OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN 2013 ANNUAL REPORT



Municipality of Anchorage, Office of the Ombudsman

632 West 6thAvenue, Suite 160

P.O. Box 196650

Anchorage, AK 99519-6650

Phone: (907) 343-4461; Fax: (907) 343-4464

ombud@muni.org

www.muni.org/ombudsman www.facebook.com/anchorageombudsman

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contact InformationFront Cover
Transmittal Letter1
Purpose of the Office of the Ombudsman2
How to File a Complaint2
Statistics3-7
Final Investigative Summaries7-9
Informal Resolution Summaries9-11
Public Outreach12
Above and Beyond Award13
Ombudsman Brochure14-15
Ombudsman Complaint Form 16-17
Acknowledgment Back Cover

P.O. Box 196650 • Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650 • Telephone: (907) 343-4461

August 28, 2014

To the Anchorage Municipal Assembly, the Anchorage School District Board of Education, the Mayor and Administration, and the citizens of Anchorage:

We are pleased to present the Anchorage Municipal Ombudsman's 2013 Annual Report. This report explains how the Ombudsman's Office fulfills its role as an independent, impartial office that provides information about Municipal government, while investigating concerns involving Municipal government and employees, including the Anchorage School District.

The Ombudsman's Office acts as an informational resource for the public and also recognizes outstanding performance by Municipal and School District employees and workgroups, through our Above and Beyond Award.

Behind the cases and statistics are real people; citizens who need help navigating and understanding Municipal government, as well as the dedicated Municipal and School District employees who serve the residents of and visitors to Anchorage. It is our pleasure to serve, inform and empower the public.

Sincerely,

Would where Elizabeth G. Eisses Darrel W. Hess

Municipal Ombudsman

Elizabeth A. Eisses

Deputy Ombudsman

Heather MacAlpine

peather Mrs alpine

Associate Ombudsman



PURPOSE

The Office of the Municipal Ombudsman is mandated by the Anchorage Home Rule Charter. The Charter's Bill of Rights guarantees the people of Anchorage "The right to the assistance of a municipal ombudsman in dealing with grievances and abuses." The Office of the Ombudsman is governed by Anchorage Municipal Code, Chapter 2.60 which established the Office as "...an independent, impartial municipal office, readily available to the public, responsible to the assembly, empowered to investigate the acts of administrative agencies and to recommend appropriate changes toward the goals of safeguarding the rights of persons and of promoting higher standards of competency, efficiency and equity in the provision of municipal services." (AMC 2.60.010)

The goal of the Ombudsman's Office is to serve the people of Anchorage, by providing information or referrals, or investigating complaints and concerns regarding Municipal and School District departments, agencies and employees. If issues and concerns are not jurisdictional to the Ombudsman's Office, we do our best to direct persons to the appropriate person or organization.

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT

When people have questions or concerns regarding Municipal government or the Anchorage School District, the Ombudsman's Office is here to assist you. You may contact our office in-person, by phone, email or postal service. Our staff will assess whether or not your issue is jurisdictional to our office. If an issue is not jurisdictional to our office, we will do our best to provide a referral to another agency or entity that may be able to address the issue. In 2013, the Ombudsman's Office provided information and referrals to nearly 700 individuals.

The Ombudsman's Office is located on the ground floor of Anchorage City Hall, in Suite 160. You can also find a Complaint form online on the Ombudsman webpage at: www.muni.org/ombudsman

Office of the Municipal Ombudsman 632 West 6thAvenue, Suite 160 PO Box 196650 Anchorage, AK 99519-6650 Phone: (907) 343-4461

