network, and have fun in Des Moines?

Photos courtesy of the Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

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UNITED STATES OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION 2006 ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____
 Title _____ Organization _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State/Province _____ Postal Code _____
 Country _____ Email _____
 Phone (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____
 Special Accommodations (Dietary or other) _____

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION (September 13-15):

The Conference Registration Fee includes the Reception on Tuesday evening, Lunch and Breaks on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, the Social Event on Thursday evening, and all Conference Materials.

	BY 7/31/06	AFTER 7/31/06	
United States Ombudsman Association Member Fee	\$395.00	\$425.00	\$ _____
Non-member Fee	\$465.00	\$495.00	\$ _____

PRE-CONFERENCE REGISTRATION (September 12):

The Pre-Conference Registration Fee includes lunch and refreshment breaks on Tuesday, and course materials.

New Ombudsman Orientation

United States Ombudsman Association Member Fee	\$175.00		\$ _____
Non-member Fee	\$225.00		\$ _____

Advanced Dispute Resolution Processes & Techniques

United States Ombudsman Association Member Fee	\$200.00		\$ _____
Non-member Fee	\$250.00		\$ _____

GUEST TICKETS:

Reception or Social Event (circle one)	# of Tickets _____	x \$45.00	\$ _____
Reception and Social Event	# of Tickets _____	x \$80.00	\$ _____

TOTAL = \$ _____

Please make your check payable to "USOA" and mail it with this registration form to:

United States Ombudsman Association, 8345 University Blvd., Suite F-1, Des Moines, IA 50325.

For credit card payments, please mail this form or fax it to: 515-225-6363.

MasterCard _____ VISA _____ Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date _____
 Cardholder Name _____ CVV2 (3 digit security number) _____
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Cancellation/Refund Policy

Cancellations must be received in writing by August 11, 2006. USOA reserves the right to cancel or change programs and conference offerings at any time as warranted.

Questions? Call 515-225-2323

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THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S OMBUDSMAN (OCO)

The Michigan Legislature created the Office of Children's Ombudsman (OCO) in 1994 to investigate complaints about children in Michigan's child welfare system. The current Children's Ombudsman, Verlie Ruffin was appointed by Governor Granholm in January 2006 and confirmed by the senate. The Children's Ombudsman Act was amended effective January 2005 to require senate confirmation of the Children's Ombudsman and Ms. Ruffin was the first to go through the senate confirmation process.

The OCO has jurisdiction to investigate children's protective services (abuse and neglect), foster care and adoption services cases handled statewide by the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) as well as private child placing agencies located in each of Michigan's 83 counties. An additional amendment to the Children's Ombudsman Act authorizes the OCO to investigate juvenile justice cases. The OCO is in the process of creating an investigative procedure for juvenile justice cases. The OCO does not have jurisdiction to investigate the courts or law enforcement. The Children's Ombudsman has subpoena power as well as the authority to hold an informal hearing. However, it has not been necessary to utilize either of these investigative tools to date.

Any member of the public may file a complaint with the OCO and the identity of OCO complainants is strictly confidential by law. OCO investigators contact the child involved in a case only if the child is the complainant.

The OCO has a staff of twelve, including the Ombudsman; two support staff, a supervising investigator, an intake investigator, and seven investigators that carry investigative caseloads. Two investigators are located in the OCO's Detroit office and the remaining staff is located in the main office in Lansing.

Cases are assigned to investigators on a rotating basis. Investigations are administrative in nature in that a copy of child's entire case file (which consists of all agency and court documents) is reviewed. The focus of investigations is to determine whether there were violations of DHS policy or applicable laws in the handling of the child's case. Investigators conduct telephone interviews with professionals associated with a case (case workers, doctors, attorneys, etc.). On occasion, an investigator may travel to observe a court hearing or to conduct face-to-face interviews with agency staff.

If at the conclusion of an investigation the OCO determines there were violations of policy or law, a Report of Findings and Recommendations is sent to the county DHS director, the state DHS director, and the director of a private agency if the agency is involved. The agencies must provide a written response indicating agreement or disagreement with each of the findings and corresponding recommendations. On average, the agencies agree with the OCO's findings and recommendations ninety percent of the time. The agency

must also indicate what action it will take when they agree with a recommendation. The OCO complainant is always provided with a written report outlining the results of OCO's investigation and if applicable the agency's response.

