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**Consumer Services:** This Division conducts an extensive program to educate utility consumers about their rights concerning utility service and provides support for consumer involvement in the ratemaking process. CSD also handles consumer complaints and inquiries, provides technical assistance to various utility consumer groups and participates in community forums.

**Operations:** This Division is responsible for space acquisition and management, materials and equipment, procurement, recruitment, personnel, staff development and benefits administration. *Management Information Systems*, part of the Operations Division, is responsible for computer systems management, user training and support and construction and maintenance of the OPC website.

## FUNDING

OPC's annual budget is included in the Council of the District of Columbia's approved budget submission to Congress. None of OPC's funding comes from D.C.'s general revenue.

OPC functions with two budgets: operating funds for day-to-day agency operations (i.e., rent, salaries, and equipment) and assessment funds for expenses related to litigating specific cases. By law, each of the public utilities (Pepco, Verizon, and Washington Gas) and the alternative telecommunications companies and energy suppliers providing service in D.C. pays a percentage set by law of OPC's annual budget. OPC's litigation-related costs are paid by the affected utility.

While both funding sources are paid by the utilities, the companies are permitted to "recover" these expenses in the rates charged for utility service. D.C. ratepayers alone, not utility company shareholders, fund OPC's annual budget and pay OPC's litigation expenses.

## Do You Need More Information?

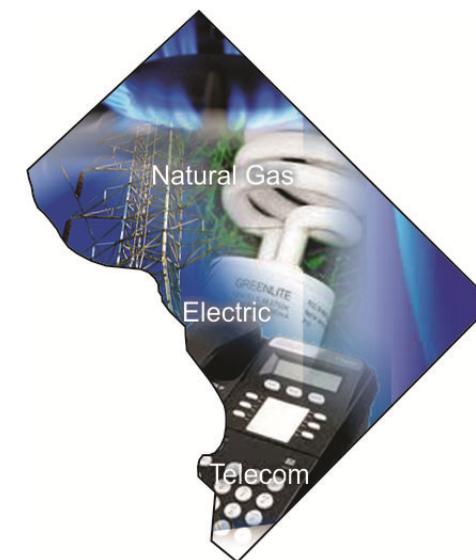
At OPC, we are proud of the wide range of quality services we provide to D.C. utility consumers. If you want to learn more about the Office of the People's Counsel, or if you would like a speaker on utility issues for the next meeting of your neighborhood, church, labor or civic group, please contact the Office.

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Office of the People's Counsel of  
the District of Columbia

# OPC is Your Utility Lawyer



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# OFFICE OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNSEL FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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The Office of the People's Counsel (OPC) is an independent agency of the District of Columbia government. By law, its legal team and consumer representatives advocate for consumers of natural gas, electric and telephone services in the District. D.C. law designates OPC as a party to all utility-related proceedings before the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia (PSC). OPC also represents the interests of D.C. utility consumers before the courts and federal regulatory commissions.

OPC advocates for the provision of quality utility service and equitable treatment at rates that are just, reasonable and nondiscriminatory to D.C. consumers; assists individual consumers in disputes with utility companies about billing or services; and provides technical assistance and consumer education to community advocates, advisory neighborhood commissions, civic and citizens associations, and other community groups.

## HOW OPC WORKS FOR YOU

In addition to representing the District's ratepayers in formal proceedings, the Office can assist individual consumer in the following ways:

**Consumer Complaints:** If you have a problem with your utility bill or service, OPC may be able to help you. OPC staff is available to contact the utility on your behalf to address the problem informally. If your complaint cannot be resolved informally, OPC may provide you with a staff attorney who will represent you at a hearing before the PSC.

**Community Outreach:** OPC encourages public participation in the regulatory process and provides general information and technical assistance to D.C. consumers. OPC staff speak at ANC, civic association and other community group meetings throughout the District of Columbia to educate the public about current utility issues and trends. OPC also serves as a technical resource to D.C. community advocates and citizens' organizations and associations, including the Consumer Utility Board.

Contact the OPC Consumer Services Division (CSD) to arrange for staff to speak at meetings. Please contact OPC at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

**Publications:** OPC publishes fact sheets, brochures, pamphlets and other materials to keep the public informed about utility issues, consumer advocacy activities and the status of pending litigation. OPC's education and outreach efforts are further enhanced by the information provided on its website, [www.opc-dc.gov](http://www.opc-dc.gov) and Facebook page. OPC also maintains public awareness of its activities through consumer alerts, newspaper articles and radio and television appearances.

## HISTORY OF THE OFFICE

Originally established by the United States Congress in 1926, OPC was eliminated by that body in a federal government reorganization in 1952. In 1975, community concern about rapidly rising energy rates resulted in Congress reestablishing the Office. The Office became an independent agency of the District of Columbia government on January 2, 1975.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

OPC is headed by People's Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye, Esq., an attorney appointed by Mayor Vincent C. Gray with the advice and consent of the Council of the District of Columbia in 2011.

**Directorate:** The People's Counsel directs the daily activities of the Agency, plans and administers the fiscal budget, represents the Agency before the Council of the District of Columbia, PSC and Congress and develops and implements policies in accordance with the Agency's mission.

**Litigation Services:** This Division advocates for D.C. consumers in cases involving utility companies before the PSC, federal regulatory agencies, federal courts, and the D.C. Court of Appeals. This includes developing overall strategies for litigation to be pursued and directing litigation teams, including staff and retained counsel, as well as expert witnesses.