



# United States Ombudsman Association

## 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference

### Session Schedule and Descriptions

*(Please note this schedule may change.)*

#### Monday, November 18, 2024

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Full-Day Training

#### **New Ombudsman Training**

**Session Description:** This is a two-day, renowned training workshop for public sector ombudsmen and their staff new to the field. The faculty is made up of seasoned experts and fellow members of USOA. This training will take attendees through each stage of a dispute process and provide some of the tools necessary to better handle a variety of issues faced by ombudsman offices.

**Session Instructor(s):** New Ombudsman Training is taught by a number of professionals who are currently working within the ombudsman profession and members of USOA.

Full-Day Training

#### **Leadership Excellence: A One-day Intensive for Ombudsmen**

**Session Description:** This is a one-day workshop taught by Kristen Mahlin, MPA. The training will provide attendees with methods for developing effective leadership within your organization. Kristen has worked extensively with the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman Office. That work, and part of this class, will focus on providing tools about how to effectively manage and supervise staff to support agency growth and staff development.

**Session Instructor(s):** Kristen Mahlin, MPA

#### Tuesday, November 19, 2024

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Full-Day Training

#### **New Ombudsman Training**

**Session Description:** This is a two-day, renowned training workshop for public sector ombudsmen and their staff new to the field. The faculty is made up of seasoned experts and fellow members of USOA. This training will take attendees through each stage of a dispute process and provide some of the tools necessary to better handle a variety of issues faced by ombudsman offices.

**Session Instructor(s):** New Ombudsman Training is taught by a number of professionals who are currently working within the ombudsman profession and members of USOA.

Full-Day Training

#### **Integrating Equity into Ombudsman Practices**

**Session Description:** This one-day intensive training will provide attendees with real-time tools for integrating equity into their agencies. This includes approaching the following through an equity lens: recruitment and hiring practices, strategic planning for programs and organizations, management and messaging.

**Session Instructor(s):** Doris Tolliver, JD, MA

Half-Day Training

### **The Art of Communication: A Deep Dive into Workstyles and Team Dynamics**

**Session Description:** This half-day immersive workshop will be taught by Kristen Mahlin, MPA. The interactive workshop is designed to equip participants with skills needed to navigate and optimize communication across varied workstyles within any team, group or one-on-one setting. This workshop offers a deep dive into understanding, recognizing, and effectively adapting to the four common communication styles generally used in today's multifaceted work environments. Participants will learn through a blended teaching approach that includes expert presentation of information and real-life examples, practical application exercises, and group interactions aimed at fostering an understanding of how to harness the power of communication to build resilient, high-performing teams.

**Session Instructor(s):** Kristen Mahlin, MPA

Half-Day Training

### **USOA Chapter Pre-Conference**

**Session Description:** The USOA Children and Families Chapter AND the USOA Public Safety Chapter will be hosting individual pre-conference sessions. Each chapter will design a unique agenda based on the chapter's subject area and expertise.

**Session Instructor(s):** Not Applicable

## **Wednesday, November 20, 2024**

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### **MORNING SESSIONS**

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**Conference Opening and Keynote Address**

**Plenary Session 1** | Open Café Style Discussions about Critical & Emerging Issues

### **BLOCK ONE AFTERNOON SESSIONS**

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*Participants will attend one of the following breakout sessions.*

#### **A) Tailoring HR Strategies for Small, Growing Agencies**

**Session Description:** As small agencies navigate the complexities and challenges of growth, the role of human resources (HR) becomes increasingly critical to their success. This session aims to provide attendees with the tools, insights, and strategies needed to develop and implement HR practices that support growth, foster a positive workplace culture, and ensure a structure that adheres to compliance with relevant regulations. Participants will learn how to tailor HR strategies to meet the unique needs of their growing agencies.

This session is designed for directors and managers of small, growing agencies who are seeking effective strategies to manage and support their expanding teams.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the critical role of HR in supporting agency growth and development.
- Learn how to develop and implement effective HR strategies that align with business goals.
- Explore the role of HR in building a strong organizational culture.
- Gain insights into building a structure that supports compliance with employment laws and regulations as the agency grows.
- Discover tools and resources available to small agencies for managing HR functions effectively.

