



## IOA ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

### PREAMBLE

The International Ombudsman Association is dedicated to excellence in organizational ombudsman work. These Ethical Principles provide general guidance for organizational ombudsman practice. They are the foundation for the IOA Standards of Practice.

These Ethical Principles reflect a commitment to promote ethical conduct in the performance of the role and to maintain the integrity of the ombudsman profession.

The organizational ombudsman shall be truthful and act with integrity, shall foster fairness, equity, and respect for all members of the organization, and shall promote procedural fairness in the content and administration of the organization's practices, processes, and policies.

### ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

#### INDEPENDENCE

The Ombudsman is established to operate independently in appearance, purpose, administration, and decision-making. The Ombudsman reports to the highest level possible within the organization and should not hold any other position or report to a function or entity that could affect or be perceived as affecting the Ombudsman's independence.

#### IMPARTIALITY

The Ombudsman, as a designated neutral, remains impartial and strives for fairly and equitably administered processes. The Ombudsman does not engage in any situation which could create a conflict of interest or which could be perceived as creating a conflict of interest.

#### INFORMALITY

The Ombudsman functions informally as an off-the-record resource and not a formal reporting channel for the organization, except when mandated by law.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

To the maximum extent permitted by law, the Ombudsman holds the identity of visitors and all communications with those seeking assistance as confidential information and takes reasonable steps to preserve the confidentiality of such information. The Ombudsman may disclose confidential information on a limited basis, and only to the extent necessary and in the Ombudsman's sole discretion, when the Ombudsman is given permission to do so or when failure to do so might result in an imminent risk of serious harm. These principles shall be included in the Ombudsman's charter, terms of reference, or detailed program description.