

## **Public Access Ombudsman Adopts Regulations**

June 18, 2019

The Office of the Public Access Ombudsman (“Office”) would like to inform you that interpretive regulations we circulated this spring have been adopted as of June 17, 2019. We invite you to review the regulations in the current issue of the Maryland Register at the following link, <http://www.dsd.state.md.us/MDR/4612.pdf>, or on the our website at <https://news.maryland.gov/mpiaombuds/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2019/06/Regs061719.pdf>.

The Office was created in 2015 to “make reasonable attempts to resolve disputes between applicants and custodians relating to requests for public records” under the Public Information Act (“PIA”). Md. Code Ann., General Provisions (“GP”), § 4-1B-04(a). The statute does not specify any particular dispute-resolution process, but does ensure the independence of the Office and the confidential and voluntary nature of the program. The regulations are an outgrowth of the Office’s institutional and programmatic experience during its three-year history, and are intended to clarify and explain the Office’s role and processes within the existing statutory framework. It is hoped that the regulations will better manage the expectations of parties who interact with the Office, and will make the Ombudsman’s mediation work more efficient and intelligible.

Thank you to all who commented on the regulations. Your insight was invaluable.