

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Identifying, Collecting, Assessing and Communicating Information About Organizational Ombuds Value and Effectiveness

2026 Hector Escalante and Mary Rowe, with assistance from AI
(Sections with AI contributions are noted with red font)

Since the late 1980s, various writers have puzzled their way through understanding and assessing organizational ombuds work. We know we are missing many contributions. This resource list is therefore a work in progress; probably it should be a permanent DRAFT.

AI Disclosure: We used AI which, while helping, invented some articles and misattributed and miscited dozens of articles. We tried to catch all of these. However, we may have missed errors; we used AI for some entries and for descriptive sentences for some entries we have not read. In any case, we certainly have missed some articles altogether, especially those not in English. We welcome corrections and additions.

NB The last sub-section list lays out *Serious Limitations of this Bibliography, as seen by AI.* Please help usto find resources and to describe them well.

The articles are listed in *reverse chronological order*.

Articles in the main list contribute to five major areas; many cover more than one area:

- 1) Ideas about how the International Ombuds Association (**IOA Standards of Practice**) were a blueprint for the Organizational Ombuds profession in ways that add value to all organizational constituents and to the organization itself.
- 2) Ideas about **how to quantify organizational ombuds (OO) Value and create metrics** of operationally useful qualitative data.
- 3) Ideas about **how to communicate the “Value-Added” from qualitative data.**
- 4) Many articles emphasize how the **ombuds’ distinctive roles in systems’ improvement** add major value for both visitors and the organization.
- 5) Many articles emphasize the **value of ombuds mitigating the risks faced by visitors**—and the subsequent value in finding ways (consonant with confidentiality) **to share information that helps mitigate organizational risks.**

In addition, some articles—about Tools and Methods of Ombuds Practice, Training OOs, Mentoring and Supervision, and Case Studies that contribute to OOs’ value—are found at the end of the main list. Possible future additions: how Annual Reports add value and help in communicating. We hope to add a designation of the articles which focus on the IOA Standards of Practice as contributing to OO value and effectiveness.

Articles

Enriquez, E. (2025, September). Ombuds supporting science: The value of organizational ombuds in scientific communities. *Just Resolutions*. American Bar Association Section of Dispute Resolution, Ombuds Committee Newsletter.

Rivera-Hernández, M., & colleagues. (2025). *Los organismos protectores de derechos universitarios: Análisis de su naturaleza, funciones e impacto en la calidad universitaria*. Astra Editorial. This Spanish-language collective volume analyzes university “defensorías” across the Ibero-American region

and links their value to improved protection of rights, enhanced university quality, and the use of indicators such as response times and types of resolutions.

Harris, B. (2025). Data management, analysis, and trend tracking. In S. L. Burton & L. Keashly (Eds.), *The organizational ombuds: Foundations, fundamentals & the future*. International Ombuds Association.

Escalante Meza, H. (2025). Demonstrating value through effectiveness. In S. L. Burton & L. Keashly (Eds.), *The organizational ombuds: Foundations, fundamentals & the future*. International Ombuds Association.

Rowe, M., & MacAllister, B. (2025). The unique—and effective—quartet of standards of practice of organizational ombuds: Each standard is necessary—and requires the other three standards. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 16(1), 45–78. This article argues that independence, impartiality/neutrality, confidentiality, and informality operate as an interdependent set of standards for organizational ombuds. The authors use practice-based examples to show how this quartet enables safe access, trustworthy guidance, and systemic feedback.

MacAllister, B. (2025, May 12). The embedded ombuds. *International Ombuds Association News Blog*. Discussing some of the ways that an “inside” outsider adds major value. See also: The role of an Ombuds as a Strategic Resource and Primary Risk Management Resource, on the blog at Bizexteam.com.

MacAllister, B. (2025) Assessment Scope, Approaches, and Categories Relating to the Organizational Ombuds IOA Research and Assessment Working Group Report to the Research and Assessment Committee Sub-Committee Review Dra- Ver. 2.0. An outline for comprehensive review of Ombuds Value and Effectiveness.

Forbes Business Council. (2025, July 17). How to amplify the effectiveness of HR and compliance with an organizational ombuds. *Forbes*

Rowe, M. (2025). *Ombuds case material, stories, and teaching notes* [Teaching cases collection]. MIT Sloan School of Management. <https://mitmgmtfaculty.mit.edu/mrowe/ombuds-case-material-stories-and-teaching-notes/> Teaching points map ombuds value onto tangible domains: risk prevention, cost and time savings, systemic improvement, protection of vulnerable parties, and healthier, more just organizational cultures—with explicit welcome to bystanders as visitors and sources of information about concerns and good ideas.

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit (2025) Review of the Ombudsman and Mediation function in the United Nations system organizations (expanded report) (https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2025_5_expanded_report.pdf and <https://docs.un.org/en/JIU/REP/2015/6>). This report covers many topics relevant to ombuds value and effectiveness. Readers who are not UN ombuds may wish to read the report with additional input from UN ombuds.

Muroff, J.A. (2025). From conflict to connection: Continuing to explore the what, why, and how of positive psychology for ombuds. *Journal of the International Ombuds Association*, 16-
https://ioa.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/JIOA_Articles/JIOA-2025-A%20.pdf This article—and the next one below—argue that limiting (the understanding of) the ombuds role exclusively to conflict resolution fails to account for the full scope and potential of ombuds value (and is problematic and inaccurate in other ways.)

Muroff, J.A. (2024). Beyond problems: The: what, why, and how of positive psychology for organizational ombuds. *Journal of the International Ombuds Association*, 40-
https://ioa.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/JIOA_Articles/JIOA-2023-T%20Publication%20Proofs.pdf International Ombuds Association. (2024).

IOA Survey Team. (2024) *2024 IOA practice survey report*. International Ombuds Association. Survey Data.

Miller, E. (2024) How Ombuds Can Impact the Well-Being of Healthcare Workers

Rowe, M., Hedeem, T., Schneider, J., & Escalante, H. (2024, December). *The most serious cases reported by organizational ombuds: Data from surveys and interviews* (Working paper). MIT Sloan School of Management. Possibly the best data for showing OO Value and Effectiveness. <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/shared/ods/documents/?PublicationDocumentID=10505>

Rowe, M., Hedeem, T., Schneider, J., & Escalante, H. (2024, December). *Some organizational ombuds achievements reported in the 2024 IOA survey* (Working paper). MIT Sloan School of Management. <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/shared/ods/documents/?PublicationDocumentID=10506>

Rowe, M., Hedeem, T., Schneider, J., & Escalante, H. (2024, December). *What do organizational ombuds do? And not do?* (Working paper). MIT Sloan School of Management. <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/shared/ods/documents/?PublicationDocumentID=5587>

Wahlgren, M. A. (2024). *An exploratory study of ombuds as agents of change: From observation to action* (Doctoral dissertation, Nova Southeastern University). NSUWorks. This dissertation examines how university ombuds act as organizational change agents, drawing on in-depth interviews. It emphasizes the use of relational influence, systems knowledge, and informal strategies to foster institutional improvements.

ADR Institute of Canada. (2024). "The case for the organizational ombuds – Our organization has an ombuds; why should we care?" *ADR Institute of Canada*. Provides concrete scenarios: ombuds handling workplace investigations in-house instead of expensive external investigators, avoiding fees estimated at hundreds of dollars per hour per case. Gives rough figures for litigation avoided (e.g., tens of thousands per case) through early resolution, explicitly tying ombuds stories to financial value.

Rowe, M. (2024, August). *Options to consider when complainants and bystanders are fearful: A toolkit for complaint handlers, hesitant complainants, and hesitant bystanders* [Teaching note]. MIT Sloan School of Management. <https://mitsloan-php.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-faculty/sites/84/2024/08/30220918/Rowe-Options-to-Consider-When-Complainants-and-Bystanders-Fearful-8-2024.pdf> These papers discuss different ways that ombuds can help constituents who might otherwise never speak up about serious issues and good ideas.

