

In our May newsletter: How we helped displaced Ukrainians obtain Ontario driver's licences, Toronto Newcomer Day, and more

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“Thank you for making a difference” – how we helped displaced Ukrainians obtain Ontario driver’s licences

OHIP renewal online: No licence? No problem

Respect: New video for Children and Youth in Care Day 2022

Here, there and everywhere

How we helped: Case summaries

Spread the word: We're hiring!

“THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE” **– HOW WE HELPED DISPLACED** **UKRAINIANS OBTAIN ONTARIO DRIVER’S** **LICENCES**



As large numbers of Ukrainians have sought refuge in Ontario in the wake of Russia's invasion of their country, Ontario has made efforts to help them settle. However, we recently heard of some having difficulty in obtaining driver's licences.

One man from a city in Ukraine that had been evacuated told us the Ministry of Transportation would not validate his Ukrainian licence and driving experience without a letter from the Ukrainian government – something he felt would not be feasible due to the war. He was told the letter was required so he could bypass Ontario's graduated licensing system and obtain a licence immediately.

Ombudsman staff made inquiries with the Ministry and learned that Ukrainians arriving in Canada with "Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel" visitor visas were

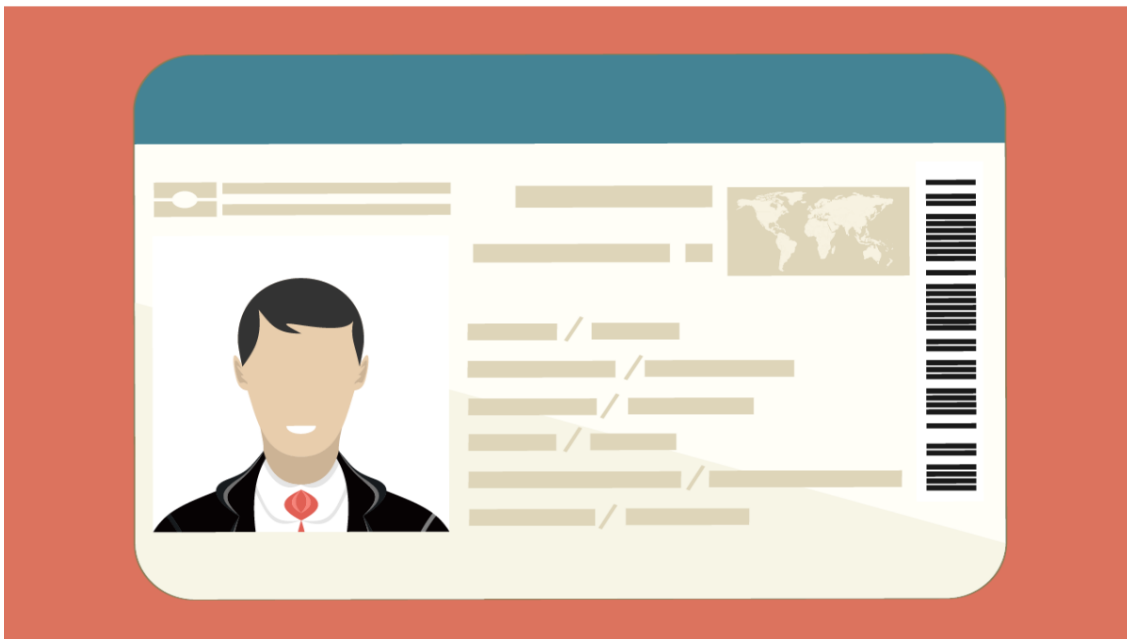
excluded from existing policies that exempt refugees from certain licence validation requirements.

Ministry officials confirmed they were working on amending the policy to include Ukrainians with these visas. In the interim, our Office helped in these cases by facilitating communication between newly arrived Ukrainians and DriveTest and the Ministry.

[The change has now been made](#), meaning Ukrainians can provide their Ukrainian license and sign a self-declaration to validate their driving experience, instead of a letter of authentication.

On May 11, the man from the evacuated city obtained his driver's licence after passing a driving test. He now plans to buy a used car, according to his Ontario host, who shared his appreciation with our Office: "Thank you for making a big difference in his life!"

