

PUBLIC ACCESS OMBUDSMAN MEDIATION PROCESS QUICK GUIDE



Request Dispute Resolution

- Must be made in writing by mail, website form, e-mail, or fax to the Public Access Ombudsman.
- Must include original PIA request, any response(s) from custodian, a brief description of the dispute, and what outcome is being sought through mediation.

File Opened

- Dispute resolution request processed within 3 business days of receipt.
- 90-day deadline to complete mediation begins.
- Other party notified, consent to enter mediation requested. If consent is not received, file is closed and Final Determination issued.

Initial Discussion Between Initiating Party & Ombudsman (0-30 Days)

- Review of information submitted for mediation assistance.
- Discuss next-steps, set expectations for process.

Ombudsman Outreach to Other Party (30-60 Days)

- Discuss PIA request, custodian response(s), dispute, and desired outcomes.
- Identify next-steps.

Review Status of Mediation (60 Days)

- Follow-up on any outstanding action items.
- If an extension is necessary, parties and Ombudsman must agree to it in writing.

Final Determination Issued (90th Day)

- Matter will either be resolved, unresolved, or partially resolved.
- A brief description of the outcome should be included where necessary.
- Final Determination must be submitted with any complaint to PIA Compliance Board within 30 days of its receipt.

The processing times outlined here serve as benchmarks for both the Ombudsman and program users to set expectations. The speed with which a mediation can be conducted depends on a number of factors, including the nature/complexity of the PIA dispute, the responsiveness of the parties, and the number of requests pending in the Ombudsman's queue, as examples.