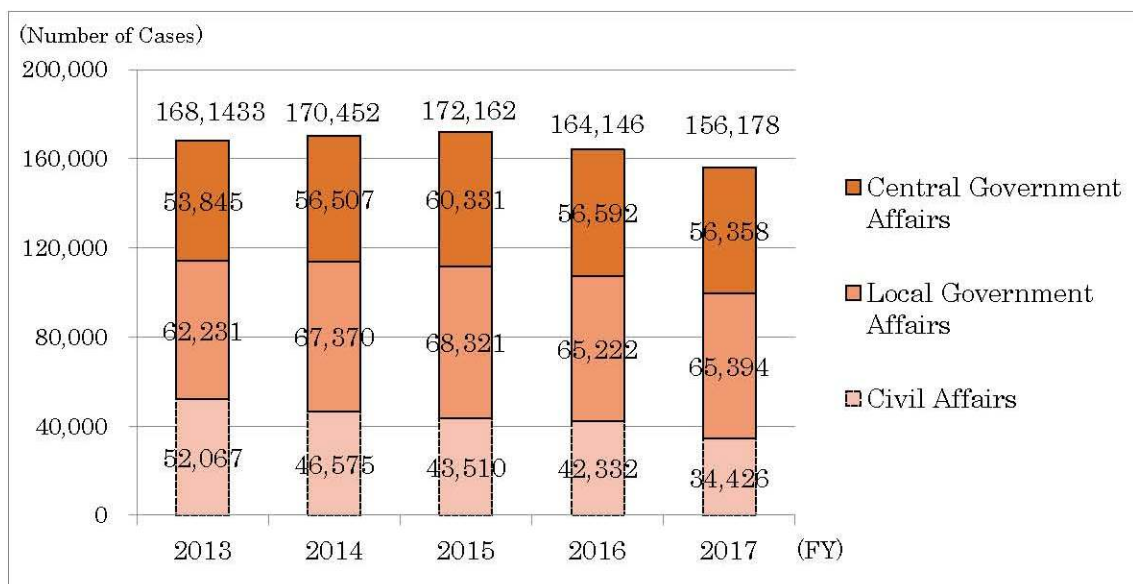


1. Summary of Administrative Counseling in FY2017

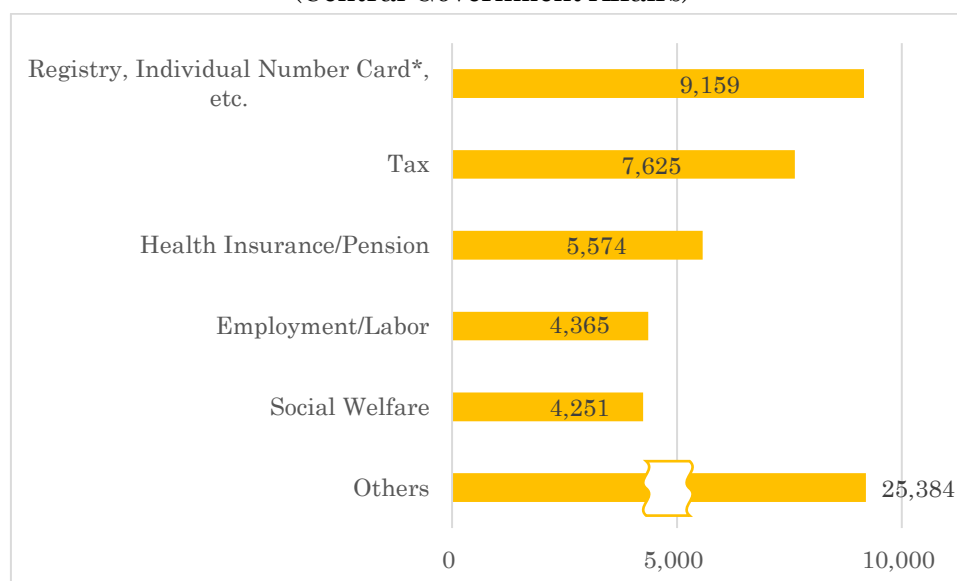
The MIC's Administrative Counseling receives complaints, opinions and requests from citizens regarding the central government administration. It gives mediations between complainants and the relevant government offices, facilitating resolution of the complaints, and to realize improvements of public administration. In FY 2017 the AEB received approximately 156,000 complaints, opinions and requests at the head office, local offices and through the approximately 5,000 volunteer administrative counselors.¹ nationwide.

