

French Language Services Commissioner to be chosen in coming months

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Ombudsman launches search for French Language Services Commissioner

In the four months since the Ontario Ombudsman's mandate was expanded to include French language services, our Office's specialized French Language Services Unit has received dozens of complaints and worked proactively to identify systemic issues affecting francophones across the province.



The unit will be led by a French Language Services Commissioner at the level of Deputy Ombudsman. In the coming months, [Ombudsman Paul Dubé will choose the new commissioner](#) with the assistance of an expert panel: Michel A. Carrier (Interim Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick), and Linda Cardinal (University of Ottawa professor and internationally recognized authority on language rights).

The Commissioner will be committed to ensuring French language rights are respected in Ontario under the *French Language Services Act*. He or she will also proactively maintain and build community relationships and identify systemic issues affecting the francophone population.

Until the new Commissioner is chosen and takes office, Mr. Dubé himself will serve as interim French Language Services Commissioner.

Cases about French language services being resolved, referred

Since May 1, the Ombudsman's French Language Services Unit has dealt with complaints through early resolution and referral – primarily by liaising with the French Language Services Coordinators within the relevant provincial ministries, or by speaking directly with service providers to facilitate a resolution.

In one recent case, we received a complaint from a man who had recently moved to Canada. Although his motorcycle licence was valid in his home country, he was required to re-take the test in Ontario. The man had been assigned an English-speaking examiner for his motorcycle road test, even though he requested a French-speaking examiner in advance at a designated DriveTest centre.

The man told our Office that because he couldn't understand the directions given by the examiner during his exam, he failed the road test. He called us because he was worried that, although he was an experienced driver, he would have to repeat the entire motorcycle licensing process from the beginning.

Staff at our French Language Services Unit contacted the Ministry of Transportation and learned that this DriveTest centre had no certified bilingual examiner for motorcycle road tests. Thanks to our intervention, the man's road test was rescheduled, this time with a bilingual examiner dispatched from another DriveTest location.

The Ministry also informed our Office that it has made arrangements to ensure there are staff available to handle bilingual road test requests at the designated DriveTest location.

[Contact us here if you have a question or complaint](#)

Municipal matters



From August 18-21, Ombudsman Paul Dubé and staff attended the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's annual conference in Ottawa, speaking with mayors, councillors and municipal staff about the challenges faced by municipalities of all shapes and sizes.

Staff and delegates had productive discussions about integrity commissioners, codes of conduct, closed meetings and more. We explained how our Office resolves municipal issues almost entirely through early resolution and referral, and rarely through formal investigations. We also advised municipalities that they should create their own codes of conduct and appoint an integrity commissioner locally to review any complaints.

Our Office has created helpful tools for municipalities, from our [municipal "tip cards"](#) to our new [online open meeting case digest](#), which we shared with AMO participants. [Learn more here about how we work with municipalities to resolve complaints.](#)

This September will be a busy month of outreach events for Ombudsman staff. Find us at the [Ontario East Municipal Conference](#) in Cornwall, September 11-13, 2019 and at the [Association of Francophone Municipalities of Ontario's](#) Annual Conference in Sudbury, September 25-27, 2019.

BACK TO SCHOOL



It's almost back-to-school time! Our Office takes complaints about issues from Ontario's publicly-funded **universities**, **colleges**, and **school boards**. As in all areas of our jurisdiction, we have resolved thousands of education-related complaints without need for formal investigation. In fact, the Ombudsman has yet to launch a formal investigation related to a university, and has conducted only two investigations related to school boards (one in 2017 and one this year). But we have helped hundreds of students and families resolve their issues, and prompted many boards and post-secondary bodies to improve their procedures and practices.

If you have a complaint about an education-related matter - from special education, to busing, to academic appeals, to OSAP - [get in touch](#)! We might be able to help.

[Read about some of the cases we've resolved related to school boards, universities and colleges.](#)

ICYMI: Ombudsman's 2018-2019 Annual Report

A man who worked as a commercial truck driver had his licence downgraded by ServiceOntario and he wasn't able to find out why – until he complained to our Office. [Find out how we helped](#) or [read about other cases we've resolved](#).



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[File a complaint or contact us here](#)

The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Ontario legislature who conducts oversight of provincial government agencies and municipalities, universities and school boards, as well as child protection services and French language services. Ombudsman Paul Dubé began his five-year term on April 1, 2016.

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