

**UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**



Office of Patents Stakeholder Experience

TC 1600 Customer Partnership

Sudhanshu Pathak, Office of Patents
Stakeholder Experience

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Office of Patents Stakeholder Experience (OPSE)

OPSE was established in October 2020.

Mission

The Office of Patents Stakeholder Experience (OPSE) promotes the innovation ecosystem by collaborating with USPTO partners to provide a foundational understanding of the US patent system through delivery of services and products that meet stakeholders' needs, thus easing their journey through the patent system.

Vision

Create an intuitive environment promoting education and innovation within the IP community.



Stakeholder Support Division (SSD)

Mission

The Stakeholder Support Division provides accurate, timely, and comprehensive assistance to the IP community that is related to initial filing, patent examination, and post examination and with a focus on bringing awareness to the IP community in order to foster and promote innovation.

Vision

To be a leader in providing world class customer experience to the IP community in order to foster innovation.



Stakeholder Support Division (SSD)

Activities/Functions

- **Oversee Contact Centers**
 - Pro Se Assistance Center
 - Patents Ombudsman Program (PO)
 - Application Assistance Unit (AAU)
 - Inventor Assistance Center (IAC)
 - Electronic Business Center (EBC)
- Incident management
- Gather and analyze internal/external stakeholder feedback
- Perform trend analysis & provide recommendations/solutions
- Incorporate findings to identify/determine future educational programming for our external stakeholders



Pro Se Assistance Center

The Pro Se Assistance Center provides outreach and education to applicants who file patent applications without the assistance of a registered patent attorney or agent. **USPTO employees cannot give legal advice.** However, through increased assistance and resources for independent inventor and small business communities, the program aims to increase the quality of pro se applications and assist pro se applicants with making informed decisions regarding their patent applications.

Monday – Friday,
8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET,
except federal holidays

- 866-757-3848
- **Email:**
Innovationdevelopment@
uspto.gov
- <https://www.uspto.gov/patents/basics/using-legal-services/pro-se-assistance-program>



Pro se Assistance Center

- **Thoroughly customer-focused business unit with dedicated personnel** to assist and educate inventors who have limited resources and need help applying for a patent.
 - How to navigate uspto.gov to find needed information or education
 - How to obtain and complete forms (e.g., application data sheet)
- **Targeted support** to connect independent inventors, small business owners, and entrepreneurs with helpful and relevant resources and information; a one stop shop for answering questions.
- **One-on-one assistance (with primary examiners) via telephone, email and video conference (Webex) and virtual assistance is also available from select Patent and Trademark Resource Centers (PTRCs).**



Pro Se Educational Program

- Provides a broad spectrum of educational programs to independent inventors, small business owners, and entrepreneurs.
- Delivers presentations and workshops to assist with understanding the application requirements and filing process.
- Provides online educational materials including:
 - Quick Clinic Videos
 - Application Filing Toolkits
 - Patent Process Knowledge Packs
 - Prior Inventor Info Chats



Patents Ombudsman

The Patents Ombudsman assist applicants, and attorneys throughout the application process which includes initial filing, patent examination, and post examination. The Patents Ombudsman can assist you when normal processing has stalled and can help get applications back on track.

Monday – Friday,
8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET,
except federal holidays

- 571-272-5555
- 855-559-8589
- **Email:**
PatentsOmbudsmanProgram@uspto.gov
- <https://www.uspto.gov/patents/ombudsman-program>



Patents Ombudsman: overview

- Address concerns relating to stalled applications.
- Track issues to ensure each is handled within 5 business days.
- Use inquiry trends to assess training needs.

Patents Ombudsman: process

- Applicant/attorney access through USPTO.gov website or via telephone
- Patents Ombudsman representatives will return your call within one business day to obtain details.
- Inquiry is **routed** to the person who can best address the concern (SPE, TC Director, and/or other Business Unit).
 - Patents Ombudsman representative will address the inquiry directly when appropriate (i.e., status inquiry, etc.).



Patents Ombudsman: POCs

- The POCs will contact the appropriate person to assist with addressing the inquiry
- The Patents Ombudsman is not a substitute for:
 - Directly contacting the examiner, SPE, or TC Director
 - Responding to an Office action by statutory deadlines
 - Appeal or petition process

Patents Ombudsman: representatives

- All business units
 - Internal and external to patents operations
- Technology centers
 - SPEs
 - Quality assurance specialists
 - Case resolution team

Application Assistance Unit (AAU)

Application Assistance Unit (AAU) assists with a broad range of questions and issues pertaining to pre-examination processing of patent applications by the Office of Patent Application Processing (OPAP) and the post-examination processing of patent applications by the Office of Data Management (ODM).

Monday – Friday,
8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET,
except federal holidays

- 571-272-4000
- 888-786-0101
- Email: HelpAAU@uspto.gov
- <https://www.uspto.gov/learning-and-resources/support-centers/application-assistance-unit-aau>



Application Assistance Unit (AAU)

- AAU can provide assistance with questions relating to
 - Filing receipts
 - Missing parts letters
 - Pre-examination and the post-examination notices to file corrected application papers
 - Pre-examination and the post-examination abandonment notices
 - Express abandonments
 - Change/withdrawal of attorney
 - Change of address; and power of attorney



Inventors Assistance Center (IAC)

The Inventors Assistance Center (IAC) provides patent information related to patent prosecution to the public. The IAC is staffed by *former* USPTO employees including technology center (TC) Directors, supervisory patent examiners, and primary examiners, who answer general questions concerning patent examining policy and procedure.

Monday – Friday,
8:30 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET,
except federal holidays

- 800-PTO-9199
(800-786-9199)
- 571-272-1000
- <https://www.uspto.gov/learning-and-resources/support-centers/inventors-assistance-center-iac>

**TTY customers can dial
800-877-8339 for
customer assistance**



Inventor Assistance Center (IAC)

- IAC can provide assistance with questions relating to:
 - patent examining policy, rules and procedures.
 - forms needed and with filling out forms.
 - general information concerning patent application content including specification, drawings and fees.
 - formats and items need for filing patent applications

Patent Electronic Business Center (EBC)

EBC assists stakeholders with technical support for various USPTO patent electronic systems, such as the Electronic Filing System (EFS-Web), the Public and Private Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system, and searching the Patent and Application Full-Text and Image Databases.

Monday – Friday,
6:00 a.m. – 12:00 midnight ET,
except federal holidays

- 571-272-4100
- 1-866-217-9197
- Email: ebc@uspto.gov
- <https://www.uspto.gov/learning-and-resources/support-centers/patent-electronic-business-center>



Patent Electronic Business Center (EBC)

- The EBC can assist with such items as listed below:
 - Submission of patent application(s) via EFS-Web
 - Viewing application information in Public/Private PAIR
 - Patent electronic system verification forms and customer number issues
 - Technical problems
 - USPTO.gov account authentication for Private PAIR and EFS-WEB including web browser problems



Questions and comments

