

FAQs

**DCS Ombudsman Bureau
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What is an Ombudsman? The word “Ombudsman” refers to a government official who investigates and resolves complaints.

Is the Department of Child Services Ombudsman Bureau part of DCS? The DCS Ombudsman Bureau is separate and independent from DCS. The Ombudsman is appointed by the Governor and the Bureau is located within the Department of Administration.

What does the Ombudsman Do? The Ombudsman has the authority to receive, investigate and resolve complaints concerning DCS actions or omissions and to make recommendations to improve the Child Welfare System.

When should I contact the Ombudsman? You should contact the Ombudsman if believe DCS’s actions or omissions have resulted in the failure to protect a child or the failure to follow laws, rules and written policies, after attempting to resolve the issue with DCS.

How do I file a complaint? To file a complaint you must submit a written complaint form. The form can be downloaded from the website (www.in.gov/idoa/2610.htm) and printed, submitted electronically via the website or by requesting a form over the telephone. If you are not submitting electronically, the completed form can be mailed to the Bureau at the above address, faxed to the above fax, or scanned and sent via email to the above email address.

Will my identity be revealed to the agency if I file a complaint? The DCS Ombudsman Bureau is required to ensure that the identity of the complainant will not be disclosed without written consent, except as necessary to investigate and resolve a complaint. You will be given the opportunity to provide written consent on the complaint form or by completing and returning the consent form mailed to you if you submit electronically.

What happens after a complaint is filed? When the completed complaint form is received you will receive notification of receipt and information concerning the next steps. After an intake assessment, the appropriate level of Bureau involvement will be determined. The DCS Ombudsman Bureau may decide to refer the matter back to DCS, to attempt to resolve the problem, refer the matter to Child Protection Team, open a case review or launch an investigation.

Will I know what happened with my complaint? If the Bureau decides not to take further action on your complaint, you will be notified in writing. If a case is opened for a review or an investigation, you will receive a letter with notification of the findings upon completion of the review/investigation. The information disclosed will be in compliance with confidentiality requirements by law.