



## Delivering Small Business Regulatory Fairness

*The National Ombudsman can help save your small business time and money in resolving regulatory compliance and enforcement issues involving any federal agency.*

**W**e promote a level playing field for small business by working directly with federal regulators to bring practical and timely resolutions to regulatory fairness matters impacting your small business.

### Delivering Measurable Impacts for Small Business

The Office of the National Ombudsman has helped thousands of small business owners by delivering practical solutions like:

- Payment of overdue invoices for work done by government contractors
- Reductions of disproportionate penalties and fines
- Resolution of inconsistently applied rules and clarification of vague regulatory requirements

To deliver broad, systemic solutions, the National Ombudsman also analyzes small business concerns to detect regulatory trends and recurring issues that create barriers to small business growth. Then we partner with federal agencies that regulate small business to address and develop smart, lasting solutions to these problems.

### Elevating the Voice of America's Small Businesses

- Small businesses can report regulatory fairness issues online at [sba.gov/ombudsman](http://sba.gov/ombudsman), or in-person directly at local outreach events through a national network of Regulatory Fairness Board Members.
- The National Ombudsman meets directly with small business owners around the country during regulatory fairness dialogues.
- Regional Regulatory Fairness Boards each made up of five small business owners from SBA's 10 regions help connect small businesses with Ombudsman resources and provide advice and policy recommendations on regulations impacting the small business community.

To learn more please visit [www.sba.gov/ombudsman](http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman)

*SBA programs and services are provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.*

### Filing a Comment or Complaint with the National Ombudsman:

- 1) Complete a short form  
(at [sba.gov/ombudsman/comment](http://sba.gov/ombudsman/comment))

#### What to Include:

- Describe the enforcement, inspection, or compliance action taken by the federal agency and the results.
- Briefly state the specific action or outcome you are seeking.
- Provide documentation of the action taken if available, such as correspondence, citations, or notices.

- 2) Submit your form:

Email: [ombudsman@sba.gov](mailto:ombudsman@sba.gov)

Fax: 202-481-5719

Online: [sba.gov/ombudsman/comment](http://sba.gov/ombudsman/comment)

Mail: U.S. Small Business Administration  
Office of the National Ombudsman  
409 3rd Street S.W.  
Washington, DC 20416

- 3) We will work with the relevant agency to obtain a high-level review and responsive answer to your concerns.

**Regulatory Fairness Helpline**  
**888-REG-FAIR**  
**[www.sba.gov/ombudsman](http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman)**

# Office of the National Ombudsman

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. How can the National Ombudsman help my small business?**

If your business has experienced unfair regulatory enforcement involving any federal agency or is dealing with a significant burden due to a particular federal rule, the National Ombudsman can help get a fair review and resolution on your behalf. All comments are handled on a confidential, protected basis.

Once you submit a comment, we ask the federal agency involved to consider the fairness of the case from a small business perspective and provide a practical, timely response that balances the spirit of the regulation with the specific circumstances of the small business.

### **2. What happens to the comment/complaint I file with the National Ombudsman?**

A case management specialist will review the comment and any supporting documentation to make sure the necessary authorization and other information is present. The comment is then forwarded to the agency with a request for a prompt, high-level, responsive review.

### **3. When should I expect a response?**

We ask the federal agency to conduct a high-level review and provide a response describing the results of its review within 30 business days. Some cases, including particularly complex ones, may require additional time to investigate and substantively address the concerns raised.

### **4. Should I file an appeal or pursue other resolutions if I file a comment with the Office of the National Ombudsman?**

Filing a comment with the National Ombudsman is not a substitute for your rights or obligations in legal or administrative agency proceedings. You should always pursue any and all avenues for relief you believe are in the best interests of your small business.

The Ombudsman process does not suspend, cancel, modify, or replace any legal or administrative process or other mandates for formal review that an agency may require, and the National Ombudsman does not have authority to make a ruling or decision on a case, or impose any punitive or corrective measures on a federal agency.

### **5. Is my comment confidential?**

Yes, all comments are confidential and will not be disclosed without your express consent. If you elect, we will also maintain your anonymity with the agency involved so that your name or other identifying information is not shared with the agency.

### **6. If I file a comment, am I protected from agency retaliation against my business?**

Yes, Federal agencies and their employees are prohibited from retaliating against small businesses for filing a complaint regarding the agency. We take any allegation of retaliation extremely seriously, and should it ever occur will refer the matter to the Office of the Inspector General for review and investigation.