

United States Ombudsman Association 41st Annual Conference

Granite Strong Ombudsman: Solid Work in Uncertain Times

Sheraton Portsmouth Harborside Hotel
250 Market St, Portsmouth, NH 03801

Pre-conference Session Options

Breakfast, lunch, breaks, and materials included in registration.

Pre-conference #1

New Ombudsman Training

September 12 & 13

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

(Two-day training)

Attendance is capped at 30 participants

This two-day workshop is for individuals who are relatively new to the role of government ombudsman. Instructors include general jurisdiction legislative ombudsmen and executive branch/agency-specific ombudsmen with many years of experience in their respective offices.

Participants will learn about the origin, characteristics, and standards of an ombudsman office. Instructors will discuss basic intake, interviewing and investigation techniques, report writing, and will present a case study to enable participants to apply knowledge to practice. The workshop will examine the role of the ombudsman in promoting an ethical climate in our organizations and review ethical challenges an ombudsman may face.

Participants will also have opportunity to discuss best practices, time saving tips, and tools of the trade with a group of seasoned ombudsmen.

Instructors:

Experienced Ombudsmen from Various Jurisdictions (to be announced)

Pre-conference #2

Managing Unreasonable Conduct by a Complainant

September 12 OR September 13

8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

This is a one-day workshop. Attendance is capped at 40 each day

Unreasonable conduct by complainants can take up substantial time and resources in your workplace. This world-renowned one-day workshop is designed to help you identify and manage unreasonable conduct, deliver effective prevention and resolution policies and strategies, and support staff members and colleagues impacted by complainant behavior.

This workshop is for staff who encounter or respond to complainants who display unreasonable conduct, as well as supervisors and management responsible for setting complaint handling policy.

Participants will learn to:

- define the characteristics and impacts of unreasonable conduct
- consider why some complainants behave unreasonably
- identify the warning signs, escalations, and safeguards of unreasonable conduct
- implement key strategies to prevent unreasonable conduct
- identify and apply key strategies, principles, and policies to manage the conduct
- reflect on your personal and organizational experiences of unreasonable conduct

Instructor:

Donald Sword – Educator and Advocate, New South Wales, Australia Ombudsman Office

Pre-conference #3

Critical Incident Review using Safety Science

September 13

8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

This universally applicable session targets ombudsman work for children through Casey Family Programs funding

Critical incidents such as child deaths may inform system improvements. In this session, participants will learn advanced techniques to support their review processes. The advanced techniques are based in safety science, commonly applied in safety-critical industries such as aviation, healthcare, and nuclear power.

These approaches depart from surface level descriptions of critical incidents that typically place blame on front line workers and instead supports in-depth systemic analysis of a critical incident, to identify and improve systemic issues that may be limiting the agency's ability to provide more successful outcomes.

The session will expose participants to foundational knowledge in safety science, use of language in interviews and report writing, and techniques in supporting open communication.

Instructor:

Casey Melsek, MSW, M.Sc., Senior Director, Collaborative Safety, LLC

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Conference Schedule At-A-Glance

Schedule Subject to Change – Detailed Agenda to Follow

Breakfast, lunch, and breaks are included in registration; welcome reception (9/13) and networking dinner event (9/14) included in full conference registration.

Visit the [conference webpage](#) to register and for fee information

Tuesday, September 13, 2022

6:00 – 8:00 PM Welcome Reception

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

7:30 – 8:30 AM **Breakfast**

8:30 – 9:45 AM **Conference Opening and Welcome Remarks**

9:45 – 10:00 AM **Break**

10:00 – 11:45 AM **Plenary Session 1** | Open Café Style Discussions about Critical Issues

12:00 – 1:15 PM **Lunch & Keynote** | Diversity, Equity & Inclusion as a Public Good
Dr. Greg Vincent, President, Talladega College

1:30 – 3:00 PM **Concurrent Session** | The Breakthrough Effect: Transforming from adversary to partner
Stephanie Villafuerte, Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman; Jordan Steffen, Deputy Ombudsman
How building a culture around the ombudsman role enhances the work, results in recommendations being implemented and creates stronger policy change.