**Session Instructor(s):** Kristen Mahlin, MPA

## **B) Infusing Ombudsman Practice with a Race Equity Lens**

**Session Description:** This presentation will explore how to build an equity lens into Ombudsman work. Ombudsman culture requires us to be objective and neutral in our work with citizens. However, the nature of both explicit and implicit bias prevents us from being completely neutral without investing in additional education and practical tools on how to do so. Using a child protection framework, this presentation will explore the ways that systemic racism impact Ombudsman work and what agencies can do to interrupt this cycle. We will explore how to set up an infrastructure with an equity lens that does not require costly resources. The presentation will discuss how to approach hiring, human resources, client contacts and public policy work with an equity lens. This presentation is not a primer on race equity, rather it is designed to give the user practical tips on how to build an informed practice that will serve citizens more equitably.

The presentation will utilize a presentation and break-out groups to give participants the opportunity to explore in a non-threatening environment what they could do to infuse an equity lens into their work.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify the ways that systemic racism may impact their practice;
- Create a race equity strategy for their organizations; and
- Understand concrete examples of how to build equitable organizational practices in areas of hiring, human resources, client contacts and public policy work.

**Session Instructor(s):** Stephanie Villafuerte, Child Protection Ombudsman, Office of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman and Doris Tolliver, JD, MA

## **C) Using the Early Resolution Process to Conduct Outreach, Provide Education and Build Relationships**

**Session Description:** This presentation is designed to share and discuss strategies for reaching successful complaint outcomes and business objectives through early resolution. the focus of the presentation will be on relationship-building. Topics that will be covered will include (not an exhaustive list):

- Using ER to conduct outreach and education to new or unfamiliar authorities;
- Using ER to build positive relationship with new or unfamiliar authorities; and
- Using ER to improve the Ombudsman’s relationship with difficult authorities.

Throughout the presentation, I will share experiences, tips, and strategies that I, and other investigators have used to not only conclude cases at the ER level, but to also use the process to meet other business objectives.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify their own communication barriers;
- Strategize tools to overcome communication barriers;
- Explore options to increase authority engagement in early resolution;
- Collect a variety of tips to overcome relationship challenges during the early resolution; and
- Collect tips for clear and concise communication with new or difficult authorities.

**Session Instructor(s):** Marlee Luhoway, Senior Investigator, Alberta Ombudsman

## **BLOCK TWO AFTERNOON SESSIONS**

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*Participants will attend one of the meetings hosted by the USOA chapters.*

### **USOA Chapter Meetings**

All are welcome. Chapter meetings include training, program updates and information sharing. Specialized chapters are organized within USOA to share experiences, resources and accomplishments. You do not need to be a member to attend. Please join us! Chapters include: Children and Families, Education, Federal Government, Healthcare, Local Government, Public Safety.

**Thursday, November 21, 2024**

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## **BLOCK ONE MORNING SESSION**

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**Plenary Session – Healing Bias: A systematic approach to reducing bias inside us, between us and around us.**

**Session Description:** For so many years, the field of diversity, equity, and inclusion has emphasized increased awareness and understanding of the constantly changing landscape of racism. When the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor sparked the most recent flame of racial consciousness, many of us became more aware of the contemporary manifestations of racism. While awareness is critical, knowing is only half the battle. Instead, we must fan the flames of awareness until they ignite into a world forever changed.

In this talk, Dr. Dana E. Crawford, clinical psychologist and nationally renowned cultural consultant, invites us to reflect on change that is not driven by the need for more awareness but the necessity of action. More specifically, Dr. Crawford will discuss how to use the

Crawford Bias Reduction Theory & Training (CBRT) to systematically reduce bias, prejudice, and racism. The CBRT approach helps participants move from being reactive to the manifestations of bias, prejudice, and racism to being mindful and strategic in responding. This talk will provide participants with concrete bias reduction skills that can be implemented immediately.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Critically evaluate the limitations of solely focusing on awareness-based approaches to combatting racism;
- Apply the CBRT framework to develop mindful and strategic responses to situations involving bias, prejudice, and racism; and
- Identify and implement concrete bias reduction skills from the CBRT approach that can be used immediately in their personal and professional lives.

