

# **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/OMBUDSMAN**

## **General Definition**

This is responsible staff work performing a variety of administrative duties assisting the Commissioners and Chief Clerk in the management of the Commissioners' office.

The Administrative Assistant is responsible for a variety of administrative details. Work involves analyzing administrative operations, policies and procedures, preparing or implementing recommendations on procedural, budget or operational activities in the offices under the Commissioners' jurisdiction. Assignments require detailed knowledge of the functions, procedures and organization of County government. Work includes public contact in accomplishing assignments and effective public relations, but emphasis in the work relates primarily to internal County operations and services. Regular duties and special assignments are received through general instructions from the Commissioners or Chief Clerk, but work is performed with considerable initiative and independent judgement.

## **Examples of Work**

Studies and analyzes administrative operations and problems, prepares recommendations to Commissioners.

Assist the Commissioners in the management of County programs.

Insures adherence to administrative standards or policies developed by the Commissioners in all offices under their jurisdiction through contacts with County administrative directors and their staffs.

Reviews correspondence, reports, news sources or publications and informs the Commissioners of subsequent developments or problems.

Collects, interprets, analyzes and summarizes information to be used as a basis for executive action by the Commissioners.

Prepare for the monthly public meetings, workshops, and staff meetings.

All other duties and functions relating to the Commissioner's office.

### Commissioners Ombudsman

Under the supervision of the Chief Clerk the Commissioners Ombudsman will record, investigate, and compile information to address all reported constituent concerns, complaints and requests for information. This will require contact with Elected Officials, Department Heads, Administrators, Managers and Supervisors to provide constituents, residents, taxpayers and other interested parties with a single point of contact to meet their requests for information and address their needs on behalf of the Board of Commissioners while remaining outside of the normal chain of command.

Follow up with the constituent to provide information regarding the resolution of situation will be necessary and the Ombudsman should have proven communication skills

Investigation of incidents and situations in this manner (by someone outside of the chain of command) will allow the ombudsman to approach the incident or situation from a more neutral perspective and provide the departments with a less intimidating opportunity to address the complaint (i.e., they are not being questioned by a superior).

A monthly report of requests will be submitted to the Chief Clerk and available to the Commissioners describing the number of total requests, type of request, status and outcome along with constituent contact information. On random occasions, constituents will be contacted to assure that their level of satisfaction has been met with regard to their request.

As of 09/12/2006 this position, although not filled in many years is combined with one confidential secretary position in the Commissioners Office who as of the date referenced will assume these duties in addition to the regular duties of the secretarial position. See also job description for Confidential Secretary Commissioners Office.

#### **Skills Required:**

Ability to communicate orally and in writing.

Sensitivity to the concerns of residents of the County of Northumberland

Open-minded and non-judgmental – the ability to be fair and honest.

Resourceful in coping with a variety of situations.

Sense of humor in dealing with day-to-day concerns.

Perseverance – working on a problem until it is solved.

Tactful and diplomatic with staff residents and families.

Good listener – the ability to determine the true nature of the problem behind a complaint.



**The ombudsman will:**

- Listen to constituents and discuss problems/concerns, identifying and evaluating with options to resolve problems.
- Provide information on resources within the County that may help the constituent.
- Open avenues of communication, investigate complaints, and gather information.
- Serve as a neutral party to solve problems and resolve conflict. The ombudsman does not take sides, but works to achieve fair outcomes.