Each year approximately 800-900 complaints and inquires are received via phone, mail, fax or email and approximately 150-175 of those are investigated in a fiscal year. The OCO provides referral information for non-jurisdictional complaints.

While every case is different, investigations have included issues such as caseworkers failing to verify the safety of all children in a family, lack of supervisory oversight, a child not receiving appropriate services while in foster care, failure to consider relatives for placement and achieving timely permanency for children within federal and state time frames.

One of the biggest challenges the OCO faces is dealing with misconceptions about its authority and power. Sometimes a complainant is referred to their office and the OCO does not have jurisdiction to help them. At other times, media coverage of a case the OCO is investigating may focus on wanting the OCO to prevent any more children from being harmed when in fact the OCO is powerless to make such assurances.

The OCO issues an annual report with information on the office and case statistics covering each fiscal year. The annual report also includes recommendations for system changes and or statutory changes if necessary. Over the last 11 years, the OCO has had a major impact on changes in DHS policy and has worked with the legislature to implement statutory changes. The OCO's impact is immeasurable when it comes to protecting the health, safety and well-being of children in Michigan.

For more information on the OCO, see www.michigan.gov/oco or contact the OCO toll free at 1-800-642-4326.

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CANADIAN COUNCIL OF PARLIAMENTARY OMBUDSMAN DISCUSS OFFICE INNOVATIONS AT JUNE MEETING

By Vice President, Linda Lord-Jenkins, Ombudsman
Alaska Office of the Ombudsman
Anchorage, Alaska

Recent innovations in provincial ombudsman offices occupied the attendees at the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman's annual meeting held in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, in June. Ombudsmen or representatives from the 10 Canadian Parliamentary ombudsman offices as well as the Bermuda Ombudsman and State of Alaska Ombudsman attended the conference. Yukon Ombudsman Hank Moorlag who is celebrating his 10th year as Yukon Ombudsman hosted the event.

Manitoba Ombudsman Irene Hamilton reported that her office is now primarily publishing its annual report on Compact Disks (CD) supplemented with 200 hard copies of the report. She said that prior to the CD publication, Manitoba experienced delays in publishing its annual reports but the office is now able to publish the report within the first quarter following the reporting year.

She said the new format also has cut production costs in half. Previously, production of 2200 hard copies of the report cost \$28,400. Current costs for 3,271 CDs, including labeling, plus the 200 hard copies total \$13,300. All production work is done in-house.

She said the new format follows the role and function of the office, supported by examples, rather than providing a random list of case summaries as done in the past.

The CD also permits additional material to be included with the annual report, such as the results of an ECO Survey and four pamphlets. The distribution list has been expanded.

Saskatchewan Kevin Fenwick reported that he is exploring the possibility of partnering with the provincial auditor, or the children's advocate to conduct systemic investigations. He also said his office is working on suggested best practices for administrative tribunals, promoting the idea that the ombudsman is a "fairness lens" for government.

He also said the office's statistical reporting is undergoing a review, and the office may change from reporting "substantiated" or "not substantiated" findings to reporting "recommendations made" or "recommendations not made".

Ontario Deputy Ombudsman Barb Finlay represented Ombudsman André Marin at the conference. She reported that Ontario has the office has changed from a complaints-based approach to doing more systemic investigations, including those using the Special Ombudsman Response Team (SORT) team special investigations unit. The SORT team has allowed the office to complete systemic investigations, with plans to

do six per year. Marin brought the SORT concept from his tenure at the Canadian Military Ombudsman office to Ontario. The Ontario SORT team is headed by Gareth Jones who also moved from the Military Ombudsman office to Ontario. SORT uses four to five investigators from a pool of 20, but two have stayed on as permanent members of the team.

Ontario also changed its practice on public outreach and communications, after the office realized that less than one percent of complaints came from groups previously targeted. Ontario found that increased news media publicity has increased the office profile and had a positive effect on the number of complaints.

Ms. Finlay also reported that Ontario now tapes all interviews because taping provides an accurate record of the interview, helps interviewers to be well prepared, and permits interviews to be more free-flowing than if responses to questions were recorded in writing. She said not all taped interviews are transcribed; transcriptions are made available to interviewees who have asked for a copy, or there has been agreement to provide one.

Ontario also is seeking to expand its jurisdiction to include municipalities, school boards, hospitals, Children's Aid.