Yamagata-Lynch, L. C. (2024). Striving to effectively communicate ombuds values: Lessons learned by an ombuds working with data. *Journal of the International Ombuds Association*, 17(1), 22–34. The author shares strategies implemented, and decisions made as an ombuds to operationalize data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Bureš, L., & Sato, Y. (2024). The early emergence of ombuds systems in Japanese science universities. *Science and Public Policy*, 51(3), 421–434. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scipol/scad079> This article analyzes the creation of ombuds offices at two Japanese science universities (OIST and Kyushu Institute of Technology), using interviews and document analysis to assess how these offices enhance dispute resolution capacity, protect community members, and complement existing grievance mechanisms.

Justice Canada. (2024). *Evaluation of the Ombuds and Informal Resolution Services Office (OIRSO)*. Department of Justice Canada. This evaluation notes that hard data are limited—but concludes, based on literature and internal evidence, that informal resolution through an ombuds office yields cost savings relative to formal processes.

Montgomery College Ombuds Office. (2024). *Ombuds annual report FY24*. Montgomery College. Uses issue categories, outcomes, examples, and narrative case data to explicitly answer “What is the value of an Ombuds?” and links data to effectiveness and neutrality.

Miller, S., & Morris, L. (2024, May 22). The case for the organizational ombuds – Our organization has HR, why would we need an organizational ombuds? *ADR Institute of Canada*. <https://adric.ca/en/the-case-for-the-organizational-ombuds/>

International Ombuds Association. (2023). *Ombuds value in brand, marketing, and organizational culture*. International Ombuds Association.

Studentombudet ved Universitetet i Stavanger. (2023). *Studentombudets årsrapport 2022–2023*. Universitetet i Stavanger. The annual report from the University of Stavanger student ombuds presents quantitative data on number and types of student contacts, trends over time, and referral patterns, and uses these statistics plus case examples to demonstrate the office’s role in protecting students’ rights and correcting systemic issues.

Peixoto, P. (2023, março). *Relatório de atividades da Provedoria do Estudante da Universidade de Coimbra: Ano 2022*. Universidade de Coimbra. The Coimbra report combines quantitative data (e.g., number of communications, issue types, trends over time) with qualitative analysis of cases to show how the ombuds contributes to protecting students’ rights, mediating conflicts, and informing improvements in university regulations and services.

Forbes Nonprofit Council. (2023, July 7). How organizational ombuds can help increasingly complex organizations. *Forbes*. This practitioner-focused article highlights ways nonprofit ombuds can create value by offering safe channels for concerns, surfacing patterns to boards, and supporting healthy culture during rapid change. The piece argues that ombuds increase the impact of HR and compliance by routing issues early, clarifying options for employees, and sharing aggregated insights that inform policy and training.

Leidenfrost, J. (2022). *Conflict management through ombudsman offices at universities in Austria: Status and outlook* (ENOHE Occasional Paper No. 16). European Network of Ombuds in Higher Education (ENOHE). This paper describes the development and current landscape of Austrian university ombuds offices and argues that they provide institutional value by improving conflict management, offering informal resolution options, and safeguarding students’ rights.

Burton, S. L., & Mershon, C. (2021). Assessing the establishment of ombuds offices in professional academic research associations. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 14(1), 1–25. This article reports survey data on ombuds programs in professional associations, including why they were created and how they are structured. The authors identify common patterns in mandates, reporting lines, and perceived benefits of these offices.

Howard, C. L. (2021). *A practical guide to organizational ombuds: How they help people and organizations*. American Bar Association. This practical guide explains how ombuds help resolve issues informally, support whistleblowers, and provide trend information to leadership. Howard links effectiveness to program design (charter, standards, access, reporting) and offers checklists and examples for demonstrating impact to stakeholders. The book offers and analyzes abundant, anonymous, real-life case stories from ombuds.

Wright, F. (2021). Personal reflection: Reimagining ombudsing and our professional responsibilities. *International Ombuds Association Blog*. In this reflective piece, Wright urges ombuds to engage in systematic self-evaluation, linking personal reflection, ethical awareness, and continual learning to the profession’s credibility and perceived value. He frames self-reflection practices (journaling, peer dialogue, structured debriefs) as informal—but vital—“data” about the quality and impact of ombuds interventions.

Wright, F., & Miller, D. (2020). An initial enquiry towards a model of supervision and support for organisational ombuds. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 13(1), 43–57. This article argues that effective supervision and support structures are essential for maintaining ombuds resilience, ethical practice, and quality, which in turn underpin the value they offer to organizations. The authors describe a reflective, supervision-based model and use practice examples to illustrate how structured support can enhance judgment, reduce burnout, and improve service to visitors.

Provedor do Estudante da Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro. (2021). *Relatório de atividades do Provedor do Estudante: 2020*. Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD). The UTAD report presents statistics on the number and nature of student complaints and contacts, describes recommendations issued and their uptake by university bodies, and explicitly frames the ombuds' role as enhancing student satisfaction, fairness, and regulatory clarity across the institution.

Kosakowski, T. (2020, May 12). Ombuds: An emerging resource for organizational conflict. *TEDxUCLA*. Shares anecdotes of campus ombuds resolving multi-party disputes and surfacing systemic issues in ways that preserve relationships and reduce formal grievances. Frames these stories as evidence that ombuds provide unique value as a confidential, informal, yet well-connected resource within complex organizations.

Adams, L., & Rasch, E. (2020). Sexual harassment, consensual relationships, and the ombuds profession. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 13(1), 1–18. This article recommends profession-level tools to increase the value of ombuds, such as expanding IOA's Ethics Code and Standards of Practice to explicitly prohibit sexual relationships with visitors, creating IOA/CO-OP® procedures for investigating complaints against ombuds, and developing sanctions, coaching, and training requirements.

Escalante, H. (2019). Abrasive conduct in higher education and the ombuds role. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 12(1), 1–23. This article examines how rising incivility and abrasive behaviors among faculty, staff, and students affect campus climates in higher education. It also explores how organizational ombuds, guided by core principles such as confidentiality and independence, can identify, address, and help prevent such conduct within academic institutions.

Soligard, L. (2019, August 11). Fra i dag av har alle rett på studentombud. *Khrono*. <https://khrono.no> This news article explains the legal requirement that all Norwegian higher-education institutions provide access to a student ombuds and argues that studentombud increase students' legal security and institutional accountability, noting growing demand and rising numbers of contacts as indicators of value.

Schneider, J. S. (2018). Amplifying trends with data. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 11(2), 1–17. Shows how ombuds can mine internal institutional data to corroborate visitor stories, define “trends,” and present data-supported upward feedback that drives policy and systems change.

Bingham, S. G., Smith, T. S., Burton, S. L., & Elkerson, D. (2018). The research agenda for the organizational ombuds profession: A living document. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 11(2), 45–60. This article sets out a multi-part research agenda for the organizational ombuds field, grounded in practitioner and scholar input. It outlines priority questions around outcomes, roles, ethics, and integration with broader conflict management systems.

Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman, & Social Finance. (2018). *The value of reform*. Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. For public-sector ombuds, models multi-year system reforms showing net savings to the ombuds system and public bodies, illustrating methods to link ombuds process changes to cost reductions.

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. (2018). *Value for money study*. Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.
[https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/sites/default/files/Value for Money report final.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/sites/default/files/Value%20for%20Money%20report%20final.pdf)

Hedeem, T. (2017). Ombuds as nomads? The intersections of dispute system design and identity. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 10(2), 8–23. In this article, Hedeem articulates seventeen core ombuds functions—including confidential listening, coaching, mediation and shuttle diplomacy, informal fact-finding, options-generation, systemic feedback, early warning, and dispute-system design contributions—and uses them to illustrate the distinctive value organizational ombuds bring to complex institutions.

