

Job Announcement

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Office of Chief Counsel

Position Title: Associate Ombuds

Location [or] Duty Station: Washington, D.C.

IC/GS-13

OPENING DATE: 5/13/2024	CLOSING DATE: 5/28/2024 by 11:59 PM ET
POSITION TITLE AND LEGAL DIVISION: Associate Ombuds, within FEMA’s Office of Chief Counsel (OCC), Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Division’s Ombuds Office.	
SERIES, PAY PLAN, GRADE, SECURITY CLEARANCE, AND TRAVEL: 0301 – CORE ADR Advisor Specialist, IC-13. Salary is equivalent to that of a GS-13. This is a public trust position and does not require a security clearance. Occasional travel may be required.	
DUTY STATION LOCATION AND REMOTE WORK ELIGIBILITY: The duty station for this position is FEMA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. This position is not currently eligible for remote work, as defined by FEMA and OCC policy. This position is eligible for telework pursuant to FEMA policy.	
POSITION TYPE: This is a Cadre of On-Call Response/Recovery Employee (CORE) position. This is a temporary appointment in the Excepted Service, not to exceed two (2) years, with the option to extend based on workload and funding availability.	
POSITION SUMMARY AND IDEAL CANDIDATE: The FEMA Ombuds Office seeks qualified applicants for the position of Associate Ombuds. The incumbent will report directly to the FEMA Ombuds and provide ombuds services to members of the FEMA workforce serving the nation before, during, and after disasters. The FEMA Ombuds Office functions in accordance with the International Ombuds Association (IOA) Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. It is a conflict transformation resource providing confidential, informal, independent, and impartial services to address matters of concern and conflict for the FEMA workforce. The office works on many levels – from individual to systemic – and works to address multiple dimensions of issues (relational, ethical, structural, systemic). The office utilizes collaborative resolution and problem-solving strategies to effectively address a wide variety of issues, concerns, conflicts, and other challenges. In addition, the office aims to prevent and reduce destructive conflict, harm, and organizational impacts/risk through early engagement/intervention. Given the services available to constituents through the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Division (mediation, facilitation, conflict coaching, teambuilding, and organizational development) the caseload for the office predominantly consists of systemic and structural matters, and individual and interpersonal matters that fall outside the purview of other ADR Division branches such as matters involving employee services or agency business units,	

concerns regarding unfair treatment or processes, policy-related concerns, working conditions, workplace culture/climate issues, and more. The incumbent candidate will thus exhibit strong interest in and propensity for working on matters of this nature.

DUTIES OF THE POSITION:

The duties of the Associate Ombuds position include (i) ombuds services, (ii) office operations and data management, and (iii) office development, advancement, and evaluation.

I. Ombuds Services

- Provide highly confidential, impartial, independent, and informal ombuds services for FEMA employees of all experience levels; adhere to and uphold professional ethics and standards of practice in all ombuds services and activities, including the IOA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.
- Utilizing a holistic approach, work to prevent, address, and facilitate the resolution of workplace concerns, conflicts, and other issues, including issues/concerns on individual, interpersonal, group, unit/departmental, and systemic levels.
- Demonstrate sound judgment and professionalism in handling sensitive, complex and unique matters. The incumbent is able to identify and analyze complex and dysfunctional systems. The incumbent's caseload may involve highly significant program and policy matters with potential impacts on multiple agency units.
- Provide a wide variety of ombuds services, including but not limited to: consultation and coaching; serving as a sounding board; assistance in identifying, articulating, defining, and clarifying issues/concerns; examining concerns and issues from multiple perspectives; engage in informal information gathering to better understand issues; supporting visitor identification of appropriate options and resolution strategies; provide informal communication channels between affected parties; and identifying and providing relevant resources, among others.
- Use applicable Ombuds strategies (facilitation, coaching, informal mediation, interests-based negotiation, shuttle diplomacy, unit level interventions, organizational transformation processes, referrals, training, etc.) to assist visitors.
- Raise visitor concerns to appropriate agency officials as appropriate, and engage in collaborative problem solving to effectively address matters on individual, group/unit, and systemic levels.
- Manage visitor expectations for Ombuds services/processes. Clearly articulate the Ombuds role and associated services/processes, uphold visitor self-determination and informed decision-making regarding their matter.
- Identify underlying causes of issues to inform recommendations for programmatic or systemic change.
- Respond to service inquiries and requests, schedule and conduct meetings (phone, virtual, in-person, and hybrid), and maintain ongoing and timely communication with visitors as appropriate. As requested, schedule meetings for the FEMA Ombuds.
- Follow up with visitors as appropriate to determine outcome and further need of assistance.
- Design, prepare, and conduct engaging learning experiences, including professional development trainings, workshops, and presentations on topics related to effective communication, collaboration, conflict engagement/transformation, and systems change.

