



**UNITED STATES OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION
28TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

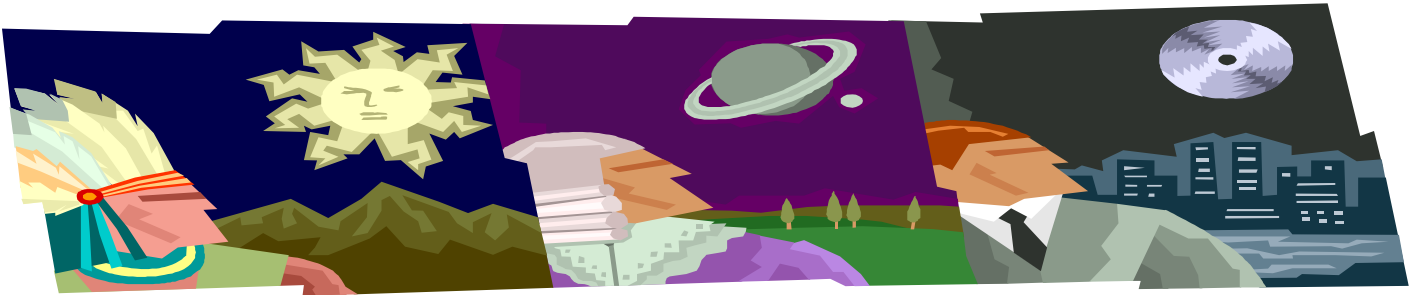
**Anchorage, Alaska
September 24-28, 2007**

**PUBLIC SECTOR OMBUDSMAN:
STRATEGIES FOR AN EVOLVING PROFESSION
REGISTRATION PACKET**



Courtesy Anchorage Convention and Visitor Bureau

UNITED STATES OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION 28TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE



PUBLIC SECTOR OMBUDSMAN: STRATEGIES FOR AN EVOLVING PROFESSION

Our predecessors faced challenges and difficulties in their world that we today have long overcome. And yet new difficulties continue to present themselves. Just as society faces new challenges, so do we as a society of ombudsmen. Some of us are new to the ombudsman world and need training in how to do our job. Some of us are tasked with creating totally new offices; others with evaluating offices that have existed for years. Many are trying to deal with a client population that is becoming more demanding, less civil and sometimes hostile. We must work faster and smarter and produce big results with small resources. We must cope with technology that can make our job easier but sometimes creates major problems. We often must carry on an internal solitary debate about the legal and ethical issues facing us in our daily work.

USOA's 28th conference aims to provide strategies to help ombudsmen from all areas of our world learn to deal with the challenges we face. This year's conference will be held in America's Last Frontier – Anchorage, Alaska September 24 - 28, 2007. Please join your colleagues as we work to develop those strategies.

Sincerely,
USOA Conferences and Training Committee
State of Alaska Ombudsman (Host)

ABOUT USOA

Founded in 1977, the United States Ombudsman Association is the national organization for public sector ombudsman professionals. USOA also is North America's oldest national ombudsman association with members from ombudsman offices in local, state, and federal government, and affiliated ombudsman offices. Under its bylaws, USOA was organized to operate exclusively for educational, scientific, and charitable purposes.

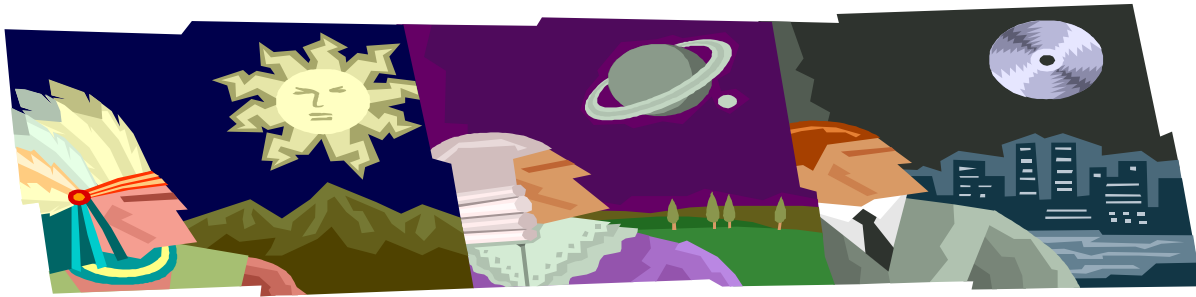
USOA exists to help ombudsman and ombudsman organizations improve their operation and services throughout the United States. Additionally, USOA dedicates itself by educational and social means to promote and encourage the establishment of ombudsman offices at the national, state, local levels and international levels.