Houk, C. S., Rowe, M. P., Katz, D. A., Katz, N. H., Marx, L., & Hedeem, T. (2016). A reappraisal—The nature and value of ombudsmen in federal agencies. Part 1: Executive summary. In *Final report to the Administrative Conference of the United States for conference consideration* (November 14, 2016). This executive summary distills key findings on how federal agency ombuds contribute to early, informal resolution of issues and to systemic improvement in agencies. It highlights the value of ombuds in fostering fairness, surfacing concerns that might otherwise remain hidden, and supporting organizational learning.

Houk, C. S., Rowe, M. P., Katz, D. A., Katz, N. H., Marx, L., & Hedeem, T. (2016). A reappraisal—The nature and value of ombudsmen in federal agencies. Part 2: Research report. In *Final report to the Administrative Conference of the United States for conference consideration* (November 14, 2016). Includes extensive survey data. This research report provides detailed empirical evidence about how ombuds offices are structured, the kinds of issues they handle, and how stakeholders perceive their effectiveness. It also analyzes patterns in the survey responses to identify common challenges, promising practices, and options for strengthening ombuds programs across federal agencies.

Gadlin, H. (2016). Stranger in a strange world: Reflections on the federal ombudsman experience. In American Bar Association, *The ombudsman in federal agencies* (pp. 27–36). Here Gadlin notes that agencies often presume ombuds “add value” but lack rigorous evidence, highlighting the difficulty of attributing systemic change to ombuds alone and cautioning against overclaiming quantitative proof.

Barkat, S. (2015). Designing a proactive organizational ombudsman program. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 8(1). The author focuses on designing proactive organizational ombudsman programs aimed at effectively addressing workplace conflicts. It emphasizes the importance of strategic program design and engagement with stakeholders, in a systems approach to foster a positive organizational environment.

Zinsser, J. W. (2015, June 21). Interested in an ethical culture? Build an ombuds program. *Ethical Systems*. <https://www.ethicalsystems.org/interested-in-an-ethical-culture-build-an-ombuds-program/> The article explains how traditional compliance-focused programs can inadvertently discourage employees from raising concerns, whereas an organizational ombuds office offers a safe, informal, and confidential channel for speaking up. It describes how well-designed ombuds programs can reduce legal and disputing costs, improve safety metrics, and help organizations live their espoused ethical values by promoting early, candid discussion of problems.

Siemiatycki, M. (2015). The impact of ombudsman investigations on public administration. Office of the Toronto Ombudsman and Ryerson University. Measures the value of the ombudsman. Applies mostly to public-sector ombuds but is widely cited on impact measurement and “value of ombudsman” methodology.

Bonnivier, B. M., Brooke-Lander, M. C., & Lewis, M. R. (2015, March 15). The organizational ombuds office and corporate social responsibility: Driving values in an organization (SPE-173528-MS). *Society of Petroleum Engineers*. Describes cases where an ombuds office embedded in a CSR program helped

raise integrity concerns about operations, leading to changes in procedures and risk mitigation. This qualitative thesis analyzes interviews with seven ombuds in large U.S. organizations, mapping their investigatory, advocacy, assisting, and regulatory roles and identifying “assisting” as the predominant mode of practice.

Joint Inspection Unit. (2015). *Review of the organizational ombudsman services in the United Nations system* (JIU/REP/2015/6). United Nations. <https://docs.un.org/en/jiu/rep/2015/6> The review explains that organizational ombudsman services are intended to provide a cost-effective informal mechanism that reduces reliance on more expensive formal justice channels, including internal legal mechanisms. It notes that the Joint Inspection Unit attempted to obtain data on the “average cost per case” in the formal system to compare it with the cost of handling cases through ombuds offices, but most organizations could not supply consistent figures. The report therefore concludes that, while qualitative and anecdotal evidence strongly suggests ombudsman services reduce overall legal and dispute-resolution costs, systematic per-case cost comparisons with formal mechanisms (including in-house counsel) are rarely available. It recommends that organizations improve data collection on ombuds case volumes and outcomes, alongside comparable metrics for formal mechanisms, to better demonstrate cost-effectiveness. The review also emphasizes that cost analysis should include not only direct financial costs but also indirect costs such as staff time, productivity loss, and damage to working relationships when disputes escalate into formal legal channels.

Bombin, M. (2014). Methods used in evaluating the ombudsman function of an international organization. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 7(2), 9–18. Details indicators and trend analysis “to assess effectiveness” and “assess the success” of the ombuds function.

Defensoría de los Derechos Universitarios, Igualdad y Atención de la Violencia de Género (DDU). (2014). *La Defensoría de los Derechos Universitarios: Origen, funciones y contribuciones a la vida universitaria*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Through narrative case examples, this monograph presents the UNAM university ombuds office as a mechanism for preventing and de-judicializing conflicts, restoring rights, and promoting a culture of respect for human rights within the university community.

Bennett, D. M. (2014). *Roles and functions of organizational ombuds officers in the United States* (Master’s thesis, University of Denver). Digital Commons @ DU. This thesis maps the core activities, guiding principles, and organizational positioning of ombuds officers, clarifying how they differ from formal compliance, HR, and legal channels while complementing those functions within institutions.

Gadlin, H. (2014). Toward the activist ombudsman: An introduction. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 31(4), 333–340. This piece frames value in terms of proactive engagement with systemic issues, describing practices like case reviews and structural interventions as evidence of impact beyond individual dispute resolution. Across these works, Gadlin consistently promotes evaluations that combine standards-based assessment, qualitative case evidence, stakeholder perceptions, and records of systemic interventions to demonstrate ombuds value.

Campbell, K. A. (2014). *Roles and functions of organizational ombuds officers in the higher education system* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver). Digital Commons @ DU. <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/67> Examines how campus ombuds contribute to conflict management and discusses return on investment conceptually through reduced formal grievances and more efficient resolution pathways. Frames ombuds value in terms of time saved, risk reduction, and support for institutional learning, rather than giving a single numeric ROI ratio.

Schenck, A., & Zinsser, J. W. (2014). Prepared to be valuable: Positioning ombuds programs to assure their worth. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 7(1), 7–17. The article asserts that organizational ombuds should explicitly link their service (case work, systems feedback, training, trend analysis) to the interests of leadership. Schenck and Zinsser affirm with updated depth and clarity the

point that Zinsser made earlier, again in detail, in his 1995 thesis (q.v., below), about meeting the needs of leadership and the organization.

Leidenfrost, J., de la Rosa, A., & Sanz, J. (2013). Las defensorías universitarias como un instrumento para la mejora de las universidades: Implantación y extensión en Iberoamérica. *Revista de Educación y Derecho*, 7, 1–24. This article argues that university ombuds offices serve as an instrument for improving universities by identifying systemic problems, recommending institutional changes, and protecting the rights of community members, illustrated with examples from Ibero-American institutions.

Lipsky, D. B., & Seeber, R. L. (2013). The organizational ombudsman. In *The Oxford handbook of conflict management in organizations* (pp. xx–xx). Oxford University Press.

Rowe, M. P. (2013). An organizational ombuds office in a system for dealing with conflict and learning from conflict. *Harvard Negotiation Law Review*, 18, 279–320.

This collection of articles includes composite stories of ombuds helping to redesign complaint systems, improve processes for dealing with abuse, and strengthen protections against retaliation. Shows how OOs can convert repeated “small” complaints into systemic changes, such as policy clarifications or new training, that improve climate and reduce future conflict.

Yang, D. (杨东). (2013). 金融申诉专员制度之类型化研究 [A typological study of the financial ombudsman system]. *法学评论* [Law Review], 2013(4), 112–128. Yang analyzes different models of financial ombudsman systems and highlights their effectiveness by citing high complaint-handling volumes, accessibility, lower costs than court processes, and the ability to combine mediation with binding or quasi-binding decisions, thereby enhancing both efficiency and perceived fairness in financial dispute resolution.

