

# County of Los Angeles



## Department of Ombudsman Strategic Plan August 2002

## SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF OFFICE

<b>June 1993</b>	Board of Supervisors approves creation of Department of Ombudsman
<b>March 1994</b>	Board of Supervisors selects Rudy De Leon as Ombudsman
<b>May 1994</b>	Department of Ombudsman opens to the public
<b>August 1994</b>	Board of Supervisors approves and authorizes the Ombudsman's Force Review Judicial Panel
<b>December 1994</b>	Department establishes a Department Project Fund program for needy families
<b>December 1994</b>	Ombuds Department joins the Ombudsman Association
<b>April 1996</b>	Department receives the National Association of Counties Achievement Award
<b>September 1996</b>	American Civil Liberties Union requests for confidential information and documentation is denied by the courts
<b>September 1996</b>	Ombudsman testifies before the United States Commission on Civil Rights
<b>September 1996</b>	Volunteer pool is established to provide assistance to clients
<b>1996-97</b>	Grand Jury recommends the department assist residents with complaints or concerns involving any County department
<b>February 1998</b>	Ombudsman duties expand to include review of complaints involving Office of Public Safety sworn and civilian personnel
<b>July 1998</b>	Department expands from 3 to 5 budgeted positions
<b>August 1999</b>	Department relocates to larger office to accommodate growing staff
<b>November 1999</b>	Transfer of Knowledge Conference with Sheriff's Department Captain and command staff

## MESSAGE FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

It is with appreciation and pride that I am able to join the Ombuds staff in presenting the Department of the Ombudsman's strategic planning document. The plan is viewed as a living document, which will be modified and adjusted to meet the needs of the department and the needs of those we serve.

As our society has become more complex and pluralistic in nature, more laws and regulations have been required, which impact on a greater number of people. With this has developed the need for resolving complaints in a less traditional manner. The traditional methods of reconsideration by the agency making the initial decision with appeals through an administrative process and/or the courts, has given way to an independent and impartial complaint review process to supplement, not supplant, the traditional methods of redress.



*Robert B. Taylor*

The Ombudsman is not an advocate for the complainant, nor is the Ombudsman an advocate for the agency or jurisdiction that is a part of the complaint. The Ombudsman is a neutral, independent intermediary who investigates complaints in an objective and fair manner. The Ombudsman is really an advocate for good government.

This strategic planning document covers numerous issues which are designed to ensure that the office is prepared to properly carry out its mission of service to its constituencies - - the people, the Board of Supervisors, the Sheriff's Department, the Office of Public Safety and other County departments.

I am confident that the Ombuds staff is committed to its mission and to the goals delineated in this plan. We look forward to providing the best possible service to everyone needing our help.