For more information, please contact:

Gerald Papica, Chair
USOA Conferences & Training Committee
(615)-532-1572 (office, voice mail)
(615)-532-1591 (fax)

Linda Lord-Jenkins
2007 USOA Conference Host
(907) 269-5290 (office, voice mail)
(907) 269-5291 (fax)

USOA Website: www.usombudsman.org



PUBLIC SECTOR OMBUDSMAN: STRATEGIES FOR AN EVOLVING PROFESSION

PRE-CONFERENCE AGENDA

(May be subject to change)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2007

- 7:30 AM – 5:00 PM PRE-CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AND CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
- 7:30 AM – 8:00 AM CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST FOR NEW OMBUDSMAN ORIENTATION PRE-CONFERENCE ATTENDEES
- 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM **PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP**



NEW OMBUDSMAN ORIENTATION - DAY 1

This popular workshop, designed for individuals who are relatively new to the role of government ombudsman, has been expanded this year from one day to two days. Participants will learn about the origin, characteristics, and standards of an ombudsman office. Instructors will discuss basic intake, interviewing and investigation techniques and will present a case study to enable participants to apply knowledge to practice. The workshop will examine the role of the ombudsman in promoting an ethical climate in our organizations as well as review ethical challenges an ombudsman may face. Workshop participants also will have the opportunity to discuss best practices, time saving tips, and tools of the trade with a group of experienced, successful ombudsmen.

PRESENTERS:

- Robin Matsunaga, Ombudsman, State of Hawaii*
- Mary Meinig, Director, Washington Office of Family and Children's Ombudsman*
- Roberta Opheim, Minnesota Ombudsman for Mental Health & Mental Retardation*
- Gene Raney, Ombudsman, Virginia Office of Health Benefits*
- Pat Shannahan, Ombudsman, State of Arizona*

- 10:00 AM – 10:15 AM Break (for pre-conference attendees)
- 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Lunch (for pre-conference attendees)
- 2:45 PM – 3:00 PM Break (for pre-conference attendees)
- 5:00 PM End of Day One

Monday Evening Dinner on your own

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2007

7:30 AM – 5:00 PM PRE-CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AND CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

7:30 AM – 8:00 AM CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST FOR PRE-CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM **PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS**



DEALING WITH UNREASONABLE COMPLAINANT CONDUCT

This workshop will explore ways to better manage unreasonable complainant conduct. The experience of complaint handlers in many countries is that unreasonable complainant conduct is on the rise, both in terms of the number of complainants who are acting unreasonably and the seriousness of their unreasonable conduct.

Participants will learn about the new approach to managing such conduct being trialled by the eight Australian Parliamentary Ombudsman offices. The approach is based around a number of principles, including:

- dealing with unreasonable complainant conduct should be accepted as being part of the core work of a complaint-handling body, and resourced accordingly;
- such conduct should be managed by complaint handlers based on responding appropriately to observable conduct, not an assessment of the mental state or possible motives of the complainant;
- there are a range of reasonable and appropriate management strategies available to complaint handlers for responding to different types of observable unreasonable conduct;
- these management strategies reflect the distinction between issues and complaints about those issues - while a complainant 'owns' the issue, the complaint handler 'owns' the complaint (e.g., it is the complaint handler who decides how a complaint is to be dealt with and whether the outcome is acceptable).

Presenter: Chris Wheeler, Deputy Ombudsman, New South Wales, Australia

NEW OMBUDSMAN ORIENTATION - DAY 2

Continuation of the 2-day New Ombudsman Orientation workshop.