Stuhmcke, A. (2012). Evaluating the effectiveness of an ombudsman: A riddle, wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. Paper presented at the 10th World Conference of the International Ombudsman Institute, Wellington.

Howard, C. L. (2011, August 28). Organizational ombudsman: A tool whose time has come. *Hartford Business Journal*. This article presents ombuds programs as cost-effective tools for managing workplace conflict and ethics issues, highlighting their ability to surface issues before they escalate into costly disputes. Howard notes that ombuds can improve organizational culture and trust while also providing tangible financial benefits through avoided litigation and preserved relationships.

The Ombuds Blog. (2011, February 3). Interviews with leading ombuds give perspective on future of field. This blog post references a session titled “Assessing and Communicating Organizational Ombudsman Value and Effectiveness,” featuring leading ombuds including Marsha Wagner and Linda Wilcox. The description stresses that, especially in tight economic times, ombuds must articulate their value through stories, aggregate data, and risk-management contributions rather than only through traditional metrics.

Newcomb, J. L. (2010). Assessing the cost effectiveness of an ombudsman: A corporate case study. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 3(1), 40–52. This article explicitly frames assessment of ombuds cost-effectiveness in terms of avoided internal legal costs and other dispute-handling resources; it reports aggregate savings, not a simple cost-per-case ratio directly against in-house counsel caseload.

Levine-Finley, S., & Carter, J. (2010). Toward the activist ombudsman: An introduction. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 28(1–2), 5–23. This introduction frames a set of articles on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of the Ombudsman/Center for Cooperative Resolution. It presents the idea of an “activist ombudsman” who pays explicit attention to systemic patterns and organizational change. The

authors position the NIH program as an example of how ombuds offices can integrate casework with broader conflict management strategies.

Bloch, B. (2010). Prioritizing practice in ombudsman and ADR programs. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 28(2), 111–139. Bloch examines how ombuds and ADR programs set priorities among casework, outreach, training, and systemic initiatives. The article highlights practical choices programs must make when resources are limited. It underscores the importance of aligning ombuds practice with the organization's broader dispute system design.

Call, C. M. (2010). Resolving land use and impact fee disputes. *The Urban Lawyer*, 42(2), 427–458. In that article, Call states that disputes “which have the potential to result in litigation against property owners” dropped by more than seventy-five percent after use of the Utah Office of the Property Rights Ombudsman and related negotiation processes.

Howard, C. L. (2010). *The organizational ombudsman: Origins, roles, and operations – A legal guide*. American Bar Association. This book argues that organizational ombuds programs enhance effectiveness by enabling safe internal reporting, early problem-solving, and systemic feedback, while reducing litigation and compliance risk. It synthesizes extensive case law and real ombuds case examples to show how well-structured programs protect confidentiality and independence—preconditions for effective use and impact.

Howard, C. L. (2010). The ombuds confidentiality privilege. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 3(2), 39–51. Howard analyzes court decisions and model laws to argue that strong confidentiality protections are essential for ombuds effectiveness because they determine whether people will use the office for sensitive matters. He provides practice guidance on charters, notices, and documentation that both support privilege claims and demonstrate responsible operation—key elements of credible effectiveness.

Howard, C. L. (2010). Documentation and measures of effectiveness. In *The organizational ombudsman: Origins, roles, and operations – A legal guide*. American Bar Association. Howard outlines what to document (office charter, public materials, trend reports, usage data, and examples) to substantiate confidentiality and show effectiveness. He discusses using measures such as case volumes, issue types, resolution approaches, and illustrative case narratives to make a persuasive case for program value without breaching confidentiality.

Rowe, M. P. (2010). Identifying and communicating the usefulness of organizational ombuds, with ideas about OO effectiveness and cost-effectiveness. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 3(1), 9–23. This long and detailed article reviews many of the methodological problems in assessing the effectiveness of an ombuds office and emphasizes the importance of the “most serious cases” in demonstrating effectiveness and the importance of benchmarking before an ombuds office opens.

Gadlin, H. (2010). Assessing effectiveness in ombudsman programs. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 3(1), 37–44. This article argues that ombuds effectiveness should be evaluated through alignment with standards of practice, quality of interventions, and contributions to fairness and learning, rather than through simplistic numerical indicators.

Rowe, M. (2010). The several purposes of the OO Crystal Ball. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 3(2), 60–65. This article describes the “OO Crystal Ball,” an annual practice that aggregates observations from many ombuds to forecast emerging issues in organizations. Rowe affirms that systematically collecting and sharing early warning signs helps ombuds support risk management, organizational learning, and proactive responses to serious problems—key dimensions of ombuds value.

Fowlie, F. (2009, February). *Ombudsman operations: Evaluation planning and basics* [Training course materials]. Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).
<https://www.icann.org/en/help/ombudsman/documents/evaluation-course-mdr-feb09.pdf>

Fowlie, F. (2008). *A blueprint for the evaluation of an ombudsman's office: A case study of the ICANN Office of the Ombudsman* (Doctoral dissertation, La Trobe University). ICANN. This case study develops a detailed evaluation framework for ombuds offices using the ICANN Ombudsman as an example. It tests tools such as client surveys, performance indicators, and self-assessment to assess effectiveness while respecting ombuds principles.

Fowlie, F. (2008). *A practitioner's guide to evaluating ombudsman offices* (International Ombudsman Institute Occasional Paper No. 83). International Ombudsman Institute (IOI). This guide provides practical instruments for evaluating ombuds work, including interview questions, survey designs, and benchmarking approaches. It is aimed at helping ombuds demonstrate value and improve practice without undermining confidentiality or independence.

Park, S. K.-Y. (2008). Moving forward with research in the organizational ombuds profession. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 1(1), 37–46. In the first volume of JIOA, Park notes that typical metrics (number of visitors, case types, demographics) say little about whether ombuds services are competent or effective, and they cannot show if the work is “up to standard.” She argues that confidentiality and informality make traditional performance evaluation tools (e.g., direct case audits) problematic, so the profession needs alternative methods. She suggests ways of assessing case scenarios.

Eisner, M. (2007) Creation of an Ombuds Office Can Prevent Retaliation. Mediate.com

Leidenfrost, J. (Ed.). (2006). *Academic ombudsmen in European higher education* (ENOHE Occasional Paper No. 2). European Network of Ombuds in Higher Education (ENOHE). This edited volume assembles case studies from multiple European universities to show how academic ombuds contribute to fair treatment, early conflict resolution, and institutional trust, using mainly qualitative descriptions and basic activity data.

Shipman, S., & Goodwin, D. (2006). The advantages of an ombuds program. *ACC Docket*, 24(8), 52–60. The authors describe how in-house counsel and executives can rely on ombuds for early detection of legal and ethical risks, thereby reducing litigation exposure and improving decision-making.

Ehrenreich sets tone as first ombudsperson. (2004, February 25). *The Harvard Crimson*. In this news article about Professor Ehrenreich, the first Harvard campus ombudsperson, Linda Wilcox, the first Harvard Medical School Ombudsman, reports that her office spoke with 625 people in a year, providing a concrete usage statistic often cited to demonstrate demand and accessibility for the Harvard Medical School ombuds office. The piece implicitly links high utilization, early problem-solving, and confidential consultation to the office's perceived value within the academic health system.

Nakagawa, J. (2004). 大学オンブズマン制度と日本の大学への適用可能性 [The university ombudsman system and its applicability to Japanese universities]. *京都大学カウンセリングセンター紀要* [Bulletin of the Kyoto University Counseling Center], 29, 39–47. Nakagawa reviews overseas university ombudsman models and considers how such systems could be implemented in Japanese universities, emphasizing potential benefits such as improved responsiveness to student complaints, enhanced fairness, and greater trust in institutional decision-making, while also addressing organizational and cultural constraints.