British Columbia Ombudsman Kim Carter reported that BC has recently reinstated its services over municipalities in British Columbia. Services to municipalities and self-regulating professional organizations had been suspended because of budget cuts several years ago. She also reported the office is assessing the effectiveness of tele-commuting so far flung areas could have ombudsman offices nearby.

Alberta Ombudsman Gord Button, who also serves as president of the CCPO, reported that his office has posted a fairness checklist to on its Internet Home page.

Other Alberta innovations included creation of an investigation reporting template that reduces length of final reports from 20 pages to 5 or 6 pages. Alberta's statistical reporting has been modified to reflect the numbers of issues/complaints rather than numbers of files.

Button also said Alberta's staff recruiting process has been amended to include a standardized written test for applicants to assess knowledge and skills.

New Brunswick Ombudsman Bernard Richard reported that, in his dual role as Information & Privacy Commissioner (IPC), he has released on video surveillance in public places.

Also attending the conference were USOA Vice President and Alaska Ombudsman Linda Lord-Jenkins.

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LAND USE/PROPERTY RIGHTS OMBUDSING: HOPEFUL DEVELOPMENTS

By David Spohr

The bulk of recent press coverage in the long-running dispute over land use and property rights issues has been devoted to the volatile reaction to the U.S. Supreme Court's controversial *Kelo v. City of New London* decision in the eminent domain arena and by the Oregon Supreme Court's decision to sustain the sweeping Measure 37 (which requires compensation for, or a lifting of, a host of land use regulations).

But a far less controversial approach to resolving such conflicts has been quietly gaining ground, one that would both avoid the dire consequences predicted by governmental and environmental interests for the other private property measures and yet perhaps offers even greater assistance to a larger swath of property owners than the relief offered by other proposals: ombudsing.

In May, Connecticut followed Utah's lead and created an Office of the Property Rights Ombudsman. Within a few days, Missouri had created an eminent domain ombudsman. And Senate Bill 1883, which would federalize Utah's model, is still (albeit quietly) circulating on Capitol Hill, offering the prospect of advice and assistance for citizens in achieving fair and equitable resolution of land use disputes nationwide.

Utah's model relies on a "gatekeeper," an attorney experienced in takings law who is readily available to property owners (at no cost) and to the government. Unlike more traditional investigate-and-recommend ombudsman charters, Utah's revolves around mediation and arbitration. The process is informal, with disputes usually resolved through conversations that provide an overview of relevant law and aim to work out a solution agreeable to all parties. The Ombudsman has power to require an agency to participate in mediation or arbitration, using the quickest, least intrusive and most economical means to resolve a dispute and save the parties time, hassle, and cost.

The results of Utah's experiment with a property rights Ombudsman have been overwhelmingly positive. By shifting the nature of the property owner-government interactions from adversarial to consensus-building, both the government and property owners have benefited. For example, according to officials of the Utah Department of Transportation, the percentage of its negotiations for the acquisition of property for public projects that fail and result in litigation has been cut by two-thirds in the past five years.

For the pro-regulatory community, it is far more palatable than other property rights initiatives because it does not change the substance of the takings law, yet it tempers some of the anti-government anger and resentment fueling other proposals, and it shortens the "parade of horrors" used against the government. For property owners, it avoids the choice between hiring

counsel to understand their rights and litigate a matter (a financial impossibility for many) versus simply foregoing potential rights. Ensuring that the government does not do or require more than actually allowed by law may be more valuable to property owners than tinkering with the substantive legal standards themselves. And all parties benefit from avoidance of costly, lengthy litigation. In short, it is a model that enjoys bipartisan support and, it would appear, is spreading.

After helping to resolve land use disputes in Utah as that State's Deputy Property Rights Ombudsman, Mr. Spohr recently began as King County, Washington's newly-created deputy ombudsman dedicated to land-use issues. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of any employer. He is available at david.spohr@gmail.com.

