

French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke releases 2019-2020 Annual Report, Paul Dubé reappointed as Ontario Ombudsman until 2026, and more!

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[FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COMMISSIONER KELLY BURKE RELEASES 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT](#)

Commissioner calls on all Ontario ministries to produce plans to improve French language services



In her first [Annual Report](#), released on December 10, Commissioner Burke noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted shortcomings in the planning and provision of government services in French. Her report details some of the **431** complaints received by the Ombudsman's French Language Services Unit between May 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020, and makes eight recommendations.

[Watch the Commissioner's press conference](#)

Commissioner Burke found that the lack of services in French was generally related to a shortage of human resources, a lack of knowledge of policies and procedures, and the unavailability of resources such as templates in French.



"The majority of the complaints we dealt with could have been resolved if adequate planning for the provision of French language services had been done," said Commissioner Burke. "The pandemic has exacerbated these issues and has highlighted the need for the government to assess how planning for the provision of French language services is being carried out."

She called on the government to require each ministry to produce a plan for the improvement of French language services. She also recommended that the Minister of Francophone Affairs report annually on the implementation of these plans, starting in the spring of 2022 – a recommendation that was welcomed by the Minister, Caroline Mulroney.

The report recounts numerous cases where the French Language Services Unit and the Commissioner succeeded in resolving complaints quickly and often proactively in many areas, including non-jurisdictional areas. "I am very proud to report that we have seen results that confirm our work has already had an impact on the lives of many Franco-Ontarians," noted the Commissioner.

Ms. Burke also stressed that the Office of the Ombudsman is uniquely positioned to resolve issues related to the implementation of the *French Language Services Act*, and

that going forward, it will examine the thousands of complaints handled each year to identify opportunities to strengthen French language services in all areas. "I have been able to assess the advantages to working within the Office of the Ombudsman, with its vast jurisdiction," she wrote in the report. "We are laying the foundation for a unique pillar of oversight in Canada."

In the news:

- [Commissioner Burke's Annual report "bodes well" for French-language services](#) (in French only) (**Radio-Canada**)
- [French Language Services Commissioner said 'adequate planning' would have resolved most complaints](#) (**QP Briefing**)
- [Translation issues, lack of bilingual information about COVID-19 concerns for Niagara French community](#) (**St Catharines Standard**)
- [Ontario ministries rarely have a plan to serve Franco-Ontarians](#) (in French only) (**Le Droit**)

Read more about the report

PAUL DUBÉ REAPPOINTED AS ONTARIO OMBUDSMAN UNTIL 2026



Our Office is pleased to announce that Paul Dubé has been reappointed as Ombudsman for a second five-year term by unanimous vote of the Legislative Assembly, beginning April 1, 2021.

"Mr. Dubé has performed his role with the twin attributes of vigour and fairness," said Speaker Ted Arnott. "He is deeply committed to improving the delivery of government services to Ontarians, and this is evident in all of his investigations and reports."

Paul Dubé, Ontario's seventh Ombudsman, has served in his current role since 2016.

During his first term, he has overseen the two largest expansions of our Office's mandate – municipalities, universities and school boards in 2016, and French Language Services and children protection services in 2019, which led to the creation of the French Language Services and Children and Youth Units.

Under Ombudsman Dubé's leadership, the Office has released reports on major systemic investigations with more than 200 recommendations to the Ontario government. These recommendations include revamping the system for notifying drivers of licence suspensions ([Suspended State](#), 2018), overhauling the monitoring and tracking of inmates in segregation ([Out of Oversight](#), [Out of Mind](#), 2017), requiring de-escalation training for police recruits and developing a new use-of-force model that emphasizes de-escalation techniques ([A Matter of Life and Death](#), 2016), and improving services for adults with developmental disabilities in crisis ([Nowhere to Turn](#), 2016).

LET'S CONNECT IN 2021

While 2020 brought many changes to the world of work, our team at the Ombudsman's Office continued its outreach efforts with virtual conference presentations, panel discussions, video press conferences, and teleconference discussions with colleagues across the country.

As we look forward to 2021, we're hoping to grow our outreach efforts, reach new audiences, make connections – and we want to hear from you! Would you like to arrange a presentation about our Office to your organization? We'd be happy to talk about our mandate, describe the work we do, and discuss how we can help you with government or broader public sector concerns. [Contact us](#) to discuss!

Looking forward to hearing from you!

LOOKING BACK: OUR MOST-VIEWED CASES OF THE YEAR

We share many examples of how we've helped Ontarians each month. Here are the five stories that most resonated with you in 2020.

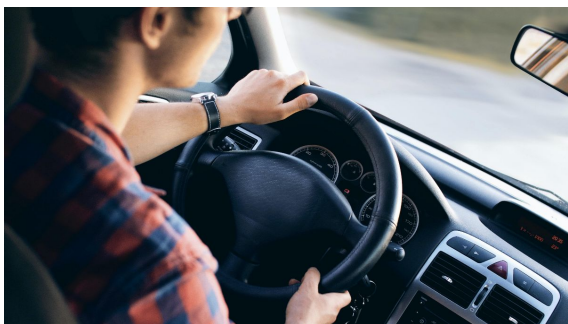


Right to complain

A woman came to our Office, frustrated with the complaint process for a local children's aid society. [Read more about how our Children and Youth Unit helped her resolve her issue.](#)

Proof of identity

When staff at an LCBO asked this man to remove his mask in-store, he felt that this type of practice could put his health at risk. [Learn about how we resolved this complaint.](#)



Failing the test

After a man and his son requested services in French at a London DriveTest centre, they were faced with a dead end. [Visit our website to read more about how our French Language Services Unit helped.](#)

Hold, s'il vous plaît

Left on hold for an hour trying to receive service in French from a government ministry, this man gave up in frustration. [Read about how we stepped in when he contacted our French Language Services Unit.](#)



Harsh choice

A woman came to our Office because she was concerned that the practices of the Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Office could deter victims of workplace harassment from making complaints. [Read about how we helped her.](#)

Work with us: Job openings



Interested in working with us?

We continue to hire new staff. Check out all of our open positions in the [Careers](#) section of our website.

- [Communications Officer, French Language Services Unit](#) **NEW**
- [Early Resolution Officer](#)
- [Early Resolution Officer, Children and Youth Unit](#)
- [Legal Counsel](#)
- [Legal Summer Student \(2021\)](#)

File a complaint or contact us here



From all of us at the Office of the Ombudsman, best wishes for a safe and healthy holiday season, and a brighter 2021.



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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