



Sunflower Association of REALTORS®, Inc. Ombudsman Process

The Ombudsman Program at the Sunflower Association of REALTORS®. The National Association of REALTORS® requires all local and state boards to provide Ombudsman services to members as of January 1, 2016. SAR will supply ombudsmen for any board/association member or member of the public that requests this service.

- I. Characteristics and duties of the Ombudsman, as it relates to the SAR program.
 - A. Ombudsmen should be available for a month period to take ombudsman requests.
 1. An ombudsman should accept no more than 8 calls during the month period.
 2. An ombudsman should check his/her e-mail several times a day during the service time for receipt of new requests.
 - B. An ombudsman
 1. Keeps all information confidential
 2. Provides service for the complainant
 3. Is an active, experienced REALTOR®
 4. Should have experience in the Professional Standards Process of SAR or the local board/association.
 5. Is a volunteer – not paid staff
 6. Must be impartial – cannot take sides or determine who is right or wrong
 - C. The ombudsman
 1. Listens to the complainant's concerns
 2. Helps determine a desired outcome (money, license sanctions, MLS concerns, etc.)
 3. Explains possible avenues that might resolve the issue or reach the desired outcome
 4. Answers general questions and/or procedural questions

5. Contacts the potential respondent to explain the complainant's concerns and desired outcome
6. Tries to bring resolution.
7. Reports back to the complainant

The Mechanics of the Ombudsman Process And the Forms

- I. Each Ombudsman serves approximately for a one month period.
- II. SAR's process limits each Ombudsman service time to only 8 calls within the service period.
- III. There are additional ombudsmen ready to take the remainder of a service time if the calls exceed 8 calls.
- IV. The Ombudsman on call will receive an e-mail with the Complainant's name and telephone number as well as the Respondent's name, telephone and broker's name (if an agent).
- V. The Ombudsman should acknowledge that the complaint has been received, by responding back to staff email.
- VI. The Ombudsman should call the complainant within 48 hours of receiving the e-mailed complaint. Two to three attempts to reach the parties should be made before closing the file.
- VII. A good script to use is as follows: "Hello, my name is _____; I am an ombudsman for the Sunflower Association of REALTORS®. As an ombudsman, I cannot make a decision in your case but can provide you with some assistance.

I understand that you have concerns regarding one of our members. If you would like to share your concerns with me, I might be able to suggest some possible avenues or options you may pursue to reach a resolution for your situation."

- VIII. The Ombudsman can modify the script to work best with his/her own personality.

- IX. The Ombudsman should report the resolution back to SAR through email within 2 days of closing the file.
- X. If some resolution is agreed to, the Ombudsman should call the complainant back within one week of final call to make sure that the matter was resolved.
- XI. All materials should be destroyed.