CITY OMBUDSMAN FROM CAPE TOWN AND PORTLAND MEET

By Michael Mills, Ombudsman
City of Portland, Oregon

On June 30, I had the pleasure of meeting with Mr. Mbulelo Baba, the City of Cape Town Ombudsman, while visiting South Africa. While we had met briefly in Quebec City at the International Ombudsman Institute Conference, the meeting in Cape Town with several of his staff provided the opportunity to discuss issues facing local ombudsman offices. Local ombudsman offices are still few in numbers, so being able to meet with a counterpart is very rewarding. We were able to find similarities in the types of issues that we deal with and some surprising differences. I have found a continuing need to work on our outreach efforts to help make our services more available to under representative communities; whereas, the Cape Town office seems to be much better known to communities in need. We found commonalities among concerns over utility billings for example.

Mr. Baba has what he calls a "Hybrid" Office, one that has adapted to the political structure and culture of Cape Town. The reality is that many local ombudsman offices are tailored to fit their jurisdiction and the people they serve. This can be done while preserving the independence and integrity of the office. In Portland for example, given our Commission form of government that blends executive and legislative powers, independence was attained by locating the ombudsman under the elected auditor.

I was pleased to hear that the ombudsman concept is being adopted by more local governments in Africa, a trend that has not, with a few exceptions, developed significantly in North America. While we have model acts, standards, and best practices for national and provincial or state ombudsman offices, we as a profession lack guidance in the development of local government ombudsman offices. Being able to guarantee complainants confidentiality remains a challenge for many local ombudsman offices since those protections must be passed at higher levels of government. There

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OMBUDSMAN UNIT PROMOTES EFFECTIVE RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS IN VIRGINIA

The Ombudsman Services Unit at the Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC) was established in April 1977. The Ombudsman has jurisdiction over all state DOC facilities. DOC is comprised of 47 major institutions, and this year has a population of 31,836.

The Ombudsman Services Unit has eight staff members. There are seven regional ombudsman throughout three regions (the Eastern and Central regions each have two staff, the Western region has three staff) and there is one statewide manager, Gloria Robinson. Gloria has been the manager of the Ombudsman Services Unit for two years. She has over fifteen years experience in the corrections field.

The Ombudsman Services Unit had over 11,300 grievances filed in 2005. That is down significantly from just a few years earlier when they had over 20,000 grievances filed in 2000. All of the grievances are inmate initiated. Ms. Robinson said that the biggest area of complaint has to do with an inmate's personal property. For example, if an inmate is moved from a lower level facility to a higher level facility, they may not be able to receive property they had at their former facility. The inmate has to pay to have the property sent to someone outside the facility if they want to retain their property. Another frequent area of complaint has to do with access to medical services. For example, there is a \$5.00 co-pay required for medical services (unless the subsequent visits are associated with the original diagnosis). But often an inmate will not want to pay a new required co-pay.

Federal and state laws require inmates to exhaust available administrative processes prior to filing lawsuits concerning conditions of incarceration. To comply with these laws, exhaustion of the regular grievance procedure is mandatory prior to judicial action by an inmate. The procedure requires that an inmate attempts to resolve his issue informally prior to filing a grievance. If the inmate is not satisfied with the informal attempt to have his issue resolved then he may utilize the formal Grievance Procedure. If a complaint is received by the Ombudsman Services Unit, and the inmate has not tried to resolve the complaint at the institutional level, the Ombudsman Services Unit advises the inmate that the formal grievance must be processed at the unit level.

Ms. Robinson stated that the formal Grievance procedure has three levels of appeal:

Level I: Institutional Ombudsman/Facility Administration

Level II: Regional Ombudsman/Regional Director, Director of Health Services, or the Chief of Offender Management Services, depending on the nature of the original grievance.

Level III: Grievances challenging the substance or interpretation of Division procedures go to the Ombudsman Services Unit manager to look at and work with Deputy Director/Director

of the DOC to make a determination on the case. Matters that revolve around religious issues are allowed to skip Level II. Religious complaints also go to a "Faith Review Committee" comprised DOC employees.

Ms. Robinson says that the Ombudsman Services Unit has seen several positive impacts including a drop in the number of grievances filed, a reduction in litigation (inmates cannot litigate unless they exhaust the grievance system), it has helped administrators identify potential problem areas before they grow, the system ensures both a safe living environment for inmates and a safe working environment for DOC employees. Above all, it promotes problem resolution through effective communication and ensures that actions are taken and problems are addressed when it is necessary to do so.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Virginia Department of Corrections Ombudsman Services Unit, contact Gloria Robinson at Gloria.Robinson@vadoc.virginia.gov.

