

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	2013 Act.	2014 Act.	2015 Act.	2016 Act.	2017 Act.	2018 Est.	2019 Est.
Federal, PSC and Appellate cases in which OPC has participated	155	170	138	130	131	133	133
Favorable Federal, PSC and appellate court decisions	100	114	91	85	71	82	82
Amount saved for customers in major cases (\$ millions)	167	171	114	209	148	157	157
Regulatory matters in which OPC has participated	20	16	14	22	30	22	22
Favorable resolution in regulatory matters	14	13	7	10	13	10	10
Calls meeting OPC intake criteria that were successfully resolved	420	368	710	557	499	589	589

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

	2017 Actual	2018 Appropriation	2019 Allowance
Number of Authorized Positions	19.00	19.00	19.00
01 Salaries, Wages and Fringe Benefits	2,217,773	2,204,423	2,249,350
02 Technical and Special Fees	1,484,895	1,510,175	1,484,910
03 Communications	29,573	32,776	28,241
04 Travel	14,547	12,000	14,000
07 Motor Vehicle Operation and Maintenance	10,850	11,500	11,500
08 Contractual Services	62,354	72,973	81,812
09 Supplies and Materials	59,138	60,000	60,000
13 Fixed Charges	151,942	156,927	158,957
Total Operating Expenses	328,404	346,176	354,510
Total Expenditure	4,031,072	4,060,774	4,088,770
Special Fund Expenditure	4,031,072	4,060,774	4,088,770
Total Expenditure	4,031,072	4,060,774	4,088,770
Special Fund Income			
C91301 Public Utility Regulation Fund	4,031,072	4,060,774	4,088,770
Total	4,031,072	4,060,774	4,088,770

3 Year Position Summary

Classification Title	FY 2017 Positions	FY 2017 Expenditures	FY 2018 Positions	FY 2018 Appropriation	FY 2019 Positions	FY 2019 Allowance
C91 - Office of the People's Counsel						
C91H0001 - General Administration						
Admin Officer III	1.00	63,366	1.00	63,371	1.00	63,371
Admin Prog Mgr I	1.00	83,805	1.00	83,811	1.00	83,811
Administrator II	1.00	66,883	1.00	66,888	1.00	66,888
Asst Peoples Counsel II	2.00	77,842	1.00	72,000	1.00	72,000
Asst Peoples Counsel III	2.00	203,170	3.00	233,090	3.00	233,090
Asst Peoples Counsel IV	4.00	411,342	4.00	417,557	4.00	417,557
Consumer Liaison Peoples Couns	1.00	98,922	1.00	99,914	1.00	99,914
Dep Peoples Counsel	1.00	123,197	1.00	123,206	1.00	123,206
Management Associate	3.00	149,474	3.00	149,941	3.00	149,941
OBSSAdmin Spec I	1.00	45,238	1.00	45,160	1.00	45,160
Office Secy I	1.00	22,027	1.00	37,662	1.00	37,662
Peoples Counsel	1.00	115,333	1.00	115,472	1.00	115,472
Total C91H0001	19.00	1,460,599	19.00	1,508,072	19.00	1,508,072