**Session Instructor(s):** Dr. Dana E. Crawford, Ph.D.

## **BLOCK TWO MORNING SESSIONS**

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*Participants will attend one of the following breakout sessions.*

### **A) LET-UP: A step-by-step approach to preventing and repairing interpersonal cultural ruptures**

**Session Description:** The goal of this training is for participants to have more awareness of their biases and concrete skills to reduce the impact of their biases. The skill building portion training focuses on LET-UP, a systematic approach to responding to bias. LET-UP is acronym for Listen, Empathize, Talk, Unconditional, and Plan. This training helps participants move from being reactive to the manifestations of bias, prejudice, and racism, to being mindful and strategic in responding. Finally, participants will have the opportunity to use the LET-UP approach for a cultural do-over (saying what they wish they would have said) after cultural ruptures. More specifically, this training series participants will have the opportunity to dig deeper into building bias reduction skills.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Identify their own personal biases and how they might influence their thoughts and behaviors;
- Apply the LET-UP framework (Listen, Empathize, Talk, Unconditional, Plan) to respond thoughtfully and strategically to situations involving bias, prejudice, and racism; and
- Evaluate their responses to past cultural ruptures (misunderstandings) by applying the LET-UP framework and develop a "cultural do-over" plan for future interactions.

**Session Instructor(s):** Dr. Dana E. Crawford, Ph.D.

**B) Bolstering the Budget 202: How ombuds offices may utilize their successes – and failures – to build and expand a sustainable budget.**

**Session Description:** When the Office of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) was established as an independent state agency in 2016, the CPO had a total of three employees and an annual budget of approximately \$500,000. Today, the agency operates with an annual budget of \$2.4 million and 15 full-time staff. During the past seven years, the CPO has worked to strategically present the agency’s successes – as well as the agency’s shortcomings – to effectively secure additional funding and staff. To date, the agency has not been denied a request item.

This session will demonstrate how ombuds offices of all shapes, scopes and size may utilize their unique role in government to increase funding and staff. It will provide a “how to guide” for building a years-long strategic plan that utilizes agencies’ struggles as much as, if not more than, their wins to obtain sustainable funding from legislators and parent organizations. This will include an in-depth guide to drafting budget requests with impactful narratives that garner public and media interest. The CPO will use examples from its budget requests and strategic plans to demonstrate effective methods for building out agency budgets that will sustain strong practice and promote the well-being of citizens.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session participants will be able to:

- Create a multi-year strategic plan for budget request submissions and presentations;
- Identify which programing areas and agency needs will help shape effective funding arguments and presentations; and
- Have a “tool kit” of approaches to drafting budget request submissions and how to prepare effective responses for criticisms of budget requests.

**Session Instructor(s):** Stephanie Villafuerte, Child Protection Ombudsman, Office of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman; and Jordan Steffen, Deputy Ombudsman, Office of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman

## **BLOCK ONE AFTERNOON SESSIONS**

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*Participants will attend one of the following breakout sessions.*

**A) Racial Awareness Conversations for Everyone**

**Session Description:** In this transformative workshop, attendees will embark on a meaningful journey towards fostering compassionate and insightful dialogues on race and racism with the aid of the innovative Racial Awareness Conversations for Everyone

(R.A.C.E.) discussion deck. The R.A.C.E. Cards, rooted in the pioneering Crawford Bias Reduction Theory and Training (CBRT) by esteemed clinical psychologist Dr. Dana E. Crawford, serve as a powerful catalyst for deepening understanding and sparking conversation around the critical issues of racism, racial bias, and prejudice.

