



THE WATCHDOG

Newsletter

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Ombudsman's office marks 40 years of helping citizens, improving governance

MILESTONE COINCIDES WITH HISTORIC EXPANSION OF MANDATE

The Office of the Ontario Ombudsman today [celebrates 40 years of helping citizens resolve issues with the provincial government](#). The occasion comes as the office embarks on an historic expansion of its mandate – something the first Ombudsman began calling for in 1975, and which will include oversight of municipalities, universities, and school boards.



Ombudsman
ONTARIO

"This anniversary is a welcome opportunity to reflect on the positive impact that an independent watchdog can have in improving governance," said Acting Ombudsman Barbara Finlay.

The first Ombudsman, Arthur Maloney, was sworn in on October 30, 1975, and the office has since handled some 800,000 individual complaints and conducted scores of in-depth investigations affecting millions of Ontarians. With a broad mandate (under the *Ombudsman Act*) to look into administrative actions that may be unjust, unfair, discriminatory or simply "wrong," the Office's work has sparked reforms to everything from support for the disabled to the treatment of prisoners; from screening of newborn babies to the security of lottery tickets.

[READ MORE](#)

OCTOBER 2015

The Ombudsman investigates public complaints about Ontario government agencies. His office oversees more than 500 provincial ministries, agencies, tribunals, boards, commissions and Crown corporations, as well as school boards and, starting January 2016, municipalities and universities.

[FILE A COMPLAINT ONLINE](#)

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SPREAD THE WORD



On September 28, Acting Deputy Ombudsman, Wendy Ray, and Director of Investigations, Sue Haslam, educated representatives from the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education's Toronto chapter about our Office's oversight of school boards. To see slides from the presentation go [here](#).

IN THE NEWS

- › [Sharing an ombud makes sense - Waterloo Region Record](#)
- › [Brantford councillor says too many closed-door meetings - Brantford Expositor](#)
- › [One lawyer gets three jobs - Northumberland Today](#)

COME WORK WITH US!

In the next few months, we'll be growing our team as we expand to oversee municipalities, universities and school boards. The Office received additional funding to hire Early Resolutions Officers, Investigators, Legal Counsel, Communications, and other staff.

[Hiring NOW: Information Officer \(Bilingual\)](#)

We're always accepting resumes. Read about the types of roles we hire and send us your application!

PROVINCE TAKES ACTION ON CARDING

On October 28, after extensive consultations with the public and stakeholders, including the Ombudsman's Office, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services [posted its draft regulation](#) on "street checks", also known as carding. The [regulation would prohibit the arbitrary collection](#) of identifying information by police and "establish clear and consistent rules to protect civil liberties during voluntary police-public interactions where police are seeking to collect identifying information, to ensure that those interactions are conducted without bias or discrimination," according to a government press release.

The Ombudsman's Office was one of more than 500 individuals or bodies to provide a [submission to government on regulating the issue](#).

Acting Ombudsman Barbara Finlay noted that the prohibition of carding reflects the strong public opposition to the practice and shows government listened to stakeholders and the public during its consultations. "Our office commends the Ministry for conducting thorough consultations with stakeholders and the public, stimulating good conversation and debate and allowing serious concerns to be heard," Ms. Finlay said. "We were pleased to have been part of the consultation process and to have had the opportunity to put forward our recommendations on this important issue."

The public is invited to comment on the regulation before December 12, 2015.

REACHING OUT TO MUS

Our senior team has been meeting with school boards, universities and municipalities to discuss the mechanics of Ombudsman oversight, including our intake

and triage processes, our behind-the-scenes work flagging complaint trends, and our method of informally resolving complaints without a full investigation, which helps us resolve more than 50 percent of complaints within two weeks.



On October 19, Acting Deputy Ombudsman Wendy Ray and members of our team met with Toronto District School Board's Director of Education Donna Quan, School Board Chair Robin Pilkey, and senior staff. They discussed school board oversight and answered questions about how we're working with boards on the 170 complaints we've received since September 1.

At the invitation of the Simcoe County Clerks and Treasurers Association, Laura Pettigrew, Senior Counsel at the Ombudsman's Office, spoke to a full house of municipal staff about how the Office operates, the importance of reinforcing local accountability mechanisms, and what to expect when the Ombudsman calls. Ms. Pettigrew also shared similar information on October 14, at a regional meeting of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) in Petrolia.

We want to connect with school boards, universities and municipalities!

Contact us at thewatchdog@ombudsman.on.ca if you'd like brochures or want to check our availability to speak to your organization.

INVESTIGATIONS UPDATE

[Ontario direction to police on de-escalation:](#)

Ombudsman staff are in the process of finalizing this report.

[Adults with developmental disabilities in crisis:](#)

Staff continue to resolve individual cases and take complaints - more than 1,300 to date. The large-scale systemic investigation continues.



RUN FOR THE CURE

The Ombudsman Watchdogs took part in CIBC's Run for Cure on October 4, marking the office's eighth year and raising more than \$3,000 for breast cancer research. Thanks to our team and everyone who supported us along the way!



STAY CONNECTED

Ombudsman Ontario has **3,918 Facebook fans** and **33,974 Twitter followers**! Please continue to reach out to us on social media, or drop us a line at thewatchdog@ombudsman.on.ca.

And stay connected with our office in both official languages! Follow our French Twitter account: [@Ont_OmbudsmanFR](https://twitter.com/Ont_OmbudsmanFR).

Anyone who has information relevant to our ongoing investigations can contact our office at 1-800-263-1830, [file an online complaint](#) or email: info@ombudsman.on.ca.

Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario | Bureau de l'Ombudsman de l'Ontario
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