

In our March newsletter: Ombudsman Ontario is hiring Early Resolution Officers, Ombudsman announces Interim French Language Services Commissioner, and more

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We're hiring Early Resolution Officers - join us!

Ombudsman announces Interim French Language Services Commissioner

INVESTIGATION NEWS: Ombudsman to investigate cases of people with developmental disabilities inappropriately housed in hospitals

INVESTIGATION UPDATE: Report on delays at the Landlord Tenant Board coming soon

Emphasizing inherent identity rights on International Trans Day of Visibility

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Here, there and everywhere

How we helped: Case summaries

Careers

**We're hiring Early Resolution Officers -
join us!**



Are you interested in a career working to improve fairness and accountability in Ontario's public sector? Join us – we're continuing to grow to help more Ontarians than ever before!

We handle 25,000 cases every year about provincial government and broader public sector bodies, such as municipalities, universities, school boards. When you reach out to us – by phone, email, or our website – our compassionate Early Resolution Officers (EROs) are your first point of contact. They'll ask you questions about your concerns, with

the aim of resolving your complaint or, if it's outside our jurisdiction, helping you figure out where to turn next.

What is an average day like for an ERO? Read this interview with Victor, an ERO with our Generalist Unit.

What do you do at the Ombudsman's Office?

As an Early Resolution Officer, I take complaints from people who are having problems related to public services. To start, we talk about their issue, and I look into their concerns by making phone calls or inquiries with the relevant public bodies to help find answers to their questions. My job is to ensure they were treated the same as everybody else, and with procedural fairness. The government can be a black box to people – I can help by shining a light.

“The government can be a black box to people –
I can help by shining a light.”

What do you like about working at Ombudsman Ontario?

I like helping people! Many people come to this Office because we're their last resort. Maybe they've exhausted everything else, or they don't know that there are additional steps they can take to solve their problems – and I'm able to help them.

What is your background?

I have a background in business law, having worked at two national law firms in Toronto and in-house for an international company before operating my own private practice.

What are skills you use daily?

It's so important for me to practice active listening and empathy when speaking with people. I really care about their problems, and want to help them find solutions. Being curious about the issues people bring to our Office is also important to this role – I learn new things every time I help someone.

You recently represented our Office at a conference for municipal councillors and staff. How was your experience?

I had an incredible time attending the Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference in January. It was a gathering of mayors, councillors, clerks and other staff from small municipalities all over the province. At our booth, I was able to answer questions, clarifying for delegates how we work closely with municipalities to resolve local issues. It's always interesting to hear the conversations happening at these events, so we can anticipate the questions we might receive.

How would you describe the culture of the Ombudsman's Office?

The culture here is supportive! When I have questions, I just call up a colleague. We deal with a high volume of complaints and there's so much to learn. Sharing knowledge with each other helps us resolve cases more efficiently. The supportive environment and

collaborative work plays a big role in how we make a difference for Ontarians.

APPLY TODAY!

Ombudsman announces Interim French Language Services Commissioner



On March 3, Ombudsman Paul Dubé announced the appointment of Carl Bouchard as Interim French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario. Since February 2020, Mr. Bouchard has overseen the day-to-day operations of the Ombudsman's French Language Services Unit as its Director of Operations, including the handling of complaints, conduct of investigations, and formulation of recommendations to enhance French language services.

"Our Office remains strongly committed to ensuring that the rights of Francophones in Ontario and the obligations of government and government agencies established by the *French Language Services Act* are respected and fulfilled," Ombudsman Dubé stated in a [press release](#).

He stressed that the FLS Unit's work will continue uninterrupted pending the search for a permanent Commissioner. The Unit plays an integral part in the Office's efforts in resolving problems and investigating administrative issues across the provincial public sector, the Ombudsman said.

In a [statement](#), new Interim Commissioner Bouchard echoed his commitment to ensuring that Francophones in Ontario have access to the services they are entitled to, and that he is “honoured to be able to serve to protect our cultural heritage and language for present and future generations.”

A proud Franco-Ontarian, he served as Director of Policy Development for the Ontario Ministry of Francophone Affairs for six years prior to joining the Ombudsman’s Office.

In his new role, the Interim Commissioner has already organized meetings with dozens of Francophone organizations to continue building on the collaborative work of the French Language Services Unit and to stay informed about the issues affecting their respective sectors.

He also delivered a speech at Massey College on March 17 during a celebration marking International Francophonie Day, and represented our Office at the launch of Francophonie Week in Toronto on March 20.

He also spoke to health and wellness professionals at events hosted by two local health agencies that support Ontario health in the provision of health services in French: Entité 1 in Chatham on March 29, and Entité 3 in Toronto on March 31.