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM Break (for pre-conference attendees)

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Lunch (for pre-conference attendees)

2:45 PM – 3:00 PM Break (for pre-conference attendees)

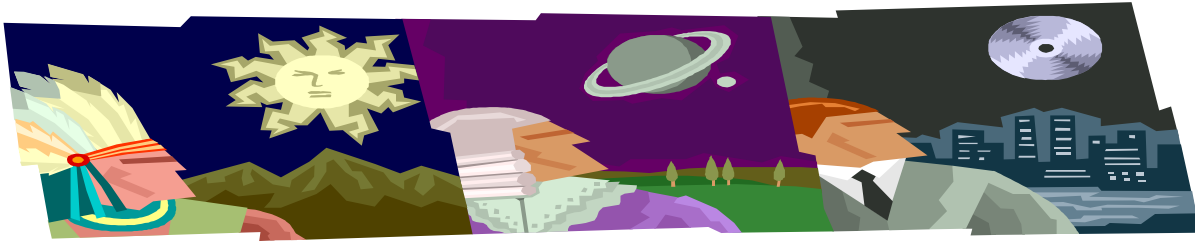
5:00 PM End of Pre-Conference Workshops

PRE-CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES:

New Ombudsman Orientation: Registration fee for the two-day New Ombudsman Orientation is \$325 for USOA members and \$375 for non-members. Fee covers course materials and breakfast, lunch, and refreshment breaks on both days of the session.

Dealing with Unreasonable Complainant Conduct: Registration fee for the session on Dealing with Unreasonable Complainant Conduct is \$225 for USOA members and \$275 for non-members. Fee covers course materials and breakfast, lunch, and refreshment breaks on the day of the session.

For pre-conference workshop participants, a Certificate of Completion will be issued. Certificates will be available at the registration/information table.



PUBLIC SECTOR OMBUDSMAN: STRATEGIES FOR AN EVOLVING PROFESSION

CONFERENCE AGENDA

(May be subject to change)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2007

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM **OPENING RECEPTION**

An informal reception featuring food and refreshments at the Anchorage Marriott Hotel.
[Note: If you are not registered for the conference, you will need to purchase a ticket for admission from USOA or at the USOA registration table. No Host Bar.]

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2007

7:30 AM – 5:00 PM REGISTRATION

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM BREAKFAST

8:30 AM – 9:45 AM **CONFERENCE OPENING**

WELCOMING REMARKS, ALASKA SENATE PRESIDENT LYDA GREEN

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM BREAK

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM **PLENARY SESSION A**

APOLOGY AND THE OMBUDSMAN

When things go wrong, public officials should accept responsibility and take 'ownership' of the problems for which they are responsible. This is what good management practice dictates, ethical conduct requires and the public expects. Where somebody is harmed, acceptance of responsibility and apologizing are each a prerequisite for the other – accepting responsibility requires transparency, including the giving of an appropriate apology, and to be effective an apology needs to include an explicit acceptance of responsibility.

This session will focus on:

- the important role apologies can play in resolving complaints
- the essential elements of an apology
- the complexities that can impact on the effectiveness of an apology, and
- ways to promote and facilitate the making of apologies by public officials.

Presenter: Chris Wheeler, Deputy Ombudsman, New South Wales, Australia

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM **LUNCH AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

Keynote address will be delivered by Michael Hostina, former State of Alaska Deputy Ombudsman, University of Alaska Associate General Counsel

1:15 PM – 2:45 PM **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

Concurrent Session #1

REAPING TECHNOLOGY’S BENEFITS; AVOIDING ITS PITFALLS

Faster, quicker, and better technology can be a blessing in chronically under-staffed ombudsman offices but with this blessing can come the curse of unintended consequences that make a lost document look like child’s play. Ask the fellow who released a document with hidden revision marks that was then opened by a reporter to reveal embarrassing edits, including the agency’s deliberative debate. Or the official who found that a draft document had been placed on a public Web site before final vetting. One portion of this session will share ideas for using technology to get more bang for your personnel and research buck. The other will focus on the ethical, practical and legal problems that can develop when using that time-saving technology. Audience participation is encouraged.

Presenters:

Mark Kissel, Assistant Ombudsman, State of Alaska
Ramon Wallace, Deputy Ombudsman, Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska

Concurrent Session #2

LAUNCHING A NEW OMBUDSMAN OFFICE

An inaugural Ombudsman not only learns the job and builds an institution but also must define the role of the Ombudsman to both the community they serve and Civil Service they investigate. This session presents one Classical Ombudsman’s experience with some of the different strategies, challenges and ways that investigations, public relations, office management and results can brand and validate the Ombudsman concept in the first year of office.

