

Procedures for Appointing Ombudsmen

1. Finding a qualified Ombudsman is critical to the success of the ombudsman program. Commands shall make every effort to recruit a volunteer that provides a good match between the skills and interests of the volunteer and the priorities of the command. These recruitment efforts will pay off in the quality of tasks performed and the Ombudsman level of satisfaction with the position.
2. Recruitment. Commanding officers may advertise at housing, through command or other newsletters, a letter to the command, website, job announcement or other methods. Whatever the method or combination of methods used to advertise the position, the desired qualities of the Ombudsman candidate should be included in the advertisement. Additionally, it is important to state the potential duties, eligibility criteria, contact information to obtain information about the position, training and travel requirements, application deadline, how to obtain an application to volunteer as a Coast Guard Ombudsman, and reference requirements. Advertisements for the Ombudsman program shall include: immediately report all allegations, suspicions and substantiated incidents of family violence; not serve as a professional counselor; provide information to families on the variety of services and benefits available; use local command and Coast Guard Work-Life Services as the first priority in their referral process; compile information on assistance agencies; compile information on requests from families concerns that address the total command; report identified issues to the command; attend annual training for updates to this program; provide leadership and advocacy for the ombudsman program and specific concerns; promote interagency cooperation and information sharing; ensure confidentiality of information given by family members is maintained and provided only to command personnel on a need-to-know basis and; compile demographic information for program reporting.
  - a. Selection. Matching the right ombudsman volunteer will be an important part of the success of the program. Making the match involves using a series of screening techniques that will allow the command and the potential Ombudsman volunteer to get to know each other and decide whether and how to best work together professionally. Commanding officers appointing Ombudsman shall use the following screening tools: application, central registry check, references, and interview.
  - b. Application. Prospective Ombudsman shall complete an application to volunteer as a Coast Guard Ombudsman. Commanding officers will need to decide after reviewing the application whether to continue with the screening process.
  - c. Central registry checks. Prospective Ombudsman shall be informed that the information on the first page of the application will be used for central registry verification. Potential Ombudsman with a family violence history shall not be appointed as a command ombudsman unless cleared by the servicing family advocacy specialist. Commanding officers shall submit the request though their assigned family advocacy specialist. Ombudsman may not be appointed before notification that the screen has been completed with results.

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- (d) References. Commanding officers shall conduct a personal or professional reference check. Commanding officers are to conduct reference checks from local commands of prospective Ombudsman who list previous experience as an Ombudsman. Reference verification shall include written documentation on the reference verification sheet.
- e. Interview. Commanding officers shall have a face-to-face interview with potential Ombudsman. This will give the commanding officer and the volunteer a chance to meet and discuss in detail the command's mission, vision, and goals, as well as the volunteer's interests, motivations, and concerns. It may be appropriate for the ombudsman volunteer to be interviewed by more than one person on the leadership team. A scripted list of questions based, in part, on information provided on the application or from the application itself. Additional guidance regarding questions for a better interview may be found at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cgpc/cpm/supvguid/spvyqfbi.htm> in the Coast Guard supervisory interview guide. The same formalities used to hire civilian employees shall be used to hire volunteer Ombudsmen. A fair, equal system of selecting staff shall be applied as the Coast Guard is in full view with the selection of volunteer positions. The interview is part of the selection process, and is subject to validation. Interview objectives must always be position related and well documented throughout the process. Commanding officers must ask all candidates the same job related questions and document all interviews.
4. The application, family advocacy check, reference checks and the interview should elicit enough information to determine whether the prospective Ombudsman is appropriate for the command position and, if so, how they may best serve the command. When commanding officers determine the need to appoint an Ombudsman it shall be documented in writing and reported to the Integrated Support Command Ombudsman supervisor. The appointment may create the position of a command Ombudsman, co-Ombudsman for the command or a lead command Ombudsman for local commands. In general, program management positions for the Ombudsman program shall be made by the Ombudsman program supervisor located at the Integrated Support Command (ISC). Commanding officers determining the need for the appointment of additional personnel other than a command Ombudsman, co-Ombudsman, or lead command Ombudsman should coordinate need with the ISC Ombudsmen supervisor. The Ombudsman program supervisor shall have the responsibility of appointing Ombudsman program management positions of lead Ombudsman coordinator, Ombudsman coordinator, or co-Ombudsman coordinators. Commandant (CG-1112) shall have the responsibility of coordinating the appointment of the ombudsman-at-large by the commandant and has the responsibility to appoint ombudsman trainers and program management ombudsman positions throughout the Coast Guard. Active duty or reserve members appointed to serve in ombudsman management positions without an appointed command Ombudsman shall actively market the ombudsman program and support the commanding officer in finding and selecting a command Ombudsman to represent the command. Active duty or active reserve members may not be appointed as command Ombudsman however may assist with program management. Auxiliary members may be appointed to serve as a

