



Office of the Public Records Advocate

800 Summer St. NE, Salem, OR 97310

<http://sos.oregon.gov/archives/Pages/public-records-advisory.aspx>

Draft Strategic Plan for Office of the Public Records Advocate

Hiring:

- I will seek to hire a well-qualified deputy whose skills and knowledge complement my own. I will seek applicants from both the government and requester community, emphasizing mediation and negotiation skills, a strong working knowledge of Oregon public records laws, and knowledge of the operations of Oregon government. I will seek a deputy with a commitment to independence, candor, and public service.

Leveraging the experience of other open government ombuds offices:

- With the help of the Council, I will investigate other states with similar ombuds offices. I will also leverage my connections with the Office of Government Information Services. I will reach out to those offices and ask for their lessons learned, best practices, and biggest challenges. I will also ask about internal administrative processes and technological resources. I would use this information to build a better, more efficient and effective office from the outset.

Soliciting feedback from relevant stakeholders:

- I will initiate a process of outreach to the public, informing the public of the office's function and the availability of mediation services and soliciting feedback regarding what requesters see as the biggest challenges. I will conduct public meetings and do online outreach and will identify important stakeholders - media organizations, educational institutions, open government advocacy groups - and reach out to them individually. I will work with these leading stakeholders to reach other requesters and communities.
- I will conduct similar outreach to agencies and city governments, informing them of the office's function and soliciting feedback on what their biggest challenges are.
- I will also reach out to the Attorney General and District Attorneys who handle appeals. I will solicit their feedback about the most frequently appealed issues and areas of contention. I will make use of their institutional and local knowledge to identify areas of strength and weakness and will then tailor education and outreach based on that feedback.
- I will also solicit public and agency feedback regarding success stories - what is working? What practices help to create an efficient and effective open records program?

Establishing a training program:

- I will craft educational presentations based on the feedback I receive from the public and government and will tailor them to the particular audience that I am addressing. I will initiate an ambitious training schedule in conjunction with Archives records training. I will conduct this training in person whenever possible, but will also utilize recorded trainings and trainings via Skype and other meeting tools. If the Council is amenable and resources allow, I will conduct not only agency trainings, but also public trainings.

Establishing a mediation process:

- My deputy and I will take mediation training courses.
- I will establish a mediation process based on best practices established in other ombuds offices, but tailored to Oregon's specific needs. I will endeavor to make all parties feel heard and understood, to foster trust and empathy, and to balance competing interests fairly.

Establishing a robust public-facing website:

- I will also work to create a website that serves as a central repository for information on the open records laws - with links to the new list of exemptions (per SB 0481), to relevant training guides, and to relevant orders and advisory opinions. I hope to expand this website to include free recorded trainings and tutorials on how to pursue and process open records requests.
- I will also use social media and outreach to traditional media to inform the public about the work of the Office of the Public Records Advocate.

Working with the Public Records Advisory Council to make policy, law, and practice recommendations:

- I will work with the Council to craft policies and administrative rules regarding the functions and practices of the Office of the Public Records Advocate.
 - I will work with the Council to leverage information about challenges and successes into concrete recommendations on law, policy, and practice, which I will then distribute to both the public and the agencies. I would aim always for consensus, unanimous recommendations with buy-in from all relevant stakeholders.
 - I will work with the Governor's office to identify legislators who are interested in public records issues and will work with those legislators to craft improvements to Oregon's public records laws.
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