



Simply put,
the Ombudsman Program
is informal telephone mediation.
In some cases it can address and solve minor
complaints from the public. It can also solve inter-
REALTOR® conflicts before they become serious issues.

WHAT IS THE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM?

Like a mediator, an ombudsman helps parties find solutions; however, the ombudsman process does not replace mediation. It is a more informal process that will take place earlier and, if successful, will avoid the need for a more formal mediation process and potentially a formal hearing ethics or arbitration hearing.

NC REALTORS®' Ombudsman Program

Ombudsman Procedures adopted by the NC REALTORS® are intended to provide enhanced communications and initial problem-solving capacity to the professional standards process. NC REALTORS® is charged with the responsibility of receiving and resolving ethics complaints and requests for arbitration filed against its members. NC REALTORS® ombudsmen will be utilized to field and respond to a wide variety of inquires and complaints. Here's a quick overview of the program:

HOW WILL I KNOW TO ASK FOR AN OMBUDSMAN?

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 issues that can be readily responded to. Some complaints are due strictly to lack of communication. These types of issues may be appropriate for the Ombudsman program.

WHAT ARE REALTOR® OMBUDSMAN BENEFITS?

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

HOW DOES THE OMBUDSMAN PROCESS WORK?

The NC REALTORS® Ombudsman Program Administrator will assemble information to be sent to the NC REALTORS® Ombudsman via e-mail. This information may include:

- Name, phone number and role of the complainant;
- Name, phone number, and role of the respondent;
- If the respondent is a broker, the name of principal broker and/or managing broker.

The NC REALTORS® Ombudsman will make all necessary contacts in an attempt to resolve the complaint. If the efforts are not successful, the Ombudsman will advise the Complainant about the next step(s) in the complaint process.

WHO ARE THE OMBUDSMEN?

REALTORS® appointed to be Ombudsmen must:

- Meet criteria for extensive real estate experience;
- Demonstrate objectivity;
- Participate in a training program;
- Possess extensive knowledge of the REALTOR® Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice.

THE OMBUDSMEN WILL NOT:

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