Presenter: *Arlene Brock, Bermuda Ombudsman*

2:45 PM – 3:00 PM BREAK

3:00 PM – 5:15 PM **USOA CHAPTERS MEETINGS**

USOA members have different areas of authority, interest and expertise in their jobs. For this reason, a number of specialized Chapters are organized within USOA to share experiences, resources and accomplishments. The Chapters include Children and Families, Corrections, Public Schools, Healthcare and Municipal Government. These meetings present an excellent opportunity to brainstorm and problem solve. This time will also allow the members to develop a plan of action for each Chapter for the upcoming year.

The **Corrections** and **Health Care Chapter** will combine their meetings for a portion of this time to meet with Sharon Legenza, ACLU Prison Project Attorney, who will discuss mental health care in corrections. Health Care will then branch out for independent discussion.

Families and Children Chapter will meet with Barb Malchik, State of Alaska Guardian ad Litem.

Municipal Chapter will hear a presentation from King County, Washington, Deputy Ombudsman David Spohr who will discuss land use issues and the Municipal Ombudsman.

Public Schools Chapter will discuss matters of importance to members including No Child Left Behind, the impact of immigration on education and other issues of interest to participants.

The **International Ombudsman Institute (IOI)** may also hold its North American Region meeting during this time.

Evening Hours: Dinner on your own. Enjoy an evening at some of Anchorage’s finest restaurants.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2007

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM **PLENARY SESSION B**

TOWN HALL MEETING: ISSUES FORUM

The Issues Forum Panel will be hosted by a panel of governmental ombudsman from a variety of ombudsman offices. Panel members will field questions and lead a discussion on current issues of interest. One objective is to gain a better understanding of the different structures and key components of the ombudsman profession. Issues such as independence and confidentiality will be addressed. The Ombudsman community is such that we are interdependent upon one another for our survival. In order to continue to promote fairness and increased accountability in government to the public, we will need to be mutually supportive. Questions and issues will be solicited from attendees before and during the session.

***Moderator:** Michael Mills, Ombudsman, City of Portland, Oregon*

Panelists:

*Wendy Kamenshine, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman Office
Richard Kurtz, U.S. Dept. of Education, Federal Student Aid Office of the Ombudsman
Beverly Reeves, School District Ombudsman, Austin, Texas
Gloria Robinson, Ombudsman Services Unit, Virginia Department of Corrections
Pat Shannahan, Ombudsman, State of Arizona
David Spohr, Deputy Ombudsman, King County, Washington*

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM BREAK

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

Concurrent Session #3

ETHICS AND THE OMBUDSMAN

Everybody knows that "ethics" is related to honest conduct, but not everyone understands the concepts or principles that ensure ethical conduct in the performance of the public's business. Perhaps the most important of these concepts is "conflict of interest," even the appearance of which can undermine public trust in government. What is a conflict of interest? Why is even the appearance of a conflict damaging? What can be done to educate public employees about ethical conduct? How can ombudsmen and other state officials detect and correct unethical conduct?

Presenters:

*Alaska State Senator Hollis French, Alaska Select Committee on Legislative Ethics
Joyce Anderson, Director, State of Alaska Legislative Ethics Committee
Tom Webster, Assistant Ombudsman, State of Alaska*

Concurrent Session #4

CAN YOU EVALUATE OMBUDSMAN OPERATIONS?

Frank Fowlie is completing a doctorate on Ombudsman Evaluation at La Trobe University. In this workshop session he will share some of his research, and will carry on two-way discussions with the participants. The discussion will look at a number of items: an overview of the existing literature and research; interesting factors rising out of his research on client satisfaction; and a review of some tools that Ombudsman offices may use for self evaluation

***Presenter:** Frank Fowlie, Ombudsman, Internet Corporation for
Assigned Names and Numbers*

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Lunch

1:15 PM – 1:30 PM **2008 ANNUAL CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT**

1:30 PM – 2:45 PM **USOA ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

Introduction of new USOA members
Introduction of new USOA Officers and Board members
Officers' Annual Reports
Discussion of Association Issues

2:45 PM – 3:00 PM BREAK

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM **PLENARY SESSION C**

SYSTEMIC INVESTIGATIONS FOR SMALLER OFFICES

Even a one or two-person Ombudsman Office can do systemic investigations if they really want to. This session will assist you to:

- set the playing field;
- identify issues that may require a systemic investigation;
- avoid issue creep;
- manage expectations;
- plan the investigation to maximize use of your resources;
- manage your existing caseload - and everything else you have to do - while conducting a systemic investigation;
- get the investigation over and done with as quickly as possible;
- deal with roadblocks along the way; and
- get your recommendations accepted.