OHIP RENEWAL ONLINE: NO LICENCE? NO PROBLEM



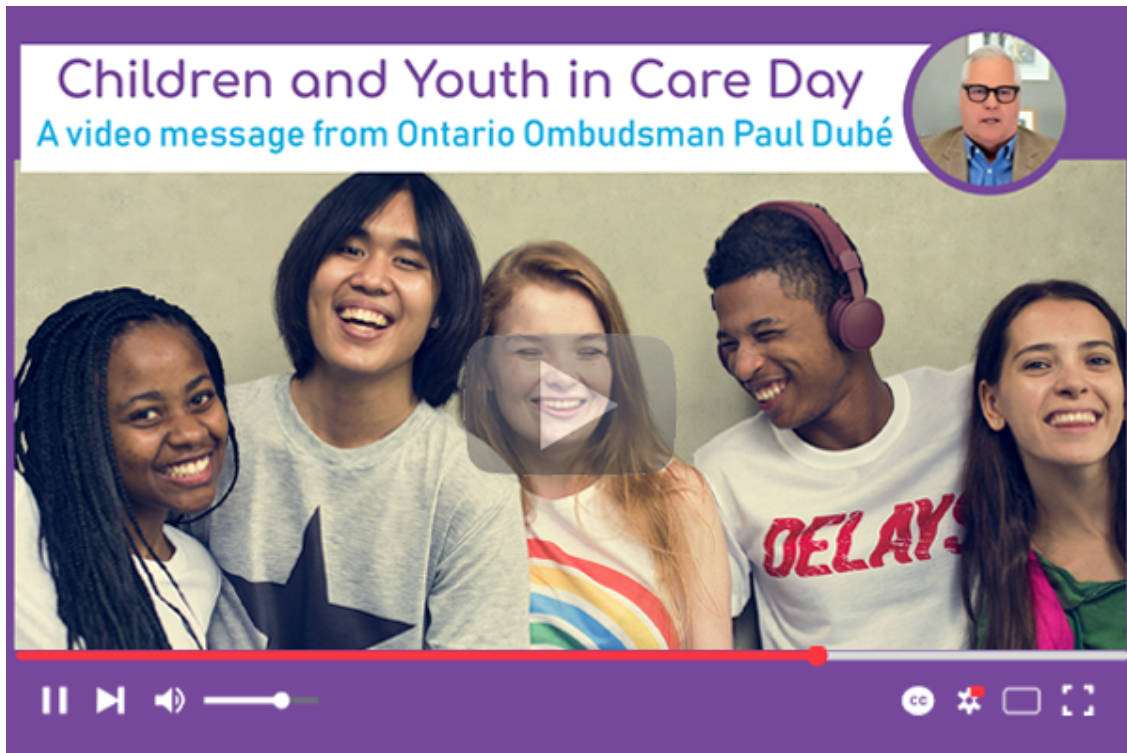
Over the past year, people with disabilities have complained to the Ombudsman about being unable to renew their Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) cards online. The province's online system accepted driver's licences as valid identification for health card renewal, but not the Ontario Photo ID card used by many who do not or cannot drive. Those without licences were required to go in person to ServiceOntario centres to renew their OHIP cards – which they felt was onerous and unfair, particularly during a pandemic.

We relayed these concerns to officials in the relevant ministry who confirmed steps were being taken to allow online renewals with valid Ontario Photo IDs as well as driver's

licences. The update came into effect on May 2. For more information, visit [ServiceOntario's health card renewal page](#).

Read more examples of how we helped resolve issues with OHIP and other Ministry of Health programs [here](#).

RESPECT: NEW VIDEO FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE DAY 2022



Ombudsman Paul Dubé marked Children and Youth in Care day on May 14 with the release of a new video message, expressing his respect for the strength, resilience and contributions of all current and former young people in the child welfare system.

"This extends to the young people who make the difficult but necessary step to contact our Office to raise their feelings and concerns related to the services they receive," he says in the video. "Our role, in turn, is to ensure young people in care are treated fairly, services for them are working and delivered the way they're supposed to, and their rights are respected and upheld by service providers and the government."

Click [here](#) to watch the Ombudsman's video message in full.

For more information about the Children and Youth Unit, please visit:
<https://bit.ly/ChildrenAndYouthUnit>

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE



Pleased to meet you: Ombudsman staff at Toronto Newcomer Day

On May 25, we were delighted to participate in our first in-person event in nearly two years – the 8th annual Toronto Newcomer Day. At our busy booth at Nathan Phillips Square in downtown Toronto, we distributed helpful resources and answered a wide range of questions about our Office and how we help Ontarians. We also guided attendees through an interactive activity to provide some perspective on the volume of cases we deal with each year – more than 20,000! – represented by a jar filled with 20,000 grains of blue rice.