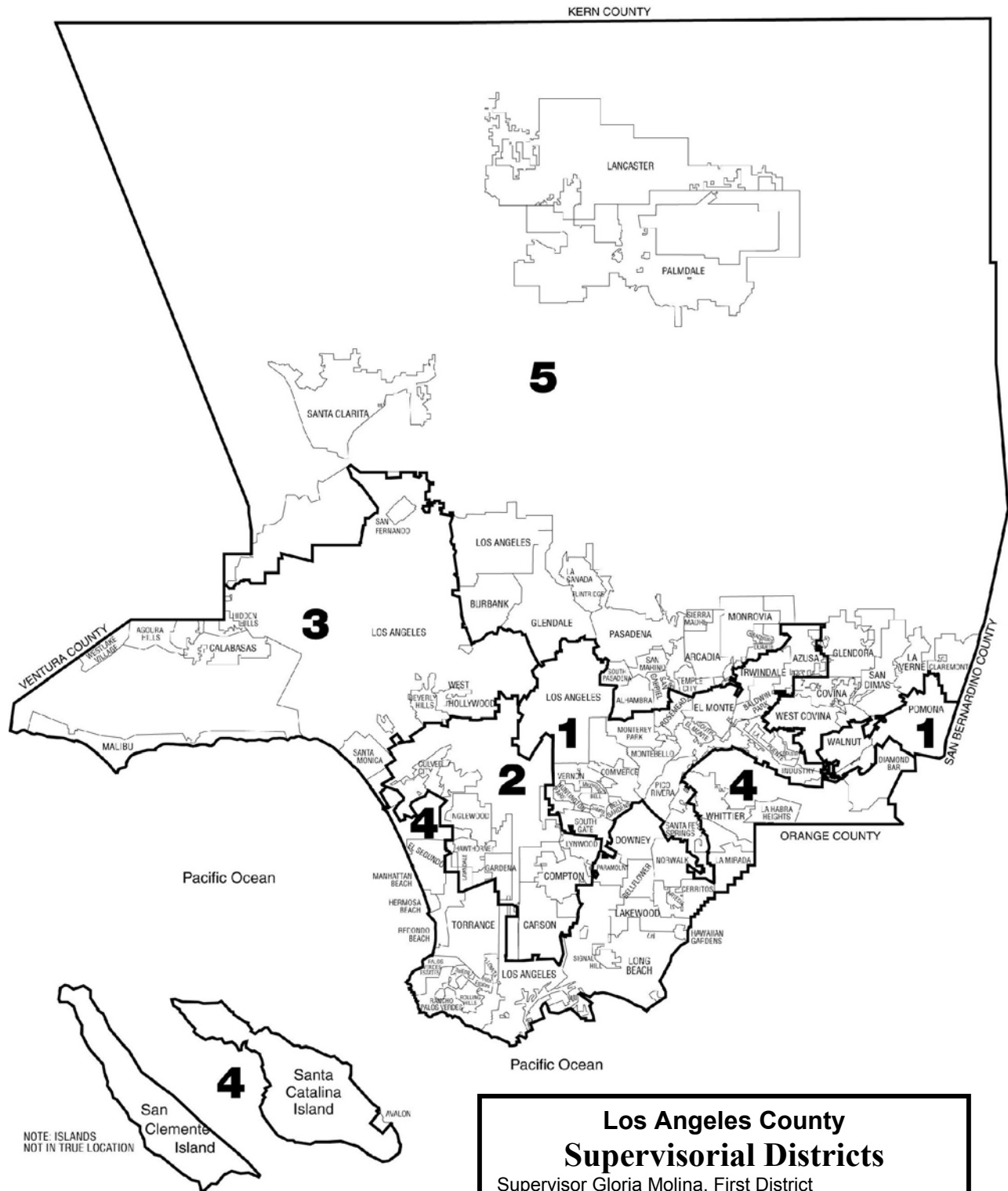
Very truly yours,

Robert B. Taylor  
Ombudsman

# **County of Los Angeles**

## **DEPARTMENT OF OMBUDSMAN**

### **Strategic Plan** **August 2002**



NOTE: ISLANDS  
NOT IN TRUE LOCATION

**Los Angeles County  
Supervisory Districts**

Supervisor Gloria Molina, First District  
 Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Second District  
 Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Third District  
 Supervisor Don Knabe, Fourth District  
 Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Fifth District

	<b>Page</b>
Message from the Ombudsman Robert B. Taylor, Ombudsman	<b>i</b>
Map of Los Angeles County	<b>1</b>

## **Table of Contents**

Executive Summary	<b>3</b>
Strategic Planning Process	<b>5</b>
Vision and Mission	<b>6</b>
Values	<b>7</b>
Goal 1 – Service Excellence	<b>8</b>
Goal 2 – Work Force Excellence	<b>12</b>
Goal 3 – Organizational Effectiveness	<b>14</b>
Goal 4 – Fiscal Responsibility	<b>16</b>
Goal 5 – Community Outreach	<b>17</b>
Contributors – Department of Ombudsman Staff	<b>19</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview of the Department of Ombudsman

Civilian oversight of law enforcement has grown by an accelerated rate over the past 20 years. Over three-quarters of the police departments in the largest cities of the United States currently have some form of civilian oversight. The independence of an oversight program serves to ensure the public that the County is committed to resolving their issues. The goal of the Department is to ensure a thorough and complete investigation that is handled in a timely manner and supported by open lines of communication.