Fax: (907) 343-4464

ombud@muni.org

www.muni.org/ombudsman



STATISTICS

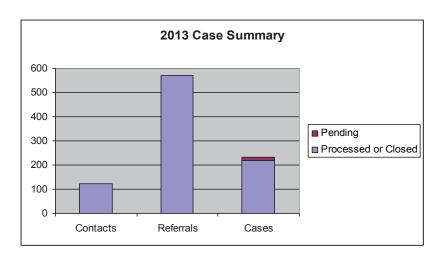
The Ombudsman's Office uses an application called "CityView" to maintain information and process statistics. The number of Inquiries listed in Table 1 and Graph 1 indicate the total number of public interactions with the Ombudsman's Office in 2013, either by telephone, email, postal mail, fax, or inperson. Contacts were interactions with persons who may have only needed information, or who may have wanted to express their opinions or concerns regarding local government. These interactions normally require no further action by the Ombudsman's Office. Referrals reflect inquiries that were referred to state or federal agencies, community agencies, or transferred to Municipal or School District employees, or departments. Cases refer to inquiries that required some level of investigation by the Ombudsman's Office.

Table 1. 2013 Processing Statistics

2013 Processing Statistics	Opened in 2013	Processed or Closed	Pending
Referrals	570	570	0
Contacts	122	122	0
Cases	212	219*	13
Total Inquiries	904**	911	13

^{*}includes 20 cases opened in previous years

Graph 1. 2013 Processing Statistics



^{**}This number reflects an 18% increase over 2012

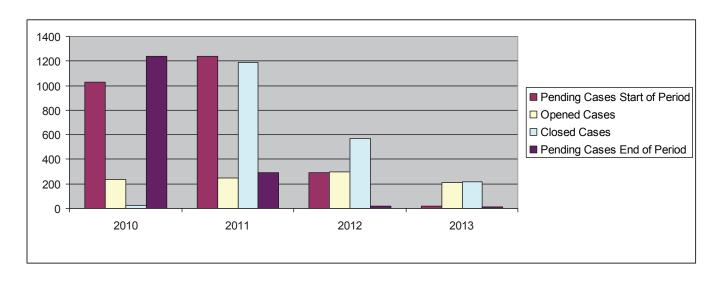


Table 2 and **Graph 2** reflect the work of the Ombudsman's Office over the past four years. The large numbers of open cases reflected in the 2011 and 2012 statistics have all been closed.

Table 2. Case Closures and Pending Inventory from 2010-13

Case Inventory	2010	2011	2012	2013
Pending Cases Start of Period	1026	1236	293	20
Opened Cases	233	247	296	212
Closed Cases	23	1190	569	219
Pending Cases End of Period	1236	293	20	13

Graph 2. Case Closures and Pending Inventory from 2010-2013



Historically, the larger Municipal Departments and those with the greatest public contact generate the largest number of cases in the Ombudsman's Office. In 2013 Community Development (21%), Public Works (14%), the Police Department (13%), Finance (8%) and the Anchorage School District (6%), ranked 1-5. (See **Table 3** and **Graph 3**)

