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WHAT'S CHANGED?

[Chapter 658](#) of the 2021 Acts of the Maryland General Assembly takes effect on July 1, 2022. This new law expands the jurisdiction of the PIA Compliance Board while instituting an integrated PIA complaint dispute resolution process that includes the Public Access Ombudsman. While the mediation process with the Ombudsman largely remains the same, there are some differences of which you should take note. Here are some of the key changes taking effect under the new law:

Before	After
Files with the Ombudsman can remain open for an indefinite period of time.	Files with the Ombudsman must be closed and a Final Determination issued within 90 days, unless parties agree to an extension in writing.
Upon conclusion of a mediation, the Ombudsman closes the file.	Upon conclusion of a mediation, the Ombudsman prepares and issues a Final Determination to the parties in order to close the file.
A file can be opened with the Ombudsman and a complaint can be submitted to the PIA Compliance Board at the same time.	Mediation must first be attempted with the Ombudsman for all PIA disputes and a Final Determination issued before the Board can review a complaint.
The PIA Compliance Board can only hear complaints involving unreasonable fees in excess of \$350.	The PIA Compliance Board will have the authority to hear disputes about denial of inspection of a public record; charging unreasonable fees higher than \$350; a failure to respond to a request for a public record within certain statutory time limits; and frivolous, vexatious, or bad faith requests.