

Office of People's Counsel

MISSION

The Office of 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	2017 Act.	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Est.	2023 Est.
Federal, PSC and Appellate cases in which OPC has participated	131	151	140	195	167	167	176
Favorable Federal, PSC and appellate court decisions	71	79	56	94	73	74	80
Amount saved for customers in major cases (\$ millions)	148	315	138	160	101	133	131
Regulatory matters in which OPC has participated	30	29	33	50	33	39	41
Favorable resolution in regulatory matters	13	15	18	47	28	31	35
Calls meeting OPC intake criteria that were successfully resolved	499	373	402	201	579	625	540

Office of People's Counsel

C91H00.01 General Administration

Program Description

The Office of People's Counsel (OPC) is an independent State agency that represents Maryland's residential consumers of electricity, natural gas, telephone and private water services. 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 also 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, OPC also serves as a resource to the community by providing education, referrals and training.

Appropriation Statement

	2021 Actual	2022 Appropriation	2023 Allowance
Number of Authorized Positions	19.00	19.00	19.00
Number of Contractual Positions	0.00	3.00	3.00
01 Salaries, Wages and Fringe Benefits	2,243,403	2,396,377	2,454,985
02 Technical and Special Fees	1,641,079	2,313,329	2,369,347
03 Communications	10,174	10,801	9,501
04 Travel	138	15,000	31,000
07 Motor Vehicle Operation and Maintenance	11,065	11,500	12,540
08 Contractual Services	140,080	151,683	141,606
09 Supplies and Materials	67,915	71,000	81,000
11 Equipment - Additional	0	15,000	19,000
13 Fixed Charges	146,715	200,195	207,751
Total Operating Expenses	376,087	475,179	502,398
Total Expenditure	4,260,569	5,184,885	5,326,730
Special Fund Expenditure	4,260,569	5,184,885	5,326,730
Total Expenditure	4,260,569	5,184,885	5,326,730
Special Fund Expenditure			
C91301 Public Utility Regulation Fund	4,260,569	5,184,885	5,326,730
Total	4,260,569	5,184,885	5,326,730

3 Year Position Summary

Classification Title	FY 2021 Positions	FY 2021 Expenditures	FY 2022 Positions	FY 2022 Appropriation	FY 2023 Positions	FY 2023 Allowance
C91 - Office of People's Counsel						
C91H0001 - General Administration						
Admin Officer III	1.00	20,008	1.00	67,638	1.00	53,935
Admin Prog Mgr I	1.00	80,535	1.00	81,342	1.00	81,342
Administrator II	1.00	72,038	1.00	72,760	1.00	72,760
Asst Peoples Counsel I	0.00	0	0.00	0	1.00	76,785
Asst Peoples Counsel II	2.00	102,902	2.00	150,327	1.00	73,542
Asst Peoples Counsel III	3.00	292,300	3.00	265,665	3.00	265,665
Asst Peoples Counsel IV	3.00	323,820	3.00	337,424	2.00	240,376
Consumer Liaison Peoples Couns	1.00	85,840	1.00	106,554	1.00	106,554
Dep Peoples Counsel	1.00	132,687	1.00	131,395	2.00	228,443
Management Associate	3.00	165,299	3.00	165,302	3.00	165,302
OBS-Admin Spec I	1.00	48,637	1.00	49,125	1.00	49,125
Office Secy I	0.00	0	1.00	41,425	0.00	0
Office Secy III	1.00	11,664	0.00	0	1.00	37,769
Peoples Counsel	1.00	115,687	1.00	125,609	1.00	125,609
Total C91H0001	19.00	1,451,417	19.00	1,594,566	19.00	1,577,207