



Office Statistics (YTD):

Since January 1st, 2025 (as of Oct 14th, 2025)

- 86 Office Visits
- 65 Unique Visitors (2.6% Pace)
- 1 Team Meeting Presentations
- 12 Facilitations/Mediations
- 1 Training
- 0 Visitors during Open Office Hours

Future:

- 1 Requested Training
- 2 Scheduled Facilitation/Mediation
- 0 Scheduled Meeting

Office Statistics :

Since Aug 7th, 2025

- 11 Office Visits
- 8 Unique Visitors (1.6% Pace)
- 1 Team Meeting Presentations
- 3 Facilitations/Mediations
- 0 Training
- 1 Visitors during Open Office Hours



The Office is NOT just Numbers, its People.

"I utilized the ombuds office to assist with communication with management regarding several concerns. It provided an opportunity to help organize what I wanted to relay to the manager, and a safe place to have a discussion about difficult workplace topics. This led to management making real changes to culture and expectations within the unit. The morale of the unit was so low before, and it has improved with the changes implemented. Without the ombuds, I would not have talked to management and don't believe they would have taken my concerns seriously if I had."

"I have enjoyed having an independent party to discuss work issues. All employees are not members of an employee group that can assist with conflict. The office gave me the opportunity to have conversations about disagreements and taught me new conflict resolution skills."

"I think having an independent voice that takes an unbiased perspective on general work issues and can potentially suggest the root of many issues in established practice and management policy is essential to improving the work force for Dane County. I think the Ombuds has been underutilized because its use is not supported by management and the administration-- and that's too bad that the administration is afraid of unbiased, objective viewpoints. It's not possible to improve unless you consider outside viewpoints."



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"I used the office to explore an ethical issue in my role at the County. Diana was helpful and provided a space to explore the issue anonymously."

"I have worked with the Ombuds Office on a couple of occasions over the last year. I found their perspective and support to be of value in helping me navigate some personnel issues that did not rise to the level of discipline. The Ombuds role provided a safe and objective forum in which difficult conversations could be held in a supportive and effective manner. I have not always had the same experience when trying to navigate difficult conversations with representatives from Employee Groups. I think having an objective, non-partisan entity with whom information can be confidentially shared and processed is of value to Dane County and its employees, supervisors and managers. I would ask that funding for the Dane County Ombuds not be cut from the 2026 budget."

"I probably would have sued my supervisor and exposed a great deal of institutional discrimination if it wasn't for the ombudsman. She was a fantastic resource and helped make an intolerable situation manageable and provided a critical resource for dialogue that has never existed. Eliminating this office would be horrible for Dane County employees."



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“An unbiased place to take issues with management is lacking anywhere else in the system. In my direct experience and observation, Dane county agencies have issues with hiring and keeping employed managers who are inexperienced with either the work their employees perform, how to properly supervise others, or both of these things. Not all managers lack people skills, management skills and subject area expertise, but a disappointing proportion of them do. When they are aware of their own incompetence or the fact that the employees who are subordinate to them know more than they do, they tend to lash out. The avenue available to them is the discipline system and this is misused to harm and retaliate. I am honestly not 100% sure that the Ombuds office alone is the way to address this problem but it is certainly part of the solution. My experience with the County Board is that the individuals represent their constituents by among other things taking an interest in treatment and conditions for Dane County employees. I don't know of another existing way that the Board can have information about the treatment of employees other than the Ombuds report. The office has not been promoted effectively to employees nor given time to create change. I am also aware that the Dept of Administration demanded significant changes to the report made to County Board that minimized and masked the findings of issues with management and this needs to be a truly independent office. Thank you.”

“The Ombuds provided helpful pertinent training information to help me do my job better. I appreciated her neutral approach and discussion the 3-4 times I interacted with her.”



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“This proposal is an alarming one, especially since it comes just months after the 2024 Term Report raised serious concerns about workplace retaliation and a toxic organizational culture. Eliminating or reducing funding for this office sends a troubling message to employees and undermines the County’s commitment to transparency, fairness, and employee well-being.”

“The Ombuds Office provides a truly neutral, confidential, and accessible resource for employees navigating issues of unfair treatment, hostile work environments, and unresolved internal conflicts. In contrast, Employee Relations has consistently demonstrated an inability to conduct unbiased investigations, deliver objective complaint determinations, or implement meaningful recommendations for systemic improvement.

Many employees—particularly front-line workers—have experienced firsthand the flaws in the current internal complaint system. Too often, those who file complaints are met with defensiveness, retaliation, or even character attacks, while those responsible for harmful behaviors are protected. This broken system discourages reporting, perpetuates harm, and erodes trust in leadership. Removing funding from the Ombuds Office would effectively eliminate one of the few remaining avenues for employees who feel voiceless. At a time when workplace culture and accountability are under justified scrutiny, now is not the time to silence the one office that offers hope for fair, impartial resolutions.”



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"I worked with the Dane County Ombuds Office in 2024 and found it to be an invaluable resource while navigating harassment and acts of retaliation within my division. It was incredibly helpful to have someone trained in conflict resolution who could serve as a truly neutral party when I was struggling with how to address concerns about management within my department. The Ombuds took time to actively listen, understand the full context, and offer fair, practical guidance on possible paths forward. They also acted as a supportive liaison and mediator when I met with my Department Director to share my experiences, ensuring the conversation remained constructive and solutions-focused. I especially appreciated the Ombuds' ability to view the situation holistically — considering multiple perspectives — while still providing clear recommendations for next steps. Additionally, the original report shared with the Ombuds Committee reflected a thoughtful and honest analysis of the systemic challenges at play, including patterns of workplace harassment and retaliation I have experienced, as well as structural biases that exist in our grievance and appeals processes. While these issues are deeply challenging to face, having a neutral, skilled professional to help navigate them and to elevate these concerns in a fair and well-documented way was empowering and validating. This should be a value Dane County upholds as we move into trying times as government workers. Overall, I found the Ombuds Office to be a safe, informed, and constructive resource during an extremely difficult time. Their support not only helped me advocate for myself but also highlighted opportunities for the County to improve how it addresses workplace conflict and equity concerns."



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“The ombuds office reached out to me quickly and provided clear communication between all parties which greatly reduced the level of tension and discomfort we had been facing. It turns out everyone was more or less on the same page but unable to see that without outside assistance. Thank you!”

“I have personally used the Ombuds Office three times in the last two years. In each of these experiences, I turned to the Ombuds Office when the County policies and procedures, staff at the Tamara Grigsby OEI office, handbook language, or other directives created by my department, County administration, and even my own employee group seemed to be collectively working against me as an individual. In all three cases, I had documented information clearly outlining my concerns about my rights, representation, equity, and equitable treatment. I used the word fair/unfair, but the Ombuds was clear when explaining each of the issues was about EQUITY. Each time I turned to the Ombuds as my last resort, desperately begging to be heard after all other avenues failed. Guess what? Every time- all three of the times I went to the Ombuds I felt seen as an employee. I felt like SOMEONE besides me cared about what I was experiencing. This is contrary to the treatment from my direct supervisor, my manager, the Department director, my EG, staff at OEI, Employee Relations, or my County Board Supervisor. The only person who was able to make any inroads was the Ombuds- all three times.”