The Ombudsman, as a designated neutral entity, has the responsibility of maintaining strict confidentiality concerning matters that are brought to his/her attention unless given permission to do otherwise. The only exceptions, at the sole discretion of the Ombudsman, are where there appears to be imminent threats of serious harm. While the focus is on the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department and Office of Public Safety, in the true spirit of an Ombudsman, assistance is provided to everyone who contacts the office. It is a reflection of the level of need for this assistance that two separate County Grand Juries have recommended that the Department of Ombudsman handle public complaints involving all County Departments.

These services include:

- Providing detailed information about the Sheriff's Department and Office of Public Safety complaint policies and processes;
- Conducting independent review of complaints for objectivity, thoroughness, integrity, and fairness and referring selected cases to a member of the Judges' Review Panel;
- Tracking complaint patterns and making recommendations to address such concerns;
- Mediating/negotiating differences between complainants and the Sheriff's Department or Office of Public Safety at the appropriate level; and
- Actively directing an on-going program informing residents, neighborhoods, and community organizations concerning available services and complaint processes, including those from other County and government agencies.

## Strategic Plan Scope

This plan addresses fiscal years 2002 – 2003 through 2004 – 2005. Four of the five Department Strategic Plan Goals reflect the County's Organizational Goals: Service Excellence, Workforce Excellence, Organizational Excellence, and Fiscal Responsibility.

The County's fifth goal, Children and Families' Well-Being, is not directly related to our work, and therefore, was not addressed in this plan. There are no specific programs within the Department of Ombudsman directed to serving children and families. However, they are indirectly assisted through services to the Department's primary clients. Issues resolved to the satisfaction of complainants are sure to have a positive impact on the families and children involved. The staff of the Department of Ombudsman promotes the well being of children and families through on-going volunteer activities and community service.

The Department's fifth Strategic Goal area, Community Outreach, was developed to address the need to increase public awareness of the Department and its mission.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

All staff members were involved in the development of the Strategic Plan. The planning consisted of three phases:

- Customer Feedback
- Staff Planning Retreat
- Drafting and Refining the Plan

### **Customer Feedback**

As outlined in the Service Excellence section of this plan, it was not feasible to contact primary clients, individuals, and family members, receiving direct service from the Department. The Department focused on secondary customers. The planning process began by obtaining feedback from Sheriff's personnel. Command staff from each region were randomly selected and responded to the request for input. They were asked their views of the Department of Ombudsman's role, their performance expectations, how well the Department has met those expectations, recommendations for future strategy and direction, and performance measurements. The Justice Deputies from Board Offices responded to the same questions.

### **Staff Planning Retreat**

During a two-day, off-site planning retreat the staff did the majority of analysis and decision making that ultimately went into the strategic plan. They reviewed the County's Vision, Mission, and Values and developed statements that reflect and support those of the County, and addressed the specific aspirations of the Department. In addition, they identified five areas of focus for the Department: Service Excellence, Workforce Excellence, Organizational Excellence, Fiscal Responsibility, and Community Outreach.

### **Drafting and Refining the Plan**

The draft, including Vision, Mission, Values, Strategic Goals, and Department Objectives, was written directly from the work done during the staff retreat. In the months since the retreat, the entire staff has worked to refine it and to ensure that there is consensus on the Department's objectives, as well as on the intent, scope, and ramifications of each of the objectives.

## **VISION**

The Department of Ombudsman aspires to be known throughout the County of Los Angeles as an agency where individuals receive quality service and resolution of concerns. The Ombuds staff seeks to resolve disputes to the full satisfaction of all parties. The Department strives to offer premier services based on creative, flexible, and impartial decision-making processes.