Figure 1. Received Cases via Administrative Counseling
 Totally 156,178 cases in FY 2017



¹ Private, unpaid citizens who are commissioned by the Minister of MIC under the Administrative Counselors Act.

Figure 2. Received Cases by Administrative Fields in FY 2017
(Central Government Affairs)



*Individual Number Card: Social Security and Tax Number System introduced in 2016.

Complaints related to systemic and operational issues of administration are referred to the Administrative Grievance Resolution Promotion Council (AGRPC) consisting of private-sector experts in order to give advices from the citizen's perspectives. Also, issues arising out of a repetitive or similar nature may be taken up as source of Administrative Inspection conducted by the AEB, and its result may be subject of recommendation and/or notification to the relevant ministries/agencies.

2. AEB's Organizational Reform of Local Offices in 2017

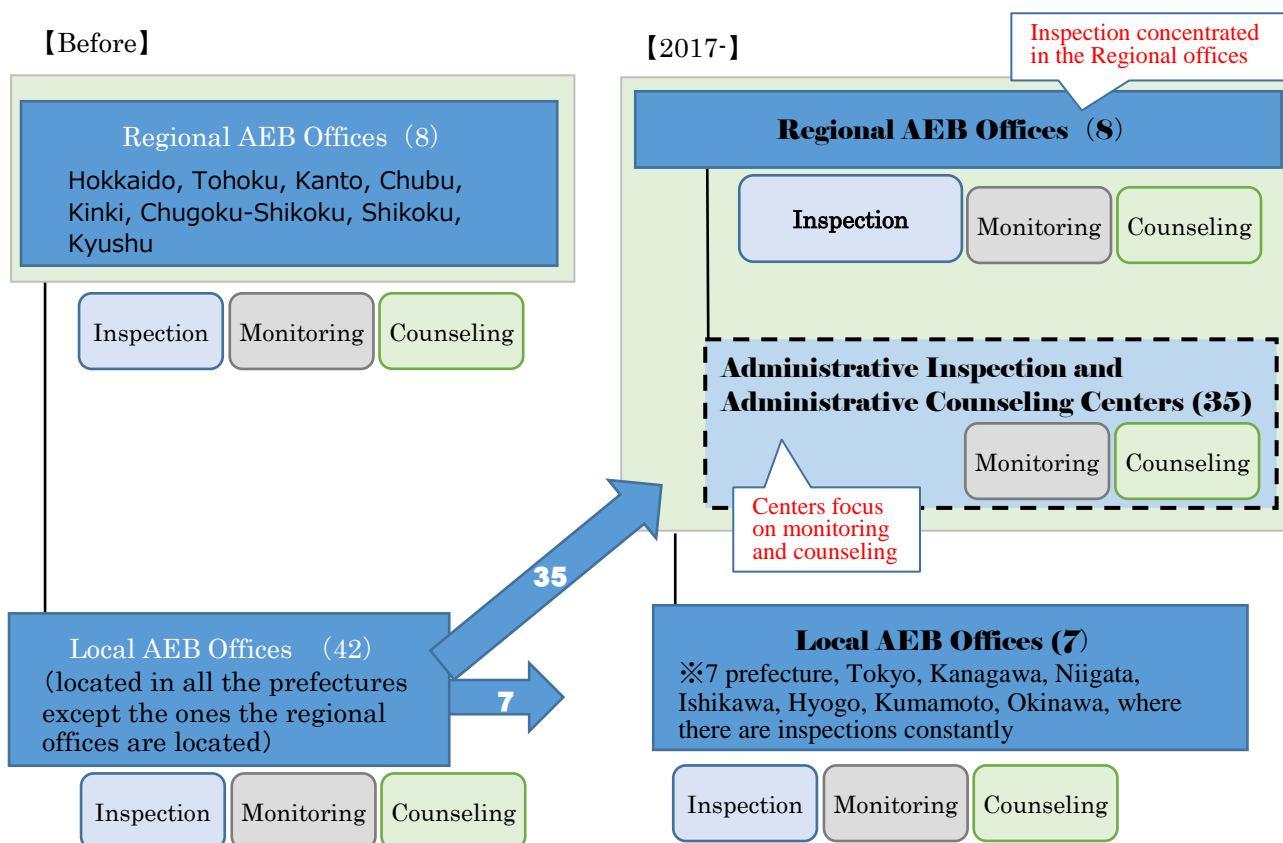
The internal organizations of both the head and local AEB offices were reorganized in October 2017 in view of more efficient and effective administration and enhancement of the function of administrative counselling service.

