



OFFICE OF STATE ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

Annual Report 2010



OSAH

INTRODUCTION

The Office of State Administrative Hearings (OSAH) touched the lives of countless Georgians in a meaningful way during FY 2010. On a daily basis, OSAH Administrative Law Judges traveled to courthouses across the State to provide a forum for Georgians with concerns about State agency decisions. OSAH Administrative Law Judges listened to Georgians with grievances about a wide range of issues. A large number of Georgians have experienced hardships resulting from the adverse economic conditions impacting our State. Many OSAH cases involved difficulties citizens have encountered in qualifying for public assistance benefits or in obtaining needed child support assistance. Other OSAH cases involved Georgians with disputes about their eligibility for health care assistance or reductions in the amount of services received for the care of loved ones. Many OSAH cases involved activities of law enforcement agencies in the enforcement of Georgia's driving under the influence laws and the resulting sanctions imposed upon their driving privileges.



On a daily basis, OSAH Administrative Law Judges impartially review State agency decisions which are contested by adversely impacted citizens. The highly trained adjudicators at OSAH provide Georgians with an opportunity to question the legitimacy and fairness of the way in which State government makes adverse determinations. The Office of State Administrative Hearings provides citizens the opportunity to question whether State agency decisions have been made in accordance with governing law.

The Georgia legislature created the Office of State Administrative Hearings for the purpose of injecting integrity into State government decision making. Fifteen (15) years after its innovative creation, the Office of State Administrative Hearings continues to provide assurance to Georgians that State government actions are governed by the principles of fundamental fairness and compliance with the applicable law.

THE NUMBERS

The amount of work accomplished by the Office of State Administrative Hearings during FY 2010 is remarkable. This accomplishment can be described, in part, by these numbers.

Counties Served	159
Cases Resolved	35,129
Monthly Hearing Sites	50
Average Judicial Caseload	3193
Average Days to Resolve a Case	36
Types of Cases	487





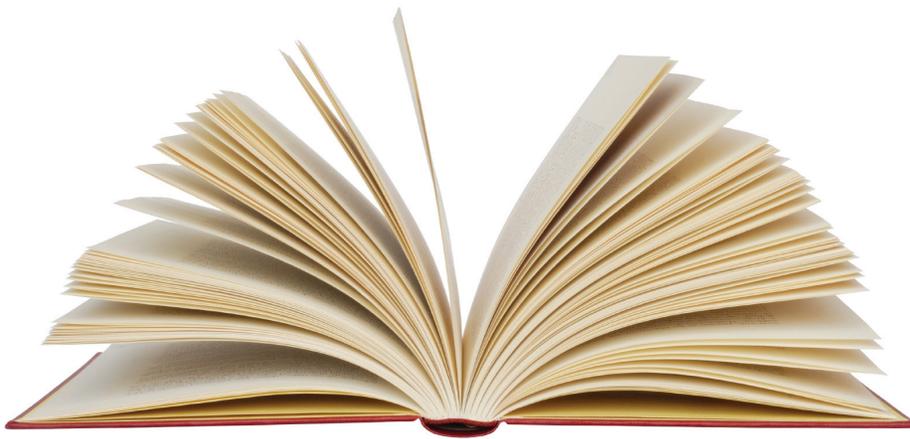
OSAH

RESPONSIVE

The Office of State Administrative Hearings is different from a traditional court. One important distinction is that Georgia's administrative court is located within the executive branch of government. Another distinction is that Georgia's administrative court has the responsibility for hearing cases throughout the state. OSAH Administrative Law Judges travel to locations across the state which are convenient to the parties to the case. An important characteristic of Georgia's administrative tribunal is the speed with which it completes each case. In FY 2010, the average case was decided within thirty-six (36) days from the day the complaint was received.



KNOWLEDGEABLE



after both parties to the dispute have been provided an opportunity to be heard. Each case, regardless of the nature of the dispute, is decided in accordance with these principles.

OSAH Administrative Law Judges are highly trained in the provision of fair and impartial hearings. Each Administrative Law Judge is a member of the bar of the State of Georgia and has received numerous hours of continuing judicial education. Each Administrative Law Judge has a caseload which includes approximately five hundred (500) types of disputes and is skilled at determining the appropriate answer to an infinite array of questions. Each dispute is decided impartially, in accordance with governing law,



OSAH

USER FRIENDLY

Georgia's administrative tribunal operates within a framework of accessibility to the citizens of the State of Georgia. For those Georgians with access to a computer, the tribunal's website contains a wealth of information. A short video contains helpful hints about the administrative hearing process. An easy to use calendar contains information about case hearing schedules. As soon as a matter is decided, a copy of the decision in each case is available to the parties on the OSAH website. Each party is provided contact information for direct access to an assigned OSAH customer service professional.



TEAM EFFORT



The Administrative Law Judges are supported by the invaluable assistance of a staff of specialists. Georgians with questions about their cases are provided prompt and knowledgeable service by a highly trained staff of case management assistants. From the first encounter with the Office of State Administrative Hearings to the closure of the case, each party is given direct access to an assigned customer service representative. In addition, a staff of technology specialists have designed easy to use methods of obtaining case specific information from the tribunal's website. A team of judicial clerks work to process incoming requests for hearing with accuracy and promptness.



OSAH

CUSTOMER SERVICE

The judicial support team at the Office of State Administrative Hearings receives positive feedback from its customers, the parties in matters pending before Georgia's administrative tribunal. Based upon interactions with the OSAH judicial support staff, litigants evaluate their interactions as follows:

- 97% of parties respond that OSAH judicial support staff are **COURTEOUS**
- 95% of parties respond that OSAH judicial support staff are **HELPFUL**
- 94% of parties respond that OSAH judicial support staff are **ACCESSIBLE**
- 95% of parties respond that OSAH judicial support staff are **RESPONSIVE**
- 94% of parties respond that OSAH judicial support staff are **KNOWLEDGEABLE**



Notable comments from attorneys who represented clients in matters pending before OSAH include:

“A staff that works together is great. I look forward to more hearings in your courtroom.”

“If the rest of the government agencies and courts were as well run as OSAH, my practice would be much more efficient. Thanks!”

“OSAH has a good system set up to handle paperwork efficiently without it collecting dust. With furloughs, this is even more impressive.”

“Very professional and courtroom demeanor was respectful to both parties.”

“Every contact I have ever had with OSAH Judges has been excellent. They are always very courteous and professional.”

“The OSAH Judge assigned to my case was one of the best I have seen in 20 years ---- very fair, professional and highly competent.”

“Very swift, friendly and efficient.”

“The OSAH Judge listened to our issues and seemed to really care about my client as a person.”