

Bend Pops Ombudsperson

Roles and Responsibilities

Bend Pops Orchestra

Purpose

The Ombudsperson (“Ombuds”) serves as a confidential, neutral, and informal resource for Bend Pops members. The purpose of the Ombuds is to provide members with a safe, supportive space to raise issues or concerns, to explore options for resolution, and, when appropriate, to bring systemic concerns to the attention of the Board for consideration and action.

Goals of the Ombuds

The Ombuds works to:

- **Listen and understand:** Provide a respectful, non-judgmental space for members to share concerns, while remaining neutral and impartial regarding facts or outcomes.
- **Reframe and clarify:** Assist members in clarifying issues, exploring perspectives, and evaluating potential options for resolution.
- **Coach and guide:** Support members in addressing concerns directly with others or in navigating formal channels, depending on their comfort and situation.
- **Facilitate informal resolution:** Help resolve issues through informal dialogue, mediation, or other collaborative approaches that promote understanding and resolution.
- **Refer to appropriate resources:** Direct members to formal organizational processes, policies, or external resources, as appropriate to the situation.
- **Surface concerns:** When a member cannot or does not wish to bring an issue forward directly, the Ombuds can help amplify the concern and ensure it reaches the appropriate decision-makers.

- **Identify systemic issues:** Observe and report trends or patterns that may indicate broader organizational challenges, providing early warning and constructive recommendations for systemic improvement.

Responsibilities of the Ombuds

- Maintain neutrality, independence, and confidentiality to the extent possible.
- Serve as a resource for all members without bias toward individuals, groups, or leadership.
- Provide information on organizational policies, procedures, and available conflict resolution options.
- Facilitate informal discussions or mediations when appropriate.
- Keep the Board informed of systemic concerns or opportunities for organizational improvement, without disclosing confidential individual information unless authorized.
- Refrain from making binding decisions, conducting formal investigations, or serving as an advocate for any one party.

Principles and Standards

The Ombuds role is guided by the following core principles:

1. Confidentiality

- Conversations with the Ombuds are considered confidential, to the fullest extent permitted.
- Information shared with the Ombuds will not be disclosed without the member's permission, except when there is an imminent risk of serious harm or if legally required.

2. Neutrality and Impartiality

- The Ombuds does not take sides or advocate for any individual or group.

- The Ombuds seeks to promote fair process and constructive resolution while remaining impartial to outcomes.

3. Independence

- The Ombuds operates independently of management and the Board, and does not have decision-making or disciplinary authority.
- This independence allows the Ombuds to serve as a trusted, informal resource for members.

4. Informality

- The Ombuds provides informal, off-the-record assistance.
- Use of the Ombuds is voluntary and does not replace or limit access to formal complaint or grievance procedures.

Position in the Organization

The Ombuds is independent of formal management and Board decision-making processes. Their role is advisory and supportive, not disciplinary or adjudicative. The Ombuds does not replace formal grievance processes but complements them by offering an informal, confidential first step for members seeking support or resolution.