

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND**  
**2025 Legislative Session**

Bill No. CB-003-2025

Chapter No. \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed and Presented by Council Member Olson

Introduced by \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Sponsors \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Introduction \_\_\_\_\_

**BILL**

1 AN ACT concerning

2 The Office of Permitting Ombudsman

3 For the purpose of establishing The Office of Permitting Ombudsman for the Department of  
 4 Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE) in Prince George's County and creating a formal  
 5 mechanism to address barriers for small business, homeowners, and other stakeholders in Prince  
 6 George's County.

7 BY adding:

8 SUBTITLE 4. BUILDING.

9 Sections 4-272, 4-273, 4-274, 4-275, 4-276, and 4-277

10 The Prince George's County Code

11 (2023 Edition; 2024 Supplement).

12 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED by the County Council of Prince George's County,  
 13 Maryland, that Sections 4-272, 4-273, 4-274, 4-275, 4-276 and 4-277 of the Prince  
 14 George's County Code be and the same are hereby added:

15 SUBTITLE 4. BUILDING.

16 **DIVISION 4. THE OFFICE OF PERMITTING OMBUDSMAN FOR THE**  
 17 **DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING, INSPECTIONS AND**  
 18 **ENFORCEMENT.**

19 **Sec. 4-272. - Definitions.**

20 (a) For the purpose of this Division, the following word shall have the following  
 21 meaning indicated:

(1) A Permitting Ombudsman is an official appointed who investigates, reports on, and helps settle complaints, usually an individual affiliated with an organization or business who serves as an advocate for patients, consumers, and employees. They will serve as mediators, negotiators, advocates and consultants when communication has eviscerated and are called upon to help mediate a resolution in which the client's voice is heard above all others. In essence, the Office of Permitting Ombudsman will be a helpful advocate for the public to navigate the permitting process.

**Sec. 4-273. - Establishment of The Office of Permitting Ombudsman.**

(a) The Prince George's County Council hereby establishes the Permitting Ombudsman, whose role shall be to assist and be an advocate for homeowners, small businesses, contractors, and other residents in navigating the permitting, administered by the Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement (DPIE) within the County.

(1) The Office of Permitting Ombudsman shall have the authority to:

(A) Provide direct support and be an advocate to individuals seeking information or assistance with obtaining permits within the County.

(B) Act as an intermediary between applicants and DPIE staff to ensue clarity, fairness, and transparency in the permitting process.

(C) Assist in identifying and resolving disputes related to delays, denials, or misunderstandings in the permitting procedures.

(D) Offer advice, training, and outreach programs to educate residents, small businesses, and contractors on navigating the regulatory and permitting requirements.

(E) Review and make recommendations regarding DPIE's processes to improve efficiency and accessibility for all users, particularly homeowners and small businesses, and

(D) Serve as an advocate for systemic reforms and process improvements in DPIE to reduce unnecessary barriers and streamline services for the public.

**Sec. 4-274. - Duties and Responsibilities.**

(a) The Office of Permitting Ombudsman shall perform the following duties:

(1) Case Resolution

(A) Address individual complaints and inquiries about permitting delays,

actions and other related concerns.

(B) Provide personalized guidance and support to homeowners, small businesses, and contractors in resolving issues with the permitting process.

(C) Facilitate communication between DPIE staff and residents or businesses to ensure timely responses to inquiries and concerns.

(2) Education and Outreach

(A) Conduct public outreach to increase awareness of The Office of Permitting Ombudsman's services and the permitting process, focusing on ensuring that homeowners and small businesses understand their rights and obligations.

(B) Host workshops and webinars to inform and educate the public about the permitting process, the role of DPIE, and how to resolve common challenges in permitting.

(C) Create a talking head video tutorial that will provide an explanation of the office to be displayed on the first page of DPIE's website with no more than one click of the mouse. It shall be written in English and Spanish. The official title on the website shall be called the Office of Permitting Ombudsman/Advocate.

(3) Monitoring and Reporting:

(A) Review the effectiveness of the permitting process and submit an annual report to the County Council highlighting the data in each Councilmanic district detailing the Ombudsman's activities, challenges faced, recommendations for improvements, and outcome of cases resolved.

(B) Analyze trends in permitting complaints, to identify areas for process improvements within permitting.