Designed with meticulous care, the R.A.C.E. Cards are comprised of forty-eight thought-provoking prompts, ingeniously segmented into three progressive tiers—Awareness, Investigation, and Reduction—to guide participants through a structured exploration of their perceptions and beliefs. Each tier is expertly crafted to not only illuminate the nuances of racial bias but also to empower individuals with the knowledge and tools necessary to embark on a path towards meaningful change.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Analyze and reflect upon their own beliefs and behaviors to recognize unconscious racial biases and their impacts on personal and professional interactions;
- Utilize the R.A.C.E. Cards discussion deck to facilitate conversations about race, racism, and bias; and
- Develop strategies for implementing the insights gained from the workshop to actively combat racial prejudice and bias in their communities and workplaces.

**Session Instructor(s):** Dr. Dana E. Crawford, Ph.D.

**B) Incorporating Constituent Voices into Ombudsman Work: From initial interviewing to report writing to policy and legislative change.**

**Session Description:** The New Hampshire Office of the Child Advocate will be presenting on the importance of meeting with constituents/complainants and learning about their experiences to inform our understanding of system challenges and practices. We will also speak to how to incorporate those experiences and voices into report writing and legislative testimony, as well as media exposure. Prior to coming to the OCA, Jen Jones was a forensic interviewer for 11 years. She will share some of her expertise in interviewing and how she utilizes those skills in her ombudsman role at the OCA. We will refer to our Issue Briefing regarding Bledsoe Youth Academy and share how the children were instrumental in identifying concerning practices at that facility and personalizing a concerning trend.

We will end with a review of our solutions-oriented, systems review approach to guide policy and legislative changes that address the issues we discovered and improve our child serving system.

- Part I: Gathering information from complainants (broadly, not child-focused specifically): Cassandra Sanchez & Jen Jones

- Part II: Case Example – the Bledsoe Youth Academy & Report Writing [children’s experiences in care to inform our office of practices and programming within residential facilities]: Cassandra Sanchez & Jen Jones
- Part III: Solutions via Policy & Legislative Work: Cassandra Sanchez & Lissa Mascio

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Understand best practices of interviewing techniques, including reasonable expectations of a victim, in a trauma-sensitive and informed manner.
- Incorporate constituent/complainant voice into report writing, and other public means of communication (including legislative testimony and in the media).
- Leverage the information gathered from constituents into proactive, systemic solutions within the system, including policy & legislative change.

**Session Instructor(s):** Cassandra Sanchez, Child Advocate, New Hampshire Office of the Child Advocate; Jennifer Jones, Assistant Child Advocate, New Hampshire Office of the Child Advocate; and Lissa Mascio, Associate Child Advocate, New Hampshire Office of the Child Advocate

## **BLOCK TWO AFTERNOON SESSIONS**

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*Participants will attend one of the following breakout sessions.*

### **A) Case Management Systems: From understanding to implementation**

**Session Description:** Any organization tasked with oversight, review, advocacy, or investigations requires a robust solution to document its activities and procedures effectively. Comprehensive documentation not only facilitates efficient agency management but also empowers leaders to support their teams and foster professionalism through improved data collection. This session will illustrate how the Office of the Child Advocate in Michigan has navigated the acquisition of a case management system tailored to their operational and security requirements. Participants will gain insights into the initial phases, engagement in development, security evaluations, user acceptance testing, and eventual implementation of the new system. Attendees will benefit from shared experiences, including challenges faced and successes achieved, enabling them to enrich their quest for a practical and useful case management solution.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this session, participants will:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the functionality and purpose of a case management system;
- Recognize the significance of implementing a case management system within their office;



- Receive guidance on initiating the process, whether through issuing requests for proposals (RFPs) or engaging in direct contracting;
- Explore internal factors crucial for effective case management implementation;
- Understand essential security considerations relevant to case management systems;
- Gain insight into the development process, from conception to execution;
- Learn about the importance and methodology of user acceptance testing;
- Develop strategies for fostering positive vendor relationships throughout the implementation process;
- Define clear objectives and goals for their case management system implementation; and
- Acquire knowledge and techniques for effectively training their staff on utilizing the new system.

