

Ombudsman Recognition

BACKGROUND

There are many ways to recognize and appreciate ombudsmen. Recognition is vitally important as ombudsmen may volunteer for a variety of reasons but they stay involved because they are appreciated and respected.

KEY MESSAGES

- Every ombudsman is unique and will respond to different types of recognition and appreciation. Try to personalize recognition, if possible. Remember that informal recognition is as important as formal recognition.
- The commanding officer may use Non-Appropriated Funds, if available, for individual ombudsman appreciation dinners, ombudsman plaques and awards. The Non-Appropriated Funds limitation is \$50 per ombudsman per year, not to exceed a total of \$500 (multiple ombudsmen) per year. Cash awards are not authorized.
- Ombudsman Appreciation Day is 14 September or the preceding Friday if the 14th is on a weekend. Commands are authorized to celebrate the event at any time during the month of September or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Although not required, most installations hold an area-wide recognition event, often in conjunction with Ombudsman Appreciation Day.

STATEMENT

There are many ways to recognize ombudsmen including an individual command event or token of appreciation, or a base-sponsored event for all area ombudsmen. First and foremost, the command must remember that an ombudsman is a volunteer. Volunteer recognition is not an event, but an ongoing interaction. When volunteers are asked why they volunteer, none say “to receive recognition,” yet lack of recognition or appreciation is often one of the reasons volunteers give for leaving an organization. According to Webster’s Dictionary, recognition is simply “special notice or attention.”

ACTION

Some general guidelines on how commanding officers/commands may recognize ombudsmen include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Personally support the program, especially with their time.
- Value the ombudsman’s opinion and advice.
- Let ombudsmen know they have done a good job, in writing or in person, and look for opportunities to provide official recognition at command functions and in publications.
- Celebrate Ombudsman Appreciation Day in an appropriate and timely way.

Ongoing Support of Ombudsman

- Present a personally-written letter of commendation or certificate of appreciation at the end of service.

Appropriate tokens of appreciation include:

- Plaque inscribed with name, date, and message of appreciation.
- Photograph of command with signatures and personal notes of thanks.
- Command items such as a hat, keychain, t-shirt, etc.
- Flowers.
- Recognition lunch or dinner at the command, club, or restaurant. Additional low-cost ways to recognize ombudsmen include:
- Posting the ombudsman's picture as part of the command leadership pictures on the quarterdeck.
- Providing the ombudsman with business cards.
- Sending a birthday card.

RESOURCES

- [OPNAVINST 1750.1G CH-1](#), Enclosure (6), delineates the requirements for ombudsman appreciation and recognition.
- The FFSC ombudsman coordinator assists commands by informing them about the effective use and recognition of ombudsmen. Contact the local FFSC for further information.

CHECKLIST

- Contact local FFSC to determine what type of local/regional ombudsman recognition will occur.
- Plan a timely and appropriate celebration for Ombudsman Appreciation Day.
- Implement "formal" ombudsman recognition on a regular basis, but at least quarterly.
- Find ways to informally recognize ombudsmen on a frequent basis – kindness and thoughtfulness go a long way.