

MARYLAND PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT (PIA)
The public's right to information about government activities lies at the heart of a democratic government.

Public Access Ombudsman

2017 Annual Report (12 mo.)
 January 1, 2017 — December 31, 2017



2017 Annual Report

310 in 2017

- ◆ 242- Mediation requests
- ◆ 68+ - Other / "help-desk" inquiries

The Big Picture: Mediation saves money

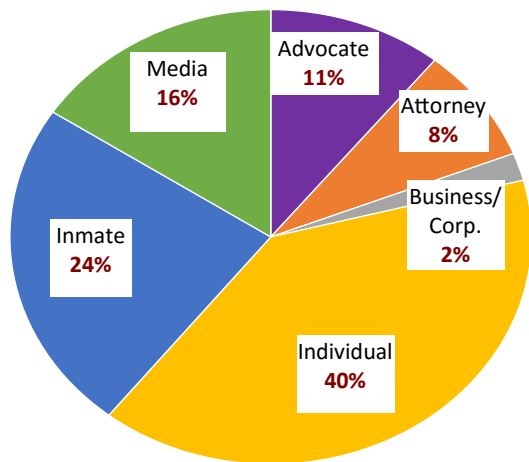
Early resolution of disputes saves time and resources and increases public knowledge and awareness of the PIA process. For example, mediation is entirely voluntary, confidential, and in many cases doesn't require an attorney.

Total Mediation Cases 2017	
Carry over from 2016	63
New/Incoming cases in 2017	242
Total Number of Mediation cases	305
Mediation cases carried to 2018	31
Mediation cases Closed as of 12/31	274

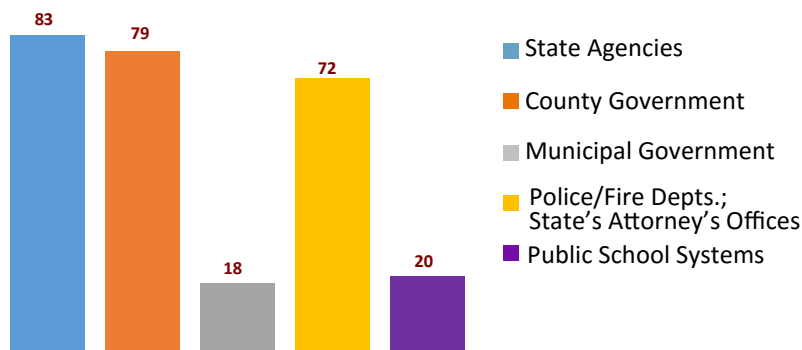
The Agencies

132 unique agencies participated in mediation matters with the PIA Ombudsman in 2017. Agency jurisdictions are state level, **17** different counties and Baltimore City, and **12** municipalities.

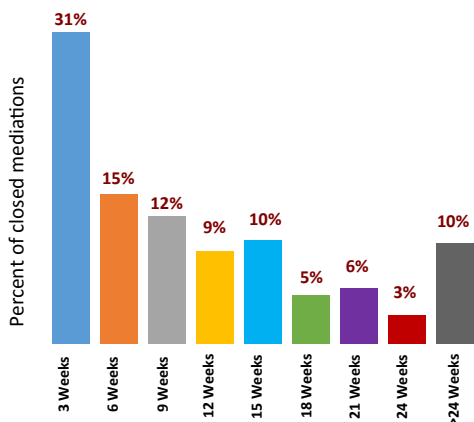
The Requestors



What Agencies are Participating in Mediation?