Continued from page 6 - City Ombudsman from Cape Town and Portland Meet

continues to great value in local government ombudsman offices which are readily accessible to the public they serve. Maintaining connections among offices, such as the one made between Cape Town and Portland, will support the development of new local government offices.



Portland Ombudsman Michael Mills meets with City of Cape Town Ombudsman Mbulelo Baba and staff of the Cape Town Ombudsman Office.

Left to right: Ashley Searle, Mbulelo Baba, Michael Mills, and Lorika Elliott.

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CHAPTER & COMMITTEE REPORTS

THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES CHAPTER

The California State Ombudsman for Foster Care invited all members of the Children and Family Chapter to an Ombudsman Convening in Sacramento California on November 18, 2005. The morning session focused on the roles and issues impacting Child Welfare Ombudsman, and offered an opportunity for Ombudsman to share their successes and challenges.

The afternoon session included a number of presentations and speakers, and was attended by Ombudsman, Child Welfare and Community professionals. Information was shared on the California Foster Youth Employment, Training & Housing Taskforce, which has been facilitated by the Foster Care Ombudsman. This Taskforce has brought together professionals and advocates to successfully create programs to meet the needs of Foster Youth. A presentation was also given on the efforts to expand the Guardian Scholars programs state wide. This program provides financial, academic, and emotional support to foster youth attending colleges. Another presentation was given by the California Youth Connection, (CYC) which is a youth led organization of current and former foster youth that advocates to improve the child welfare system, and provides youth leadership and empowerment programs for foster youth. Information was shared on the successful child welfare legislation that CYC has sponsored. The guest speaker, Kevin Campbell gave a compelling presentation on the "Family Finders" program and technology. This program allows social workers to electronically find the names and addresses of relatives of children in foster care, in hopes that the children can be placed with extended family members instead of with strangers. The Annual Report of the California State Ombudsman for Foster Care was presented.

On-going sharing of child welfare information & future activities: The Children and Family Chapter continues to share child welfare articles and other information. The Chapter is kept informed through an email group. The Co-chairs of the Chapter are exploring the possibilities of coordinating with the ABA Center for Children and the Law to hold another convening similar to the convening that was previously held, that a significant number of the USOA chapter members attended.

For more information or if you wish to become a member of the Children and Family Chapter, please contact Chapter Co-chairs Karen Grace-Kaho at Karen.Grace-Kaho@dss.ca.gov or Mary Meinig at Mary.Meinig@OFCO.WA.GOV.

MUNICIPAL CHAPTER UPDATE

The USOA Municipal Government Chapter has established a listserv for its members. The listserv allows all members to post questions to one another or to share news and information that is specific to ombudsman work at the local government level. For more information or if you wish to become a member of the Municipal Chapter, please contact Amy Calderwood at Amy.Calderwood@METROKC.GOV.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

USOA Newsletter Needs You! Interested in submitting an article? Do you have an idea for a story? Please contact Member Services committee chair Kristen Erbes at kerbes@ci.portland.or.us.

2007 USOA Conference – The Conference Committee will reconvene in early 2007. Please contact committee chair Gerald Papica at Gerald.Papica@state.tn.us if you would like join the committee or if you have an idea for a conference presentation or have interest in being a presenter!

USOA EDITORIAL INFORMATION

The purpose of USOMBUDSMAN is to communicate the activities, goals, and mission of the United States Ombudsman Association and to publish diverse information and views on matters significantly related to the ombudsman profession. Statements of fact and opinion do not express the opinion or endorsement of the USOA unless they are specifically identified as USOA policy.

For information regarding content of USOMBUDSMAN and/or submission of articles and announcements, please contact the editor: Kristen Erbes at kerbes@ci.portland.or.us.



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USOA sponsors the OMB_GOV listserv as a service to public sector ombudsman offices across the United States and around the world. The purpose of the listserv is to promote the free exchange of ideas about the public sector ombudsman institution. The list is open to anyone who provides governmental ombudsman or complaint resolution services at the local, state, federal, or international levels. This includes academics studying the governmental ombudsman institution and voting and associate members of the USOA, the Canadian Ombudsman Association, or the International Ombudsman Institute. We encourage all staff and managers of governmental ombudsman or government complaint resolution offices to subscribe. If you wish to subscribe, visit http://usombudsman.org/list_subscribe.cfm and fill out the form. You will receive an automatic welcome response.

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