Hedeem, T., Moses, M., & Peter, J. (2004). What is success in ombuds processes? Evaluation of a university ombudsman. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 22(1–2), 3–19. This piece explores how to define and measure “success” in ombuds work within a university setting. The

authors combine visitor outcomes, perceptions of fairness, and institutional impacts as evaluation criteria. They propose that meaningful assessment must integrate both quantitative indicators and qualitative narratives from stakeholders.

Wilcox, L. (2003). The ethics of authorship: An ombudsperson's perspective. *Science*, 301(5634), 133–134. Wilcox discusses disputes over scientific authorship from an ombuds perspective, highlighting how fair, transparent authorship practices contribute to research integrity and institutional trust. She uses anonymized case examples to illustrate how ombuds intervention can prevent retaliation, clarify expectations, and support ethical research cultures, framing this as a key dimension of ombuds value in academic medicine.

Rowe, M., & Simon, M. (2002). Effectiveness of organizational ombudsmen. In *The Ombudsman Association Handbook* (Chap. 4, pp. 1–22). The Ombudsman Association. (Original work published 2001, update dated April 2002.) It explicitly encourages ombuds to track their “most serious” cases, defined as those where they believe they have interrupted or prevented unacceptable behavior and “saved the most money, time, expertise, ‘image’ and pain” for their organizations. It recommends looking particularly at cases where external legal interactions, agency complaints, and settlement/insurance costs were avoided or sharply reduced, as part of assessing value, and notes surveys in the 1990s supporting these kinds of estimates, including an example cost-effectiveness calculation.

Rowe, M. P. (2001). *Effectiveness of organizational ombudsmen: Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness* (Rev. 4/01). The Ombudsman Association. Reprinted by the International Ombudsman Association. https://www.ombudsassociation.org/assets/docs/effectiveness_final-6_TOA.pdf

U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2001). *Human capital: The role of ombudsmen in dispute resolution* (GAO-01-466). U.S. Government Accountability Office.

Wagner, M. L. (2000). The organizational ombudsman as change agent. *Negotiation Journal*, 16(1), 99–114. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1571-9979.2000.tb00205.x>
Discusses specific sources of value in being a change agent.

Wagner, M. L. (2000). The organizational ombudsman as change agent. In J. Katsh & M. Rifkin (Eds.), *Online dispute resolution*. This chapter argues that organizational ombuds add value by serving as internal change agents, using patterns of complaints to recommend systemic improvements and enhance fairness in organizational processes. Wagner emphasizes cost-effectiveness in leveraging an internal ombuds' deep organizational knowledge compared with outside consultants, and highlights aggregated, anonymous data and trend reporting as key value-related outputs.

Bauer, R. M. (2000). The practice of one ombudsman. *Negotiation Journal*, 16(1), 59–78. Bauer offers a detailed narrative of everyday ombuds practice in a specific organizational context. The article illustrates how seemingly individual problems often reflect broader systemic dynamics. It demonstrates how an ombuds navigates confidentiality, informality, and neutrality while providing options to visitors.

Furtado, T. (1999). Why an organizational ombuds? What an organization's management needs to know. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 2(1). This article explains for leaders how ombuds programs add value by providing a confidential, informal channel for employee voice and early intervention in conflicts. Furtado emphasizes risk management, trust-building, and organizational learning, arguing that management gains “credit” and tangible benefits from maintaining a credible ombuds function.

Furtado, T. (1999). The organizational ombuds: Implications for voice. In *Employee voice and participation*. Furtado situates the organizational ombuds within broader employee voice theory, arguing that ombuds programs create a protected pathway for concerns that might not surface through formal

channels. He notes that organizations often receive reputational and internal “credit” simply for providing an ombuds option, and that the real value comes from using ombuds feedback to address systemic issues.

Rowe, M., & Simon, M. (1999, May 26). *Cost effectiveness equation* [Presentation slides]. The Ombudsman Association. (One slide offers these data: “1996 survey – 166 ombuds reported 258 ‘highest potential cost’ cases,” and gives the distribution: 40% harassment/discrimination/interpersonal violence; 20% other illegal/criminal; 40% not obviously illegal but high potential cost (including retention of valuable people).

Wagner, M. L. (1998). “Paper about the ombudsperson as change agent presented to the Consortium on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, 8–9 May 1998.” In this early article, Wagner outlines how ombuds transform individual complaints into organizational learning, positioning ombuds value in their ability to surface hidden issues and catalyze policy and cultural change. She discusses collecting anonymous aggregate data, identifying systemic weak spots, and following up on implementation of recommendations as core value-producing activities.

Now the dirty laundry gets washed in public. (1997, October 27). *Bloomberg Businessweek*. Quoting Trocchio as Executive Director of the Ombudsman Association, this article reports the growth in corporate ombuds offices and presents them as cost-effective internal mechanisms for addressing employee concerns. It implicitly ties ombuds value to reputational protection, early conflict resolution, and reduced litigation. Trocchio is cited explaining the prevalence of corporate ombuds programs and how they serve as internal resources for employees reluctant to use formal channels. The article positions ombuds offices as adding value through confidential problem-solving and as visible signals of an organization’s commitment to fairness.

An ombudsman may help polish Apple. (1997, February 11). *Wired*. <https://www.wired.com/1997/02/an-ombudsman-may-help-polish-apple/> The article reports that Apple was considering appointing an internal ombuds, following other high-tech companies, to provide a neutral channel for employee concerns. It frames ombuds offices as one way to improve corporate image, address internal problems early, and signal responsiveness to employees—implicitly positioning the ombuds role as a value-adding mechanism for both reputation and internal climate.

Howard, C. L., & Gulluni, M. A. (1996). *The ombuds confidentiality privilege: Theory and mechanics*. Dallas, TX: The Ombudsman Association (TOA).

Zinsser, J. W. (1995). *The perceived value of considered approaches to internal conflict in business organizations* (Master’s thesis, Antioch University). This thesis measured perceptions of value in three organizations in both quantitative and qualitative terms. One detailed and major research finding was “that if a program is not widely understood on the level of intent, procedure and purpose, it will not be perceived as valuable.”

Rowe, M. P. (1993). *Options and choice for conflict resolution in the workplace*. In L. Hall (Ed.), *Negotiation strategies for mutual gain: The basic seminar of the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School* (pp. 105–119). Sage Publications.

This chapter lays out in detail how and why providing *choices* for complainants reduces costs and adds benefits to visitors and the organization. The fact that the practice of an OO rests on offering “choice” to visitors illuminates the value to visitors of having a resource that affirms their autonomy—and thus adds to the trust of constituents in speaking up.

Rowe, M. P., Simon, M. G., & Bensinger, A. (1993). *Ombudsman dilemmas: Confidentiality, neutrality, testifying, record-keeping*. *Journal of Health and Human Resources Administration*, 15(3), 329–340. This article examines core dilemmas that define the ombuds role, arguing that strict confidentiality, independence, and limited record-keeping are essential to perceived legitimacy and thus to the office’s

value. Through case-based discussion, the authors show how protecting confidentiality and avoiding managerial roles preserve trust and encourage early, candid reporting of concerns—key mechanisms by which ombuds contribute to organizational health.

Rowe, M. P. (1991). The ombudsman's role in a dispute resolution system. *Negotiation Journal*, 7(4), 353–361. Rowe positions the ombudsman as one vital element in an integrated internal dispute resolution system. The article describes functions such as confidential consultation, option generation, and systems feedback loops. It argues that *multiple, coordinated* channels—including an ombuds office—are necessary for a robust conflict management system.

Perneski, T., & Rowe, M. (1990). Cost-effectiveness of ombudsman offices. *Ombudsman News* (Newsletter of the Corporate Ombudsman Association), Spring. Presents a formality-avoidance model: estimate the average cost of grievances, investigations, lawsuits, and settlements, then multiply by the number of cases that ombuds helped resolve without those formal processes. The article includes examples where avoided formal cases produced very substantial savings.

