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

**1530 since March 30, 2016**
- 967 - Mediation requests
- 563+ - Other "help-desk" inquiries

**Requestors**
- Inmate: 23%
- Individual: 41%
- Media: 17%
- Advocate: 8%
- Attorney: 7%
- Business/Corp: 4%

**Length of Time to Close**
- 3 Weeks: 37%
- 6 Weeks: 22%
- 9 Weeks: 15%
- 12 Weeks: 8%
- 15 Weeks: 5%
- 18 Weeks: 4%
- 21 Weeks: 2%
- 24 Weeks: 2%
- >36 weeks: 5%

**PIA Disputes**
- Misapplication of exemption 20%
- No Response in any form 23%
- Partial, nonresponsive, or incomplete response 22%
- Fees excessive 8%

**Agencies**
- 257 unique agencies participated in mediation matters with the PIA Ombudsman since the beginning of the program. Agency jurisdictions are state, county and local level.

**Mediations**
- New/Incoming cases between 3/30/16—3/31/20: 967
- Closed as of 3/31/20: 905

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2020 Legislative Session
Multiple bills were introduced during the 2020 Legislative session that would have amended the PIA. The session was terminated early due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency and none of the PIA bills passed, including HB 502/SB 590, which was based on the recommendations of the Ombudsman and PIA Compliance Board in their joint Report on the PIA published December 27, 2019.

Open Matters: Blog of the Public Access Ombudsman
- Importance of Accurate PIA Custodian Contact Information. 04/06/2020
- Guidance to Governmental Custodians Regarding PIA Timelines during the COVID-19 Crisis. 03/23/2020
- Ombudsman and members of the PIA Compliance Board unanimously support HB 502 / SB 590. 02/14/2020
- Records Management and the Public Information Act. 01/07/2020
- Highlights From The PIA Compliance Board’s Opinions. 08/14/19
- Ombudsman and PIACB Seeking Comments on Research Project. 07/12/19
- Where Are My Records? 07/03/19

RESOURCES/LINKS
- Public Access Ombudsman: www.piaombuds.maryland.gov
- MD State Archives: a resource for record management and retention practices. www.msa.maryland.gov
- Office of Government Information Services: www.archives.gov/ogis

Outreach 2020 & 2019
Presentations, Workshops, Trainings, and Other Outreach

2020
Due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency, the Public Access Ombudsman’s Office was required to postpone three in-person trainings scheduled in the first quarter of 2020. The Ombudsman’s Office plans to create virtual/online training modules on the PIA for future use.

2019
- PIA Compliance Board, Discussion of PIA Research Report, December 17
- PIA Compliance Board, Discussion of Preliminary Findings for PIA Research Report, November 5
- Maryland Association of Counties, County Attorneys, November 13
- Maryland Association of Counties, Winter Conference, November 20
- Wicomico County Public Schools, October 17
- Maryland State Bar Association, October 25
- Local Government Insurance Trust, October 31
- Veterans of Jessup Correctional Institution, September 25
- Maryland Municipal Clerks Association, September 19
- Open Government Advocacy Network meeting hosted by the ACLU, September 19
- PIACB Annual Meeting Presentation on PIA Research Report, August 19
- Maryland Association of Counties, Summer Conference, August 14
- Veterans of Jessup Correctional Institution, July 10
- Bowie Police Department, June 11
- Harford Co. State’s Attorney’s Office, June 7

Select Publications
- Where Are My Records? Office of the Public Defender, Post Conviction Newsletter, Summer 2019
- Public Access Ombudsman’s Interpretive Regulations: https://tinyurl.com/y2cuqp55, June 2019
- Ombudsman comments, included as an Appendix to the 2019 Annual Report of the PIA Compliance Board. September 2019