



What is an Ombudsman? Ombudsman is a representative who investigates complaints impartially, and advocates for improvements in policies and procedures.

What is the Child Welfare Ombudsman Division? The Child Welfare Ombudsman division is an independent and impartial agency that is housed within the Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape and Domestic Violence. The Child Welfare Ombudsman Division was created to work independently from other child welfare agencies in the state of Arkansas. The Ombudsman reviews issues and concerns involving a child who has been subjected to abuse or neglect. The Ombudsman also has the duty to review and recommend necessary changes to improve the policies, procedures and laws within the child welfare system of Arkansas, and to make sure every child being served by the child welfare system is aware of their legal rights under the law.

What Services are Provided?

The Ombudsman may:

- Investigate complaints
- Answer questions regarding your issue or complaint and make referrals if possible
- Provide information about department procedures or policies
- Attempt to resolve complaints not resolved at the local office level
- Advocate for improvements within the child welfare system that will aid individual children and/or families

The Ombudsman Cannot:

- When reviewing a complaint or making findings, the Ombudsman cannot disclose confidential information.
- The Ombudsman does not determine whether or not disciplinary action is taken against an employee of an agency.
- The Ombudsman does not have authority over judicial decisions regarding court involved cases.
- The Ombudsman Office cannot overturn or change investigative findings.
- The Ombudsman Office cannot compel an agency to implement recommendations.
- The Ombudsman Office jurisdiction is the Arkansas Child Welfare System, and not Domestic Relations or Probate cases.

Who Can File a Complaint? Anyone who believes that a child welfare agency or party has failed to follow laws, rules, or policies in regard to a child welfare case may file a complaint. This could be a child, a parent, a relative, a foster parent, or anyone that is advocating for a child involved in a dependency-neglect case in Arkansas.

What Should I Do Before I File a Complaint? Before contacting the Child Welfare Ombudsman try to resolve the issue through the supervisors of the agency with whom you are having issues. Many times an agency official can explain a policy, answer your questions, or correct the problem.

How Can I File a Complaint? You can file a complaint by sending an email to childwelfareombudsman@uams.edu, or by calling (501) 661-7974 and leaving a voicemail message.

What Happens After I File a Complaint? After a complaint is filed, the ombudsman will contact you for additional information and conduct a preliminary assessment of the case. A determination is then made to refer to the agency, to attempt a resolution, or to launch an official investigation into the complaint. An official investigation involves a review of all necessary case documents and interviews with parties involved in the case. When the investigation is complete, findings will be communicated to the complainant and the respective agency along with recommendations for improvement if needed.

OUR MISSION

To review an issue or complaint in any child welfare case or investigation in which a child or their family needs assistance from the Ombudsman; to bring resolution when possible; and to advocate for policies and procedures that will improve the child welfare system in Arkansas.

OUR GOALS

- To advocate for the best interests of the child by encouraging best practices from all parties serving our children and families in Arkansas
- To objectively evaluate and work to resolve issues and concerns within the child welfare system of Arkansas
- To provide independent oversight to the child welfare system in Arkansas



Contacting the Child Welfare Ombudsman Office:

Telephone Number
501-661-7974

Email
childwelfareombudsman@uams.edu

Website
accardv.uams.edu

Mailing Address
4301 W. Markham St. #606
Little Rock, Arkansas 72205-7199

UAMS

ARKANSAS CHILD WELFARE OMBUDSMAN OFFICE

A division of the Arkansas Commission on
Child Abuse, Rape, and Domestic Violence



*An independent resource
for reviewing issues
concerning child welfare
cases in Arkansas and
advocating for our
children and families.*

UAMS