Ziegenfuss, J. T., Jr., Rowe, M. P., & Munzenrider, R. F. (1993). Corporate ombudsmen: Functions, caseloads, approaches and outcomes. *Journal of Health and Human Resources Administration*, 15(3), 261–280. Includes results of a 1989 survey of 55 corporate ombudsmen.

Rowe, M. P., Ziegenfuss, J. T., Jr., Perneski, A. J., Hall, G., & Lux, M. (1993). Perspectives on costs and cost effectiveness of ombudsman programs in four fields. *Journal of Health and Human Resources Administration*, 15(3), 281–312. These articles include analyses of five types of ombudsman offices, offering early cross-field cost-effectiveness reasoning.

Robbins, L. P., & Deane, W. B. (1986). The corporate ombuds: A new approach to conflict management. *Negotiation Journal*, 2(2), 195–205. This early article introduces the corporate ombuds as a mechanism for addressing employee concerns within large organizations. It outlines how the role can improve communication, trust, and early resolution of problems. The authors discuss structural features needed to ensure independence, neutrality, and accessibility for employees

Rowe, M. P. (1984). The non-union complaint system at MIT: An upward-feedback mediation model. *Alternatives to the High Cost of Litigation*, 2(4), 10–18. Cited in later work as early evidence that ombuds as part of system reduced complaints and litigation compared with peer grievance channels, forming the empirical foundation for later cost-savings models.

Some Articles Discussing Ombuds Methods and Tools that Add Value

Talking circles, OO outreach, non-voting participation in a weekly, middle-level leadership meeting to add value

Fleury, J. (2024). The center will hold: An overview of circle processes and their application to organizational ombuds practice. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 17(1), 1–24. This article differentiates several circle models (e.g., talking circles, restorative justice circles, reintegration circles) and explains how ombuds can structure them through opening/closing rituals, shared guidelines, and use of a talking piece to support dialogue, healing, and organizational change.

Keys to Opening and Maintaining an Ombuds Office Presented by Ronnie Thomson and Reese Ramos International Ombuds Association Annual Conference April 2023, 50 Outreach and Marketing Ideas when Launching and Maintaining an Ombuds Program.

Burton, S. L. (2017). Ombudsing in the new era. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 10(1), 1–11. Burton discusses when an ombuds might convene or help design restorative or reconciling circles in response to social and political polarization, describing circles of trust and similar processes as tools for re-examining systems and rebuilding community.

Rowe, M. (2013) “[Portia: It is Not a ‘Crisis Committee,’ But One Might Want a ‘Portia’ Anyway.](#)” *Journal of the California Caucus of College and University Ombuds* Vol. 10, Issue 1: 22-27. This article discusses attendance at an informal, regularly-meeting meeting of senior officers in a university. Here the ombuds is not a facilitator. There are no votes, no minutes. The meetings are explicitly off the record for the purposes of communication, building trust, brainstorming and discernment about the issues brought ad hoc by each person who comes—and contributing each week to review of relevant organizational systems.

Restorative justice in ombuds work to add value

Smith, R. (2022, October 12). Centering ourselves in community: Is it time for ombuds to embrace restorative approaches to our work? *International Ombuds Association Blog*. Argues that restorative practices can inform ombuds orientation and suggests that some ombuds may appropriately facilitate circle processes, provided they have training and stay within their office scope.
https://www.ombudsassociation.org/index.php?option=com_dailyplanetblog&view=entry&id=71

Lahatte, C. (2011). Restorative justice in the ombuds office. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 4(1), 33–40. This piece presents a concrete example of a restorative circle used in an ombuds context, detailing preparatory one-on-one meetings, the structure of the circle itself, and follow-up steps as a repeatable tool for addressing harm while preserving neutrality and voluntariness.

Active listening and diagnostic inquiry to add value

Moore, K. (2016). Reframing conflict: Applying Bolman and Deal’s four-frame model in ombuds practice. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 9(1), 7–22. Moore describes how ombuds use active listening, elicitive questions, and reflective reframing as practical tools to surface parties’ psychological and substantive interests, showing stepwise how these micro-skills help visitors see additional options and re-interpret their situations.

Journal of the International Ombudsman Association. (2014). Tales from the front line of ombuds work. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 7(2), 1–52. The narratives in this special issue repeatedly highlight active listening, empathic presence, and careful summarizing as core tools that enable visitors to calm, clarify issues, and generate their own solutions, illustrating technique through case vignettes.

Collaborative problem solving and conflict tools to add value

Moore, K. (2016). Reframing conflict: Applying Bolman and Deal’s four-frame model in ombuds practice. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 9(1), 7–22. In addition to reframing, Moore treats the four frames as a collaborative problem-solving tool, walking through how ombuds guide visitors to look at structural, human-resource, political, and symbolic dimensions of a conflict to unlock new, jointly workable options.

Adam Barak Kleinberger (2012) *Improvisation, Intuition and Spontaneity: A New Approach for the Ombuds Trainer*, *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*
https://ioa.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/JIOA_Articles/JIOA_Vol5_Issue_2.pdf#page=45 The author builds on his extensive work in improvisation and clowning to work on ADR skills like listening.

Rowe, M. (2009) "An Organizational Ombuds Office In a System for Dealing with Conflict and Learning from Conflict, or 'Conflict Management System.'" *Harvard Negotiation Law Review* 14 279-288. Rowe outlines a "multi-option" conflict management system and shows how ombuds use collaborative problem solving—joint meetings, option-generation, and interest-based reframing—to help parties and managers design tailored solutions while maintaining access to formal channels.

Team science, collaboration planning, and ombuds tools to add value therein

National Institutes of Health Office of the Ombudsman. (n.d.). Collaboration planning questions for research teams. In Northwestern University, *Team science: Module 1 resources*. This resource distills a set of concrete questions—about authorship, data management, decision-making, and conflict resolution—that ombuds use as tools for proactive collaboration planning in research teams, helping prevent disputes in team science projects.

Peters, J. R., & colleagues. (2023). Team science: A syllabus for success on big projects. *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science*, 7, e123. The article describes a team-science course that incorporates bystander-intervention, structured communication, and explicit introduction to a project ombuds as practical tools to manage conflict and support large interdisciplinary collaborations.

Bennett, L. M., & Gadlin, H. (2012). Collaboration and team science: From theory to practice. *Journal of Investigative Medicine*, 60(5), 768–775. The article synthesizes theory and practice to describe concrete behaviors, communication norms, and trust-building strategies that support team science, many of which map directly onto ombuds tools such as early norm-setting conversations, feedback coaching, and mediated team meetings.

Bennett, L. M., & Gadlin, H. (2011, August). *Leading in the era of team science and collaboration* [Conference presentation]. Education Leadership Conference, American Psychological Association. This piece emphasizes leader practices—open communication about power and credit, explicit conflict-management plans, and regular check-ins—that ombuds can introduce or reinforce when coaching scientific leaders or helping design collaboration agreements.

Bennett, L. M., Gadlin, H., & Levine-Finley, S. (2010). *Collaboration and team science: A field guide*. National Institutes of Health. This guide offers highly practical tools—such as structured conversations about expectations, authorship, data sharing, decision rules, and conflict management—that ombuds regularly adapt when coaching research teams and PIs on collaboration planning and repair.

Case-handling methods and practice questions to add value

Brant, Tracey (2026). When Loss Matters Enough for Ombuds to Name: Introducing the Loss Recognition Threshold™, *IOA Blog*, Tools and Resources for Ombuds, in Ombuds Practices Brant tells a story and includes some questions OOs might ask themselves, "What Naming Loss Is and What it Isn't" and "When to Choose Restraint." It concludes with discussing "A Practice of Noticing."