1:30 – 3:00 PM **Concurrent Session** | How DEI Challenges Play Out in Your Work
Panel facilitated by Kim Wilson Vincent
A select group of USOA members will discuss their efforts, challenges and accomplishments implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion principles both within the structure of their ombuds organization and in the practice of carrying out the duties and responsibilities of their office.

3:00 – 3:15 PM **Break**

3:15 – 5:30 PM **Concurrent Session** | USOA Chapter Meetings
USOA members have different areas of authority, interest, and expertise. Specialized chapters are organized within USOA to share experiences, resources, and accomplishments. Chapters: Children and Families, Public Safety, Healthcare, Education, Federal Government and Local Government. You do not need to be a member to attend.

3:15 – 4:30 PM **Concurrent Session** | Town Hall Meeting
Ombudsmen depend on our colleagues for support, wisdom, and experience. If you are new to USOA or always wanted to better understand how the organization works, this session is for you. We will field questions about USOA, its history, mission, and opportunities for member involvement, as well as answer questions regarding topics of interest to attendees.

6:15 – 9:30 PM **Networking Event** – Harbor Boat Cruise Dinner (Boarding at 6:10 PM)

Thursday, September 15, 2022

7:30 – 8:30 AM	Breakfast
8:30 – 10:30 AM	Plenary Session 2 Gray Area Thinking® – <i>Ellie Krug, Human Inspiration Works</i> With this inclusivity presentation, Ellen (Ellie) Krug offers an innovative toolset—Gray Area Thinking®—for interacting with diverse humans: (1) awareness of another human’s vulnerability or suffering; (2) risk-taking to alleviate or lessen that vulnerability or suffering; and (3) compassion and kindness both for others and for one’s self.
10:30 – 10:45 AM	Break
10:45 – 12:00 PM	Concurrent Session Looking out from the Inside: The Ombudsman’s role in ensuring administrative fairness for our most vulnerable populations <i>Kirsty Larsen, Senior Investigator, Alberta Ombudsman</i>
10:45 – 12:00 PM	Concurrent Session Justice, Neutrality & Fairness - <i>Dr. Greg Vincent and Kim Wilson- Vincent</i>
12:00 – 1:30 PM	Lunch and USOA Annual Meeting 2023 USOA Annual Conference Announcement
1:45 – 3:15 PM	Concurrent Session Breaking News! Meeting Your Obligations to Work with the Media <i>Melanie McNeil, Esq, Georgia State Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Moira O’Neill, former New Hampshire Child Advocate; Annmarie Timmins, Senior Reporter, New Hampshire Bulletin; Amy Covenor, Reporter, WMUR-TV ABC Affiliate</i>
1:45 – 3:15 PM	Concurrent Session Building Rapport - <i>Olivia Walker, Ombudsman, Fort Hood</i> Establishing relationships with internal and external agencies and individuals.
3:15 – 3:30 PM	Break
3:30 – 5:00 PM	Plenary Session 2 Accessing Cultural Humility to Provide Solid Ground in Uncertain Times <i>Jennifer Mahony, Ombuds Office Director, Boston Children’s Hospital</i> This interactive plenary focuses on how the combination of cultural humility, complaint psychology theory, and vulnerable consumer strategy impacts accessibility and effectiveness of systems.
4:45 – 5:45 PM	International Ombudsman Institute Meeting

Friday, September 16, 2022

7:30 – 8:30 AM	Breakfast
8:30 – 9:45 AM	Concurrent Session Prioritizing the Brand <i>Jordan Steffen, Deputy Ombudsman, Office of Colorado’s Child Protection Ombudsman</i> How dedicating time or resources to messaging, branding and media are key in driving change.
8:30 – 9:45 AM	Concurrent Session Fishing Expedition or Responsive Investigation? An evolving systemic examination of youth custody in British Columbia, Canada <i>Jay Chalke, Ombudsperson, Province of British Columbia; Zoë Jackson, Director</i> This presentation will highlight the benefits of designing an investigation model that can respond to information emerging during an investigation.
9:45 – 10:00 AM	Break
10:00 AM - 12:00	Plenary Session 4 Amid a Pandemic: Self-Care and Preventing Burnout - <u>It’s Your Time Now!</u> <i>Karen Tinsley, LCSW</i>
12:00 – 12:30 PM	Conference Closing