Public Access Ombudsman
Since Inception (34 mo.)
March 30, 2016 — March 31, 2019

The Big Picture: Mediation Matters!
Early resolution of disputes saves time and resources and increases public knowledge and awareness of the PIA process. Mediation is entirely voluntary, confidential, and in many cases doesn’t require an attorney.

The Agencies
204 unique agencies participated in mediation matters with the PIA Ombudsman since the beginning of the program. Agency jurisdictions are state level, 20 different counties, 21 municipalities, and Baltimore City.

What Agencies are Participating in Mediation?

What are the PIA disputes?

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

The Requestors

The Agencies

How Long does Mediation Take?

Percent of closed mediations

New/Incoming cases between 3/31/16—3/31/19
Closed as of 3/31/19

Maryland Public Information Act (PIA)
The public’s right to information about government activities lies at the heart of democracy.

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Ombudsman’s Website:
http://piaombuds.maryland.gov
Outreach 2019 & 2018

Presentations, Workshops, Trainings, and Other Outreach 2019
- Prince George’s County Law Office. April 25
- Mt. Airy Police Department. April
- 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
- MDDC 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.

2018 Legislation & Court Opinions

Ombudsman’s Blog — Open Matters
- Proposed Regulations Noticed – Ombudsman Operations, 03/29/19
- 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

Resources/Links
- MD State Archives: http://msa.maryland.gov is a resource for custodians’ record management and retention practices.