We appreciated the opportunity to let newcomers know about the many ways we can help them resolve administrative issues with driver's licences, health cards, ServiceOntario, school boards, universities and colleges, public drug programs, and more.

For example, we prompted the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program to address delays and apologize to a couple from the Netherlands who waited more than 18 months for a decision and paid \$1,200 to take language tests twice. We also intervened to help a man obtain his G2 licence after he was initially told his driving record from India and B.C. did not count and he'd have to do basic driver training.

Learn more about our Office and how we work [on our website](https://www.ombudsman.on.ca).



Children and youth: Sharing expertise across the globe

On May 19, Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay and Children and Youth Unit Director Diana Cooke presented virtually to the Office of the State Comptroller and Ombudsman of Israel, which is establishing its own complaints system for children and youth. They explained how we carry out our role as a legislated safeguard for young people and their rights in care, under Ontario's *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* – and discussed the most common complaints raised by young people who contact us.



Emphasizing the importance of French education

French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke delivered a [video statement](#) (in

French only) at the closing ceremony of the [Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques](#) (AFOCSC)'s annual conference on May 28. Commissioner Burke highlighted the important role educational institutions play in preserving and propagating Francophone culture. She also emphasized that proper strategic planning will help solve the shortage of French teachers who directly contribute to the sustainability of French in Ontario.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Municipal matters: Watch for us at 2022 AMCTO

On June 14, two of our Office's experts in municipal issues will deliver an in-person workshop on how municipalities can resolve issues and address complaints, at the [2022 annual conference for the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario](#) in Niagara Falls.

General Counsel Laura Pettigrew and Senior Counsel Joanna Bull will discuss how good policies can assist municipalities in dealing with "unreasonable behaviour."

Delegates will also find our staff at the exhibitor trade show June 12-15, where we'll answer questions and provide resources like our ["tip cards" for municipal best practices](#), and [guides to the municipal open meeting rules](#).

Access to justice in French: Commissioner to address AJEFO 2022

On June 10, French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke will address the hybrid annual conference of [Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario](#) (AJEFO), in Toronto. Active since 1981, the AJEFO is a legal community that facilitates equal access to justice in French throughout the province.

HOW WE HELPED – CASE SUMMARIES



Culture change

A Black 16-year-old complained that her children's aid society worker was dismissive of her requests for hair and skin products that met her cultural needs, making her feel like she was being treated differently because of her race.

Click [here](#) to read the full case summary.

Click here to learn more about how we helped with issues or problems concerning children and youth

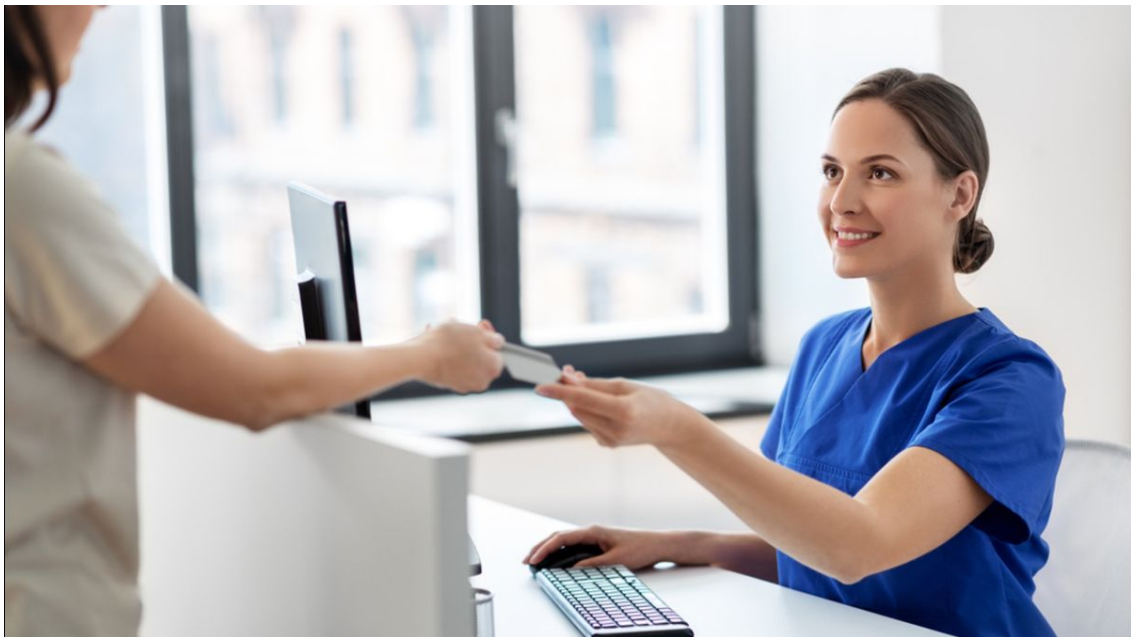


[French connexion](#)

A Francophone man contacted us after noticing that [Cancer Care Ontario](#)'s promotional messages about virtual access to health care on LinkedIn appeared in English only, despite his LinkedIn account being configured in French.

