Defending the rights of users of public services

In the eyes of the law, we are all equal
DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF USERS OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Throughout life, individuals are received and supported by public services. Sometimes, the complexity and opacity of the system prevent users of public services from fully benefiting from their rights.

The Defender of Rights helps people to better assert their rights and guides them through the process, in particular through its delegates.

It intervenes to defend the fundamental rights of users, when the steps they have previously taken to assert their rights or challenge a decision have not been successful.

WHICH PUBLIC SERVICES ARE INVOLVED?

- **State departments**: ministries, prefectures, regional or departmental directorates, education authorities, regional health agencies, schools, etc.;

- **Services of local authorities**: town halls, departmental councils, regional councils, etc.;

- **Private bodies** charged with a public service mission: Caisse d’Allocations Familles (CAF), primary health insurance funds (CPAM), employment centre, Régime social des indépendants (RSI), Caisse nationale d’assurance vieillesse (CNAV), etc.;

- **Other public services**: public establishments, health establishments, departmental homes for disabled people (MDPH), energy suppliers (Engie, GRDF, ENEDIS, etc.) and water boards, public transport companies (SNCF, RATP, etc.) for non-commercial aspects.
“MY APPLICATION FOR APL* HAS BEEN BLOCKED BY THE CAF.”

*Aide personnalisée au logement (Housing Benefit)*

“I WAS DENIED ACCESS TO MY LATE MOTHER’S MEDICAL RECORDS.”

“The Employment Centre suspended my benefits even though I had updated my situation online.”

**WHAT CAN THE DEFENDER OF RIGHTS DO?**

- Investigate
- Propose an amicable settlement
- Make recommendations
- Present its observations before the judges
- Request disciplinary action
- Make proposals for legal reform
ONE INSTITUTION, 5 AREAS OF OPERATION

“THE DEFENDER OF RIGHTS UPHOLDS RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS”

Article 71-1 of the Constitution

The Defender of Rights is an independent institution responsible for defending individual rights and freedoms within the framework of 5 areas of expertise determined by law:

- Defence of the rights of users of public services
- Defence and promotion of the rights of the child
- Combating discrimination and promoting equality
- Respect for the ethics of security
- Orientation and protection of whistleblowers

TO CARRY OUT ITS MISSION, THE DEFENDER OF RIGHTS:

- handles the claims addressed to it by offering appropriate solutions;
- acts in favour of equal access to rights for all through information, training, the development of partnerships and the proposal of reforms.

MORE THAN 45% OF THE CLAIMS RECEIVED ON PUBLIC SERVICES CONCERN THREATS TO SOCIAL RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO THEM
Delegates:
Providing a unique local service

The Defender of Rights relies on a network of almost 550 delegates.

The delegates of the Defender of Rights are present throughout the national territory. Anyone seeking assistance in asserting their rights can contact them free of charge at more than 870 centres in mainland France and overseas: Maison de la Justice et du Droit (MJD), Point d’accès au droit (PAD), prefectures, town halls, etc.

Delegates can:

- Listen to what you have to say
- Guide you through the process
- Help you assert your rights
- Forward your file to the head office

80% of the claims of the Defender of Rights are received by delegates within their clinic.

See the list of clinics:
defenseurdesdroits.fr
In the eyes of the law, we are all equal

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Do you believe that your rights have been violated?

Contact the Defender of Rights free of charge

★ THROUGH THE DELEGATES

Online at defenseurdesdroits.fr / “How to get answers?” or at a centre.

★ BY POST FREE OF CHARGE, WITHOUT POSTAGE

Défenseur des droits - Libre réponse 71120 - 75342 Paris Cedex 07

★ USING THE ONLINE FORM

Online at defenseurdesdroits.fr / “File a Claim”.

+33 (0)9 69 39 00 00 FROM 9 AM TO 6 PM

Information can be obtained by telephone or during an appointment with a delegate.

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ATTACH ALL USEFUL DOCUMENTS (COPY OF ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS, LETTERS, EMAILS, TESTIMONIALS, ETC.) TO ENABLE THE DEFENDER OF RIGHTS TO PROCESS YOUR FILE.

GOOD TO KNOW

Recourse to the Defender of Rights is free of charge. The Defender of Rights cannot challenge a court decision. Referral to it does not interrupt or suspend the limitation periods for civil, administrative or criminal actions or those of administrative or litigation appeals.