Presenters:

André Marin, Ombudsman, Ontario, Canada

Sue Haslam, Manager of Investigations, Ontario Ombudsman Office

Gareth Jones, Director, Special Ombudsman Response Team, Ontario Ombudsman Office

Evening

BANQUET, ALASKA NATIVE HERITAGE CENTER

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2007

7:30 AM – 8:00 AM CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

8:15 AM – 9:45 AM **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

Concurrent Session #5

CURRENT EVENTS ON THE LEGAL HORIZON

Ombudsmen and their legal counsel will discuss and analyze some of the legal issues on the horizon. Join us with questions that keep you up at night, have recently been litigated, are soon to be litigated, or that you fear might be litigated. Audience participation is a must.

Presenters:

Joan Beck, Citizens' Advocate, Lexington Fayette Urban County Government, Kentucky

Beth Leibowitz, Assistant Ombudsman, State of Alaska

Concurrent Session #6

**CHALLENGES TO IMPARTIALITY IN INVESTIGATION AND INTERVENTION:
SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS, IMPLICIT BIAS AND COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS**

This session questions the very idea of “objective” and “impartial” investigations and suggests new criteria against which investigatory processes can be measured. Using exercises and illustrations we will explore two major topics:

1. Implicit bias/Implicit cognition - barriers to objectivity: A review of recent research on factors that affect our perception and subliminal judgments which often run contrary to our own overt beliefs. Discussion will include steps to address this dilemma.
2. Systemic Problems, Circular Questioning, and Root Cause Analysis: A discussion and demonstration of circular questioning and root cause analysis to identify systemic problems.

***Presenter:** Howard Gadlin, Ombudsman and Director,
Center for Cooperative Resolution, National Institutes of Health*

9:45 AM – 10:15 AM BREAK

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM **PLENARY SESSION D**

IF I KNEW THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW

Ombudsman investigators who worked in the field then went on to serve in the bureaucracy they sometimes investigated return to share their insights in what they learned from the other side of the table. These experienced ombudsmen can comment about being subject to ombudsman inquiry, watching ombudsmen work their way through the legislative process, and watching how Ombudsman offices fare in the media. Our insightful and entertaining former Assistant Ombudsman/Panel members include a current State Senator who ran a large state-operated business and a former deputy commissioner and newspaper editor.

Panelists:

*Alaska Senator Kim Elton; former Assistant Ombudsman, State of Alaska
Larry Persily, Associate Director for Oil, Gas, and Renewable Energy; Commerce;
and Transportation, State of Alaska; former Assistant Ombudsman, State of Alaska*

11:45 AM – 12:00 PM **CONFERENCE CLOSING/EVALUATION**

For full conference attendees, a Certificate of Attendance will be provided at the end of the conference. Certificates will be available at the registration/information table.

***EARLY CONFERENCE AND HOTEL REGISTRATION
ARE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.***

GENERAL CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Registration Fees

The fee for Conference Registration submitted **by August 24, 2007** is \$425 for USOA members and \$500 for non-members. The fee for Conference Registration submitted **after August 24, 2007** is \$475 for USOA members and \$550 for non-members.

Dress/Attire

The dress or attire for the conference is "business casual."

Hotel Accommodations

This year's conference will be held at the Anchorage Downtown Marriott, 820 W. 7th Avenue in downtown Anchorage, Alaska. Reserved rooms will be \$108 per night plus 12 percent state and local taxes. Subject to availability, this rate is available from September 20, 2007 through September October 1, 2007. Please book directly with the hotel no later than **August 24, 2007**, the cut-off date for release of unused rooms to the general public. Rooms *may* be available after that date but August 24 is the cut-off date for the USOA block. For reservations, call 1-800-228-9290 or contact the hotel directly at 1-907-279-8000. Please remember to mention that you are attending the United States Ombudsman Association or use ID "USOA" in order to ensure that you receive your special rate. All rooms feature high speed Internet, coffee and tea in the rooms, mountain views, down comforters and pillows. The hotel features a swimming pool, and fitness center. The Marriott is a non-smoking hotel. More information on the accommodations at Anchorage Downtown Marriott can be found at its website: <http://marriott.com/hotels/travel/ancdt-anchorage-marriott-downtown/>

Hotel Address Anchorage Downtown Marriott
820 W 7th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 279-8000

If you're arriving by car, valet parking is available for guests at the Anchorage Marriott in the surface lot north of the hotel.

