

Disability Ombuds

Independent, Impartial, Confidential & Credible Services

Learning Objectives



Explore

Explore the Office of Ombuds programs and services.



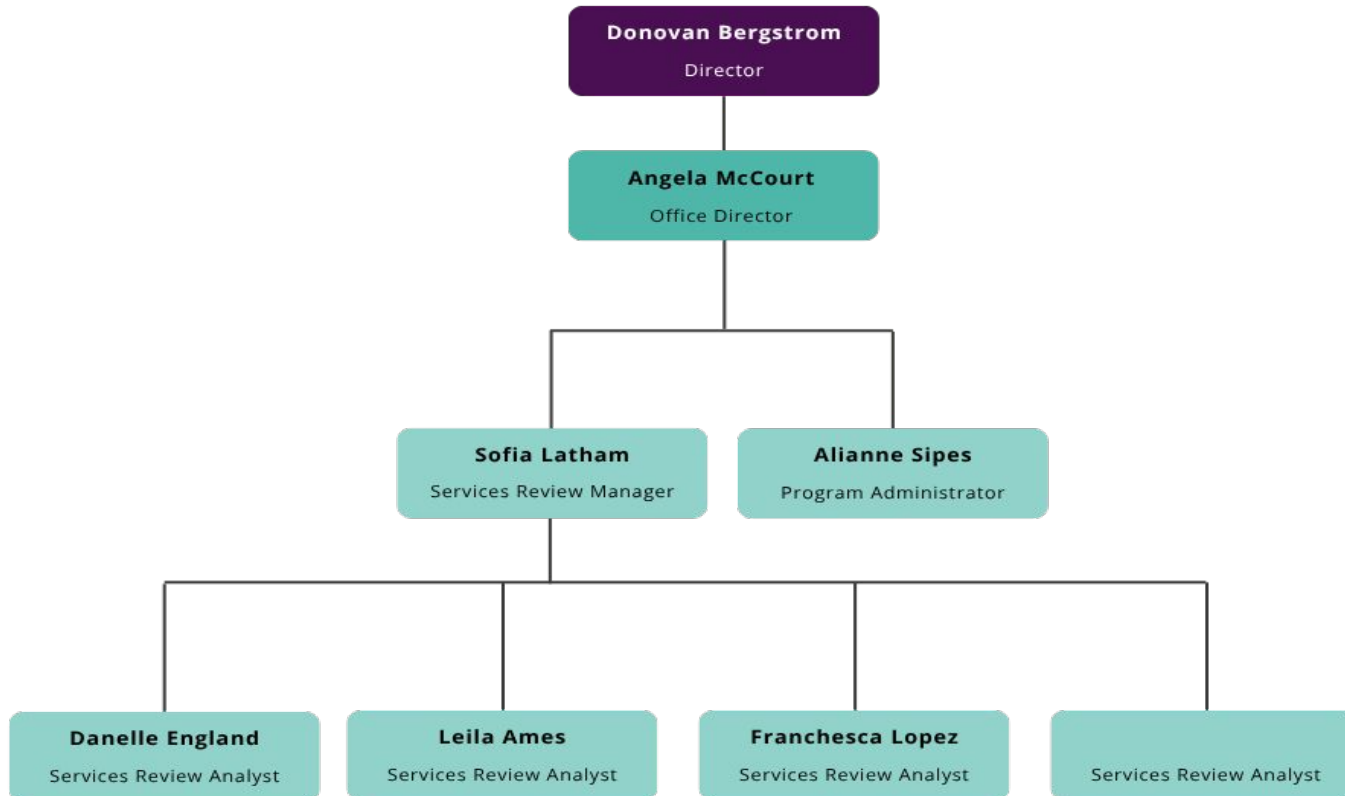
Identify

Identify Ombuds characteristics and principles.

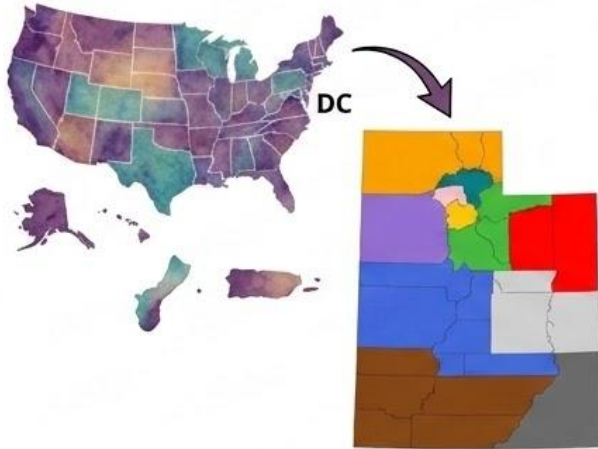


Experience

Experience how the spirit of resolution improves outcomes.



Authority of LTCO



Nationwide program (all states, DC, PR, Guam).

In Utah: 11 local programs for regional resident advocacy.



Authorized by the Older Americans Act.



Advocates only with resident/representative consent.

Not neutral: advocates for residents, seeking win-win solutions.

Child Protection Ombuds (CPO)

- ❑ Created from the David C. v. Leavitt lawsuit in 1993
- ❑ Codified in Utah Code in 1998. 80-2-1104

Core roles and function:



Investigator



Educator

Congregate Care Ombuds (CCO) Program

- ❑ Created with passing of S.B. 297
- ❑ Utah Code: 26B-2-124.2

Core roles and functions



Advocate



Investigate

Disability Ombuds

- ❑ Established by the Utah Legislature through HB 150 in 2022

Core roles and function:



Advocate & Promote



Uphold Rights & Privileges

Disability Ombuds

We support individuals with disabilities and help them understand their rights. We are here to listen, help individuals navigate the system, and review concerns about access to services.

What we do:



Listen & Advise

Listen to concerns and answer questions about rights and services.



Review & Resolve

Investigate issues for compliance and work to resolve concerns.



Educate & Advocate

Provide resources and advocate for systemic change.

Disability Ombuds Workflow

Intake

- Gather information.
- Ask about preferred outcomes.
- Provide further assistance or refer out.

Review

- Referral to another agency
- Fact finding and data collection
- Investigation

Resolution

- Final report and notifications
- Updates and case closure

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AN OMBUDSMAN

INDEPENDENCE



IMPARTIALITY



CONFIDENTIALITY



CREDIBLE



How the Pillars Support Resolution



The Ombudsman process moves conflict from a **"he-said, she-said"** battle into a **structured search** for a fair solution.

The Ombuds Process

1. Listen & Understand

You explain the problem.

We listen to your concern and evaluate how we can best help with your specific issue.

2. Gather Facts

We look at all sides. This includes reviewing files, talking to individuals involved, and checking policies.

3. Resolve & Improve

Informal Fix: Solving things quickly by clarifying rules.

Findings: If complex, we issue formal advice to fix mistakes or change confusing rules.

Better Systems: We provide feedback to prevent the problem from happening again.

The Spirit of Resolution

Essential skills in ombuds work



1. Empathy

Makes the complainant feel heard and respected



2. Mediation

Turns a 'fight' into a 'problem solving session'



3. Inquiry

Ensures recommendations are based on hard evidence



4. Emotional Intelligence

Prevents the Ombuds from becoming part of the conflict



5. Communication

Turns findings into change

Improving Outcomes

Spirit of Resolution



Focuses on empathy, mediation, and open communication to reach a mutual understanding.

Procedural Justice Theory



Ensures the process is neutral, respectful, trustworthy, and individuals are given a voice.

Combining these elements leads to **significantly improved outcomes** and trust.