**Session Instructor(s):** Ryan Speidel, Michigan’s Child Advocate, Michigan Office of the Child Advocate; and Amie Bailey, OCA Special Projects Administrator, Michigan Office of the Child Advocate

**B) The Power of Hello: The foundation of cultural responsiveness in ombuds work.**

**Session Description:** Originating within many languages and forming as a foundation of acknowledgement interculturally, ‘Hello’ is a globally recognized greeting and gesture. A hello has the power to generate belonging, value, and engagement, which creates a community that fosters cultural awareness and seeks to eliminate barriers. The power of hello forms the building blocks to community, cultural responsiveness and the foundation in communication excellence.

Cultural responsiveness in ombuds work is essential in understanding cultural capital for excelling in service delivery to reach the variety of demographics that we are serving, which then creates an environment for diversity and inclusion to flourish, while also asserting identity and cultural awareness.

Ombuds offices across Canada and the United States, serve as a public voice to assist those that have experienced unjust, a loss of voice and are hoping for a final chance at fairness. This presentation will focus on the power of hello to teach participants the magnitude that a greeting cultivates in creating an inclusive, respectful, and empowered workplace.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Understand that the power of hello to a colleague, a complainant/client, or in outreach, creates an opportunity for connection, value and inclusion. This understanding will empower the ombuds work to tailor service delivery to match

your diverse demographic, bring voice to the vulnerable and enhance your cultural capital.

- Understand that the power of hello establishes an openness to learning other values, creating community and effective collaboration. This understanding will emphasize the importance of cultural engagement by exploring the intricacies of diversity and the directions to consider within ombuds work. This skill is also fundamental in ombuds work as it relates to international collaborations and networking demonstrating respect, responsiveness, and initiative.
- Understand that the power of hello is a foundation to cultural responsiveness that will empower ombuds work with the confidence to communicate with respect, understanding and value. This skill will strengthen the ability to deepen relationships with colleagues, complainants, and the community while also fostering a culture of acceptance, unity and openness to learn and grow. This results in effective leadership and a positive work culture.

**Session Instructor(s):** Zarmina Faqiryar, Investigator, Alberta Ombudsman

### C) Guide to Investigations

**Session Description:** Field work with active investigations, facility visits, child visits, priority level designations for investigations, and systemic reviews to remedy concerns and gaps.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Distinguish reviews from investigations
- Determine priority responses, build positions and capacity
- Hold systemic reviews to improve the child serving system.

**Session Instructor(s):** Kayla Capps, Deputy Child Advocate, South Carolina Department of Children’s Advocacy; Amanda Whittle, State Child Advocate, South Carolina Department of Children’s Advocacy; and Melissa Pettinato-Irby, Assistant Child Advocate, South Carolina Department of Children’s Advocacy

**Friday, November 22, 2024**

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## **BLOCK ONE MORNING SESSIONS**

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*Participants will attend one of the following breakout sessions.*

### **A) Using Safety Science in Ombudsman Work: System review mapping and solutions-oriented outcomes.**

**Session Description:** The New Hampshire Office of the Child Advocate will be presenting on the importance of identifying trends and utilizing that information to create systemic change. The NH OCA is the first children’s services oversight agency to use Safety Science and the System Review Mapping (SRM) process to create changes at the system level,

which allows the state agencies we oversee to learn and grow without shame and judgement. The first step of the mapping process is to conduct a series of pre-interviews (called Human Factors Debriefings) with individuals who were directly involved within specific case(s) or identified issues to better understand what influenced their decision-making at the time. This is a non-judgmental approach to learn about system barriers; participants are informed that the conversations are confidential and will not be shared with their agency for disciplinary purposes.

The information gathered is only shared with the System Review Mapping team, a group which must maintain confidentiality, to discuss the system impacts on daily case decision making. The key takeaways from the Human Factors Debriefings are narrowed down to a specific learning point and presented during a System Review Mapping meeting which includes key stakeholders and members from the State agency. This practice allows for collaboration by all levels within the system in an effort to not only understand the contributing factors to the decisions, but also to promulgate positive change on a larger systemic level to avoid similar outcomes moving forward. We will describe this process using our most recent mapping, which involved the serious physical injury of non-ambulatory infants [trigger warning]. We will end with what we did with our takeaways in a solutions-oriented, systemic approach through policy work and legislation to address the issues we discovered.