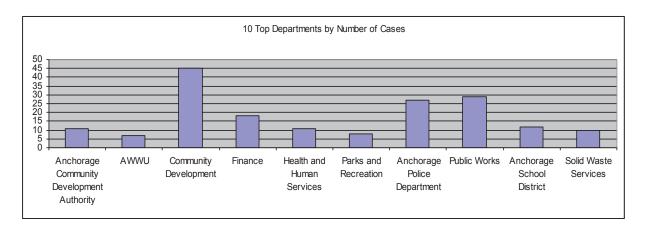


Table 3. 2010-2012 Cases by Department

Department	2011	Percent	2012	Percent	2013	Percent
Anchorage Community	8	3%	10	3%	11	5%
Development Authority						
AWWU	2	<1%	4	1%	7	3%
Assembly	6	2%	11	4%	0	
Board & Commissions	0		0		0	
Community Development	40	16%	52	18%	45	21%
Economic & Community Development	0		0		0	
Emergency Management	0		0		0	
Employee Relations	7	3%	3	1%	2	1%
Office of Equal Opportunity	0		2	<1%	0	
Equal Rights Commission	2	<1%	0		0	
Finance	27	11%	17	6%	18	8%
Fire Department	12	5%	2	<1%	0	0,0
Health & Human Serv.	19	8%	22	7%	11	5%
Information Technology	0		2	<1%		
Legal	0		9	3%	6	3%
Library	0		1	<1%	2	1%
Mayor's Office	0		0		3	1%
Merrill Field Airport	0		0		0	
Municipal Attorney	6	2%	0		0	
Municipal Light & Power	0		0		1	<1%
Municipal Manager	2	<1%	0		1	<1%
Parks & Recreation	3	1%	3	1%	8	4%
Police Department	46	19%	40	14%	27	13%
Port of Anchorage	0		1	<1%	0	
Public Transportation	4	2%	12	4%	4	2%
Public Works	18	7%	46	16%	29	14%
Traffic	0		0		0	
Purchasing	1	<1%	2	<1%	2	1%
Real Estate Services - HLB	0		4	1%	1	<1%
Risk Management	3	1%	3	1%	4	2%
School District	26	11%	21	7%	12	6%
Solid Waste Service	3	1%	7	2%	10	5%
Transportation Inspection	3	1%	5	1%	4	2%
Not Dept. Specific	9	4%	17	9%	4	2%
All Department Total	247	100%	296	100	212	100



Graph 3. 2013 Cases by Department (most frequent)



The Ombudsman's Office also tracks Cases by Assembly District.

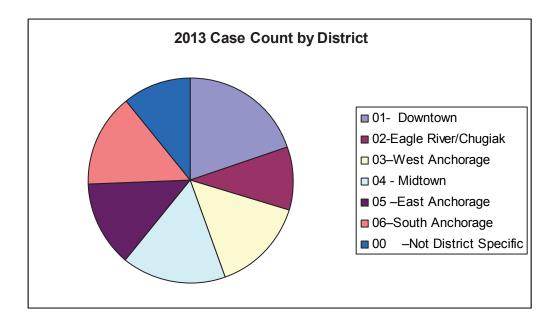
These numbers are reflected in Table 4 and Graph 4.

Table 4. Cases by Assembly District 2011-2013

District No./Name	2011	Percent	2012	Percent	2013	Percent
01- Downtown	34	14 %	39	12%	42	19.8%
02-Eagle River/Chugiak	24	10%	20	6%	21	9.9%
03-West Anchorag	28	11%	58	18%	31	14.6%
04 - Midtown	50	20%	39	12%	35	16.5%
05 –East Anchorag	37	15%	42	12%	29	13.6%
06–South Anchorage	30	12%	46	14%	31	14.6%
00 -Not District Specific	44	18%	52	26%	23	10.8%
Total	247	100%	296	100%	212	100%



Graph 4. Cases by Assembly District 2013



2013 FINAL INVESTIGATIVE REPORT SUMMARIES

In 2013 the Ombudsman's Staff issued several Final Investigative Reports as authorized by the Municipal Code. Below are summaries of some of those reports. (Note: In June 2013 the City View application used by the Ombudsman's Office was upgraded, and the case numbering system was modified. Case numbers entered after the upgrade all start with "OM".)

Final Investigative Report Concerning Ombudsman Complaint 2013-0356

An Anchorage resident contacted the Ombudsman's Office regarding the penalty and interest that the Municipality had assessed upon the late payment of property taxes by her friend's estate, of which she was the personal representative. The property owner died two weeks before her June 15, 2013 property tax payment was due. By the time that the complainant was able to access the taxpayer's assets to settle the estate, the June 15th tax payment was past due and the Municipality assessed a 10% penalty and 5.25% interest. The complainant believed that it was unfair for the Municipality to charge a penalty and interest in this instance, since her friend missing the payment deadline was due to her death.

Because Alaska State Statute permits municipalities to impose a penalty upon late payment of property taxes at their discretion, and because municipalities can enact legislation to allow for an administrative appeal process regarding assessment of penalties upon late payment of property taxes, and because current Anchorage Municipal Code does not allow for an adequate, fair and reasonable administrative appeal process, the complaint that the 10% penalty in this case was unfair, was found to be JUSTIFIED.