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command Ombudsman or in Ombudsman program management positions.

5. Appointment letter. Commanding officers shall provide an appointment letter in the selection of a command Ombudsman. It is recommended the first letter is for an initial appointment to give the commanding officer and the potential Ombudsman the opportunity to decide if they would like to continue with the program. The commanding officer has the authority to terminate services of the ombudsman program at any time it's determined by the commanding officers the services are no longer needed for the command. Commanding officers who determine the need to terminate or not establish an ombudsman program shall serve as the family programs representatives. The appointment letter shall include the following information: the ombudsman will be an official member of the command staff and have direct access to the commanding officer or the executive officer in the performance of their duties; the name of the ombudsman program supervisor at the servicing ISC Work-Life Staff; the requirement of the ombudsman to attend training; information obtained by the ombudsman shall not be disclosed other than to those command personnel who have a need to know in the performance of their official duties; family violence must be reported in writing to the Family Advocacy Program Specialist at the Work-Life Staff serving this geographic area and follow guidance in COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1750.7, Family Advocacy Program; the name and contact number for the Family Advocacy Program Specialist; a statement that ombudsman services are considered free and donated; however, they will be entitled to reimbursement for child care, telephone toll calls and local travel in the performance of your duties, if approved in advance by the commanding officer; the ombudsman is protected under Federal Law for liability and work related injury when serving as a ombudsman and performing duties as define in the policy provided in COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1750.4C, Ombudsman; a statement that authorized administrative support from this command for the program; time frame the beginning and ending date, it's recommended to provide an initial appointment or probationary period with the option of both parties to renew or not; and the process to discuss a permanent appointment unless terminated sooner by the ombudsman terminating services or by the command terminating services; a statement of thanks for volunteering for the program; and contact information for the commanding officer. The appointment letter shall have a signature block for the commanding officer, along with the commanding officer's signature and date. Commanding officers shall forward a copy of the appointment letter to the Ombudsman program supervisor, place a copy in the administrative file, and give the original of the letter to the ombudsman. After the appointment letter has been completed schedule an appointment with the potential ombudsman to issues the appointment letter and to complete the initial command briefing.
6. Initial command briefing. To ensure standardization and equity throughout the program a command briefing shall be given to each command ombudsman appointed. A facilitated discussion given by the commanding officer focused on educating the ombudsman about the command, their assigned duties, procedures to document their service hours, policies and procedures for obtaining reimbursement of incidental expenses and other relevant matters. This briefing does not duplicate ombudsman basic training but serve in a capacity to present an overview of the local command and provide the views of the commanding officer on the program. The intent of the briefing

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is to cover a wide range of subjects that are integrated to prepare the ombudsman to begin work for the command immediately. The briefing has been intentionally developed with the flexibility that each local command can input their specific goals for the program; however specific guidance is given to ensure standard program content is covered with each ombudsman throughout the Coast Guard. Commanding officers shall attach a copy of the completed initial command briefing, along with the appointment letter and forward to the intergrated support command ombudsman supervisor so the ombudsman can be officially processed and placed on the intergrated support command master roster.

7. Administrative files. Commanding officers following guidance of these procedures shall complete the appointing process using the initial command briefing checklist and the administrative file checklist; this will create a number of documents to be filed in an administrative file and maintained by the commanding officer as long as the ombudsman is assigned to the program. These procedures include the enclosures of the following documents: application to volunteer as a Coast Guard Ombudsman, ombudsman reference verification sheet, volunteer agreement, ombudsman initial command briefing checklist, ombudsman administrative file checklist, ombudsman service hours.