

Office of the Ombudsperson



United States Department of Agriculture

Ombudsperson

- Neutral, independent, informal, and confidential
- Receives and hears concerns
- Facilitates equitable solutions
- Identifies systemic issues and trends
- Organizational Ombudsman serves a particular organization and hears concerns from internal and/or external stakeholders



Neutral/ Impartial

- Advocates for fair process
- Considers rights and interests of all parties
- Does not take sides

Independent

- No interference
- Independence from organization

Standards of Practice

Informal

- Voluntary
- Does not replace filing a complaint or requesting an investigation
- Office has no managerial authority to compel action or compliance

Confidential

- Off-the-record resource
- Will protect and honor confidentiality within federal limitations

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Practice

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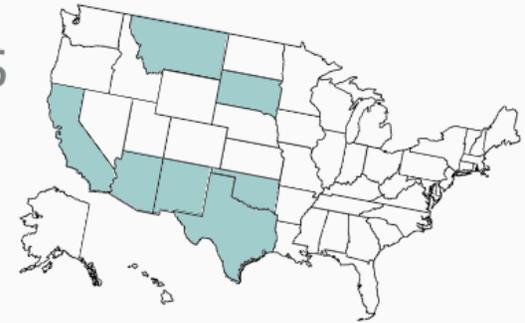
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Who the Office of the Ombudsperson serves:

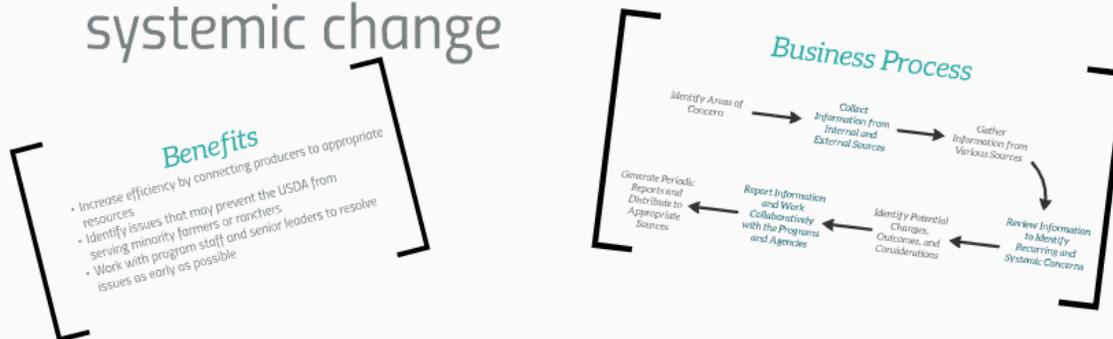
- Minority farmers and ranchers who have concerns about access to USDA programs
- In the first phase, the office will serve Native American farmers and ranchers in seven states: AZ, CA, MT, NM, OK, SD and TX
- Eventually, the office will serve all minorities in all US states
- USDA employees can contact the Ombudsperson if they have concerns about access to USDA programs



** Note, the Office of the Ombudsperson will not advocate on behalf of the USDA or visitors, but instead will provide a fair process for all involved.*

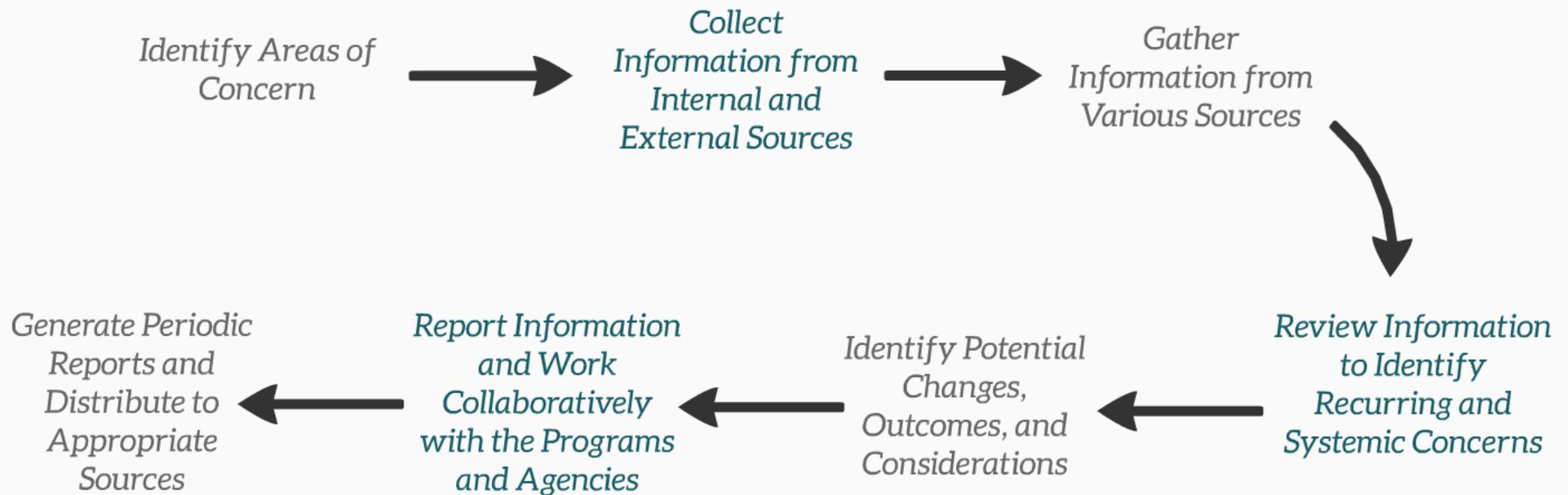
How the Ombudsperson works:

- Listens to concerns and identifies various perspectives
- Helps connect farmers and ranchers to other USDA resources
- Analyzes data to inform future focus
- Brings shared concerns to USDA leaders, while maintaining confidentiality
- Works collaboratively with USDA offices to create systemic change



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Business Process

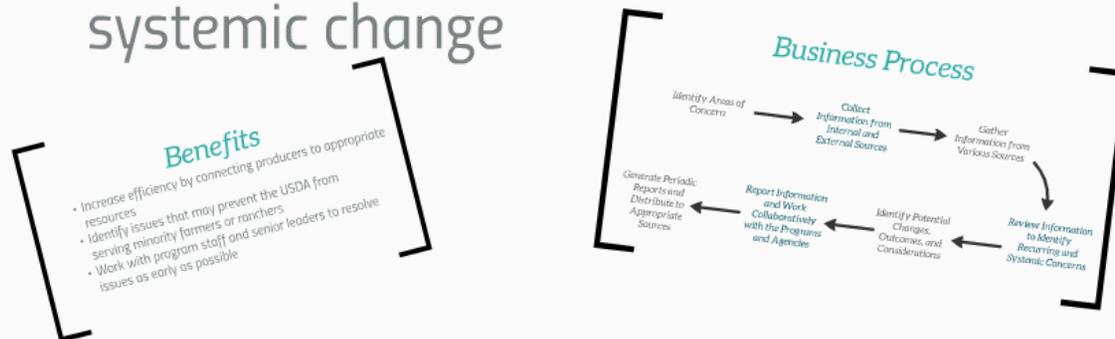


Benefits

- Increase efficiency by connecting producers to appropriate resources
- Identify issues that may prevent the USDA from serving minority farmers or ranchers
- Work with program staff and senior leaders to resolve issues as early as possible

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For More Information:

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Webpage: [www.usda.gov/
ombudsperson](http://www.usda.gov/ombudsperson)

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