- Part I: Safety Science Overview
- Part II: An Exemplar - The System Review Mapping process (trigger warning - serious physical injury of non-ambulatory infants)
- Part III: Takeaways and how those translate into actionable systemic change

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Understand best practices of utilizing a safety science lens to identify system issues and create meaningful dialogue with key stakeholders.
- Leverage the information gathered through the safety science/system mapping review process into proactive, systemic solutions including policy & legislative change.

**Session Instructor(s):** Cassandra Sanchez, Child Advocate, New Hampshire Office of the Child Advocate; Jennifer Jones, Assistant Child Advocate, New Hampshire Office of the Child Advocate; and Lissa Mascio, Associate Child Advocate, New Hampshire Office of the Child Advocate

## **B) Remedy, Redress and Resolution: Helping beyond your “limits.”**

**Session Description:** Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO) authorization mandates we address violations of law, policy, and standards, as well as incidences of misconduct. However, with our daily case management work, we often come across issues that don’t rise to this level but still deserve our attention. We’ve

separated out “redress” from “case assistance” to ensure our case managers can track this work and that we’re able to identify quickly incidences where violations have occurred. Join us to talk about these definitions in one Office’s work and how we find the line between them, as well as the various ways we work within the mandate to improve conditions for people in immigration detention and how we tell the story of this work when we report back to Congress and the public.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Assess their own work toward varying levels of “resolution”
- Develop a narrative for talking about how this work is critical to the role of the ombuds and the success of the larger organization.

**Session Instructor(s):** Meredith DeFraités, Deputy Director for External Relations, Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman

### **C) Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement: A key component for evaluations.**

**Session Description:** Evaluation is integral to the success of ombudsman programs. It not only can be used to document the success of the project, but also to manage program activities and improve services. The purpose of program evaluation is to systematically collect information and data about program activities and objectives, monitor progress, and to report and communicate results to network members, partners, stakeholders, and the community.

During this session participants will learn about using the evaluation process to document successes and challenges. Furthermore, the session will address involving the parties in developing strategies to address issues such as funding, staffing, program activities, and plans of correction/improvement.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Understand the importance of using data to assess the quality and effectively evaluate systems to improve program outcomes.
- Understand effective performance improvement processes and recognize their importance and benefits.
- Implement corrective action/performance improvement plans to address any issues identified during quality assurance reviews.

**Session Instructor(s):** Jeff L Taylor, Ombudsman Services Coordinator, Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Georgia Department of Human Services

## BLOCK TWO MORNING SESSIONS

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*Participants will attend one of the following breakout sessions.*

### A) **More than Numbers: How data can assist with advocacy in addressing health equity challenges in long-term care communities.**

**Session Description:** Professionals in advocacy groups work to change existing systems and infrastructure for the benefit of one or more groups of stakeholders. Data collection is essential to support our advocacy and address inequities. Such data can sway stakeholder opinion, identify policies that require revision, and develop recommendations for systemic change. Although overall health in the US has improved in the past, older adults from underrepresented communities continue to experience a lower quality of care. How can better use of data improve health equity? Health disparities exacerbate the challenges that specific older adult populations face in long-term care facilities. Therefore, advocacy is essential to improve health equity for long-term care residents. Ombudsman Representatives have various types of laws and regulations they can rely on to advance health equity. Academic researchers are essential in generating data and providing advocacy information to partners, such as Ombudsman Representatives. This session will include scenarios for participants to practice using the knowledge they have gained and examples of how communities can capture diverse perspectives through a combination of data and storytelling for advocacy.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Recognize how health disparities impact people in the local community;
- Explain strategies and advocacy in mitigating barriers and promoting equitable access to quality long-term care for all individuals;
- Use data to advocate for social determinants of health at institutions, organizations, and policymakers; and
- Apply their understanding of social determinants of health to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels.

