



# Maine Small Business Advocate

## Fact Sheet

### What is the Small Business Advocate's role?

The Advocate serves as an independent voice for Maine's small businesses within the State's regulatory system. Working with small businesses of fewer than fifty employees, the advocate helps with the challenges of understanding and complying with Maine's regulatory structure.

The Advocate testifies on legislation and comments on rules affecting the interest of Maine's small businesses. Based on its work with small businesses, the Advocate identifies statutes and rules that present an unnecessary regulatory burden on small businesses.

The Advocate is not a substitute for established agency procedures or the formal appeals process, nor can the Advocate reverse legal or adjudicatory determinations.

As an appointee of Maine's Secretary of State, the Advocate is located outside of both the executive branch and the legislative branch to provide an objective voice for small businesses to address and change Maine's regulatory structure.

### The Regulatory Fairness Board:

The Regulatory Fairness Board holds public forums around the state to hear direct from small businesses about regulatory issues. Its members are appointed from the private sector by the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House. The board is chaired by the Secretary of State. The Advocate advises and staffs the Regulatory Fairness Board in its efforts to hear directly from Maine's small business community. The board prepares an annual report for the legislature with recommendations for regulatory and statutory changes that may enhance Maine's business climate.

### How are small businesses served by the Small Business Advocate?

1. A small business owner who feels aggrieved by a state agency through its regulatory enforcement action contacts the Small Business Advocate requesting assistance, offering sufficient information regarding their grievance to enable the Advocate to effectively research and address their grievance.
2. The Advocate conducts fact-finding by researching pertinent statutes and rules and regulations, then consulting with the small business and state agency involved.
3. The Advocate then serves as an intermediary between the small business and the agency to determine, if appropriate and if the agency has discretion, whether there is an alternative means of effective enforcement possible that would not cause a significant economic hardship to the business.
4. When necessary, the Advocate will request that the Secretary of State issue a regulatory impact notice to the Governor outlining the fact finding and recommending an alternative means of effective enforcement that would relieve the small business of the significant economic hardship imposed.

### How do I contact the Small Business Advocate?

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