

Where can I go for help? How can I get results?

If the red tape seems endless, or you believe an agency is not correctly following the law, the Arizona Ombudsman - Citizens' Aide is here to help. When you have a complaint about a state agency or public access, the Ombudsman - Citizens' Aide will listen. The service is free and confidential.

Just do one of the following:

- **Contact us by phone:**

Local: (602) 277-7292
or
Toll Free: 1-800-872-2879

- **Write to us:**

Arizona Ombudsman - Citizens' Aide
3737 N. 7th St. Ste. 209
Phoenix, Arizona 85014

- **Send us an email:**

ombuds@azoca.gov

- **Come into the office:**

We are open Monday - Friday
(excluding holidays)

8am - 5pm

Located on the east side of 7th
Street, south of Indian School
Road, in Phoenix.

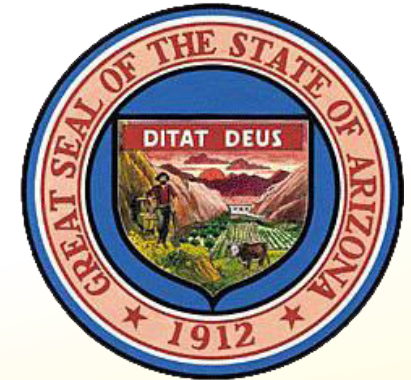
Mission Statement

The mission of the Arizona Ombudsman - Citizens' Aide is to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness of state government by receiving public complaints, investigating the administrative acts of state agencies and, when warranted, recommending fair and appropriate remedy. In addition, the Arizona Ombudsman - Citizens' Aide promotes open government throughout the state, by providing assistance and education to state and local government officials and members of the public, resolving disputes, and investigating complaints in matters relating to public access laws.



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**Arizona Ombudsman
-
Citizens Aide**

Are you having problems
with a state agency?

We Can Help!

What does the Ombudsman - Citizens' Aide do?

Our primary role is to help people resolve problems with agencies of state government. We will help you by listening to your complaint and discussing your rights, your options, and the procedures that are in place to help resolve the problem. In some cases, that may be all the help you need. In other cases, we work with the agency to correct a mistake and find a remedy that is appropriate and fair. Alternatively, if we find the agency is correct, we will explain that to you. We do not provide legal advice, nor do we serve as legal counsel, advocate, or representative of any person or agency.

What authority does the Ombudsman Office have?

We do not have power to order an agency to change their position; however, the great majority of state administrators are responsive and cooperate with our recommendations. If the seriousness of the case warrants, we also have the authority to conduct a formal investigation and send a public report of our findings to the Legislature and Governor.

Who does the Ombudsman Office represent? Me or the agency?

The Ombudsman serves as a neutral, independent intermediary between the citizen and the agency. We conduct our investigations in a fair and impartial manner. Our final position is based on where the facts lead us. We support what we find to be correct and advocate that all errors be resolved.

When should I contact the Ombudsman Office?

Usually, it's best to think of the Ombudsman as a last resort - someone that will try to help when other approaches have failed.

If you have a problem, first discuss it with the person or office involved. Many times, they will explain a specific law or policy. Other times, they will recognize that the agency erred and correct the problem on the spot. In fact, agency staff can solve most problems quicker and easier than the Ombudsman Office. Note that each agency has an internal ombudsman and it is advisable to contact them for assistance if the initial agency staff are not able to resolve the concern for you.

If you don't know who to see, or what procedure to use, contact us. We can point you to the right agency or person and explain the best way to go about solving your problem.

You can also call us if you have already made a reasonable effort to resolve your problem with the agency and have not been successful.

Does the Ombudsman - Citizens' Aide receive complaints regarding matters related to public access?

Yes, we receive complaints regarding matters related to public access laws including public records and open meeting law.

The Legislature, responding to the public's ever-growing interest in accessing public information, expanded our jurisdiction to provide free services to citizens as well as state, county, and local government bodies for matters relating to public access.

We guide people through these processes, investigate concerns, make recommendations to agencies to resolve complaints, and report misconduct regarding public records requests and open meeting requirements. We also prepare informational materials and provide training to public bodies on these topics.

Are there problems the Ombudsman cannot handle?

With the exception of matters relating to public access, we are only allowed to receive complaints having to do with administrative acts of state agencies. We cannot take up conflicts with: private individuals, companies or organizations; federal, county or local governments; the Board of Regents, universities, or community colleges; elected officials and their chief advisors; the Legislature and its staff; or the judicial branch of government. We do not have jurisdiction over political or judicial decisions.

We can also decline to look into a case where our intervention would be inappropriate. If we cannot take up your case, we will tell you why. We will do our best to provide advice, information, and referrals when we cannot help directly.