Click [here](#) to read the full case summary.

Read more examples of how we helped Franco-Ontarians on our website



[What to expect](#)

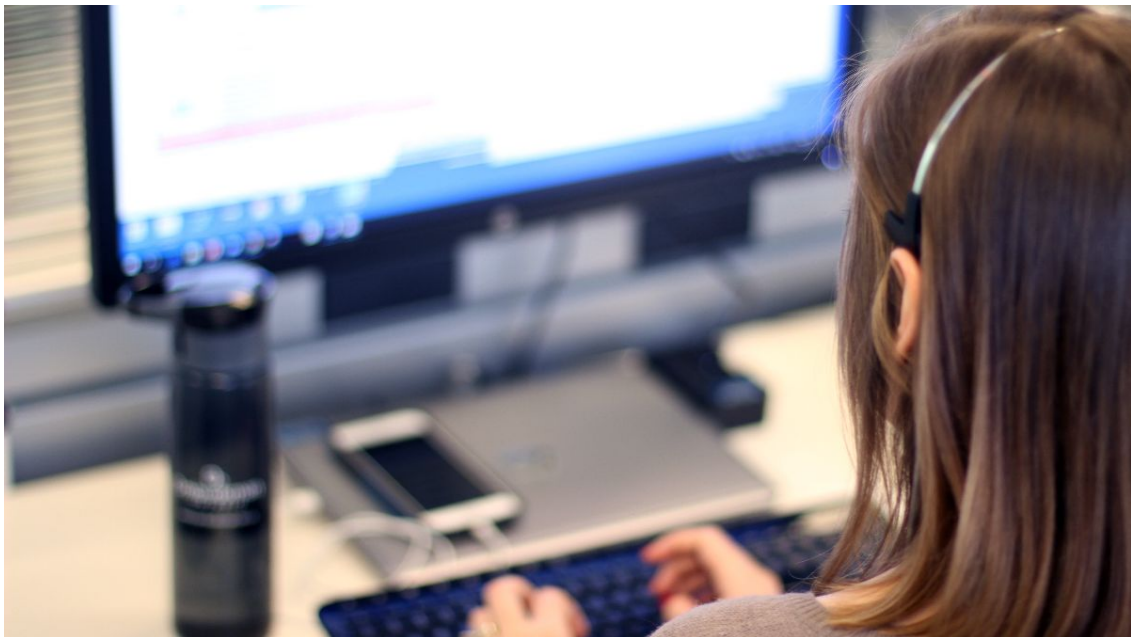
An international student who had completed post-secondary studies in Ontario and was

now employed sought our help in communicating with ServiceOntario about getting an Ontario Health card. She complained that each time she brought in the documents they requested, their expectations changed.

Click [here](#) to read the full case summary.

Click here to learn more about how we helped Ontarians with their problems

SPREAD THE WORD: WE'RE HIRING



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

- [Articling Student \(2023-2024\)](#)
 - [Early Resolution Officer](#)
 - [Early Resolution Officer \(French Language Services Unit\)](#)
 - [Early Resolution Officer \(Children and Youth Unit\)](#)
 - [Legal Counsel \(French Language Services\)](#)
 - [Legal Summer Student \(2023\)](#)
 - [Investigator](#)
 - [Investigator \(Children and Youth Unit\)](#)
 - [Investigator \(French Language Services Unit\)](#)
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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 was reappointed for a second five-year term, beginning on April 1, 2021.

The Ontario Ombudsman's work takes place on traditional Indigenous territories across the province we now call Ontario, and we are thankful to be able to work and live on this land.

What does the Ombudsman do during a provincial election?

The provincial election is June 2, and throughout the campaign period, while the Ombudsman and other non-partisan, independent officers of the legislature remain on the job, we keep a deliberately low profile. We are receiving and reviewing complaints as usual, and our ongoing investigations continue. However, we bear in mind that the Ontario public service is in a "caretaker" role during an election period, and major policy changes are unlikely. We also have no major report releases scheduled until after the election.

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