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Date: July 18, 2018
Appraiser: Ann Gillette, ACR2
Agency: Department of State
Subject: DAA-0059-2018-0001

LAG 7/18/2018

INTRODUCTION

Schedule Overview

Office of the Secretary, Office of the Ombudsman

Additional Background Information

As in similar programs across the Federal government, the Department of State Office of the Ombudsman manages informal mediation between employees and management, including the Civil Service. It provides an opportunity for employees to voice concerns while recommending avenues to resolve issues. In keeping with the Ombudsman Code of Ethics, the program is unaligned, impartial, and strictly confidential. Employees are not identified by name or position. The Ombudsman does not investigate or adjudicate issues brought to them, but rather serves as an intermediary between various parties. They can also assist in passing issues along for more formal grievance procedures, such as Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) proceedings.

Overall Recommendation

I recommend approval with proposed changes to one or more items, as provided below.

APPRAISAL

Item 0001: Office of the Ombudsman Program Files

Records include the establishment documents of Ombudsman Office, policies for the Ombudsman's Office, policy recommendations from the Ombudsman Office, and reports issued by the Ombudsman Office that rise to the level of the Secretary. An example of the types of reports included is the Quarterly Report, which documents the types and number of cases they have adjudicated in a given quarter. They also have a published guide and brochure, which provides information about what the office is and what the Ombudsman does, for internal employees. The amount of total records accumulated by the office is very small, currently estimated at about 0.5 C.F. of paper, and under 1 GB of electronic, which date from 2010 to the present. To more accurately describe the records, it was discussed during appraisal to revise the item description. NARA recommends, "Records related to the policy, organization and mission of the Office of the Ombudsman. These files include, but are not limited to, substantive correspondence; action and briefing memorandum; memoranda of

conversation; publications; reports; issue papers; department notices; records of creation; and other related information including relevant documentation by staff and advisors on the activities and responsibilities of the Ombudsman in the directing and carrying out of their duties. Excludes records related to confidential consultation and/or assistance regarding all State Department personnel, including anyone falling under chief of mission.”

Proposed Disposition: Permanent

Appropriateness of Proposed Disposition: Appropriate.

Appraisal Justification:

- * High potential research value. Included are the establishment and policy documents for the office.

- * Documents significant actions of Federal officials. The Ombudsman advises the Secretary and other senior management on workplace issues, as they relate to the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce.

- * Similar records have been approved as permanent; National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, NGA Ombudsman, job number DAA-0537-2014-0001, item 1, Ombudsman Program Files and Annual Reports and Department of Energy, Ombudsman Program, job number DAA-0434-2016-0007, item 1, Ombudsman Program Files.

Adequacy of Proposed Transfer Instructions: Requires change. NARA recommends: “Transfer to NARA in 5 year blocks, when most recent record is 25 years old.”

Media Neutrality: Approved

Item 0002: Conflict Prevention and Resolution Program Files

This item will be deleted as the records are covered by GRS 2.3, Employee Relations Records, Item 10 ADR Program Files.

Item 0003: Working Case Files

Records include tracking sheets and databases, used strictly for maintaining statistics on the numbers and types of cases handled. Also included are the working documents gathered as a part of a case file. The statistical information is summarized within the quarterly report captured as permanent in item 1 of this schedule. All identifying information of individuals or cases is kept under strict confidentiality per Ombudsman Association Code of Ethics.

Proposed Disposition: Temporary

Appropriateness of Proposed Disposition: Appropriate.

Appraisal Justification:

- * Similar records have been approved as temporary; National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, NGA Ombudsman, job number DAA-0537-2014-0001, item 2, Ombudsman Working Case Files and Department of Energy, Ombudsman Program, job number DAA-0434-2016-0007, item 2, Ombudsman Working Case Files.

- * Has little or no research value. All these records are utilized in support of the Ombudsman mission, and have short term value. The records are administrative in nature and do not document the mission of Ombudsman Office (those records are proposed as permanent under Item 1 of this schedule).

* Records that identify, or could identify individuals reporting on issues within the agency are considered confidential, in accordance with the Ombudsman Association Code of Ethics.

Adequacy of Proposed Retention Period: Requires change. A shorter retention is appropriate for these records will help foster an atmosphere of trust as is critical for the work of Ombudsman. In addition the shorter retention ensures that personally identifiable information is not kept on file beyond the immediate business need. NARA recommends: "Destroy after cutoff." The Department of State has requested-GAO approval for destruction immediately after cutoff for these records in order to ensure confidentiality. If concurrence is received the Department will be required to add to the schedule as an attachment. If not received then the Department will be required to revise the retention to read, "Destroy when 3 years old."

Media Neutrality: Approved.

Ann Gillette
Appraiser