## **MISSION**

The Ombudsman is a county department that provides a professional, neutral, and impartial forum for people to seek answers and solutions to problems. Integrity and objectivity are our guiding principles. The Ombuds staff reviews and assesses investigations for fairness and thoroughness, and seeks to obtain proper resolution to issues involving the Sheriff's Department, Office of Public Safety and other agencies as directed by the Board of Supervisors.

## VALUES

<b>Responsiveness</b>	We are tenacious and stick with issues until we get answers and resolutions.
<b>A Can-do Attitude</b>	We never tell anyone we cannot help him or her.
<b>Commitment</b>	We are dedicated to serving the public to the best of our ability.
<b>Integrity</b>	We are candid, respectful, and unbiased, despite personal feelings or beliefs.
<b>Respect for Diversity</b>	We strive to relate and communicate in all situations and with all ethnicities in a manner that makes our clients comfortable.
<b>Compassion</b>	We acknowledge and respect the concerns of others and strive to be empathetic.
<b>Accountability</b>	We take responsibility for and stand behind all we say and do.
<b>Professionalism</b>	We are knowledgeable about our jobs and handle each person as a unique individual. As representatives of the Department, we maintain the highest standard of conduct.
<b>Objectivity</b>	We are fair, focused, and impartial.
<b>Excellence</b>	We strive for excellence in the service we provide.

## STRATEGIC GOALS

### Strategic Goal 1: SERVICE EXCELLENCE

*The Department of Ombudsman receives a myriad of inquiries and complaints from the public involving the Sheriff's Department, the Office of Public Safety, and other public agencies – County and otherwise. The major service areas are:*

**Complaint Assistance** --The complaint process is explained, questions are answered, and data is recorded. Individuals wishing to file complaints are directed to the appropriate department to initiate this process.

**Investigative Review/Analysis** -- Review the investigation to determine if it is thorough and objective.

**Investigation Progress/Status** -- Determine the status/progress of on-going complaint investigations and communicates this information to the client.

**General Assistance to Clients** -- Help the public and inmates and their families with issues that do not involve a formal complaint. Examples of this assistance are issues such as inmate medical concerns and referrals.

**Direct Public Services** -- Assist the public with issues involving other public agencies.

**Community Outreach** -- Provide presentations on the Department of Ombudsman and conflict/mediation to community and civic groups, schools, and colleges; air public service announcements on radio and television in English and Spanish advising on available services; and distribute brochures in six languages to various communities throughout the County.

## Implementation of the Strategic Plan

Two objectives in the Department Plan have been completed:

### **1.2 Analyze Ombuds clientele and identify primary and secondary clients**

*Our Primary Clients are:*

- Individuals contacting the department with complaints involving the Sheriff's Department or Office of Public Safety;
- Inmates requesting medical treatment and/or assistance with other issues;
- Individuals requesting Ombuds assistance with other issues involving the Sheriff's Department or Office of Public Safety;
- Individuals requesting Ombuds assistance regarding other County departments or with general inquiries; and
- Residents with family members who have transferred from Sheriff's custody to State prison but have unresolved issues with the Sheriff's Department or Office of Public Safety.

*Our Secondary Clients are:*

- Police Watch, American Civil Liberties Union, and others who refer individuals to the department;
- Family members, friends, significant others contacting the department on behalf of individuals who have had contact with the Sheriff's Department or Office of Public Safety personnel;
- Attorneys contacting the department on behalf of clients who have issues/concerns regarding the Sheriff's Department or Office of Public Safety;
- Supervisorial Offices;
- Offices of the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender; and
- Sheriff's Department or Office of Public Safety.

#### **1.4 Develop outcome measures to evaluate the services provided by the Ombuds Department**

*Our Outcome Measures are:*

- An overall decrease in the number of Ombuds clients who, within one year, do not find it necessary to file compensatory claims against the Sheriff's Department or Office of Public Safety
- An overall increase in the number of client contacts

While it would be ideal to survey the Department's primary clients to gain their input, there is currently no system that serves this purpose. Individuals contacting the Department typically have strong negative feelings associated with the incident about which they are complaining. The staff works diligently to resolve those issues recognizing that clients may be satisfied with the process and outcome but may continue to recall the unpleasant event.

