

What is Fairness?

Ombudsman Saskatchewan promotes and protects fairness in the design and delivery of government services. But what does that mean? What is fairness anyway?

What is fairness? Fairness is not always simple and it does not always mean that everyone gets the exact same thing. There are many situations, relationships and events that come into play. Sometimes generally accepted principles of fairness will apply; sometimes the law will apply. Although there is no single answer, there are some basic principles and practices that can help to describe fairness.

Three Aspects of Fairness: The Fairness Triangle

- Was the person given sufficient information to know what was required?
- Was the person given an appropriate forum to present his or her views?
- Did government take the time to listen?
- Did government provide reasons for its decisions?
- Was the decision delivered within a reasonable time?
- Was the decision-maker unbiased?



- Was government approachable?
- Was confidentiality respected?
- Was the government agency honest and forthright?
- Was an apology offered if a mistake was made?

- Did government have the legal authority to make the decision?
- Was the decision based on relevant information?
- Was the decision oppressive or unjust?
- Was the decision wrong in fact or law?

How does the Ombudsman promote and protect fairness? One way is by taking complaints about unfair service in provincial government ministries, agencies, boards and Crown corporations. The Ombudsman is independent and can make recommendations to government to correct an unfairness. The office uses coaching, negotiation, mediation and investigation to help resolve complaints. Ombudsman Saskatchewan offers workshops about fair practices and can also meet with government to provide a fairness perspective (also called the “fairness lens”).

Do You Have a Complaint?

If you think you have encountered an unfairness in provincial government services, talk to them. Try any appeals that are available. If that doesn't work, call us. We may be able to help.

What Can Ombudsman Saskatchewan do?

- We can review complaints about provincial government services to determine whether government was fair.
- We can make recommendations to government about what we think they should do or change.
- We can investigate, coach, negotiate and mediate...whatever is needed to find out what happened and promote a fair resolution.
- We are unbiased and separate from government, so we can look at all aspects of a situation fairly.

What Can't Ombudsman Saskatchewan do?

- We can't review complaints about the federal government, courts, decisions of Cabinet, school boards, the police, municipal governments, band councils, private companies or individuals.
- We can't force government to follow our recommendations (but they usually do).

How to Reach Us

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promoting fairness