[Read Carl Bouchard’s bio](#)

[Read the Ombudsman’s full statement](#)

In the News (in French only)

- [Interview with Carl Bouchard - Téléjournal Ontario](#)
- [Qui est Carl Bouchard, le Commissaire aux services en français par intérim? - ONFR+](#)
- [L’Ombudsman lance une recherche pour remplacer la commissaire aux services en français de l’Ontario – Le Métropolitain](#)
- [Le nouveau commissaire aux services en français de l’Ontario prêche la stabilité – Le Devoir](#)

INVESTIGATION NEWS: Ombudsman to investigate cases of people with developmental disabilities inappropriately housed in hospitals

On March 24, Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé announced a new investigation into the plight of adults with developmental disabilities who are inappropriately housed in hospital due to a lack of supports and services in the community.

“It is particularly concerning that vulnerable individuals with complex needs are in hospital – often for long periods – despite having no medical need to be there,” he said. “They are often kept in restraints, and their condition deteriorates the longer they remain in hospital settings, according to those who have complained to us.”

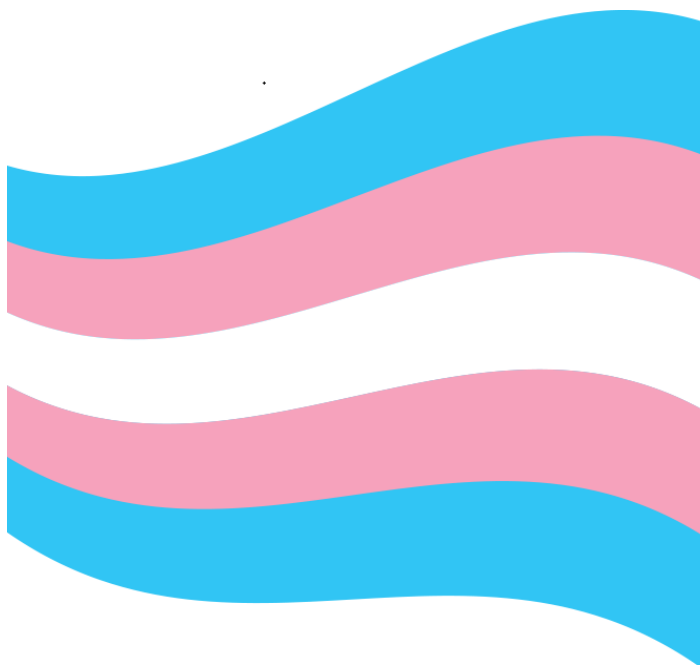
The Ombudsman previously investigated systemic issues faced by hundreds of adults with developmental disabilities in a range of crisis situations, including many who were in hospital because other placements were not available. His 2016 report, [*Nowhere to Turn*](#), made 60 recommendations, all of which were accepted. This new investigation will include a review of the government's progress on those relating to hospitals.

[Read the press release.](#)

INVESTIGATION UPDATE: Report on delays at the Landlord Tenant Board coming soon

The Ombudsman's investigation into whether the Ministry of Attorney General, Tribunals Ontario, and the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) are taking adequate steps to address delays at the LTB is complete and plans are under way for its release this spring. Investigators have reviewed hundreds of complaints from landlords, tenants, advocacy groups, MPPs and other stakeholders, conducted dozens of interviews and reviewed thousands of documents.

Emphasizing inherent identity rights on International Trans Day of Visibility



**INTERNATIONAL
TRANS DAY
OF VISIBILITY**

**JOURNÉE
INTERNATIONALE
DE LA VISIBILITÉ
TRANSGENRE**

Today, March 31, is the International Trans Day of Visibility – a day to recognize and celebrate all transgender, non-binary, questioning and gender non-conforming people. Ombudsman Ontario celebrates this day by acknowledging the inherent right for all people to be affirmed for who they are and how they identify.

Our Office has helped individuals overcome difficulties they have faced because of their identity when trying to receive provincial government services. For example, in one case, [we helped a transgender woman when the Ontario Health Insurance Plan had improperly refused her application for prior approval for breast reconstruction surgery](#). In another instance, [we intervened to help a transgender man obtain an updated birth certificate](#). In a different situation, we stepped in [when a transgender man's name-change application was rejected](#) because the sex on his birth certificate differed from the gender on his application.

As we strive toward a more equitable and fair society, [we encourage any individuals with problems or concerns about the public services they receive to contact our Office](#). We can help.

**International Day for the Elimination of Racial
Discrimination**



March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, highlighting racial discrimination as a barrier to fairness, justice and equity. The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on the day the police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid "pass laws" in 1960. In 1966, the United Nations proclaimed March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination because they were so aggrieved by the senseless tragedy and wanted to urge the world to join hands to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.