Contacting a client upon completion of the review process does not serve the department's purposes or those of the clients. The Ombuds staff will continue to look for productive ways to measure primary client satisfaction with the services provided.

Input was sought from our secondary clients, including the Justice Deputies in the Supervisorial Offices and lieutenants from a number of Sheriff's Stations. Their recommendations have been considered and incorporated in the planning. Specifically, Sheriff's Department interviewees recommended that the Ombuds staff raise its visibility with Sheriff's personnel through station visits, and Board deputies recommended that the Department explore ways to increase the public's awareness of Ombuds services.

<b>County Goal 1: Service Excellence</b>	Provide the public with easy access to quality information and services that are both beneficial and responsive.	
<b>Department Objectives</b>		
Develop service delivery standards for each relevant program		Year 1
1.2 Analyze Ombuds clientele and identify primary and secondary clients		Completed 7/01
1.3 Explore ways to measure primary client satisfaction and outcomes by implementing methodology that would maintain the confidentiality surrounding the complaints and be productive for the Department and the clients		Year 2
1.4 Develop outcome measures to evaluate Ombuds services		Completed 11/01
1.5 Provide thorough follow-up information concerning investigation outcomes to Ombuds primary and secondary clients		Year 1
1.6 Prepare a quarterly summary of Department cases and activities and raise the visibility with the Board of Supervisors through regular communication with their Justice Deputies		Year 1
1.7 Document quality and comprehensive customer service procedures into a departmental employee manual		Year 1
1.8 Educate new deputies attending the Sheriff's Training Academy about the Department of Ombudsman		Year 2
1.9 Explore and implement ways to raise the Department's visibility with all Sheriff's personnel		Year 2
1.10 Explore the possibility of offering language translation services to Ombuds clients		Year 2
1.11 Finalize the complaint/website interface project that downloads complaint information to the Department's client tracking system		Year 1
1.12 Develop Intranet links to appropriate departments		Year 1
1.13 Explore the feasibility of animating the website and making it interactive		Year 2
1.14 Explore developing other language capability on-line		Year 3
1.15 Explore ways to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements on-line		Year 3

## **Strategic Goal 2: WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE**

***The Department of Ombudsman has a small, but highly effective staff of ten. Each person brings to the organization unique and diverse skills that combine to successfully assist the public with their issues and concerns.***

***The challenge for a department of this size is to continue to provide opportunities for staff growth and advancement while retaining their expertise and experience within the organization. The staff believes this can be achieved by accomplishing these objectives.***

### **Implementation of the Strategic Plan**

The Department has begun work on three of the Objectives:

#### **2.1 Implement and analyze a training needs assessment for all staff**

A training needs assessment has been developed that will be customized by each individual staff member to reflect the skills required for his or her specific work assignments. Each person will also have the ability to prioritize training and development needs through this assessment.

#### **2.2 Conduct an employee satisfaction survey and develop and implement an action plan to address the results**

An employee satisfaction survey based on questions from The Gallup Organization was administered to the staff and an action plan is being developed to address concerns raised by the survey.

#### **2.3 Formalize the entry-level training program for Ombuds staff**

New Community Service Liaisons will participate in a comprehensive training program designed to orient them to the Department and its role in the County. Training will also include required case management skills.

<b>County Goal 2: Workforce Excellence</b>	Enhance the quality and productivity of the County workforce.	
<b>Department Objectives</b>		
2.1	Implement and analyze a training needs assessment for all staff	Year 1
2.2	Conduct an employee satisfaction survey and develop and implement an action plan to address the results	Year 1
2.3	Formalize the entry-level training program for Ombuds staff	Year 1
2.3	Develop an individual training and professional development plan for each staff member and each position	Year 1
2.5	Develop and implement a career ladder for the positions within the department to develop and retain dedicated and productive staff	Year 1
2.6	Review employee classifications to ensure that duties are consistent with assigned positions	Year 1
2.7	Conduct a focus group within the Department to assess the current employee evaluation system and recommend improvements	Year 1
2.8	Develop and implement a plan to ensure a computer literate workforce that maximizes use of technology	Year 2
2.9	Include a case review component during staff meetings as an educational tool	Year 1
2.10	Continue using an interoffice newsletter as a method of communicating news and County information	Year 1
2.11	Assess the current physical facility, including location, and develop a plan for improvement	Year 1
2.12	Explore the feasibility of establishing satellite offices throughout the County that are accessible to the public	Year 3

