



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Don Meyer  
[Donald.meyer@gowestfourth.com](mailto:Donald.meyer@gowestfourth.com)  
Phone: 202-834-6859

## IOA Introduces Guide for Engaging Ombuds Services for Conferences and Professional Events

**Seattle, WA (February 5, 2020)** – The International Ombudsman Association (IOA) today announced the launch of a how-to guide designed to meet the growing demand for ombuds services at conferences, conventions and other large meetings where attendees may seek to address concerns or conflicts that arise during professional events.

IOA's *Guide for Setting Up a Conference Ombuds Program* is available at [ombudsassociation.org](http://ombudsassociation.org) and includes information about the value of an ombuds, resources for scoping and contracting ombuds services, and tools for communicating the role of an ombuds to conference participants.

Developed in response to a growing number of requests for conference resources, the IOA guide also reflects research conducted by organizations such as the American Political Science Association (APSA), which in 2017 surveyed members about negative experiences at conferences. Among 2,424 respondents, APSA found that 37 percent of its members had experienced some kind of inappropriate behavior at a conference during the previous four years.

“Ombuds can provide a knowledgeable resource to assist people who experience problematic behavior at a conference,” said IOA Executive Director Chuck Howard. “Ombuds can also help sponsoring organizations by providing expertise and insights that help build and strengthen a culture of fairness and respect.”

Acting as an independent, impartial, confidential and informal resource, an ombuds engages in constructive problem-solving toward the goal of instilling respect in communities, organizations and professional relationships. They help people overcome disputes, conflicts and barriers, empowering individuals and organizations to reach their full potential.

“We believe the provision of an organizational ombuds at conferences is an important development in the continuing effort to provide safe and respectful spaces when large groups of people assemble for a common purpose,” said Howard. “We hope organizations of all kinds will use this new IOA resource because it can help them create positive, respectful and rewarding experiences for conference attendees.”

###

### About IOA

The International Ombudsman Association (IOA) is a member-led, professional association committed to supporting organizational ombuds worldwide. The association's 800-plus members help others safely navigate conflict and change in corporations, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, government entities and non-governmental organizations across the globe. IOA provides professional development, networking, mentoring and other resources, as well as an engaging [annual conference](#). Learn more at [ombudsassociation.org](http://ombudsassociation.org).