

Mission

The Alaska State Ombudsman investigates citizen complaints about administrative acts of state agencies and determines appropriate remedies. A.S. 24.55

Vision

The Alaska State Ombudsman promotes fair and efficient government through objective inquiry and well-reasoned recommendations for meaningful, measurable improvement.

Core Values

The core values of the Alaska State Ombudsman are **Objectivity, Curiosity, Respect, Integrity,** and **Public Service.**

Objectivity: We are committed to reviewing citizen complaints without bias or preconception.

Curiosity: We are committed to looking carefully at citizen complaints and the larger context in which they arise. We are also committed to a culture of perpetual learning and discovery.

Respect: We are committed to treating everyone with respect and compassion, to listening to understand, and to maintaining a work environment that fosters acceptance, compassion, and understanding.

Integrity: We are committed to performing our work with honesty, fairness, and authenticity and in accordance with professional and statutory ethical guidelines.

Public Service: We are committed to helping people resolve their complaints individually and to improving the effectiveness and equity of government systems.

Goals and Strategies

1. Alaskans are aware of the role, work, and value of the Alaska State Ombudsman.

Performance Measures:

- IA. Alaskans receiving outreach information
- IB. Contacts from Alaskans seeking information or assistance
- IC. Complaints resolved (brief service or complex investigations)

Strategies:

- Host information and outreach booths at Alaska Federation of Natives convention annually.
- Provide informational presentations to chambers of commerce, professional organizations, civic groups, other community organizations.
- Provide on-site outreach in one rural community annually.
- Provide on-site outreach and intake in Wasilla/Palmer quarterly.
- Update website and expand online information libraries.
- Develop and maintain social media outlets for the Alaska State Ombudsman.
- Partner with Anchorage Municipal Ombudsman, advocacy organizations to share outreach efforts, expand reach of communications tools.

2. The Alaska State Ombudsman provides welcoming, accessible, and safe environments for people to come for help with their problems.

Performance Measures:

- 2A. People visiting ombudsman offices and website(s)
- 2B. People receiving helpful information or assistance during visit
- 2C. Number of significant security incidents at each office

Strategies:

- Ensure offices are accessible, safe, and welcoming.
- Provide comfortable, accessible, secure space for walk-ins to meet with staff.
- Offer translated informational materials for indigenous, immigrant populations.
- Offer an interactive online complaint form.

3. Ombudsman investigations are conducted and reported in a timely fashion.

Performance Measures:

- 3A. Investigations completed
- 3B. Investigations completed according to regulatory timeframe
- 3C. Public reports published within 1 year of start of investigation

Strategies:

- Implement an updated, intuitive case management system that supports investigative processes and management of workflow.
- Make use of reporting templates designed to communicate information clearly and concisely.
- Deploy investigatory teams when needed to ensure timeliness.

4. Ombudsman recommendations are tracked for implementation and evaluated for effectiveness.

Performance Measures:

- 4A. Recommendations (formal and informal) made
- 4B. Recommendations accepted by state agencies
- 4C. Recommendations implemented within 1 year

Strategies:

- Implement a timeline and practices for following up with state agencies on recommendations accepted for implementation.
- Support agencies in securing resources needed to implement recommendations.
- Partner with agencies and external partners to evaluate and report on the impact of implemented recommendations after 12 months and 24 months.
- Report annually on recommendations not accepted or implemented.

5. Internal ombudsman operations are efficient and effective.

Performance Measures:

- 5A. Intakes completed
- 5B. Intakes reviewed and referred for investigation within 14 days
- 5C. Public reports published within 30 days of final report to state agency

Strategies:

- Review and update Ombudsman policies and procedures in FY18.
- Identify and discontinue duplicative and/or inefficient business practices.
- Review effectiveness of internal process improvement efforts in FY20.
- Make full use of office technologies to increase the efficiency of work practices.
- Add part-time administrative staff in the Juneau office.

6. The Alaska State Ombudsman has capacity to investigate complex, technical, and systemic complaints.

Performance Measures:

- 6A. Complaints about complex, technical, or systemic problems received
- 6B. Investigations of complex, technical, or systemic complaints completed

Strategies:

- Develop annual professional development plans for ombudsman staff.
- Recruit a research analyst, with specific expertise in data development analysis and reporting.
- Contract with outside professional consultation as needed for highly technical issues (engineering, actuarial, financial, medical, etc.) presented during investigations.

7. State agencies appreciate the role of the Alaska State Ombudsman and the value that it offers to public systems.

Performance Measures:

7A. Complaints resolved prior to formal report, recommendations

7B. Investigations in which recommendations are implemented by state agencies

Strategies:

- Meet regularly with leadership of departments about complaints received and systemic issues presented in those complaints.
- Engage state employee associations/groups through regular outreach.
- Report the results of investigations both when there is a finding of agency error or wrongdoing and when investigations find the agency performed well.
- Invite agencies to participate in collaborative discussion of possible remedies to errors/problems identified in the course of investigations, prior to making formal recommendations.

8. The Alaska State Ombudsman is a source of expertise and technical assistance on complaint resolution policies and procedures.

Performance Measures:

8A. Agencies seeking technical assistance or training on complaint resolution or grievance process improvement.

8B. Technical assistance or training provided to agencies updating or adopting complaint resolution or grievance regulations, policies, and/or procedures.

Strategies:

- Develop collaborative relationships with quality improvement/assurance staff in state agencies.
- Partner with state agencies to review, evaluate, and improve complaint resolution and grievance procedures.