## **Strategic Goal 3: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

***The hiring of two additional professional staff will impact the Department's ability to achieve the objectives in this goal area, as well as in the areas of Service Excellence and Community Outreach. An Assistant Ombudsman position will enable the Department to focus on organizational effectiveness.***

### **Implementation of the Strategic Plan**

The Department has begun work on the following Objectives:

**3.1 Develop and implement a department strategic plan consistent with the countywide plan**

The Department of Ombudsman strategic plan will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors before August 30, 2002. Each strategic plan goal provides a brief status on implementation efforts.

**3.2 Conduct an internal review of current business processes**

While many of the office systems have been upgraded, there is a need to continually evaluate and align our business processes.

**3.3 Explore uses of information technology to better support business processes**

There are electronic applications that can help the staff to better track and file cases.

**3.4 Finalize, implement, and test modifications to the Department's client tracking system**

Scheduled modifications to the client tracking system were implemented and staff training is on going.

**3.5 Refine and document key administrative operations**

Documentation of administrative operations is under development.

**3.9 Increase interaction with Sheriff's Office of Independent Review**

Quarterly meetings have been scheduled and the first meeting was in May 2002.

<b>County Goal 3: Organizational Effectiveness</b>		Ensure that service delivery systems are efficient, effective, and goal oriented.
<b>Department Objectives</b>		
3.1	Develop and implement a department strategic plan consistent with the Countywide plan	Years 1 – 3
3.2	Conduct an internal review of current business processes and recommend areas for improvement	Year 1
3.3	Explore ways to coordinate Information Technology support so that business processes are more effective	Year 1
3.4	Finalize, implement, and test modifications to the Department's client tracking system to document workload data and measure responsiveness	Year 1
3.5	Refine and document key administrative operations	Year 1
3.6	Create an Assistant Ombudsman position to focus on internal efficiencies and effectiveness	Year 1
3.7	Identify areas of overlap, conflict, and shared accountabilities with other County agencies	Year 2
3.8	Explore the feasibility of conducting a study on why police and sheriff personnel who are "good cops" become "bad cops," including funding opportunities	Year 3
3.9	Increase interaction with Sheriff's Office of Independent Review to improve information sharing and to identify areas of service betterment	Year 1
3.10	Examine best practices in providing Ombudsman services through greater involvement in professional associations and interactions with others in the profession.	Year 2

## Strategic Goal 4: FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

*The Department of Ombudsman will continue to explore grants and other revenue-generating opportunities in addition to pursuing Countywide goals and strategies in this area. The Department continues to focus on improving management of allocated funding through cost awareness and County-sponsored classes on fiscal operations.*

### Implementation of the Strategic Plan

The Department has begun work on the following Objectives:

#### 4.1 Develop internal strategies that enhance the organizations' fiscal capacity

The Ombudsman is negotiating a revenue generating agreement with a local university to provide Ombuds services to its clientele. Efforts are underway to relocate the Ombuds Department to a County owned facility, which would reduce net county costs.

#### 4.2 Implement countywide standards for Enterprise Resource Planning

The Ombuds Department supports the County's Enterprise Resource Planning processes through survey responses and attendance at meetings.