**Session Instructor(s):** Liang-Lin Chao, MA, CMS, CSA, MBA/MPH, Ombudsman Services Coordinator, Georgia Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Lauren Carcia, MPH, Research Associate, Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer's Research and Care

### B) **Helping States Learn from One Another: Policy research in ombuds offices.**

**Session Description:** In this presentation, Bryan Kelley, Public Policy Analyst will share research completed by the Office of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman regarding policies and protocols in other states. This research and outreach has been key in helping Colorado stakeholders understand viable policy options and trends as they consider reforming law and rule in Colorado. This presentation will include an overview of the research methodologies used to compile state policy information, present resources the

agency has created for task forces and discuss how understanding policies in other states can help further the efforts of ombuds offices throughout the country.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Understand how research of policies in other states can aid policy promotion and reform efforts in ombuds offices.

**Session Instructor(s):** Bryan Kelley, Public Policy Analyst, Office of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman

## **BLOCK THREE MORNING SESSIONS**

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*Participants will attend one of the following breakout sessions.*

### **A) Inoculating Your Agency: How ombuds offices can prepare for, and fend off, threats to their authority, budget and existence.**

**Session Description:** Increasingly, ombuds offices across the country are facing attacks from the outside. As budgets tighten and the gaps between political narratives widen, ombudsmen offices are facing threats to their autonomy, authority and, in some cases, general existence. This has been fueled by public messaging that thrives on presenting issues and progress in black and white. Language that ombuds offices do not speak. Our utility, ingenuity and neutrality to serve citizens where they need us most has been tarred by false rhetoric. Ombuds offices are accused of overstepping, failing to show change and serving partisan agendas. This session will provide agencies with tools to start building a plan not only to fend off such threats, but to prevent them. Through public messaging strategies, to budget, to data collection and analysis, this session will provide attendees with tools to help promote the work of their agencies and the importance of maintaining ombudsman standards and principles.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, participants will be able to:

- Have tools or prompts to help them monitor threats occurring with other ombuds offices;
- Have tools to develop a crisis communication plan to counter such threats.; and
- Learn how to preempt such threats through strategic planning and messaging.

**Session Instructor(s):** Jordan Steffen, Deputy Ombudsman, Office of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman

## **B) Juvenile Justice Bill of Rights**

**Session Description:** This training will be an interactive experience that teaches participants about the California Office of the Foster Care Ombudsperson (OFCO) and the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR). Participants will learn about the Foster Youth Bill of Rights and Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard (RPPS) and how to make parenting decisions that will uphold the rights and promote the positive development and well-being of youth in care. Participants will also learn about the Justice Youth Bill of Rights and how to provide trauma responsive, culturally informed restorative justice support services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Understand the role, duty, functions, and limitations of the California Office of the Foster Care Ombudsperson and the Office of Youth and Community Restoration and the laws that govern both the California Office of the Foster Care Ombudsperson and the Office of Youth and Community Restoration
- Describe the Foster Youth Bill of Rights and the Justice Youth Bill of Rights.
- Determine ways the Office of the Foster Care Ombudsperson and the Office of Youth and Community Restoration can help justice youth / justice involved foster youth and will know how to act when justice youth rights violations occur.
- Explain 2 ways the Office of Youth and Community Restoration can personally assist justice youth/ justice involved foster youth when they are advocating for foster youth / justice youth rights.
- Value the justice youth Bill of Rights and the positive impact in the lives of foster youth/ justice youth and the need for advocacy and empowerment for foster youth/ justice youth.
- Recognize ways in which accountability and healing, rather than punishment can inform decision making in secure track facilities and reflect on ways restorative justice can support healing and provide the best outcomes and transitions into society for our youth.

**Session Instructor(s):** Kendra Jackson, Staff Services Manager I Specialist OYCR Liaison; Michael Massa Education Subject Matter Expert Office of Youth and Community Restoration

**Conference Closing**