

WHAT DOES THE OMBUDSMAN DO?

The Ombudsman Office

- ▶ Acts as a resource, by answering questions and providing information regarding Municipal government.
- ▶ Recommends to the Assembly, the School Board and the Mayor, changes in policies and procedures and Anchorage Municipal Code, to make the Municipality and School District more responsive to the needs of individuals and the community.
- ▶ Responds in an independent, impartial and confidential manner, while safeguarding the rights of persons and promoting higher standards of competency, efficiency and equity.
- ▶ Investigates complaints against agencies, departments and employees of the Municipality and the School District, as authorized by Anchorage Municipal Code, Chapter 2.60.
- ▶ Makes findings and recommendations through formal investigations about the fairness of official actions by the Municipality or the School District.

Before you contact the Ombudsman

- ▶ Be prepared. Gather any needed information and write down your questions before calling a government office.
- ▶ Don't hesitate to exercise your right to call or write government offices for assistance.
- ▶ Ask for the names of employees you speak with, take notes and save all correspondence.
- ▶ If you are having problems getting answers, or are being treated discourteously, be sure to speak with a supervisor. If a supervisor cannot satisfactorily address your concerns, you can contact the Ombudsman.
- ▶ Courtesy works both ways; be pleasant. Everyone appreciates being treated courteously.



May and Darrel

632 West 6th Avenue, Suite 100
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

343-4461

For Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons

Dial **711** for Alaska Relay Services

Fax: 343-4464



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www.muni.org/ombudsman

www.muni.org/CityViewPortal/Logon

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"Your Independent Voice For Fairness"

"Anchorage,



How Can We Help You?"

FREE and CONFIDENTIAL Services

Walk-ins Welcome

Interpreter Services Available

**632 W 6th Avenue, Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99501**

Recognizing that, for the average person, government is often difficult to navigate, the authors of Anchorage's Home Rule Charter provided for a Municipal Ombudsman's Office, that would act as an independent, impartial reviewer of complaints.

It is our honor to serve the people of Anchorage. The Anchorage Ombudsman's Office is your independent voice for fairness in local government. Our office strives to assist you in navigating the agencies and departments of the Municipality of Anchorage and the Anchorage School District, responding to your concerns and questions.

Our goal is to assist, in some fashion, every person who contacts our office. Many of the issues brought to us are non-jurisdictional, but we will attempt to direct you to the correct person, agency, department, business or nonprofit, who can help you.

We look forward to informing, assisting and empowering you regarding local government policies, procedures and codes. Our services are free of charge, and available to anyone within the Municipality. It is our privilege to serve you.

WHAT IS AN OMBUDSMAN?

Ombudsman is a Swedish term, which means "protector or defender of the people's rights." The Anchorage Ombudsman is appointed by the Assembly and is an independent, impartial reviewer of complaints and concerns. The Municipal Ombudsman is authorized by the 1975 Anchorage Home Rule Charter, and is governed by Anchorage Municipal Code, Chapter 2.60.

The Ombudsman is nominated by an Assembly selection committee, and if confirmed by the Assembly, serves a four year term. Reappointment is allowed. The Ombudsman investigates complaints of unfair treatment and unreasonable actions by the Municipality of Anchorage and the Anchorage School District, and their employees.

Complaints may result from the action, or lack of action, by a Municipal or School District employee. Often complaints are based on misunderstandings of Municipal or School District policies and procedures, Municipal Codes or individual rights. The Ombudsman can interview Municipal and School District Employees, examine confidential documents, inspect agency and department premises, and issue subpoenas.

The Ombudsman is a neutral fact finder when reviewing and researching complaints. The Ombudsman is not an advocate. If an Ombudsman investigation determines that an agency, department or employee made a mistake, or acted unfairly or arbitrarily, the Ombudsman may recommend corrective action. While the Municipality and School District do not have to follow the Ombudsman's recommendations, they usually do.

Above and Beyond Award

The Ombudsman's Office recognizes Municipal employees who offer exceptional customer service with our Above and Beyond Award. To nominate an employee, contact the Ombudsman's Office, or fill out a nomination form at www.muni.org/ombudsman.

The Ombudsman does not investigate

- The Assembly
- The Mayor
- The School Board
- State or Federal Agencies or Employees
- Disputes between private parties
- Most Tenant/Landlord disputes
- Decisions more than one year old (generally)
- Matters being adjudicated by the courts