

City of Detroit

CITY COUNCIL

DENZEL ANTON MCCAMPBELL
COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 7

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sherry Gay-Dagnogo, Ombudsman

THRU: Council President James Tate

FROM: Council Member Denzel Anton McCampbell *D.A. McCampbell*

DATE: March 31, 2026

RE: FY27 Budget Hearing Follow Up – Office of the Ombudsman

Thank you again for your time and for the presentation during the recent hearing. We appreciate the Ombudsman's willingness to walk through current operations and respond to council questions. As a follow-up, I have a few additional questions so I can better understand some of the issues discussed on the record and areas that may come up in future policy discussions.

- 1) The Ombudsperson's Office was established by Charter referendum in 1973, upheld by voters in 2011, and is mandated to independently investigate citizen complaints against any City agency. Given this Charter-rooted independence, can you explain how the Mayor's proposed budget for this office was developed? Was the Ombudsperson consulted, and did the office submit its own budget request that differed from what appears here?
- 2) How many subpoenas has the office issued in the last three fiscal years, and how many independent investigations has it initiated (as opposed to responding to individual complaints)?
- 3) What are the top five complaint categories by volume, and do you track complaint data by the race, zip code, income level, age, disability status, and language of the complainant? Can you provide any complaint data?
- 4) The office reports holding 120 events per year. What constitutes an "event"? How many of these events are held in neighborhoods with the highest complaint volumes, and are interpretation services provided for non-English-speaking residents, including Arabic, Spanish, French, Bangla, and other languages spoken in Detroit?
- 5) What is the industry standard caseload for ombudsman investigators, and is this office adequately staffed to conduct thorough investigations rather than simply processing and closing complaints?
- 6) What percentage of complaints received by the Ombudsperson's Office involve the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, the Buildings, Safety Engineering and

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Environmental Department, the Office of the Assessor, and the Detroit Police Department?

- a. Does the Ombudsperson's Office track complaints geographically, and can you provide a heat map or breakdown of complaint origins by zip code and council district?
- 7) How accessible is the complaint process for residents who lack internet access, are elderly, have disabilities, are non-English speakers, or are experiencing homelessness? What percentage of complaints are filed online versus in person, by phone, or by mail?

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions. Thank you.

Cc: Honorable Detroit City Council
Louise Jones, City Clerk's Office
Malik Washington, Director of City Government Affairs