

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 customers. It is our mission to identify systemic issues that impact customers and pursue solutions that promote innovation, safety, and reliability of utility services at the lowest possible cost, considering the public safety, economic welfare, and environmental interests of the State and its residents, including the State's progress toward meeting its greenhouse gas emissions reductions goals. OPC is committed to educating residential consumers on issues pertinent to their utility services and changes in the energy markets.

VISION

Maryland's utilities perform superlatively, providing monopoly services and facilitating competitive markets that produce innovation, low prices, and environmental benefits for Maryland's residential customers who have the education and resources to take advantage of those services.

KEY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Goal 1 To advocate for safe, reliable, innovative, and fairly priced utility service for residential consumers of energy, telecommunications, and other regulated utility services while considering the public safety, economic welfare, and environmental interests of the State and its residents, including the State's progress toward meeting its greenhouse gas emissions reductions goals.

Obj. 1.1 To advocate through litigation on behalf of residential ratepayers before the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC), Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and Maryland State and federal courts.

Obj. 1.2 To advocate on behalf of residential consumers of energy, telecommunications and other regulated utility services in other non-litigated forums.

Obj. 1.3 To reduce the volume of consumer requests for assistance by ensuring customers are served by highly performing utilities, while increasing the proportion of successful resolutions or referrals of consumer requests for assistance.

Performance Measures	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Est.	2024 Est.
Federal, PSC and Appellate cases in which OPC has participated	151	140	195	167	194	185	182
Favorable Federal, PSC and appellate court decisions	79	56	94	73	95	87	85
Amount saved for customers in major cases (\$ millions)	315	138	160	101	109	123	111
Regulatory matters in which OPC has participated	29	33	50	33	25	36	31
Favorable resolution in regulatory matters	15	18	47	28	20	32	27
Calls meeting OPC intake criteria that were successfully resolved	373	402	201	579	773	676	725

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 the interests of Maryland's residential consumers of electricity, natural gas, telephone and private water services. OPC litigates in regulatory and court proceedings for safe, reliable, and fairly priced utility service for residential consumers of energy, telecommunications and other regulated utility services while considering the public safety, economic welfare, and environmental interests of the State and its residents, including the State's progress toward meeting its greenhouse gas emissions reductions goals. OPC also helps resolve problems with utility services and locate financial assistance for customers who have difficulty paying their bills. OPC advocates, on both State and Federal levels, for legislation that provides protection for residential ratepayers. OPC also advocates for rules and policies regarding competitive energy markets in the areas of gas, electricity and telephone services that will promote just and reasonable outcomes for consumers. Finally, OPC serves as a resource to the community by providing education, referrals and training.

Appropriation Statement	2022 Actual	2023 Appropriation	2024 Allowance
Number of Authorized Positions	19.00	19.00	22.00
Number of Contractual Positions	2.19	3.00	0.00
01 Salaries, Wages and Fringe Benefits	2,265,281	2,688,680	3,538,016
02 Technical and Special Fees	2,442,066	3,322,077	2,989,930
03 Communications	8,905	9,501	9,501
04 Travel	7,570	31,000	31,000
07 Motor Vehicle Operation and Maintenance	11,440	12,540	12,540
08 Contractual Services	170,952	141,606	178,192
09 Supplies and Materials	69,564	81,000	81,000
11 Equipment - Additional	15,922	19,000	19,000
13 Fixed Charges	168,826	207,751	189,374
Total Operating Expenses	453,179	502,398	520,607
Total Expenditure	5,160,526	6,513,155	7,048,553
Special Fund Expenditure	5,160,526	6,513,155	7,048,553
Total Expenditure	5,160,526	6,513,155	7,048,553
Special Fund Expenditure			
C91301 Public Utility Regulation Fund	5,160,526	6,513,155	7,048,553

3 Year Position Summary

Classification Title	FY 2022 Positions	FY 2022 Expenditures	FY 2023 Positions	FY 2023 Appropriation	FY 2024 Positions	FY 2024 Allowance
C91 - Office of People's Counsel						
C91H0001 - General Administration						
Admin Officer III	1.00	56,783	1.00	58,226	1.00	64,392
Admin Prog Mgr I	1.00	32,537	1.00	87,926	1.00	67,802
Admin Spec III	0.00	17,194	0.00	0	1.00	62,884
Administrator II	1.00	94,448	1.00	78,639	2.00	148,845
Asst Peoples Counsel I	0.00	139,973	1.00	83,082	6.00	575,646
Asst Peoples Counsel II	2.00	53,177	1.00	79,574	0.00	0
Asst Peoples Counsel III	3.00	184,309	3.00	287,453	2.00	238,993
Asst Peoples Counsel IV	3.00	219,064	2.00	260,090	3.00	388,048
Consumer Liaison Peoples Couns	1.00	90,777	1.00	115,293	1.00	101,684
Dep Peoples Counsel	1.00	263,108	2.00	247,180	2.00	280,199
Management Associate	3.00	153,201	3.00	179,750	2.00	131,745
OBS-Admin Spec I	1.00	36,151	1.00	53,012	0.00	0
Office Secy I	1.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
Office Secy III	0.00	38,336	1.00	41,862	0.00	0
Peoples Counsel	1.00	127,476	1.00	135,911	1.00	142,027
Total C91H0001	19.00	1,506,534	19.00	1,707,998	22.00	2,202,265