

10 Frequently Asked Questions

ABOUT THE OMBUDSMAN

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What is Her Role?

As an independent legislative officer, the Ombudsman investigates complaints made by the public about authorities under her jurisdiction.

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What Do We Do?

We investigate **final** administrative decisions using the principles of natural justice and administrative fairness. This includes confirming the actions and policies of municipalities are congruent with the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA).

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What Power Does She Have?

The Ombudsman may make formal recommendations to help municipalities improve decision-making processes or confirm existing processes are fair.

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Why Do We Investigate Municipalities?

Dec. 6, 2016

- Bill 21 passed: *Modernized Municipal Government Act*
- S. 85 amended MGA, s. 136 amended *Ombudsman Act*

Oct. 26, 2017

- Final amendments to MGA proclaimed into law

Apr. 1, 2018

- Ombudsman's functions and duties now include jurisdiction over municipalities

The Ombudsman is **not** an advocate for complainants, nor does she represent municipalities.

HANDLING COMPLAINTS

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How Are Complaints Received?

We encourage people to phone our office with inquiries, but all complaints must be submitted in writing.

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What Happens When We Receive Complaints?

Written complaints are assigned to and analyzed by investigators. Often, referrals are provided if additional reviews are available (e.g., write to the CAO).

INVESTIGATIONS AND OUTCOMES

7

What is an Early Resolution (ER)?

Often the first step of investigation, ER is a collaborative, informal, and efficient process wherein we isolate the core issue of a complaint and provide an objective and impartial assessment using our eight administrative fairness guidelines.

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How is Early Resolution Collaborative?

An investigator may call to understand both sides of the complaint. We may ask for information about the process followed (e.g., relevant bylaws) and/or request a more detailed response, including reasons for the decision. A case is closed once we are satisfied an administratively fair decision was made.

9

What if Early Resolution is Not Possible?



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What Are Recommendations?

With the goal of improving decision-making processes, recommendations can be broad or specific. They are **not** substitute decisions, nor are they based on the merits of a decision. For example, the Ombudsman may recommend a process be amended or an appeal matter be reheard.



FAQs for Municipalities



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