The Ombudsman recommended that Anchorage Municipal Code be revised to allow for an administrative appeal process of penalties assessed upon late payment of property taxes.



The Ombudsman believed that charging interest upon late payment of property taxes under any circumstance is not always fair and equitable, but because assessing interest upon late payment of property taxes is mandated by Alaska State Statute, the Ombudsman had NO FINDING regarding the complaint that the interest charged by the Municipality was unfair. *It is up to the State Legislature to address this issue.*

Final Investigative Report Concerning Ombudsman Complaint 2012-0007

An Eagle River resident contacted the Ombudsman's Office regarding Project Management & Engineering Project Number 10-21, Old Eagle River Road Upgrade. The citizen alleged that the Municipality was not following "A Strategy For Developing Context Sensitive Transportation Projects," (CSS) a policy guide for transportation project development which was adopted by the Anchorage Assembly on October 14, 2008. Investigation of the complaint revealed that the CSS policy document contained confusing and contradictory statements regarding implementation of the policy and the parameters of citizen input and guidance. In the Ombudsman's opinion, the project team was following the CSS policy to the best of their ability.

Because all Municipal transportation projects are mandated to follow the CSS policy document, and because the policy document contains confusing and contradictory statements, the complaint that Project Management & Engineering Project Number 10-21 did not follow the CSS policy was found to be PARTIALLY JUSTIFIED.

This case was resolved in 2013. The Ombudsman recommended that the CSS policy document be revised to address the confusing and contradictory statements. PM&E is currently working on revising the document.

Final Investigative Report Concerning Ombudsman Complaint 2012-0099

A citizen contacted the Ombudsman's Office alleging that the Anchorage School District did not adequately inform parents regarding the Gifted/IGNITE programs. The citizen further alleged that the Anchorage School District did not adequately inform parents when their children are eligible for gifted testing. Upon investigation, the Deputy Ombudsman found that the Anchorage School District did not make information regarding the District's Gifted/IGNITE program readily available to parents, and that the Anchorage School District did not have a policy regarding providing information to parents that informed them when their children are eligible for gifted testing.

Because the Anchorage School District did not make information regarding the Gifted/IGNITE programs readily available to the public, and because the District did not have a policy to inform students and parents about the opportunity to be tested and, if qualified, to participate in the District's gifted programs, the Ombudsman found this complaint JUSTIFIED. Based on the recommendations of the Ombudsman's Office, the Anchorage School District revised the information on their website regarding the Gifted/IGNITE programs, and agreed to include information regarding the gifted programs and testing in the District's Elementary School newsletters.



Final Investigative Report Concerning Ombudsman Complaint 2012-0007

An Anchorage citizen received court fines in 2010 for violating Anchorage Municipal Code. In July of 2011 she mailed a check for the balance of her fines to the Municipality of Anchorage, Treasury Division. The check was returned to her indicating "We show your case being paid." In October 2012 the citizen received a notice from Municipal Services Bureau (MSB) referencing the same case number, stating that her account was now in collection, and that she owed an additional \$89.61 in fees. The Associate Ombudsman ascertained that a Municipal fine ordered by the Court remains with the Alaska Court System until the fine is due. If the account falls into default or non-payment, the account is forwarded to the Municipality to seek payment. The Municipality then forwards the account to MSB for collections, as allowed by AMC 6.70.120(B). The cost of collection "shall be paid by the debtor."

Because the Municipality, Treasury Division, informed the citizen that her account was paid when she made a good faith effort to pay the outstanding balance, and because she was not notified otherwise prior to her account being forwarded to collections, the Ombudsman believed that the collection fees should not have been assessed to the constituent.

In response to the Ombudsman's report, Treasury developed an insert to be added to all initial demand letters sent regarding criminal fines. The insert clarifies the collection process, and informs citizens that although the Municipality might show their account (fines) as being paid, the fines might still be with the Alaska Court System. Treasury refunded \$89.61 (the amount of the collection fees) to the citizen.