County Goal 4: Fiscal Responsibility	Strengthen the County's fiscal capacity
<b>Department Objectives</b>	
4.1 Develop internal strategies that enhance the organization's fiscal capacity	Years 1 - 3
4.2 Implement applicable Countywide standards for Enterprise Resource Planning	As required
4.3 Continue developing and implementing the annual Business Automation Plan	Years 1 - 3
4.4 Participate in the County inventory of physical assets	As required
4.5 Implement aspects of the County Strategic Asset Management Plan as applicable to the Department	As required
4.6 Explore alternative funding opportunities	Year 1

## Strategic Goal 5: COMMUNITY OUTREACH

***Community outreach is a critical component of the Department of Ombudsman's program. A coordinated, comprehensive plan will be developed to educate the public on the services provided by the Ombuds Department and to raise the organization's visibility. Community outreach efforts will focus on Los Angeles County residents, employees, and those utilizing County services. Two recently hired staff persons will focus on community outreach as part of their on-going duties.***

### **Implementation of the Strategic Plan**

The Department has begun work on four of the Objectives:

**5.1 Develop a community awareness program to raise visibility and awareness of the Department**

The Department has taken a two-pronged approach to implementation of this objective. The Ombuds staff is developing its community awareness program while participating in events as opportunities arise. To date, the staff has participated in job fairs and cultural festivals at local junior colleges and universities and given presentations to residents at community advisory council meetings.

**5.2 Submit regular articles about the Department's activities and services to the media on a regular basis**

This involves information sharing and building relationships.

**5.3 Participate in County events and committees to become more actively involved**

Departmental participation at County events has significantly increased with booths at Supervisorial-sponsored youth job fairs, walk-a-thons and the County's annual cultural diversity conference.

**5.4 Develop a package of materials to share with others who are interested in establishing Ombuds organizations or are seeking technical assistance**

Numerous inquiries are received from other agencies and jurisdictions inquiring about the Ombudsman program. The staff wants to assist others in starting out on the "right foot" by providing a package of materials, very similar to a press kit.

<b>Goal 5: Community Outreach</b>	Increase the public's awareness of the Department of Ombudsman	
<b>Department Objectives</b>		
5.1 Develop a community awareness program to raise visibility and awareness of the Department		Year 1
5.2 Submit articles about the Department's activities and services to the media on a regular basis		Year 1
5.3 Participate in County events and committees to become more actively involved, e.g. Youth Job Fairs, charitable giving programs, and conferences		Year 1
5.4 Develop a package of materials to send to other jurisdictions who are establishing Ombuds organizations or are seeking technical assistance		Year 2
5.5 Develop targeted education programs (e.g. help high school students have positive interactions with law enforcement personnel)		Year 3
5.6 Explore the feasibility of conducting a forum to assist local police agencies interested in establishing an Ombuds function		Year 3

## **Contributors – Department of Ombudsman Staff**

Mary L. Calhoun

Rudy De Leon

Angela Isaiah-Payne

Louis Jasper

Matthew Jensen

Alice F. Martel

Stephanie S. Maxberry

Mario A. Miranda

Debra Pritchett

Robert B. Taylor



## SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF OFFICE

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>July 2000</b>     | Department expands from 5 to 9 budgeted positions   |
| <b>January 2001</b>  | Comparative Analysis on Civilian Oversight programs throughout the nation is published  |
| <b>February 2001</b> | Ombudsman WEB Site is implemented   |
| <b>April 2001</b>    | Staff participates in annual California State University, Dominguez Hills Unity Fest  |
| <b>March 2001</b>    | First on-site computer training for staff   |
| <b>March 2001</b>    | Ombuds staff joins the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement  |
| <b>October 2001</b>  | Department joins United States Ombudsman Association  |
| <b>January 2002</b>  | Ombudsman Rudy De Leon retires and Stephanie S. Maxberry appointed Acting Ombudsman   |
| <b>April 2002</b>    | Department receives award for the Highest Cash Donation Category – D from the United Way September 11 <sup>th</sup> Fund Committee and the Board of Supervisors |
| <b>April 2002</b>    | Robert B. Taylor appointed Ombudsman by the Board of Supervisors  |





**County of Los Angeles  
Department of Ombudsman**