

New case resolutions, latest investigation updates, and more job openings.

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In this month's newsletter:

- How do we resolve complaints? Read these stories to find out
- News about our Annual Report
- Status of our ongoing investigations
- French Language Services Commissioner's July message
- We're hiring – new positions available

How we helped – new cases resolved in July

As the Ombudsman and staff continued to work from home this month due to the coronavirus pandemic, we resolved numerous cases across the public sector. Here are some examples of how all of our units helped Ontarians in recent weeks.



Registrar General: Proven parenthood

A father whose wife died in childbirth sought our help in obtaining a birth certificate and Social Insurance Number for the new baby, which he needed in order to claim survivor benefits. Registrar General officials told him one of the forms he had filled out was invalid, and he would have to provide an affidavit from his deceased wife's parents to confirm he was the child's father. Our staff spoke to a manager at the Registrar General's office, who reviewed the file and

determined that additional proof of fatherhood was not required. The manager also confirmed the case would be expedited so the widower could proceed with his application for benefits.

Education: Opportunity granted

A former master's student who began to work in her field just before she completed her degree complained to us that the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) had deemed her ineligible for an Ontario Student Opportunities Grant, due to unreported income. She conceded that she had inadvertently failed to disclose some of her earnings, but noted that OSAP's decision appeared to be based largely on income she earned after

graduation. Ombudsman staff spoke with OSAP officials, which led them to discover information in the student's file that did not align with their decision. They conducted an additional assessment and determined that the woman was indeed eligible for the grant, and would receive \$7,880. They also lifted a condition that would have barred her from OSAP funding for a further three years.



Children and Youth: Safe slumber

A 16-year-old living in a foster home sought our help when she was invited to spend the night at a friend's house, but her foster care agency denied her request, citing COVID-19 restrictions. She told us her children's aid society worker was not returning her calls to discuss the matter further. Our Children and Youth Unit connected with the worker and raised the youth's concerns, including that the sleepover had been approved by her friend's parents. The worker promised to follow

up with the youth, and, after reviewing the COVID-19 guidelines, approved the overnight visit.

French language services: Fish story

When new signs were installed at the Ministry of Natural Resources' Fish Culture Station in North Bay, some Francophone residents noticed something fishy - the signs were in English only. Photos of them circulated on social media and in the local newspaper, and caught the notice of the area MPP. Responding to a complaint, our French Language Services Unit spoke with the Ministry, which quickly acknowledged that its signs at stations in North Bay and Sault Ste. Marie were not bilingual. But

like many fish stories, this one continued to grow: the Ministry's review led it to discover yet another unilingual sign, near Englehart. As of last week, new bilingual signs were installed at all of these stations. The Ministry also let us know that it has ensured that maps and other information at all nine of its fish culture stations are available in French and English, and it updated its website to note that tours in French can be arranged in designated



areas.

In the News



Did you catch the news about our Annual Report, released on June 30? Check out these reports:

- [Ontario's Ombudsman received more than 800 complaints due to COVID-19](#) (Toronto Star)
- [Ombudsman receives record number of complaints about provincial jails](#) (CBC/Canadian Press)
- [Ontario Ombudsman report highlights "appalling" jail conditions, COVID-19 complaints](#) (The Lawyer's Daily)

Investigation updates



Our Special Ombudsman Response Team (SORT) has two major systemic investigations in progress:

[Oversight of long-term care homes during COVID-19](#) (launched last month): Evidence-gathering is under way, and SORT investigators have begun interviewing stakeholders and complainants.

[Delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board](#): SORT investigators are reviewing large volumes of documentary evidence, and conducting interviews.

Anyone with relevant information or questions about these investigations can contact us via our [online complaint form](#) or by emailing info@ombudsman.on.ca.

French Language Services Commissioner comments on new long-term care commission

Message from the Commissioner



On July 29, French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke welcomed the newly appointed Independent Commission investigating Long-Term Care and COVID-19, while urging that it take issues affecting Francophones into account. She also raised concerns "that the Terms of Reference allow the Commission to issue a report in one language only," and asked "that the government explicitly communicate its expectations regarding the offer of French language services to the Commission."

[Read Commissioner Burke's full statement](#)

Jobs, jobs, jobs



Interested in working with us? We continue to hire Investigators and Early Resolution Officers, and we recently added these new job postings:

- [Manager, Investigations and Early Resolutions, French Language Services Unit](#)

- [Legal Counsel \(Bilingual\)](#)
- [Legal Counsel](#)
- [Policy and Issues Analyst \(Bilingual\), French Language Services Unit](#)
- [Articling student \(2021-2022\)](#)

Check out all of our open positions in the [Careers](#) section of our website.

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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