In particular, the Administrative Counseling Division in the AEB head office is now composed of the Administrative Counseling Division and Administrative Counseling Office and the latter, receiving people's complaints and facilitating their resolutions, is considered in apposition with the Division.

Meanwhile, there was a transition at the local AEB offices, too. Conventionally there were 8 regional offices and 42 local offices of AEB at least one in the every prefecture, all covering the three functions of the AEB, namely, inspection, monitoring and administrative counseling. In contrast, in October 2017, the inspection officers in the prefectural offices are now concentrated into the regional

offices of AEB (8 offices) so that the Bureau’s inspection function may be mobilized more effectively at the regional level. And the other local offices except the ones located in the major cities were reorganized into the ‘centers’ which may concentrate on the other two functions of inspection and administrative counseling (See Figure 3).

Figure 3: Organizational Reorganization in the Local AEB Offices in 2017



3. New Administrative Counseling Nickname and Mascot

In order to make the MIC’s administrative counseling service more widely known and deeply rooted within the community, the AEB has publicly announced that it has adopted an official nickname for its reception centers in its regional and local offices and a mascot character for its services as of this June 2018.

The new official nickname for the MIC administrative counseling centers is “Kiku-Mimi (Listening Ears)”, describing reception officers’ serious and empathetic attitudes towards people with complaints/opinions/requests relating to the national administration. The Japanese term “Kiku” also implies something in the process of

taking effect or hitting its targets, with both meanings conveying the effectiveness of the administrative counseling service. The administrative counseling service’s mascot character is “Kikoon”, which also incorporates the sound “Kiku” in its name. Simultaneously with the adoption of the nickname and mascot, the AEB has released publicity videos on the internet, available on YouTube. Hopefully these marketing materials together with further publicity initiatives will ensure administrative counseling becomes more widely known and accessible to Japan’s citizens.



https://youtu.be/xMke1Co_tBE

<https://youtu.be/LGiYTQKYPJA>

4. Cases Resolved via Administrative Counseling

- **Betterment of Traffic Light Difficult to See**

[Overview] Please improve visibility of the traffic light which is difficult to see because of the overlapping wires.

Before



[Improvement Status] The administrative counselor who had received the complaint contacted the Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT). As result of NTT's servicing operation on site, the traffic light is now much more visible.

After



- **Repair of the damaged Braille Blocks**

[Overview] The braille blocks installed on the sidewalk of a prefectural road are badly damaged. I request repairs of them.

Before



[Improvement Status] The administrative counselor who had received the request checked the site and contacted the relevant office of the prefectural government. Consequently, the replacement work of the braille blocks was implemented.

After



● **Commuting Allowance Counted as part of Household Income**

[Overview] I am a job-seeker and in a vocational training program. I visited the Public Employment Security Office to apply for vocational training benefit, but could not receive it. The reason was that our household income that month exceeded the upper limit. But this was due to the inclusion of half-yearly commuting allowance as part of my wife's salary*. Essential expenses like transportation costs should be excluded from household income when assessing eligibility for benefits.

*Commuting allowance for office workers is usually paid twice a year as a lump sum.

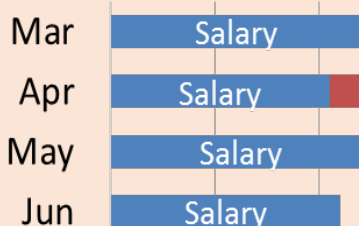


AEB's Findings

Support System for Job Seekers:
Job seekers, who cannot receive unemployment benefits under the employment insurance system, can receive the vocational training benefit (100,000 yen per month) during job training if their household income is below a certain level.



