

STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report

State Government Article, Section 9-1610(a)(6)

Office of Administrative Hearings
State Advisory Council on Administrative Hearings

April 2025



Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report of the State Advisory Council on Administrative Hearings Md. Code Ann., State Government § 9-1610(a)(6) (MSAR #321)

Legislative Authority and Functions

The State Advisory Council on Administrative Hearings (the Council) is authorized by State Government Article § 9-1608 of the Maryland Annotated Code. The Council was established with the following purpose and functions:

- 1) To advise the Chief Administrative Law Judge (CALJ) in carrying out his duties;
- 2) To identify issues of importance to administrative law judges (ALJ) that should be addressed by the CALJ
- 3) To review issues and problems relating to administrative hearings and the administrative process
- 4) To review and comment upon policies and regulations proposed by the CALJ
- 5) To advise the Governor as to those agencies for which a continuing exemption under § 9-1601 should be maintained
- 6) To submit an annual report, which may be prepared in conjunction with the Office of Administrative Hearings' (OAH) Annual Report to the Legislative Policy Committee of the General Assembly.

In the interest of government efficiency and economy, the Council submits its Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 24) Annual Report in conjunction with the FY 24 Office of Administrative Hearings' (OAH) Annual Report.

Council Membership

The Council consists of ten members. Leroy D. Maddox, Esquire, general public representative, continued to serve as Chair.

The following Council members served in FY 24:

- Senator Mary-Dulany James, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- Vacant¹, agency representative;
- Scott Goldman², agency representative;
- M. Natalie McSherry, Esquire³, general public representative;
- Bruce P. Martin, Esquire, Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) representative;
- Terri D. Mason, Esquire⁴, nongovernmental attorney representative;
- Michele J. McDonald, Esquire, designee of the Attorney General; and
- Susan Dishler Shubin, Esquire, Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) representative.

Council Activities

The Council held meetings on October 11, 2023, March 6, 2024 and June 12, 2024. Council members were kept apprised of OAH’s overall operations, the monthly Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) training programs, the recruitment and hiring of five new ALJs, and the status of the current year’s budget as well as the upcoming fiscal year’s budget.

On October 30, 2023, OAH held a Swearing In Ceremony for eleven of its newest ALJs who were hired in 2022 and 2023. The main hallway of the Hunt Valley building was filled with the ALJs’ family members, friends and their new OAH colleagues. Mr. Maddox and Ms. Mason attended the Ceremony and Mr. Maddox provided Closing Remarks.

OAH held its first Open House on May 20, 2024 and Council members Leroy Maddox, Bruce Martin and M. Natalie McSherry attended the Open House. The program, developed by the Director and Deputy Director of Quality Assurance, and in conjunction with the Maryland Association of Administrative Law Judiciary (MAALJ), was excellent and there was a remarkable number of attendees including Assistant Attorneys General and local department of social services representatives. The program consisted of:

- I. Welcome – CALJ Pak
- II. What OAH is and what OAH does – EALJs Leidig and Hampton-EL

¹ Former State Superintendent of Schools, Karen Salmon, Ph.D., stepped down from her agency head position at the Maryland State Department of Education on June 30, 2021. That Council position remained vacant in FY 22, FY 23 and FY 24.

² On October 23, 2023, Governor Moore appointed Bobbie James, Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Environment, to fill one of the “secretaries or designees from departments involved in the adjudication of contested cases” vacancies. Ms. James later transitioned to join the Office of the Attorney General and Scott Goldman filled the vacancy.

³ In January 2023, April Ishak advised that she was no longer serving on the Council leaving a vacancy for the remainder of FY 23. On October 10, 2023, Governor Moore appointed M. Natalie McSherry, Esquire to fill the general public vacancy.

⁴ On September 18, 2023, Governor Moore appointed Ms. Mason to replace Rochelle Eisenburg, Esquire.

- III. ALJ Training Overview – EALJs Dargan and Daneker
- IV. Hearing room tour and hybrid hearing room set up – Tareq Ibrahim and OAH’s Information Technology Division
- V. “Presenting a Case Before the OAH” – ALJ Erin Cancienne – MAALJ Officer
- VI. A mock Department of Labor hearing in the Ceremonial Courtroom
- VII. Recorded mock Motor Vehicle Administration hearing displayed throughout the morning

OAH reported that a second Open House for law students will be scheduled in the Fall.

Members of OAH’s management team reported on the January 24, 2024 briefing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee where they received excellent questions and Committee members were very complimentary of the work the OAH does.

ALJ Syeetah Hampton-EL, Deputy Director of Operations, kept Council members up to date on legislation that OAH monitored during the 2023 Legislative Session. The OAH monitors bills that (1) could impact OAH’s caseload; (2) may require ALJ training; (3) a “Request for Fiscal Note” has been submitted by the Department of Legislative Services; and (4) would provide a board with the option of delegating contested case hearings to a subset of board members.

Council members were also updated on the following:

- meetings with agency personnel
- staffing changes
- attendance at conferences
- presentations

The Council would like to provide the following additional highlights regarding OAH in FY 24:

- Maintained an approximate 99% timeliness rate for issuing written decisions
- Achieved a customer service satisfaction rating of 87.8%
- ALJ Patricia M. DeMaio was appointed as an Associate Judge of the Circuit Court for Baltimore County. Judge DeMaio is the thirteenth former ALJ to be appointed to the Judiciary
- Worked to implement an E-filing system
- Started receiving Maryland Police Accountability Act cases in October 2023
- Hired a Deputy Director of Information Technology to focus on cybersecurity
- Searched for new Rockville office space after being notified that the current lease was being terminated due to the sale of the building.

The Council wishes to emphasize that the attached OAH FY 24 Annual Report provides detailed information on the items highlighted in this Report.

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