We stand with the United Nations and with organizations around the world in continuing to advocate for fairness and equal rights, and to ensure people of all backgrounds are treated fairly and respectfully. #FightRacism

Here, there and everywhere

Educating current and future support personnel to the many ways we can help young people in care

Staff from the Ombudsman's Children and Youth Unit met with workers from the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society and local foster parents on March 3 to discuss their roles and obligations in supporting young people in care. We encouraged them to share our guidance videos, act as "support persons" to help youth contact us, and pass along youths' concerns to us directly so we can work together to determine how to help them.

We appreciated the opportunity to speak to foster parents and workers, and encourage anyone with questions to contact us.



Later that day, Children and Youth Unit staff met with approximately 20 students in the Youth Justice Program at St. Clair College in Windsor. Our staff shared a case story of [a young person serving a youth sentence at an adult correctional facility who was not being provided post-secondary education and counselling as required by his court-ordered plan](#). After our involvement, steps were taken to help the youth register in a post-secondary program, and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services worked with the Ministry of the Solicitor General on a Memorandum of Understanding to improve the process for other youths in similar situations.

To request a presentation from the Ombudsman's Children and Youth Unit, please [contact us](#).

Municipal matters, all summer long

Starting next month, you'll spot Ombudsman staff at events across the province! At the end of April, come find our table at the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association's conference in Thunder Bay, or at the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities conference in Brantford.

We're happy to answer your questions or help you better understand how we work with municipalities to resolve municipal complaints.



We'll also have lots of helpful resources, like the brand-new edition of our [“Open Meetings: Guide for Municipalities”](#), our [“tip cards” for municipal best practices](#), and copies of our [municipal investigation reports](#).

Not able to make it? [“Open Meetings: Guide for Municipalities”](#) is also available on our website! This updated 2023 edition includes new examples from recent Ombudsman investigations and features excerpts from relevant legislation and best practice suggestions.

You'll also find us at these conferences:

- Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, Parry Sound, May 8-10
- Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario conference, Niagara Falls, June 11-14 (watch for our session on integrity commissioners!)
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario, London, August 20-23

HOW WE HELPED – CASE SUMMARIES



Entitled to inclusion

Our French Language Services Unit was contacted by a Francophone mother whose transgender child was seeking a name change through the Office of the Registrar General. One of the required documents was a letter from a person who has known the child for at least 12 months. The child's school provided a letter signed by a person with the gender-neutral French title of "Direction" (equivalent to "Principal" in English).

The Office of the Registrar General refused the child's application, explaining only the masculine ("Directeur") or feminine ("Directrice") versions of this title were acceptable. After we contacted the Office of the Registrar General, it re-evaluated the case, accepted the term "Direction," and processed the child's name change. The Office also committed to reviewing its list of accepted professional titles to reflect the use of inclusive language.

Learn more about the French Language Services Unit which answers questions and takes complaints about services in French



Left in limbo

A youth in care who was turning 18 called our Children and Youth Unit for help when plans fell through for her to enter a transitional housing program and complete her final semester of high school. The girl temporarily moved in with her sister while trying to reach her children's aid society (CAS) worker, who had gone on a sudden leave of absence. The worker was also supposed to have registered the youth in school, but the school told the youth she was not registered in time and classes were full.

When she contacted us, she was desperate for information. We reached a CAS supervisor, who discovered that before going on leave, the worker had registered the girl with another school, which was holding a spot for her. The girl was pleased with the news and agreed to start at the new school. Shortly after, a space became available for her at the housing program, and she was able to move out of her sister's home.

Our Children and Youth Unit staff will listen, review concerns about the experiences and services provided to young people by the child welfare system, and help find solutions. If we can't help directly, we will refer you to someone who can. [Contact us](#).

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



[Healthy extension](#)

A woman who had lived in Canada for 76 years sought our help when she attempted to renew her health card and discovered she did not have Canadian citizenship. She feared this would affect her health coverage, as she was told she would have to apply for a passport in her birth country and then apply for permanent resident status in Canada before she could renew her health card.

We spoke to Ontario Health Insurance Plan officials, who confirmed her health coverage would be extended for a year in order to complete the requisite applications.

[Click here to learn more about how we helped Ontarians with their problems](#)

[CAREERS](#)



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

WE OFFER:

- Collaborative, exciting work with exceptional colleagues passionate about public service
- Comprehensive health, dental and vision benefits
- Generous paid maternity and parental leave
- Hybrid working environment with an office centrally located on the subway line
- A commitment to work-life balance
- Defined-benefit pension plan through the Ontario Pension Board
- Ongoing training and professional development opportunities

APPLY TODAY!

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.

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