

NOTICE OF OMBUDSMAN SERVICES SOUTHWEST RIVERSIDE COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

The Southwest Riverside County Association of REALTORS® (Association) Ombudsman Program can be used to resolve disputes with members of the Association before they escalate to official complaints, or if you wish to attempt to resolve the dispute even after filing a complaint. Ombudsmen are experienced, trained members who work with both parties to facilitate effective communication in an attempt to reach a resolution in an informal manner. The purpose of utilizing these services is, ultimately, to avoid going through the grievance procedure and to come to a compromise that both sides can agree on.

Ombudsmen:

- Will not adjudicate the issue
- They will not “rule” or decide whether ethics violations have occurred.
- Will not recommend any form of discipline
- Are trained in:
 - National Association of REALTORS® Code of Ethics
 - State real estate regulations
- Are experienced in the practice of real estate.

Ombudsmen are trained so they can effectively respond to a wide variety of questions and complaints, including general questions about real estate practice, transaction details, ethical practice, and enforcement issues. Aside from instances that allege violations of Public Trust (such as stealing from a client, discrimination, and/or misrepresentation causing financial harm), all written and oral communications with the Ombudsman are confidential.

After an Ombudsman has been assigned to a matter, he or she will contact the party with whom there is a dispute, inform them why they are being contacted, and obtain the information needed to help the parties work towards a resolution. If a resolution cannot be reached, the parties still reserve the ability to file or continue with a formal disciplinary (ethics) complaint through the Association’s Professional Standards department. Furthermore, if a party fails or refuses to comply with the terms of a mutually agreed on resolution, the complaining party can file or resubmit a disciplinary complaint.

Some of the important terms to remember about this program are:

- It’s free;
- It’s optional;
- It’s confidential;
- It’s meant to be quick; and,
- You still file a formal grievance complaint if you find you cannot reach a resolution with the help of the Ombudsman.