

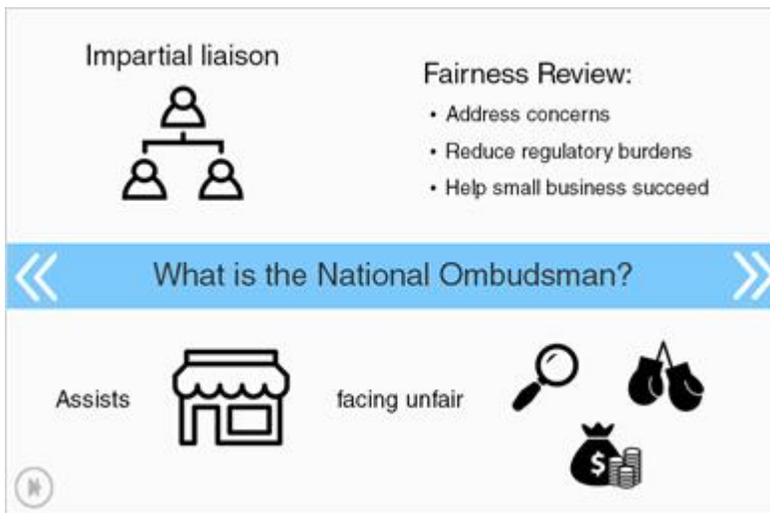
Ombudsman Transcript

Introduction



Have you heard about the National Ombudsman, but want to know more about the office's role in helping small businesses? Press Begin to learn more.

What is the National Ombudsman?



The National Ombudsman assists small businesses facing unfair or excessive federal regulatory compliance or enforcement issues such as repetitive audits or investigations, excessive fines and retaliation.

As an impartial liaison, the Office of the National Ombudsman directs reported regulatory fairness matters to the appropriate federal agency for high-level fairness review and works across government to address those concerns, reduce regulatory burdens, and help small businesses succeed.

Who is the National Ombudsman designed to help?



The National Ombudsman is designed to help any...

- Small business, OR
- Non-profit organization, OR
- Small government entity with a population of 50,000 or less

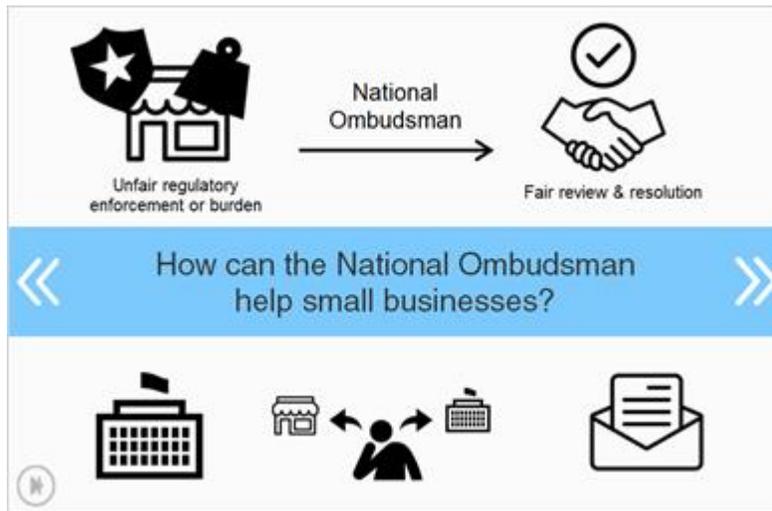
...that has a comment or complaint that directly involves a federal agency and federal regulations.

In many cases, these regulations are related to:

- pre-bid practices and policies that unfairly exclude small contractors,
- Delayed invoice payments,
- Contract implementation issues,
- SBA certification process issues,
- and unfair agency actions taken against a small business.

Note that the National Ombudsman is only involved in *federal* complaints, and doesn't get involved in the local regulation issues that many small businesses run into.

How can the National Ombudsman help small businesses?



If a business has experienced unfair regulatory enforcement [badge] involving any federal agency, or is dealing with a significant burden [weight] due to a particular federal rule, the National Ombudsman can help get a fair review and resolution on the business' behalf.

Once a comment is submitted, the federal agency in question is asked 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.

How can I file a comment or complaint through the National Ombudsman?

Online Form	sba.gov	U.S Small Business Administration Office of the National Ombudsman 409 3rd St, S.W. Washington, DC 20416
Fax	202-481-5719	
Email	ombudsman@sba.gov	
Hotline	(888) 734-3247	
		Mail

How can I file a comment or complaint through the National Ombudsman?

Describe the issue clearly

State the action you're seeking

Provide documentation

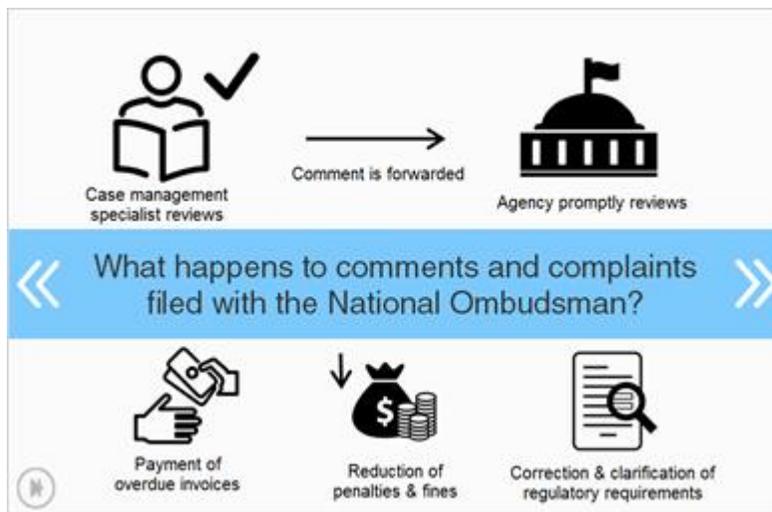
To file a comment or complaint, use the online form at SBA.gov.

