The Requestors

- Individual: 39%
- Media: 20%
- Inmate: 36%
- Business/Agency: 6%
- Attorney: 8%
- Advocate: 1%

Total Mediation Cases 2019

- Carry over from prior years: 20
- New/Incoming cases in 2019: 70
- Total Number of Mediation cases: 90
- Mediation cases currently open: 16
- Total Mediation cases Closed: 74

How Long does Mediation Take?

- 47% of cases are resolved within 3 weeks and 69% by 6 weeks.

The Agencies

40 unique agencies participated in mediation matters with the PIA Ombudsman in the first quarter of 2019. Agency jurisdictions include state level, 7 different counties and Baltimore City, and 3 municipalities.

What Agencies are Participating in Mediation?

- State Agencies: 38%
- County Government: 20%
- Municipal Government: 13%
- Police/Fire Depts.; State’s Attorney’s Offices: 8%
- Public School Systems: 23%

What are the PIA disputes?

- MIA: No Response: 11%
- Misapplication of exemption: 25%
- Partial, nonresponsive, or incomplete response: 26%
- Fees excessive: 14%
- Fee waiver request denied or ignored: 7%
- Does not believe response: 7%
- Asked for explanation of response: 7%
- Redaction inappropriate: 7%
- Other: 8%

Disputes are presented as framed by the requestor. Characterizations are based on how the requestors describe the issues. These are not findings.

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.

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Ombudsman’s Website:
http://piaombuds.maryland.gov
Legislation & Court Opinions

- **SB 5** (2019) requires notification to "person-in-interest" when certain 911 records requested. Awaiting Gov. Signature.

Ombudsman’s Blog — Open Matters

- Proposed Regulations Noticed – Ombudsman Operations, 03/29/19
- Proactive Disclosure Saves Time and Money, and It’s the Law, 1/28/19
- Let the Sun Shine In: Maryland Public Access Ombudsman Program, 03/15/19
- PIA TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS: Maryland Insurance Administration’s PIA Web-Portal, 11/20/18
- Recommendations to the General Assembly. 11/01/2018

Ombudsman’s Selected Tweets — 2019

- The Spring 19 issue of *For the Record*, a Quarterly Records Management Newsletter for the State of Maryland has Tips and Tricks for Email Retention. The Ombudsman recommends this article for all Maryland government employees. [https://t.co/Z1XUjyoq7](https://t.co/Z1XUjyoq7)
- The Ombudsman’s Office” is noticing interpretative regulations that are proposed to govern the Office’s operations. We invite you to review the proposed regulations in the Maryland Register at [https://t.co/cTNxrdgMBn](https://t.co/cTNxrdgMBn) and submit any comments by April 29, 2019. For more information on how to comment. 3/29/19. Visit [https://t.co/MoWjB2iI7](https://t.co/MoWjB2iI7)
- FOIA in the News. *FCC to pay journalist $43K in net neutrality records case*. The Hill. 03/22/19 [https://t.co/wptJSASd6D](https://t.co/wptJSASd6D)

Outreach 2019 & 18

Presentations, Workshops, Trainings, and Other Outreach

2019

- Mt. Airy Police Department. June
- Prince George’s County Law Office. April 25
- Wicomico County State’s Attorney’s Office, April 5
- Town of Boonsboro. February 7

2018—4th Quarter

- Maryland Association of Counties, November 14
- Office Of the Public Defender, Nov. 8
- Goucher College, October 23
- MDPC Press Assoc., *Public records requests in the current political climate*, October 23, hosted by Morgan State University, Global School of Journalism
- Oregon Public Records Advocate, October 22
- City of Greenbelt, October 18
- Department of Health, October 9 (Boards), and November 30 (New Employees)
- Maryland General Assembly, Joint Committee on Legislation, Information Technology & Open Government, October 3

Publications

- Ombudsman Program - Summary Report, Program Operations Since Inception, March 30, 2016 - March 31, 2019
- Fee Estimates, Flat Fees and Waiver of Fees. Office of the Public Defender, Post Conviction Newsletter, Spring 2018

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

- **MD State Archives**: [http://msa.maryland.gov](http://msa.maryland.gov) is a resource for custodians’ record management and retention practices.
- **Federal FOIA (Freedom of Information Act)**: [https://www.foia.gov/](https://www.foia.gov/)
- **Public Access Ombudsman - Request for Mediation Form**: [https://news.maryland.gov/mpiaombsuds/request-mediation/](https://news.maryland.gov/mpiaombsuds/request-mediation/)