My wife's salary



Upper limit for benefit

Commuting Allowance for 6 months

Standards:

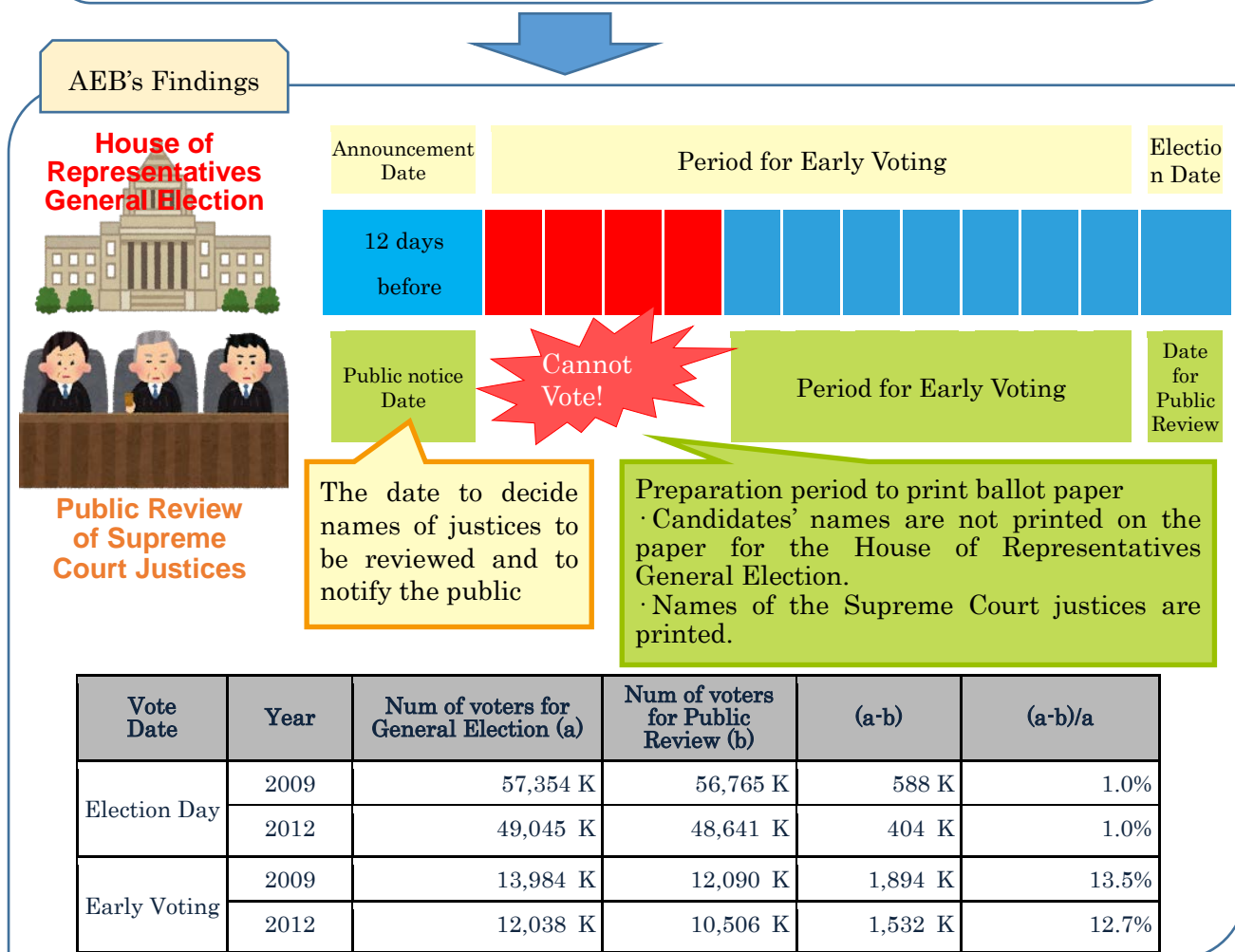
- monthly income is less than 80,000 yen
- household income is less than 250,000 yen per month / 3,000,000 yen per year
- household assets are less than 3,000,000 yen



[Improvement Status] AEB referred the issue to the Administrative Grievance Resolution Promotion Council for consideration, and then requested the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare to review the calculation method to exclude commuting allowance from the income calculation. As the result, the MHLW decided to exclude the commuting allowance from the income calculation.

- **Unification of the Early Voting Date for House of Representatives General Election and Public Review of Supreme Court Justices**

[Overview] I went to cast my vote in the House of Representatives general election during the early-voting period, and also tried to vote in the public review of the Supreme Court justices at the same time, but found this was not possible. It would be a burden to go to the polls again.



[Improvement Status] In order to unify the voting date for the House of Representatives general election and the public review of Supreme Court justices, “Bill to amend part of the Public Office Election Law and Act on National Review for Judges of Supreme Court” was passed in the National Diet (Japanese legislature) and has been in effect since January 1, 2017.