

# OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ACCESS OMBUDSMAN

## REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE -- MARYLAND PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT DISPUTES

The purpose of this form is to provide the Public Access Ombudsman with the information necessary to process a request for dispute resolution under the Maryland Public Information Act (“PIA”). Please note that generally, we will not be able to begin work on your matter until we receive all requested information. See [COMAR Title 14, Subtitle 37](#) for regulations governing the Ombudsman’s procedures.

### DISPUTE RESOLUTION ASSISTANCE

The Ombudsman is tasked, under the General Provisions Article, [§ 4-1B-04](#) of the PIA, with making “reasonable attempts to resolve disputes between applicants and custodians relating to requests for public records” including the following types of disputes:

From Requesters:	From Custodians:
Denial or partial denial of a request	Overly broad requests
Redactions	Repetitive or redundant requests
A custodian’s failure to respond / produce records within 30 days	A request or pattern of requests that is alleged to be “frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith.”
A custodian’s failure to disclose all records responsive to the request	A custodian’s request for an extension, given available staff and resources
Fee issues, including a request for / denial of a fee waiver or excessive fee	

The Ombudsman has 90 days to reach a resolution of the dispute. When attempting to resolve disputes, the Ombudsman cannot force a custodian to disclose records or redacted information. At the end of the process, the Ombudsman will issue a Final Determination to reflect the outcome of the issue(s) addressed.

To learn more about the Ombudsman’s dispute resolution process, please review Confidentiality of Ombudsman Mediations, the Standards of Conduct Applicable to the Ombudsman and Parties, The Ombudsman’s Mediation Process: What to Expect, and the Ombudsman’s Statement on Artificial Intelligence, all available at [piaombuds.maryland.gov](http://piaombuds.maryland.gov).

**PIA REQUESTER INFORMATION**

Full Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
*First Middle Last*

Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address Apartment/Unit #*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*City State Zip*

Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(###) ###-####*

Email

\_\_\_\_\_

**CUSTODIAN INFORMATION**

Agency

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name*

Agency Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address Suite/Office/Unit #*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*City State Zip*

Contact Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
*First Middle Last*

Contact Email

\_\_\_\_\_

**PIA REQUEST INFORMATION**

Date of PIA request

\_\_\_\_\_  
*MM/DD/YYYY*

Date of custodian  
response

\_\_\_\_\_  
*MM/DD/YYYY*

**What assistance are you seeking from the Ombudsman's Office?**

### **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

Please be sure to submit the following documents with this form, if available:

- A copy of the original PIA request to the custodian.
- A copy of the custodian's 10-day response to the PIA request.
- A copy of the custodian's final response to the PIA request.

If these items are not available, please attach a separate document providing a narrative of the request and/or the custodian's response(s), including dates, key details, and contact information. Without this information, the Office may be unable to assist you.

### **SUBMITTING THIS REQUEST**

Please return this completed form and all attachments by email to:

[PIA.Ombuds@oag.maryland.gov](mailto:PIA.Ombuds@oag.maryland.gov)

You may also submit this completed form and all attachments by mail to:

**OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ACCESS OMBUDSMAN  
c/o OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
200 St. Paul Place  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202**

Learn more at [piaombuds.maryland.gov](http://piaombuds.maryland.gov)