



Restoring Hope, One Resident at a Time

The Office of the Ombudsman continues to serve as a vital support for countless residents through our deeply rooted community outreach programmes. These initiatives are not just service touchpoints but acts of service grounded in empathy, designed to educate residents about their rights and support them through the complaints lodging process with care, dignity and compassion.

At the core of our mission is the unwavering belief that no one should have to face administrative shortcomings, alone.

Across all seven regions of the city, our ambassadors embody this mission in action. More than just intermediaries, they are champions of justice and fairness. They are the helping hands, the listening ears and the caring hearts that step in when residents feel ignored or forgotten. Whether in bustling townships or quiet suburbs, their presence offers more than assistance, it brings reassurance that someone cares.

A deeply moving example comes from Region D, where *Mr. Ray Charles, a pensioner had gone over a year without receiving a simple refuse bin from Pikitup. His dignity had slowly eroded with each unanswered call and fruitless visits to their offices. But everything changed the day he crossed paths with one of our ambassadors, Refilwe Huma at the Jabulani Civic Centre in Soweto.

Recognising his frustration and the injustice of his situation, Refilwe took immediate action at an Integrated Development Planning (IDP) session on 10 May 2025 - where Pikitup officials were present – she raised his case, cutting through red tape and ensuring that his long-overdue request was finally fulfilled.



© Joburg Ambassador: Communications Unit, Refilwe Huma handing Mr. Ray Charles his new refuse bin

When that refuse bin was delivered, it was more than a container for waste, it symbolised recognition, respect and restoration. With heartfelt gratitude, the pensioner said, "There is hope in our government." That moment reminded all of us that, *when done right, public service can change lives.*

These small victories are not isolated, they are everyday examples of how the Ombudsman's Office is making a real difference, one resident at a time.

Our outreach efforts are about more than resolving complaints. They're about building bridges between communities and their government, rebuilding trust where it has been broken and empowering residents with the knowledge and tools to demand the services they deserve. By remaining visible, approachable and action-driven, our ambassadors bring humanity back into governance.

Through proactive engagement, our teams don't just point residents in the right direction, they walk beside them. They explain, assist, follow up and often go beyond the call of duty to ensure no one is left behind.

We also hold city departments accountable, ensuring that service delivery is not just a promise but a lived experience for every resident. With every case we resolve, every hand we hold and every voice we amplify, we're reaffirming the values of fairness, transparency and responsiveness that lie at the heart of our office.

Our community outreach reflects what true public service looks like - service that listens, acts and uplifts. And as we continue to expand our reach, we carry with us the stories of people like Mr. Charles, reminders that even the smallest victories can restore a person's dignity, renew their trust and reignite their hope.

Because at the Office of the Ombudsman, we're not just resolving complaints, we're restoring faith in what government can and should be...a partner, a protector, and a source of hope.

To apply for a new bin, contact Pikitup as follows:



**TO APPLY FOR A
NEW BIN**

Call
011 375 5555
or
086 056 2874



• www.pikitup.co.za
• Pikitup Offices: +27 (0) 11 712 5200
• Call Centre: +27 (0) 11 375 5555
• Mandatory Separation at Source Programme: +27 (0) 86 562 874

• www.facebook.com/Pikitup
• @CleanerJoburg

* Not his real name





OMBUDSMAN
City of Johannesburg

UMBIKO
July 2025

Caring for All: How the Office of the Ombudsman Champions Inclusion in the Workplace

At the heart of our work lies a simple, powerful belief: every person deserves dignity and respect, whether they walk through our doors as a resident or work behind them as a staff member. This belief extends not only to our community outreach programmes but also to the way we treat and support our own employees.

In alignment with the City of Johannesburg's Group Disability Management Policy Framework, our office is committed to cultivating a workplace that reflects compassion, fairness, and inclusivity for all, especially for people with disabilities (PWDs). The framework is more than policy, it's a reflection of our values and a roadmap toward a more equitable, accessible work environment.

Inclusion That Starts from Within

As an institution tasked with promoting justice and accountability, we understand that true credibility begins with living the values we advocate for externally. That means actively working to remove the barriers - from recruitment to daily operations - that prevent our colleagues with disabilities from thriving in the workplace.

Awareness, Empathy, and Action

Promoting awareness around disability rights is a critical part of our internal culture. By integrating disability awareness into induction programmes and ongoing staff training, we're helping to dispel stigma and foster empathy across the office. Every team member is encouraged to be an ally—to listen, learn, and act with compassion.

Accountability Through Ethics and Law

As part of the broader City of Johannesburg, our office fully supports and complies with national legislation like the Employment Equity Act, the Constitution of South Africa, and the Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities. These legal frameworks provide the ethical backbone of our operations, reinforcing our responsibility to be not only fair but proactive in our support for all employees.

More Than Policy - A Promise

Ultimately, the Group Disability Management Policy Framework is more than a corporate directive. It's a promise - a commitment to honour the humanity and potential of every individual, regardless of their ability.

At the Office of the Ombudsman, we uphold that promise daily. Whether serving residents in the field or staff within our own walls, we lead with compassion, advocate for fairness and stand by our belief that a caring City starts with a caring workplace.

It's a Wrap: A Reflection of Three Open Days of People-Centred Service

Over the course of three impactful Open Days - held in Rabie Ridge, Lenasia, and Pimville, Soweto - the City of Johannesburg's Revenue Department, in partnership with our office, brought essential services closer to the people in a way that was not only practical, but deeply human-centred.

These engagements were more than an administrative exercise, they were acts of care and restoration, and for many of the 200+ residents who visited our welcome desks, it was the first time they felt truly heard. They came feeling frustrated and despondent but left with a sense of renewed hope.



© Intake & Registry Team, Mvikeleni Thango and Sikelelwa Jakuja, assisting a resident with a complaint

In one instance, five residents who had struggled for months with unresolved billing and meter issues from Joburg Water and City Power finally received clarity. They were not only advised on how to escalate their concerns but were empowered with the tools and knowledge to protect their rights going forward. It was not just problem-solving, it was capacity-building for citizens who had felt left behind.

But perhaps the most meaningful impact came in the quiet moments: elderly residents who had been passed from pillar to post finally sitting with someone who listened. Working-class families who often feel invisible were reminded that their grievances matter. For many, the events provided a long-awaited sense of relief and proof that government can respond with both urgency and empathy.

As the campaign ended, the mood was one of cautious optimism. Residents left with more than complaint forms - they left with the belief that the city is truly listening.

These resident support sessions form part of a growing movement to transform the city into a truly responsive and compassionate municipality - where governance meets empathy and service delivery means the restoration of one's hope in the system.

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