

*The Minnesota Office of the Ombuds for Corrections (OBFC) was created “to promote the highest attainable standards of competence, efficiency, and justice in the administration of corrections.” MN Statute 241.90-95*

The Office of the Ombuds for Corrections (OBFC) is a neutral and independent investigator of complaints regarding Minnesota corrections agency actions and policies. It is a separate agency that acts independently from the Department of Corrections and reports directly to the Governor.

### What the OBFC Can Do

- **Receive, Investigate and Resolve Complaints:** Provides an impartial and unbiased process for incarcerated individuals, staff, and community to share concerns about corrections agency actions and policies and have them investigated.
- **Recommend and Report:** Investigations can lead to recommendations for resolving complaints and improving policies to corrections agency staff and leadership; and to public reports, findings, and statutory change recommendations to the Governor and Legislature.
- **Provide Information:** The OBFC provides education and information to help people navigate the corrections system.

### Complaint Information

- **Grievance/Administrative Process Required:** To support a fair and effective agency process, the OBFC requires, in almost all cases, that the agency grievance process or other administrative remedies are sought before a complaint will be accepted.
- **Consent:** The OBFC will not accept a complaint on behalf of another individual without their consent, absent compelling reasons for doing so.
- **Data Practices:** Information received from a complainant is private data under M.S. 13.856, except for name, location, and identification number (if applicable).
- **Interference and Retaliation:** Staff must not prevent or discourage the filing of complaints. Retaliation for making complaints is illegal.
- **Special Mail:** Correspondence to and from the Office of the Ombuds must be delivered unopened.
- **To File a Complaint:** Those in DOC facilities should use the OBFC complaint form available at facility libraries, all others can go to the OBFC web site at [mn.gov/obfc/](http://mn.gov/obfc/) or if unable to access web, call 651-539-4520.

## Other Important Things to Know

- **Authority:** The OBFC cannot force a corrections agency to take any action or discipline anyone.
- **Local Facilities:** Jail or other local adult or juvenile correctional facility grievance/administrative process should be exhausted first, then complaints can be made to the Department of Corrections Inspection and Enforcement unit, info at [mn.gov/doc/staff-partners/licensing/inspection-enforcement/](https://mn.gov/doc/staff-partners/licensing/inspection-enforcement/). The OBFC may investigate issues the DOC does not.

## Ombuds for Corrections Goals

- **Provide Oversight:** Minnesota's correctional facilities confine tens of thousands of people and place staff in often difficult work environments, with restricted public access and minimal outside oversight.
- **Promote Efficiency and Justice:** The Ombuds examines existing policies and procedures, identifies opportunities for raising overall standards, makes recommendations, and produces reports in order to promote efficiency, justice, and fairness.
- **Increase Health and Safety** for incarcerated individuals, staff, and community by:
  - **Increasing Health and Safety**—Ensuring effective correctional programs, policies, and practices which create a safer and healthier environment for incarcerated individuals and staff.
  - **Providing an Outlet**—Providing a productive option for incarcerated individuals frustrated by circumstances that might otherwise lead to harmful conflict.
  - **Increasing Community Safety**—Ensuring the rights of those who are incarcerated are protected and that correctional services promote rehabilitation which reduces recidivism, improves lives, and promotes overall community safety.
- **Promote Equity:** People of color are disproportionately represented in prisons and jails. BIPOC people represent over 55% of the male and 44% of the female prison population. Addressing both individual and systemic issues advances equity and provides for greater accountability and greater transparency in addressing inequitable systems within and outside of corrections.

## Office of the Ombuds for Corrections

[mn.gov/obfc/](https://mn.gov/obfc/)

651-539-4520

Office of the Ombuds for Corrections

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*Promoting the Highest Standards of Justice*