



The Ombuds Process

The Ombuds Program in its simplest definition is informal telephone mediation. In some cases, it can address and solve minor complaints from the public. It can also solve REALTOR®-to-REALTOR® conflicts before they become serious problems. Like a mediator, an Ombuds Representative helps parties find solutions.

WHAT IS THE CTR OMBUDS PROGRAM?

Ombuds procedures adopted by Connecticut REALTORS® (CTR) are intended to provide enhanced communications and initial problem-solving capacity to the professional standards process. CTR is charged with the responsibility of receiving and resolving ethics complaints and hearing arbitration disputes filed against members of Local Boards/Associations participating in the Statewide Professional Standards program. An Ombuds Representative can respond to general questions regarding real estate practices, transaction details, ethical practices and enforcement issues.

HOW WILL I KNOW TO ASK FOR AN OMBUDS REPRESENTATIVE?

Many complaints do not expressly allege violations of specific articles of the REALTOR® Code of Ethics and may not concern conduct related to the Code. Some complaints are transactional, technical and procedural questions that can be readily responded to. Some complaints are due strictly to lack of communication. These types of issues may be appropriate for the Ombuds Program.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING THIS SERVICE?

You can receive non-judgmental real estate related information in a timely manner and at no cost.

WHAT WILL THE OMBUDS REPRESENTATIVE NOT DO?

- Adjudicate/make the final decision;
- Give legal advice;
- Determine who is right or wrong;
- Disclose communications – Process is CONFIDENTIAL;
- Collect or review documents; or
- Make any written record of discussions and/or agreements.

WHO ARE THE OMBUDS REPRESENTATIVES?

REALTORS® appointed to be Ombuds Representatives must:

- Meet criteria for extensive real estate experience and/or additional qualifications as determined by CTR;
- Demonstrate objectivity;
- Participate in a training program; and
- Possess extensive knowledge of the REALTOR® Code of Ethics, license law and best practices.



HOW DOES THE OMBUDS PROCESS WORK?

CTR's Statewide Professional Standards staff will get certain information to send to the CTR Ombuds Representative.

This information may include:

- Name, phone number and role of the complainant (that is, buyer, seller, REALTOR®, etc.)
- Name, phone number, and role of the respondent (that is, REALTOR®, etc.)
- If the respondent is a salesperson, the name of the designated/sponsoring broker.
- The general topic of the complaint.

With your consent, the CTR Ombuds Representative will make the necessary contacts in an effort to resolve the complaint. If the Ombuds efforts are successful, no further action is necessary. If the efforts are not successful, the Ombuds Representative will advise the complainant about the next step(s) in the complaint process.

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The term REALTOR® is a registered collective membership mark which may only be used by real estate professionals who are members of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and who subscribe to its strict Code of Ethics.