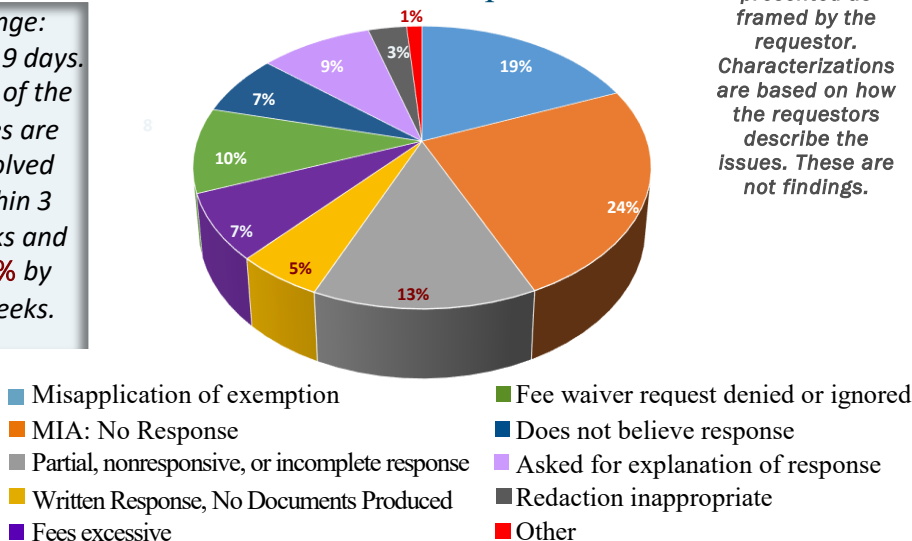


How Long does Mediation Take?



Range: 1 – 519 days.
31% of the cases are resolved within 3 weeks and **46%** by 6 weeks.

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.

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Ombudsman's Website:

<http://news.maryland.gov/mpiaombuds/>

**MPIA Ombudsman
on Twitter**
@MPIA_Ombuds

PIA Legislation & Publications

2017 New Legislation— Effective October 1, 2017

- HB0383/(SB1057): *Public Information Act - Denials of Inspection - Explanation Regarding Redaction*
- SB 44: *Records Management and Preservation - State and Local Government Units - Responsibilities*

Publications

- **Ombudsman's Annual Reports & Metrics: 2016, 2017, Since Inception**
- **Ombudsman comments to the Office of the Attorney General for its Report of the Office of the Attorney General on the Implementation of the Public Information Act.** September 22, 2017
- **Report of The Public Access Ombudsman, Appendix Comments to the 2nd Annual Report of the PIA Compliance Board,** September 6, 2017
- **HB 1105 Report: Ombudsman's Report Concerning the Howard County Public School System's Handling of Requests Under the Public Information Act.** December 30, 2016

PIA Fact Sheets

- *Tips for Submitting and Responding to a PIA Request*
- *Tips for Participating in a PIA Mediation*

RESOURCES/LINKS

- ◆ **PIA Manual** 14th Edition: http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/OpenGov%20Documents/PIA_manual_printable.pdf
All of the resources below can be found in the PIA Manual.
 - List of Public Record Custodians: Appendix "J"
 - Overview of the Public Information Act: Appendix "I"
- ◆ **MD State Archives:** <http://msa.maryland.gov> is a resource for custodians' record management and retention practices.
- ◆ **Records Management Guide:** http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/intromsa/html/record_mgmt/pdf/nagara/making_mgmtsuccess.pdf
- ◆ **Office of Government Information Services (OGIS – FOIA)** <https://www.archives.gov/ogis>
- ◆ **Federal FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) :** <https://www.foia.gov/>
- ◆ **Public Access Ombudsman - Request for Mediation Form:** <http://news.maryland.gov/mpiaombuds/request-mediation/>
- ◆ **DC Office of Open Government:** <https://www.open-dc.gov/office-open-government>
- ◆ **Calvert County League of Women Voters:** Transparency Report: <http://calvert-lwvmaryland.nationbuilder.com/publications>

Outreach 2017

Presentations, Workshops, Meetings

March

- Japanese Embassy, March 9
- DHMH, Fiscal and Contract Managers, Training, March 17

May

- Maryland Municipal Attorneys Association, May 4
- Maryland State Bar Association, State and Local Government Section, May 5

June

- MD Department of Agriculture, June 14
- Maryland Municipal League Conference—Secretary's Roundtable, June 27

September

- Second Chance -Maryland Correctional Institution-Women, September 11
- Baltimore Community Mediation Program, September 19
- DHMH, Prevention and Health Promotion Administration, Training, September 20
- Justice Policy Institute, Presentation, September 28

October

- Howard County Public Schools, Training, October 12
- Maryland Association of Counties, Presentation, October 18
- Calvert County League of Women Voters, Presentation, October 26
- Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Training, October 30
- DHMH, Training, October 31

November

- Joint Committee on Legislation, Information Technology and Open Government, November 8
- Maryland State Bar Association, State and Local Government Section, November 30

December

- Prince George's County Attorneys, December 12
- Charles County Sheriff's Office, December 19

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.