Rowe, M. P. (2025). "An Unusual Harassment Training That Was Warmly Received—and, as well, Inspired Bystanders—an Organizational Ombuds Story." *Journal of the International Ombuds Association*, 16(2), 1–10. [Special issue on the work of Mary Rowe]. This essay describes a specific harassment-training design that uses realistic stories, anonymized examples, and open discussion to help participants explore options and concerns safely. *It emphasizes that when managers and faculty are*

trained in respectful complaint-handling—listening well, avoiding any perception of retaliation, and knowing how to refer concerns appropriately—they are more likely to be trusted and to act as effective bystanders in their own settings.

Anderson, M., & Toor, S. (2022). Employing Ambivalent Sexism Theory as a lens to make sense of sexual harassment narratives. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 15(1), 1–12. Using Ambivalent Sexism Theory as an analytic tool, this article extracts patterns from the sexual-harassment narratives (e.g., benevolent vs. hostile sexism) and concludes with implications and cautions for ombuds' practice when assessing cases and advising visitors.

Hill, C., & JIOA Editorial Team. (2021). Ombuds work on sexual harassment cases: The power of our stories (Special issue introduction). *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 14(1), 1–9. The introduction frames the special issue as a set of practice “stories” and poses method-focused questions—how ombuds help hesitant reporters, support bystanders, assist alleged perpetrators, and respond when policies are inadequate—which are intended as prompts for developing concrete methods and decision tools.

Anonymous authors. (2021). [Twelve narratives on ombuds responses to sexual harassment] (Special issue on sexual harassment and discrimination, Part One). *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 14(1), 10–90. Each anonymous narrative details specific ombuds methods, including confidential options, coaching, safety planning, accompaniment to formal offices, pattern-spotting and upward feedback, and strategies for addressing retaliation concerns.

Rowe, M. (2010) The Several Purposes of the Crystal Ball, *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, (https://dspace.mit.edu/bitstream/handle/1721.1/156707/Rowe_2010_JN_Crystal-Ball.pdf?sequence=1). This article focused on ombuds adding value to visitors and the organization by picking up new issues and new patterns early. It included a list of tiny case examples.

Articles on OO's more generally inventing/adapting/using tools and methods to add value

Rusanov, M. (2025). The AI-powered ombudsman: A boon or a curse? *Alternative Dispute Resolution Journal*, 4(2), 101–130. Rusanov explores possible AI-supported intake, pattern detection, and documentation tools, and outlines safeguards and new competencies ombuds would need.

Rowe, M. 2025. *Teaching Cases and Teaching Notes*. <https://mitmgmtfaculty.mit.edu/mrowe/ombuds-case-material-stories-and-teaching-notes/> This collection includes teaching cases that include an explicit “recipe” of ideas the OO might wish to consider in complex cases.

Rowe, M. (2024, August). *Options to consider when complainants and bystanders are fearful: A toolkit for complaint handlers, hesitant complainants, and hesitant bystanders* [Teaching note]. MIT Sloan School of Management. <https://mitsloan-php.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-faculty/sites/84/2024/08/30220918/Rowe-Options-to-Consider-When-Complainants-and-Bystanders-Fearful-8-2024.pdf> Ten papers and cases discuss different ways that ombuds can help constituents who might otherwise never speak up about serious issues and good ideas. Includes “Drafting a Letter” and “Generic Options.”

Yamagata-Lynch, L. C. (2024). Striving to effectively communicate ombuds value: Lessons learned by an ombuds working with data. *Journal of the International Ombuds Association*, 17(1), 22–34. The article shows how an ombuds designs and iteratively refines coding, dashboards, and visualizations to improve systemic reporting and self-evaluation—without using any visitor identifiers.

“Helping Hesitant Bystanders Identify Their Options: A Checklist with Examples and Ideas to Consider.” Rowe, Mary. *Journal of the International Ombuds Association*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Mary Rowe special issue, 2023-2024). This article has an elaborate and detailed check list for Ombuds and for bystanders themselves.

Patrick, M. N. (2023). The visitor experience and standards alignment audit: A framework for ombuds programs. *Journal of the International Ombuds Association*, 16(1), 1–20.

Patrick introduces a structured self-assessment “audit” tool that ombuds can use to analyze visitor touchpoints, identify pain points, and check alignment with IOA standards, thereby improving both practice and program design.

Reimers, B., & Johnson, A. (2023). Photovoice: Expanding the modern ombuds’ toolkit to provide impactful feedback about systemic challenges. *Journal of the International Ombuds Association*, 16(1), 1–23. The authors adapt photovoice, a participatory image-and-dialogue method, so ombuds can co-create visual narratives with constituents and leaders about systemic issues.

Rule, C., & Sen, I. (2015). Online dispute resolution and ombuds: Bringing technology to the table. In M. S. Abdel Wahab, E. Katsh, & D. Rainey (Eds.), *Online dispute resolution: Theory and practice* (pp. 305–320). Eleven International Publishing. This chapter describes how ombuds can expand their toolbox by using ODR platforms, video, and online case-management systems while preserving core ombuds principles.

Zimmerman, S., Sloane, P. D., & Evans, L. (2015). Utilizing online tools to increase volunteer ombudsmen presence in long-term care facilities. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 34(8), 1047–1065. This study examines web-based training and communication tools used by long-term-care ombuds programs to extend reach and responsiveness.

Rainey, D., & Fowlie, F. (2015). Leveraging technology in the ombudsman field: Current practice and future possibilities. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 8(1), 8–21. Rainey and Fowlie survey technology uses in ombuds offices and suggest concrete ways ombuds can invent or adapt tools such as secure online intake, databases, and analytics.

Patrick, M. (2012). *An exploratory study of ombuds as agents of change* (Doctoral dissertation). Nova Southeastern University. Patrick analyzes how ombuds develop and customize interventions, relationships, and communication tools as part of their evolution into effective change agents.

Patrick, M. (2011). A day in the life of an organizational ombudsman. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 4(1), 7–12. Patrick’s narrative illustrates specific techniques and micro-tools (framing, option-generation, communication coaching) used across a typical day and reflects on how ombuds can continuously refine these skills.

“Helping People Help Themselves: An ADR Option for Complaint Handlers.” Rowe, Mary P. *Negotiation Journal* Vol. 6, No. 3 (July 1990): 239-248. (This article was written for complaint-handlers before current laws, but it includes a review of many points relevant for complainants who are interested in helping themselves, and for complaint-handlers who support them.)

Ombuds having or needing special skills (to enhance value)

Gallaudet University. (2025, April 1). *Office of the Ombuds expands: Navigating conflict resolution through a diverse cultural lens*. University Communications. <https://gallaudet.edu/university-communications/office-of-the-ombuds-expands-navigating-conflict-resolution-through-a-diverse-cultural-lens>

Brill-Cass, I. (2024). “Ombudsing with Neurodiversity in Mind,” *Journal of the International Ombuds Association* (JIOA), Volume 17, Issue 2. This article focuses on how organizational ombuds can better support neurodivergent constituents and discusses practical adaptations in intake, communication, and process.

Virginia Department of Corrections & Joint Commission on Health Care. (2021). *RD787: Department of Corrections ombuds study* [Report]. Commonwealth of Virginia. <https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2021/RD787> States that “success metrics supporting the efficacy of other ombuds offices were not determined” and reports other ombuds officials’ frustration at defining what “success” looks like, highlighting the evaluation gap. Questions “the effectiveness of the current grievance process” and examines whether a DOC ombuds office would improve complaint resolution and system accountability, directly tying the proposal to improved outcomes.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services & Integrated Care Resource Center. (2013). *State approaches to developing and operating ombudsman programs for beneficiaries in integrated care models*. Describes ombudsman programs as an “early warning system” that identifies recurring issues and system failures, and discusses tracking and trending of cases as a way to inform plan and state oversight—an implicit evaluation/value frame based on systemic impact rather than only case counts. <https://www.integratedcareresourcecenter.com/sites/default/files/Ombudsman%20Programs%20brief.pdf>

Utah Department of Health and Human Services. (2025, January 27). *Language access* (Office of Ombuds). Utah DHHS. <https://dhhs.utah.gov/office-of-ombuds/language-access/>

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2020, October 12). *Language Access Workgroup report: Recommendations to improve language access for public school students and families* [PDF]. (References the Office of Education Ombuds as a resource for language-access guidance for limited-English-proficient parents.) https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/WAOSPI/2020/10/16/file_attachments/1572677/Language%20Access%20Workgroup%20Final%20Report.pdf

Rowe, M. P., & Bloch, J. (2012). *The solo organizational ombudsman*. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 5(2), 7–31. This article notes that solo ombuds often “without really noticing it” become specialists in certain kinds of cases, explicitly including disability cases and intellectual property problems, as well as “high-maintenance super-star” and very complex multi-issue cases.