(C) Work with other County departments, agencies, and local organizations to support the County's efforts in making permitting processes more accessible and efficient for all residents and small businesses, and

(D) Collaborate with DPIE's leadership to develop improvements in the permitting process.

**Sec. 4-275. - Authority and Access.**

(a) The Office of Permitting Ombudsman shall have full access to all information and data within the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement

1 necessary to effectively perform their duties, including but not limited to:

2 (1) Records related to permit applications,

3 (2) Communication between DPIE staff and applicants, contractors, or  
4 residents.

5 (3) Internal reports and evaluations related to service performance,  
6 complaints, and case resolutions, and

7 (4) The Office of Permitting Ombudsman shall have the authority to  
8 make recommendations to the Director of DPIE and the Prince George's County  
9 Council, for the purpose of enhancing efficiency, customer service and accessibility with  
10 the permitting process.

11 **Sec. 4-276. - Funding.**

12 (a) The Prince George's County Council shall allocate sufficient funding from  
13 the County's general fund to establish and maintain The Office of the Permitting  
14 Ombudsman, including staff support, training, technology, infrastructure, and outreach  
15 activities. The Office of Permitting Ombudsman and their staff shall be housed in the  
16 Wayne K. Curry Administrative Building, 1301 McCormick Drive, Largo, MD 20774  
17 and maintain an office with DPIE.

18 **Sec. 4-277. - Implementation and Reporting.**

19 (a) The Office of Permitting Ombudsman shall be appointed and confirmed by  
20 the Prince George's County Council. The individual selected shall have relevant  
21 experience in public service, customer advocacy, and permitting. The Office of  
22 Permitting Ombudsman shall report directly to the Council.

23 (b) The Office of Permitting Ombudsman shall submit an annual report to the  
24 County Council detailing the number of cases handled, resolutions achieved and any  
25 recommendations for improving the permitting process highlighting each Councilmanic  
26 District.

27 (c) The Office of Permitting Ombudsman shall be subject to review and  
28 evaluation by the County Council after a two-year period to assess the effectiveness and  
29 impact of the office in improving customer service and supporting small businesses and  
30 homeowners.

31 (d) The Office of Permitting Ombudsman shall keep all statistical data such as

1 address, phone numbers, electronic mail from anyone seeking redress which includes all  
 2 small business entities or homeowners. The office shall be open from Monday, Tuesday,  
 3 Thursday and Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Wednesday from 9 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
 4 and

5 (e) The Office of Permitting Ombudsman shall acknowledge receipt of  
 6 communication from members of the public within 2 (two) business days.

7 SECTION 2. BE IT FURTHER ENACTED that the provisions of this Act are hereby  
 8 declared to be severable; and, in the event that any section, subsection, paragraph,  
 9 subparagraph, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this Act is declared invalid or  
 10 unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality  
 11 shall not affect the remaining words, phrases, clauses, sentences, subparagraphs, paragraphs,  
 12 subsections, or sections of this Act, since the same would have been enacted without the  
 13 incorporation in this Act of any such invalid or unconstitutional word, phrase, clause,  
 14 sentence, paragraph, subparagraph, subsection, or section.

15 SECTION 3. BE IT FURTHER ENACTED that 30 (thirty) days after the bill becomes  
 16 law, sufficient notice shall be disseminated in written and electronic form by the Clerk of the  
 17 Council to the Community and Neighborhood Civic Associations, Municipalities, Prince  
 18 George's County Municipal Association, Chamber of Commerce of Prince George's County,  
 19 the Black Chamber of Commerce of Prince George's County, The Hispanic Chamber of  
 20 Commerce of Prince George's County, The Prince George's County Association of Realtors,  
 21 The Maryland Institute of Architects and Maryland Building Industry Association and any  
 22 other recipients as determined by the Council.

1       SECTION 4. BE IT FURTHER ENACTED that this Act shall take effect within forty-  
2 five (45) calendar days after it becomes law.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE  
GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jolene Ivey  
Chair

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Donna J. Brown  
Clerk of the Council

APPROVED:

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tara H. Jackson  
Acting County Executive

KEY:

Underscoring indicates language added to existing law.

[Brackets] indicate language deleted from existing law.

Asterisks \*\*\* indicate intervening existing Code provisions that remain unchanged.