



PIA Tips for Requestors & MD Agencies

Our basic advice for filing a successful MPIA request can be distilled into a few simple thoughts. Here are some basic “dos” and “don’ts” for your next request or response:

Requestors

Keep it Simple & Specific

Do:

- Make requests simple and straight forward.
- Make requests specific and precise.
- Treat people as you want to be treated. Always be polite and respectful.
- Identify your request as an MPIA request. Follow agency procedures for submitting PIA requests.

Don't:

- Do **not** make complicated or convoluted requests.
- Do **not** use vague and imprecise language in your request.
- Do **not** be inconsiderate or antagonistic.
- Do **not** submit stealth requests. Do not embed a PIA request in your other correspondence.

WITH THESE GUIDELINES IN MIND, REQUESTORS AND AGENCIES CAN SIMPLIFY THE PIA PROCESS AND AVOID UNNECESSARY CONFLICT. IF YOU HAVE ISSUES OR PROBLEMS, **WE ARE HERE TO HELP**. YOU CAN ASK FOR OMBUDSMAN ASSISTANCE BY EMAIL AT PIA.OMBUDS@OAG.STATE.MD.US, OR BY CALLING 410-576-6560.

Agencies

Communicate & Follow Through

Do:

- Communicate with the requestor. When in doubt, **ask**.
- Calculate actual costs to estimate fees and explain the basis for the estimate to the requestor.
- Treat people as you want to be treated. Always be polite and respectful.

Don't:

- Do **not** ignore requests that are submitted outside of your standard procedures. A PIA request does **not** have to say “MPIA Request” to be one; a PIA request does **not** have to be submitted via designated agency forms or portals to be one.
- Do **not** ignore or deny fee waiver requests without consideration. “Indigence” can be a basis for waiver of fees to individuals.
- Do **not** be inconsiderate or antagonistic. Do **not** wait until the 30th day to respond to PIA requests.