2013 INFORMAL RESOLUTION SUMMARIES

On average, less than 10% of Ombudsman investigations are resolved formally, and a final investigative report issued. Frequently the Ombudsman's Office achieves good results, including changes to Municipal Code, policies and procedures, through informal case resolutions, working with Municipal employees and departments, as well as citizen complainants. Below are summaries of some of those cases:

Ombudsman Complaint 2013-0429

Two citizens contacted the Municipal Ombudsman's Office alleging that the Municipality had failed to adequately address criminal activity in Town Square Park, which had resulted in negative impacts to their adjacent business and concerns for the safety of their employees, customers and family members. Investigation revealed that the Anchorage Police Department had expended considerable time and resources addressing public safety issues in the park. The APD Community Action Policing Team (CAP) conducted a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessment of the Park, and recommended that some environmental modifications be implemented to help address criminal activities in the Park. The Ombudsman facilitated meetings with the complainants, Parks and Recreation Department, Police Department, Anchorage Downtown Partnership, and Executive Director of the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts.

As a result of the conversations and site visits, Parks and Recreation placed a spotlight on top of the streetlight nearest to the problematic northeast corner of the park, attached decorative fencing to the top



of the retaining wall/bench located in the same area, and removed 9 trees, "opening up" the problematic area. These environmental modifications resulted in a reduction in illegal and undesired behaviors in the northeast corner of Town Square Park.

Ombudsman Complaint 2013-0332

A citizen was notified by the property management company for the mobile home park where she had resided for 32 years that she was subject to eviction because the Municipality of Anchorage, Land Use Enforcement, had accused her of holding an excessive number of garage sales, thereby operating an illegal home business. The citizen was upset because she was never contacted by the Municipality, and she contended that she did not hold an excessive number of garage sales. Investigation revealed that Municipal Code holds property owners responsible for land use violations on their property. Consequently Land Use Enforcement issues notices of potential violation to property owners, not tenants. Since most leases allow for eviction of tenants for violations of Municipal Code, the Ombudsman believed it was unfair that citizens who are tenants did not have an administrative appeal process to contest accusations that they were violating Municipal Code.

The Ombudsman's Office met with Jack Frost, Chief, Code Enforcement, who agreed to modify Code Enforcement's policy to require that property owners AND tenants receive notices of potential violations. This allows tenants to appeal alleged violations to the Municipal Administrative Hearing Officer.

Ombudsman Complaint 2013-0032

Two Anchorage citizens contacted the Ombudsman's Office alleging that they had been paying property taxes on an unconstructed, platted street adjacent to their property for several years. Investigation by the Ombudsman revealed that the property owners had been assessed for, and had paid property taxes on, 19,000+ square feet of public Right of Way for several years.

The Property Appraisal Division concurred with the Ombudsman's findings, and agreed to, upon application of the complainants, recommend to the Anchorage Assembly that they suspend the statutory timeline for refunding tax overpayments in this case, because the overpayments were the result of an error on the part of the Municipality.

Ombudsman Complaint 2013-0071

A citizen in East Anchorage was notified by Land Use Enforcement that the shed on his property was too close to his house, and had to either be moved, or removed. Title 21 required that accessory structures must be located at least 10 feet from the primary structure. The citizen contended that the code requirement, originally adopted by the City of Anchorage in 1965, did not apply because the shed was constructed in 1972, and at that time his property was located in the Greater Anchorage Area Borough (GAAB). Investigation by the Ombudsman revealed that the GAAB had implemented a similar requirement in 1969, which predated the shed's construction. However, further research revealed that the relevant section of Title 21 had been dropped from the revised Title 21, which would take effect in seven months.



The Ombudsman recommended to the Community Development Department Director and Chief of Code Enforcement that this provision of code not be enforced since it was not in the revised Title 21; they concurred with the Ombudsman's recommendation.

