



Being Treated Fairly by Public Body Programs and Services

Learn about your rights, public bodies' responsibilities and when you can complain to Manitoba Ombudsman.



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OMBUDSMAN

Your rights

Under The Ombudsman Act, you can complain if you feel you were treated unfairly through the decisions and actions of a Manitoba public body. You believe you didn't receive a fair process, decision or service, or the public body acted differently than what law or policy requires.

Your complaint can be about how you were affected by the administrative processes or operations of these public bodies:

- provincial government departments and agencies
- crown corporations
- health authorities
- municipalities/local governments
- local government districts, planning districts, and conservation districts
- boards and commissions directly or indirectly responsible to the government
- colleges with appointed boards (Red River College and Assiniboine Community College)

The background features a large, stylized graphic. At the top, there are several concentric, semi-circular bands in shades of light orange and peach. Below these, there are stylized human figures in a light teal color, arranged in a circular pattern. The figures have their arms raised, and their heads are positioned at the top of the orange bands, creating a sense of a collective or community. The overall design is clean and modern, with a focus on human connection and fairness.

What is fair treatment?

We look at three different aspects of fairness when considering if a person was treated unfairly.

A fair process can be the way a decision is made or the steps that are taken.

Fair process is sometimes called procedural fairness. For example:

- Did you know ahead of time a decision was going to be made?
- Were you given the information considered in making the decision?
- Did you have a chance to give your side of the story or dispute information?
- Was the decision maker unbiased and impartial?

A fair decision can be about the decision itself, or the outcome or result. For example:

- Why do you think the decision is wrong or unreasonable?
- Can you understand why the decision was made and were you given reasons for the decision?
- Does the decision create unnecessary obstacles for you or do you think it discriminates against you?

A fair service can be about how you were treated. Fair service is also called relational fairness. For example:

- Were programs and services easily accessible?
- Was information about how to make a complaint readily available and easy to understand?
- Did employees actively listen to you, demonstrate courtesy and respect confidentiality?



Before contacting the Ombudsman

Try resolving your complaint directly with the public body first. Ask them for an explanation about why a decision was made or an action taken. Ask if there is a review or appeal process available. If you are not able to resolve your complaint, the Ombudsman may be able to help.

Making a complaint to the Ombudsman

Complaints under The Ombudsman Act must be made in writing which can be done through email, our online forms or in a letter. Learn more about making a complaint by visiting our website. You can also call us with any questions. Our services are free.


What happens when the Ombudsman receives your complaint

Complaints under The Ombudsman Act are reviewed. Intake staff will contact you, ask for more detail and may:

- provide information about how to resolve your concern(s)
- discuss possible referral and appeal options
- contact the public body you complained about to confirm or clarify information

In some cases, intake staff may be able to resolve your complaint. If a complaint cannot be resolved by intake staff, it may be opened as an investigation file.

The Ombudsman may decline a complaint and will explain why. We also cannot investigate complaints about the federal government or private businesses, the courts, decisions of the courts, or members of the legislative assembly (elected politicians). We do not act as an advocate for complainants or represent government departments or professional organizations.

A decorative graphic consisting of several concentric, light gray arcs of varying thicknesses, arranged in a semi-circular pattern at the bottom of the page.

About Manitoba Ombudsman

Manitoba Ombudsman receives complaints about Manitoba public bodies and services on unfair actions or decisions, access to information, privacy protection, or serious wrongdoing. We resolve citizen concerns, conduct impartial investigations, make recommendations and educate Manitobans and public bodies on legislated rights and responsibilities.

The Ombudsman is independent, impartial and non-partisan, providing oversight to protect and promote citizens' rights and improve fairness, transparency and accountability in public services.

Contact us

ombudsman.mb.ca

1-800-665-0531

Winnipeg | Brandon | Thompson

Information available in alternate formats
upon request.



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