Training, supervising and mentoring OOs to be more effective and of more value

Supervision and support models

Wright, F., & Miller, D. (2019). An initial enquiry towards a model of supervision and support for organisational ombuds. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 12(1). The article proposes a structured model of supervision and support (including mentoring, case consultation, peer supervision, and reflective practice) with specific examples.

Chavez Rudolph, M., & Connell, M. (2012). Mentoring program: Integral component of IOA’s learning community. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 5(2), 23–32. The authors describe the design, matching process, expectations, and lessons learned from IOA’s formal mentoring program, positioning structured mentoring as a core method for developing and sustaining competent ombuds practitioners.

Training content and gaps

Coalition of Federal Ombuds. (2020–2025). *COFO annual conferences and regional events* [Conference programs and calls]. Coalition of Federal Ombuds. COFO conference announcements and agendas repeatedly frame the coalition as a forum for “skills development” and “sharing best practices,” and sessions often include informal mentoring, but these are event materials rather than standalone articles.

Coalition of Federal Ombuds. (n.d.). *COFO mentoring program* [Program description]. Coalition of Federal Ombuds. The mentoring details quoted in Wright & Miller (meeting frequency and duration, mentor qualifications) come from COFO's program description, which functions as a practice guide rather than a peer-reviewed article.

International Ombudsman Association. (n.d.). Ombuds training opportunities. International Ombudsman Association. This resource outlines the progression of IOA courses (e.g., Foundations, core skills, advanced topics) and maps how new and experienced ombuds can plan ongoing training to build competence.

International Ombudsman Association. (2025). The IOA Leadership Academy. International Ombudsman Association. The Leadership Academy description specifies learning objectives and skills for experienced ombuds who are developing as leaders, underscoring the need for advanced training in leadership, strategy, and organizational influence.

International Ombudsman Association. (n.d.). IOA mentoring program. International Ombudsman Association. The program page details eligibility, expectations, and processes for pairing new and experienced ombuds, emphasizing mentoring as a key support for ethical judgment, boundary issues, and complex casework.

Blair, C. (2017). Reimagining the role of the organizational ombuds. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 10(1), 6–18. Blair reflects on teaching IOA's Foundations course, arguing that ombuds training should devote more attention to "how" to practice (skills, techniques, and judgment) rather than only what ombuds may or may not do, and suggests concrete curricular shifts.

Some Case Studies by Ombuds (likely very incomplete)

Rowe, M. P. (2025). Ombuds case material, stories, teaching cases, and teaching notes. In *Research & publications* (MIT personal faculty site). <https://mitmgmtfaculty.mit.edu/mrowe/ombuds-case-material-stories-and-teaching-notes/> This curated collection gathers multiple, ombuds-authored, true stories, teaching cases, and articles that incorporate de-identified, disguised ombuds case material to show the value of organizational ombuds.

Rowe, Mary, 2023 "Becoming an Ombuds at MIT." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* Vol. 40, Issue 4, 497-504. This article, written from Rowe's ombuds experience, functions as a narrative case history of building and practicing the ombuds role at MIT. It repeats the MIT President's instructions to the ombuds to pick up new issues and good ideas, as well as problems, and to support a systems approach to adding value to MIT. It describes an explicit prescription of office instructions (that are now the IOA Standards of Practice) to develop an effective safe place for constituents to talk about work related concerns.

Howard, C. L. (2022). *A practical guide to organizational ombuds: How they help people and organizations*. Chicago, IL: American Bar Association. Includes a major section with numerous annotated case stories.

Adams, S., & Rasch, R. (2020). Sexual harassment, consensual relationships, and the ombuds: Ethical tensions and practice dilemmas. *Journal of the International Ombuds Association*, 13(2), 35–58. Uses detailed composite cases drawn from ombuds experience to explore complex harassment and relationship situations

Katz, M., Sosa, S., & Kovack, K. (2018). Ombuds and conflict resolution specialists: Navigating workplace conflict in higher education. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 11(1), 1–27. Includes data on cases involving workplace bullying among student–faculty and staff relationships.

Brubaker, R. W. (2015). *There's an ombuds for that: Ombuds' experiences with visitors in cases involving discrimination* (Doctoral dissertation). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. This study explores university ombuds' experiences with discrimination-related cases through qualitative, case-style narratives based on visitor interactions.

Bennett, D. M. (2014). *Roles and functions of organizational ombuds officers in the United States* (Master's thesis, University of Denver). Includes qualitative case-style profiles of several large organizations' ombuds offices and how they handle cases.

Keashly, L. (2010). A researcher speaks to ombudsmen about workplace bullying. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 3(2), 3–25.

Sebok, T., & Chavez Rudolph, M. (2010). Cases involving allegations of workplace bullying: Threats to ombuds neutrality and other challenges in adding value. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, 3(2), 24–39.

Serious Limitations of the OO Value/Effectiveness Bibliography

2026 Mary Rowe

Serious limitations of AI in searching. Multiple errors turn up frequently, especially with respect to authorship and the titles of various entries. This bibliography required many dozens of search questions and dozens of corrections. (Sometimes the same error came back before being corrected.) *As with all AI work, please verify yourself the accuracy of any entry that is useful to you.*

The following ideas were supplied in 2026, by AI, about difficulties in finding value and effectiveness articles:

No single master index exists. There is no authoritative, up-to-date master bibliography of all ombuds value/effectiveness works (Journal of the International Ombuds Association (JIOA) + other journals + books + International Ombudsman Institute (IOI)/UN/federal reports + grey literature) that can simply be imported; each item is found piece-by-piece across scattered sites and PDFs.

Severely limited full-text searching. Many relevant PDFs (especially older JIOA volumes, IOI papers, UN/GAO reports, newsletters) are only partially indexed or behind PDF links that require manual full-text searching to catch phrases like “assessing value,” “assessing effectiveness,” or “measuring value.”

Grey literature, untapped and local documents. A significant share of “value” discussion lives in conference handouts, slide decks, internal reports, and working papers (e.g., IOI sessions, ICANN workshops, federal and international agency evaluations) that are not systematically catalogued as publications, so they are hard to guarantee in an “all works” list. Major sources such as non-English publications, annual reports, conference papers, teaching papers, and all other conflict-related journals remain to be searched.

Ongoing publication. New ombuds-value pieces continue to appear (e.g., in the 2025 IOA book, recent JIOA volumes, and new UN/IOI guidance), so any list is a snapshot rather than a final, closed canon.

In sum: Research is sharply constrained by failure to publish in easily searchable ways. The list you have now is intentionally curated around the most obvious and most cited value/effectiveness pieces;

to approach completeness, to do this well, someone must download all JIOA issues, major IOI/UN/GAO/ACUS materials, all the key books about ombuds, then run systematic full-text and reference-list searches—AND maintain a living database.

AI may offer responses that are insufficient, inaccurate or offensive.

Note: This draft bibliography is part of a Resource Repository designed to support identifying—and helping to quantify—the value of an **Organizational Ombuds (OO)**. This **Resource Repository** is a **work in progress**. It is open to improvements, additions, deletions, critique, revision and random commentary. If any page in the repository is helpful, or needs revision, please let us know. Please contact Mary Rowe or other co-authors, if you can help to improve these pages or have another page to offer.