Ombudsman Complaint 2012-0292

The Ombudsman's Office received a call from a constituent who was seeking information regarding a program that allowed persons with mobility issues to purchase a special parking permit that provided for extended parking at Downtown parking meters. The program enables persons with mobility issues to park closer to their Downtown workplaces or shopping destinations. Investigation by the Associate Ombudsman determined that mobility impaired parking permits are dictated by AMC 9.30.330. The program allows mobility impaired persons to purchase a permit to park at metered or time limited parking spaces in the Central Business District of Anchorage. The permits are valid between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

After contact from the Ombudsman's Office the Anchorage Community Development Authority, Parking Services Department reinstituted the program.

Ombudsman Complaint OM20130203

A constituent contacted the Ombudsman's Office after an APD officer warned him that skateboarding in Town Square Park was a violation of Municipal Code, and that he could receive a ticket for the offense. AMC 9.20.085 prohibits skateboarding in the block containing Town Square Park and the Performing Arts Center. The Deputy Ombudsman did a walkthrough of Town Square Park and ascertained that there were no "No Skateboarding" signs posted in the park; the only sign forbidding skate boarding was located on the exterior wall of the Performing Arts Center building. The sign did not include a Municipal Code citation.

After being contacted by the Ombudsman's Office the Parks and Recreation Department posted signs in Town Square Park that inform citizens that skateboarding is not allowed in the Park.

Ombudsman Complaint OM20130554

A constituent filed a complaint with the Ombudsman's Office alleging that she had placed a check for the 2nd half of her property tax assessment in the drop box on the 3rd floor of City Hall, on August 15th, 2013 (the payment due date). Subsequently she received a late payment notice from the Municipal Finance Department. The complainant alleged that the Finance Department has a security camera set up to record the area of the hallway that includes the drop box, but that they would not let her view the tapes in order to prove that she had timely placed her payment in the drop box.

Because of privacy issues citizens are not allowed to view security tapes. The Deputy Ombudsman was allowed to view the tapes and verified that the constituent had dropped her payment in the drop box at 5:41 pm on August 15th, 2013. The taxpayer was refunded her late fees and an apology was issued.



2013 PUBLIC OUTREACH

In 2013 the Ombudsman's Office worked to improve the office's interface with the public, including;

- Continuing to make effective use of the Ombudsman's page at www.muni.org/ombuds.
- Developing an Anchorage Ombudsman Facebook page.
- Purchasing Anchorage Ombudsman wristbands, lapel pins and ink pens.
- Conducting public outreach:
 - ➤ NAACP Anchorage Installation of Officers
 - ➤ The Spenard Chamber of Commerce
 - ➤ The Federation of Community Councils
 - ➤ Catholic Social Services Refugee Assistance & Immigration Services Partners Meetings
 - NeighborWorks Anchorage Board
 - ➤ The Salvation Army's Financial Fitness Fair
 - ➤ Bridge Builder's Meet the World in Anchorage
 - ➤ NAACP Black History Month Celebration & Voter Registration Drive
 - ➤ YWCA Alaska Opening Minds and Hearts Social Justice Dialogues
 - ➤ Alaska Association of Paralegals
 - ➤ LGBTQ Town Hall Meeting
 - ➤ Identity, Inc. Board
 - ➤ Fairview Elementary School Multicultural Celebration Day
 - ➤ Anchorage History Day Celebration
 - Asia-Pacific Heritage Month Celebration
 - Alaska Native Justice Center 20thAnniversary Celebration
 - ➤ GLBT Timeline/Teen Underground Pride Art Show Opening Reception
 - NeighborWorks Anchorage Paint the Town Celebration
 - ➤ 1st Annual Empower Our Community Minority Business/Health Fair & Car Show
 - ➤ 2013 PrideFest Town Square Kick-Off, 2013 Equality March & 2013 PrideFestival
 - CSS/RAIS World Refugee Day Celebration
 - ➤ Pista Sa Nayon 2013
 - ➤ Polynesian Flag Day 2013
 - ➤ Mountain View Street Fair
 - ➤ NAACP Rally for Justice
 - ➤ Ted Stevens Day 2013
 - ➤ Kirk Bloodsworth/Innocence Project Presentation
 - National Night Out Celebration
 - ➤ Japanese Summer Festival
 - ➤ UAA Campus Kick-Off
 - Miss Africa Alaska Pageant
 - CT Lewis Freedom Fund Dinner
 - ➤ Alaska Federation of Filipino Americans 10th Annual Founder's Banquet
 - ➤ Brother Francis Shelter Town Hall Meeting on Homeless Issues
 - ► Human Trafficking Awareness Weekend 2013 Conference & Workshops
 - ➤ Hispanic Heritage Day Celebration
 - ➤ Community Forum: Stand Your Ground Law in Alaska
 - ➤ Alaska Native Heritage Day Celebration
 - ➤ Community Forum on Bullying in the Workplace & Schools