- Employ a high level of interpersonal, collaboration, and communication skills (both oral and written).

II. Ombuds Office Operations & Data Management/Analysis

- Work collaboratively on ombuds initiatives.
- Collaborate in administering the Ombuds Office case/data management system and ensure that activities are properly tracked in the system in a timely manner.
- Work with the FEMA Ombuds to analyze data, identify recurring concerns/problems, emerging issues, and critical situations; develop recommendations for the agency overall and/or specific cases; and develop annual reports, as well as periodic reports if/as needed.
- Collaborate in the development of Ombuds Office products and procedures.
- Skillfully use information technologies (devices, software programs, etc.), and accurately input, manage, and analyze data.
- Build trust and effective working relationships.

III. Ombuds Office Development, Advancement, and Evaluation

- Proactively promote the availability and use of Ombuds services throughout the agency.
- Support the design and development of marketing material and procedural information for the Ombuds Office.
- Respond to requests for information about the Ombuds Office, explaining resources, services, and administrative processes to visitors and/or make appropriate referrals.
- Work with supervisors and employees in selecting appropriate cases for the Ombuds Office.
- Participate in strategic planning efforts to help to identify strategies and structural supports needed to promote organization-wide change toward a more conflict-healthy culture.
- Participate in and represent the Ombuds Office in meetings and projects with appropriate organizations.
- Support Ombuds Office evaluation methodologies.
- Engage in professional development opportunities; stay informed and up to date on topics pertinent to the Ombuds profession.

In addition, the incumbent will be required to perform other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED/SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE:

Applicants must meet the qualification requirements by the closing date of this announcement.

Minimum Requirements include:

- U.S. Citizenship
- Ability to successfully pass a background investigation (public trust)
- Ability to obtain and maintain a government travel card
- Selective Service registration for males born after 12/31/59
- Agreement with Every Employee is an Emergency Manager requirement

Minimum Experience:

- At least five (5) years of full-time experience as a professional Ombuds or ADR practitioner with ombuds experience, in which the candidate's job duties required the provision of Ombuds or ADR services in large, complex, multicultural organizations.
- Applicants must have at least two (2) years of specialized experience that is directly related to the line of work of this position, which has equipped the applicant with knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform the duties of the position. At least one of the two years of specialized experience must be at a level of difficulty and responsibility equivalent to that of an Ombuds at the IC/GS-13 level.
 - Ombuds at the IC/GS-13 level perform substantive work on complex, novel, or significant matters; have excellent writing skills, conduct demanding case-related services and analysis; possess strong communication skills; are able to assume some supervisory role over interns and IC/GS-11/12 Ombuds, or non-attorney staff on a project-specific basis (if/as needed); and require only moderate level of supervision or review of written work product.
- A bachelor's degree and at least 300 hours of ADR and/or Ombuds-related training.

Specialized experience for this position includes:

- Demonstrated skill in ombuds functions, skills, and concepts, such as coaching, shuttle diplomacy, mediation, facilitation, organizational development/transformation, conflict analysis, etc.
- Ability to effectively engage conflict, facilitate difficult communications, and negotiate solutions to sensitive and complex workplace problems, as well as balance conflicting interests on matters of importance and controversy to employees and all levels of management.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, and a demonstrated ability to interface well with management and employees at all levels of an organization.
- Demonstrated experience working effectively within complex organizations and multicultural environments; commitment to upholding diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA)

Preferred Qualifications

- Bilingual or multilingual
- Advanced degree in a related field
- Advanced-level professional training and expertise in Ombuds-related skills and processes
- Relevant certifications, including as a Certified Organizational Ombuds Practitioner (CO-OP)

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

At time of application, the applicant must submit a:

- Resume, and
- Cover letter explaining their interest in the position and how their experience will make them an outstanding Associate Ombuds.

EMERGENCY MANAGER ASSIGNMENT:

Every FEMA employee has regular and recurring emergency management responsibilities. All positions are subject to recall around the clock for emergency management operations, which may require irregular work hours, work at locations other than the official duty station, and may include duties other than those specified in the employee's official position description. Travel requirements in support of emergency operations may be extensive in nature (weeks to months), with little advance notice, and may require employees to relocate to emergency sites with physically austere and operationally challenging conditions.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:

OCC is a diverse workplace, promotes equal opportunity, and welcomes all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), parental status, national origin, age, disability, genetic information (including family medical history), political affiliation, military service, or other non-merit-based factors.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION:

Please contact the Hiring Manager listed below if you require a reasonable accommodation for the application process as soon as possible.

HOW TO APPLY:

Interested applicants should submit a resume and cover letter to Caitlan Hendrickson via email at Caitlan.Hendrickson@fema.dhs.gov by the closing date of this announcement, **May 28, 2024**. The subject line of the email should reference that you are applying for the Associate Ombuds position.

Please let us know in your email or cover letter where you saw this announcement.