The public's right to information about government activities lies at the heart of a democratic government.

**The Big Picture: Mediation saves money**

Early resolution of disputes saves time and resources and increases public knowledge and awareness of the PIA process. For example, mediation is entirely voluntary, confidential, and in many cases doesn’t require an attorney.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Mediation Cases 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carry over from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New/Incoming cases in 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Mediation cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation cases carried to 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation cases Closed as of 12/31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Agencies

132 unique agencies participated in mediation matters with the PIA Ombudsman in 2017. Agency jurisdictions are state level, 17 different counties and Baltimore City, and 12 municipalities.

The Requestors

- Media: 16%
- Advocate: 11%
- Attorney: 8%
- Inmate: 24%
- Business/Corp.: 2%
- Individual: 40%

What Agencies are Participating in Mediation?

- State Agencies
- County Government
- Municipal Government
- Police/Fire Depts.; State’s Attorney’s Offices
- Public School Systems

What are the PIA disputes?

- Misapplication of exemption (3%)
- MIA: No Response (19%)
- Does not believe response (7%)
- Partial, nonresponsive, or incomplete response (10%)
- Written Response, No Documents Produced (13%)
- Fees excessive (5%)
- Fee waiver request denied or ignored (7%)
- Asked for explanation of response (9%)
- Redaction inappropriate (3%)
- Other (19%)

Range: 1 – 519 days. 31% of the cases are resolved within 3 weeks and 46% by 6 weeks.

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Ombudsman’s Website:
http://news.maryland.gov/mpiaombuds/
PIA Legislation & Publications

2017 New Legislation—
Effective October 1, 2017

- HB0383/(SB1057): Public Information Act - Denials of Inspection - Explanation Regarding Redaction
- SB 44: Records Management and Preservation - State and Local Government Units - Responsibilities

Publications

- Ombudsman’s Annual Reports & Metrics: 2016, 2017, Since Inception

PIA Fact Sheets

- Tips for Submitting and Responding to a PIA Request
- Tips for Participating in a PIA Mediation

Outreach 2017

Presentations, Workshops, Meetings

March
- Japanese Embassy, March 9
- DHMH, Fiscal and Contract Managers, Training, March 17

May
- Maryland Municipal Attorneys Association, May 4
- Maryland State Bar Association, State and Local Government Section, May 5

June
- MD Department of Agriculture, June 14
- Maryland Municipal League Conference—Secretary’s Roundtable, June 27

September
- Second Chance-Maryland Correctional Institution-Women, September 11
- Baltimore Community Mediation Program, September 19
- DHMH, Prevention and Health Promotion Administration, Training, September 20
- Justice Policy Institute, Presentation, September 28

October
- Howard County Public Schools, Training, October 12
- Maryland Association of Counties, Presentation, October 18
- Calvert County League of Women Voters, Presentation, October 26
- Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Training, October 30
- DHMH, Training, October 31

November
- Joint Committee on Legislation, Information Technology and Open Government, November 8
- Maryland State Bar Association, State and Local Government Section, November 30

December
- Prince George’s County Attorneys, December 12
- Charles County Sherriff’s Office, December 19

PIA “Help Desk”
The office of the Ombudsman receives daily requests regarding a number of PIA matters, including:
- Questions about PIA process;
- Misdirected requests to Ombudsman are referred to the correct custodian; and
- Referrals to other resources, e.g., PIA Compliance Board Fee Issues.

Resources/Links

  All of the resources below can be found in the PIA Manual.
  - List of Public Record Custodians: Appendix “J”
  - Overview of the Public Information Act: Appendix “I”
- MD State Archives: http://msa.maryland.gov is a resource for custodians’ record management and retention practices.