ABOVE AND BEYOND AWARD

The Ombudsman's Office recognizes outstanding performance by Municipal and School District employees and workgroups through our Above and Beyond Award, which acknowledges above and beyond service to the citizens of Anchorage. To nominate a Municipal or School District employee or workgroup to receive the Above and Beyond Award, call the Ombudsman's Office at 907-343-4461, or email to OMBUD@muni.org.

In 2013 the Municipal Ombudsman's Office recognized Jack Frost, Chief, Code Enforcement, with the Ombudsman's Above and Beyond Award, in recognition of his commitment to delivering superior customer service to the citizens of Anchorage.



Jack Frost (recipient), Betsy Eisses, Darrel Hess and Heather MacAlpine



THE OMBUDSMAN OFFICE

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

FROM DARREL HESS

It is my honor to serve the citizens of Anchorage as your Municipal Ombudsman. The Anchorage Ombudsman's office is your independent voice for fairness in local government. Our office strives to assist citizens 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 citizen's rights." The Anchorage Ombudsman is appointed by the Assembly and is an independent, impartial reviewer of citizen 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 two 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 and 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.

The Ombudsman does not investigate:

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

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE



COMPLAINT FORM

The Ombudsman's Office was established in addition to other remedies or rights of appeal, as an independent, impartial municipal office, readily available to the public, responsible to the Assembly, empowered to investigate the acts of Municipal agencies and Anchorage School District, and to recommend appropriate changes toward the goals of safeguarding the rights of persons and of promoting higher standards of competency, efficiency, and equity in the provision of municipal services.

Please fill out and mail to:

Municipal Ombudsman PO Box 196650 Anchorage, AK 99519-6650

		T
Name	Date	
Address		
City	State	Zip
Phone Number	Alt. Phone Number	
Email Address:		
Name of municipal department you are complaining about:		
Have you tried to resolve the complaint with the department?	☐ YES ☐ NO	
*It is important to try to resolve your issue with		
•		

	E OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT FORM Dictionality The ombudsman shall be barred from inquiry into acts of the mayor the
assembly or school board." AMC 2.60.110.A. D What did the department do that you think is wrong? ———————————————————————————————————	nicipality,The ombudsman shall be barred from inquiry into acts of the mayor, the
What do you want from the department?	
Please provide any other information we may need to	help us investigate your complaint.
*IMPORTANT We will not give out your name with your name when talking to the agency?	nout your consent. Do you give permission to use S
Use this space to provide any further information you The Municipal Ombudsman only investigates con if necessary.	feel may be useful in our investigation. Remember: nplaints about municipal agencies. Use extra paper
What do you want the Ombudsman to do for you?	
Signature	Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This annual report was prepared by the following members of the Ombudsman's Staff:

Darrel W. Hess, Municipal Ombudsman

Elizabeth A. Eisses, Deputy Ombudsman

Heather MacAlpine, Associate Ombudsman



Darrel, Heather and Betsy



A very special thanks to the Municipal Reprographics Team, Ruth, Bob, Tiny and Brandon, for their professionalism and invaluable assistance.

Cover: Quilt by Elizabeth Eisses.