**R988. Workforce Services, Homeless Services.**

**R988-1000. Homeless Services Provider Ombudsman.**

**R988-1000-1. Authority.**

This rule is authorized under Section 35A-16-1002, which authorizes the office to make rules governing the Homeless Services Provider Ombudsman.

**R988-1000-2. Definitions.**

Terms used in this rule are defined in Title 35A, Chapter 1, Department of Workforce Services, and Title 35A, Chapter 16, Office of Homeless Services.

**R988-1000-3. Scope.**

(1) The ombudsman is a neutral party who investigates complaints to resolve disputes between clients and homeless service providers.

(2) The ombudsman is not an advocate for clients or service providers, but exists to investigate complaints, resolve disputes, and improve delivery of homeless services.

(3) The ombudsman serves as a resource to service providers and public agencies and may coordinate with other public agencies throughout the state to provide training and make recommendations for improvement of services.

(4) The ombudsman may not:

(a) transport a client;

(b) provide services to a client beyond investigating or mediating a complaint;

(c) act as a guardian;

(d) act as a payee;

(e) sign a consent form;

(f) sign a medical directive; or

(g) exercise a client's power of attorney.

**R988-1000-4. Complaint Procedure.**

(1) No later than 90 days from the date of the alleged circumstances giving rise to the complaint, a complainant may file a written, oral, or electronic complaint with the office at any of the following:

(a) an employment center;

(b) an email address or telephone number provided by the office; or

(c) the Department's website.

(2) A complaint should include:

(a) a summary of the reasons for the complaint;

(b) the names of persons involved;

(c) a summary of the actions taken by the complainant to resolve the complaint;

(d) the complainant's desired outcome;

(e) whether the complainant requests the ombudsman to contact the complainant directly; and

(f) whether the complainant authorizes the ombudsman to release personally identifiable information concerning the complainant.

(3) A complaint may be filed by any person, including a client, a family member or close associate of a client, an advocacy group, or employee or volunteer of a homeless service provider.

(b) A complaint may be filed anonymously.

(4)(a) The ombudsman may request additional information from the complainant or the service provider.

(b) The ombudsman may decline to investigate a complaint that fails to provide sufficient information to allow further investigation.

(5) The ombudsman shall maintain data and records regarding the ombudsman's activities and complaints received.

**R988-1000-5. Time Limits for Complaints and Reviews.**

(1) Complaints should be filed within 90 days after the act or omission complained of occurred.

(2) Absent reasonable cause, complaints received after 90 days may not be considered.

(3) If requested, the ombudsman will generally try to contact the complainant within three business days of receiving a complaint.

(4) The ombudsman shall prioritize complaints alleging acts or omissions that place a client's health or safety at risk.

(5) If the ombudsman accepts a complaint for investigation, the ombudsman shall document the ombudsman's findings and recommendations, if any, within 90 days after receiving the complaint.

**R988-1000-6. Mediation of Disputes.**

(1) The ombudsman may conduct mediation to resolve disputes and settle complaints.

(2) The ombudsman is not required to verify a complaint to seek a resolution.

**R988-1000-7. Protection of Personal Information.**

(1) Records maintained by the ombudsman shall only be disclosed at the discretion of the ombudsman and in accordance with applicable laws governing the privacy and disclosure of government data and records.

(2) The identity of a complainant, client, or individual named in a complaint may be disclosed as part of an investigation involving the client to an agency that:

(a) has statutory responsibility for the client, or over the action alleged in the complaint;

(b) can assist the ombudsman to resolve the complaint; or

(c) can provide expertise that would benefit the client.

(3) The ombudsman shall report to the office substantiated findings that a provider has willfully interfered with an investigation or retaliated against any individual for the filing of a complaint or cooperation with the ombudsman.

**KEY: homeless services, ombudsman**

**Date of Last Change: December 8, 2025**

**Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: 35A-16-1002**