You can submit this form online, or you can print it out and fax it, mail it, email it, or even complete it on the Ombudsman's hotline.

If you're going to file a comment or complaint, here are a few key tips:

- Make sure to describe the enforcement, inspection, or compliance taken by the federal agency and the results or outcomes clearly.
- Then, briefly state the specific action or outcome you're seeking.
- Lastly, make sure to provide documentation of the action taken if available, including correspondence, citations, and notices.

What happens to comments and complaints filed 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.

Outcomes from complaints might include:

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

Are filed comments confidential?

All comments and complaints are confidential



Are filed comments confidential?



Allegations are taken extremely seriously and immediately referred to the Office of the Inspector General

All comments and complaints are confidential and will not be disclosed without a business owner's express consent. That is, a small business owner's name and other identifying information will not be shared with the agency involved, unless the small business owner elects to have their information disclosed.

Keep in mind that Federal agencies and their employees are prohibited from retaliating against small businesses for filing a complaint regarding the agency. The Ombudsman takes any allegation of retaliation extremely seriously, and any reports of retaliation are immediately referred to the Office of the Inspector General for review and investigation.

What are the Regional Fairness Boards?

10
Small Business
Regulatory Fairness Boards



Comprised of 5 small business owners

What are the Regional Fairness Boards?



Receive copy of appraisal form



Hold follow-up meeting



Report on significant issues



Reflect concerns to Congress

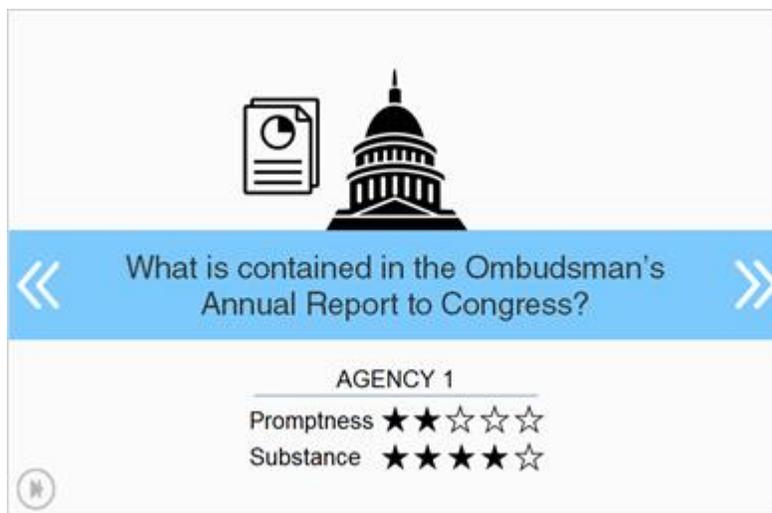
The SBA Administrator is required to appoint 10 Small Business Regulatory Fairness Boards. The boards are

comprised of five volunteer small business owners. The Regulatory Fairness Boards can:

- Receive a copy of your appraisal form.
- Hold a follow-up meeting on your concern.
- Report on significant enforcement issues; and
- Reflect all concerns in their report to Congress.

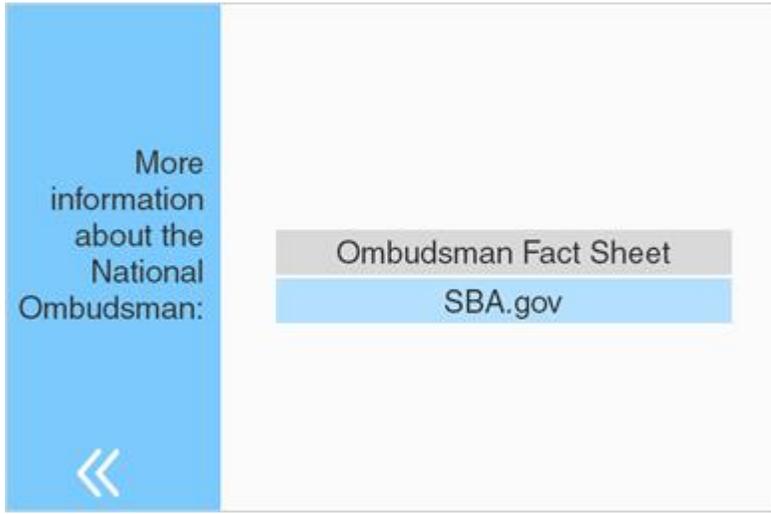
It's important to note that the Fairness Board cannot adjudicate your complaints directly; or reverse agency decisions. Therefore, you should continue exercising your rights and exhausting every option you believe is in your best interest.

What is contained in the Ombudsman's Annual Report to Congress?



Each year, the Ombudsman submits an annual report to Congress. This report includes scores all federal agencies that regulate small business on the promptness and substance of responses to small business concerns.

Additional Resources



Each year, the Ombudsman submits an annual report to Congress. This report includes scores of all federal agencies that regulate small businesses on the promptness and substance of responses to small business concerns.