

Office of the People's Counsel

MISSION

The Office of the People's Counsel (OPC) strives to provide effective and zealous representation for Maryland's residential utility ratepayers. In addition, it is our mission to identify systemic issues that impact ratepayers and pursue solutions that will preserve the safety and reliability of consumer utility service, while advocating for the lowest possible costs to utility consumers. Finally, OPC is committed to educating residential consumers on issues pertinent to their utility service and changes in the energy markets.

VISION

A State in which all residential utility customers have equal access to advocacy, education and resources concerning their utility service, regardless of income.

KEY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Goal 1 To advocate for safe, reliable and fairly priced utility service for residential consumers of energy, telecommunications and other regulated utility services.

- Obj. 1.1** To advocate yearly through litigation on behalf of residential ratepayers before the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) and Maryland State circuit and appellate courts.
- Obj. 1.2** To advocate yearly for safe, reliable and fairly priced utility service for residential consumers of energy, telecommunications and other regulated utility services in other non-litigated forums.
- Obj. 1.3** Annually increase the number of successful resolutions or referrals.

| Performance Measures | 2015 Act. | 2016 Act. | 2017 Act. | 2018 Act. | 2019 Act. | 2020 Est. | 2021 Est. |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Federal, PSC and Appellate cases in which OPC has participated | 138 | 130 | 131 | 151 | 140 | 141 | 144 |
| Favorable Federal, PSC and appellate court decisions | 91 | 85 | 71 | 79 | 56 | 69 | 68 |
| Amount saved for customers in major cases (\$ millions) | 114 | 209 | 148 | 315 | 138 | 165 | 150 |
| Regulatory matters in which OPC has participated | 14 | 22 | 30 | 29 | 33 | 31 | 31 |
| Favorable resolution in regulatory matters | 7 | 10 | 13 | 15 | 18 | 15 | 16 |
| Calls meeting OPC intake criteria that were successfully resolved | 710 | 557 | 499 | 373 | 402 | 425 | 400 |

Office of the People's Counsel

C91H00.01 General Administration

Program Description

The Office of the People's Counsel (OPC) is an independent State agency that represents Maryland's residential consumers of electricity, natural gas, telephone and private water services. The OPC litigates on behalf of consumers and their interests in regulatory and court proceedings, helps resolve problems with utility services and locates financial assistance for ratepayers who have difficulty paying their bills. OPC advocates on both State and Federal levels for legislation that provides protection for residential ratepayers. In addition to monitoring the changes in competitive energy markets in the areas of gas, electricity and telephone services, the OPC also serves as a resource to the community by providing education, referrals and training.

Appropriation Statement

| | 2019 Actual | 2020 Appropriation | 2021 Allowance |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Number of Authorized Positions | 19.00 | 19.00 | 19.00 |
| 01 Salaries, Wages and Fringe Benefits | 2,271,833 | 2,370,120 | 2,322,443 |
| 02 Technical and Special Fees | 1,483,918 | 1,497,323 | 1,483,504 |
| 03 Communications | 30,282 | 9,801 | 10,801 |
| 04 Travel | 16,646 | 13,000 | 17,000 |
| 07 Motor Vehicle Operation and Maintenance | 10,920 | 11,500 | 11,500 |
| 08 Contractual Services | 64,747 | 106,788 | 128,856 |
| 09 Supplies and Materials | 66,449 | 62,000 | 66,000 |
| 13 Fixed Charges | 159,174 | 164,810 | 170,196 |
| Total Operating Expenses | 348,218 | 367,899 | 404,353 |
| Total Expenditure | 4,103,969 | 4,235,342 | 4,210,300 |
| Special Fund Expenditure | 4,103,969 | 4,235,342 | 4,210,300 |
| Total Expenditure | 4,103,969 | 4,235,342 | 4,210,300 |
| Special Fund Expenditure | | | |
| C91301 Public Utility Regulation Fund | 4,103,969 | 4,235,342 | 4,210,300 |
| Total | 4,103,969 | 4,235,342 | 4,210,300 |

3 Year Position Summary

| Classification Title | FY 2019 Positions | FY 2019 Expenditures | FY 2020 Positions | FY 2020 Appropriation | FY 2021 Positions | FY 2021 Allowance |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| C91 - Office of the People's Counsel | | | | | | |
| C91H0001 - General Administration | | | | | | |
| Admin Officer III | 1.00 | 65,313 | 1.00 | 68,197 | 1.00 | 65,654 |
| Admin Prog Mgr I | 1.00 | 84,752 | 1.00 | 88,494 | 1.00 | 88,494 |
| Administrator II | 1.00 | 67,639 | 1.00 | 70,626 | 1.00 | 70,626 |
| Asst Peoples Counsel II | 1.00 | 151,735 | 1.00 | 76,025 | 2.00 | 148,839 |
| Asst Peoples Counsel III | 3.00 | 268,119 | 3.00 | 263,035 | 3.00 | 263,035 |
| Asst Peoples Counsel IV | 4.00 | 281,987 | 4.00 | 406,897 | 3.00 | 334,083 |
| Consumer Liaison Peoples Couns | 1.00 | 101,036 | 1.00 | 105,499 | 1.00 | 105,499 |
| Dep Peoples Counsel | 1.00 | 124,107 | 1.00 | 130,094 | 1.00 | 130,094 |
| Management Associate | 3.00 | 153,308 | 3.00 | 160,076 | 3.00 | 162,060 |
| OBS-Admin Spec I | 1.00 | 45,668 | 1.00 | 47,684 | 1.00 | 47,684 |
| Office Secy I | 1.00 | 38,895 | 1.00 | 40,612 | 1.00 | 40,612 |
| Peoples Counsel | 1.00 | 116,768 | 1.00 | 121,927 | 1.00 | 121,927 |
| Total C91H0001 | 19.00 | 1,499,327 | 19.00 | 1,579,166 | 19.00 | 1,578,607 |