Non-Conference Participant/ Guests at Reception and Banquet

If you are not registered for the conference, you will need to purchase a ticket from USOA or at the USOA conference registration desk for Tuesday night's reception and/or Thursday's banquet.

Ground Transportation from Ted Stevens International Airport

Taxi services are easily accessible near the airport's baggage area on ground level. A one-way taxi fee costs approximately \$20. Rental cars are available in the underground level near the baggage area.

Cancellation/Refund Policy

Notice of cancellation must be in writing. Cancellation by telephone will not be accepted. Notice of cancellation may be e-mailed to usoa@usombudsman.org or faxed to 515-225-6363.

If you must cancel your registration, we encourage you to send a substitute to take your place. Please contact the office and notify us of the change so we can arrange for a name badge and certificate.

If you cannot find a substitute to take your place, please refer to the following cancellation policy:

Cancellation on or before September 16	100 percent refund, less \$25 cancellation fee
Cancellation from September 17 - 19	50 percent refund, less \$25 cancellation fee
Cancellation after September 19	No refund

USOA reserves the right to cancel or change programs and conference offerings at any time as warranted.

**United States Ombudsman Association
2007 Annual Conference
REGISTRATION FORM**

Name _____
 Title _____ Organization _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State/Province _____ Postal Code _____
 Country _____ Email _____
 Phone (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____
 Special Accommodations (Dietary or other) _____

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION (September 26 – 28, 2007):

The Conference Registration Fee includes the Tuesday evening Reception; Wednesday and Thursday breakfast, lunch, and breaks; the Thursday evening Banquet, Friday breakfast and break, and all Conference Materials.

	BY <u>8/24/07</u>	AFTER <u>8/24/07</u>	
United States Ombudsman Association Member Fee	\$425.00	\$475.00	\$ _____
Non-member Fee	\$500.00	\$550.00	\$ _____

PRE-CONFERENCE REGISTRATION:

The Pre-Conference Registration Fees include lunches, refreshment breaks, and course materials. A Certificate of Completion will be given to participants who complete the course.

New Ombudsman Orientation (September 24-25) (2 Days)

United States Ombudsman Association Member Fee	\$325.00	\$ _____
Non-member Fee	\$375.00	\$ _____

Dealing with Unreasonable Complainant Conduct (September 25) (1 Day)

United States Ombudsman Association Member Fee	\$225.00	\$ _____
Non-member Fee	\$275.00	\$ _____

GUEST TICKETS:

Reception or Banquet (circle one) # of Tickets _____ x \$55.00 \$ _____
 Reception and Banquet # of Tickets _____ x \$90.00 \$ _____
TOTAL = \$ _____

PAYMENT: Please make your **check** payable to "USOA" and mail it with this registration form to:

United States Ombudsman Association, 8345 University Blvd., Suite F-1, Des Moines, IA 50325.

For **credit card payments**, please mail this form or fax it to: 515-225-6363.

MasterCard _____ VISA _____ Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date _____
 Cardholder Name _____ CVV2 (3 digit security number) _____
 Cardholder Address _____

IMPORTANT: Please read and check off the following information

Concurrent Session Options

Please indicate below which session you would like to attend. This does not obligate you to a specific session. This information will be used to judge the popularity of a session and appropriate room size required.

Wednesday, September 26:

_____ #1 Reaping Technology's Benefits; Avoiding it's Pitfalls

or

_____ #2 Launching a New Ombudsman Office

Thursday, September 27:

_____ #3 Ethics and the Ombudsman

or

_____ #4 Can You Evaluate Ombudsman Operations?

Friday, September 28:

_____ #5 Current Events on the Legal Horizon

or

_____ #6 Challenges to Impartiality in Investigation and Intervention

Questions? Call 515-225-2323