

July newsletter: Interim French Language
Services Commissioner to investigate unilingual
government out-of-home advertising, and more

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ONTARIO OMBUDSMAN NEWSLETTER



**Interim French Language Services Commissioner to investigate
unilingual government out-of-home advertising**

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How we helped

We're looking for bilingual staff – join us!

Interim French Language Services Commissioner to investigate unilingual government out-of-home advertising



On July 6, Interim French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard announced that he is launching an investigation, on his own initiative, into the lack of French in the provincial government's out-of-home (outdoor) advertising.

"We have noticed that French has been missing in recent advertising, in particular on some electronic panels, bus shelters and buses," said Mr. Bouchard. "This raises serious questions about how government agencies communicate with Francophones in Ontario."

The interim Commissioner initiated the investigation on his own motion to determine to what extent the *French Language Services Act* is being respected. There is no fixed deadline for the investigation; it will be completed as quickly as possible.

Mr. Bouchard encourages anyone who has information relevant to this investigation to [file a complaint online](#), to email sf-fls@ombudsman.on.ca, or to call 1-866-246-5262.

Connecting with Indigenous Elders



We were honoured this month to participate in the trade show for the Elders Gathering hosted by Nijjaansinaanik Child and Family Services at Henvey Inlet First Nation Traditional Grounds on July 25-27.

We appreciated the chance to connect with Elders, helpers, well-being workers and First Nations community members to share how we can help them with their problems with provincial and municipal governments or the broader public sector, as well as share information about our work with child welfare services.

It is important for our Office to meet with Indigenous Elders, to listen to their truths and ensure their voices are being heard, and that their valuable perspectives are being incorporated into the provision of public services.

Are you Indigenous and having problems with municipal or provincial public services? We are a culturally safe space and can help you exercise your rights. [Click here to read more about the ways we can help.](#)

Municipal matters: New resources at AMO in August



Photography credit: AMCTO – Mark Holleron

Our Office resolves thousands of complaints about municipal services every year, and we regularly attend municipal conferences across the province to share our resources and best practices.

Come and see us at the **Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference in London from August 20-23!** Delegates can visit our booth at the exhibitor trade show, where we will answer questions and distribute resources. This year, we're unveiling our brand-new resources on municipal integrity commissioners and codes of conduct. We'll also have copies of the latest edition of our handy "[open meeting guide](#)."

Municipal conferences enable our staff and the Ombudsman to share information with mayors, councillors, and municipal staff about how we work with municipalities to resolve local problems – such as issues with by-law enforcement, local services, Ontario Works, municipal utilities, sewers, and infrastructure.

Here's where we've been so far this year:

- Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference in Toronto, January 22-24
- Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association conference in Thunder Bay, April 26-28
- Ontario Small Urban Municipalities conference in Paris, April 26-28
- Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities conference in Parry Sound, May 8-10

- Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario conference in Niagara Falls, June 11-14
-

Here, there and everywhere

Guiding principals

On July 9, Robin Bates, Senior Counsel, spoke about our work with school boards as part of a semi-annual training session during the Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program, organized by the Ontario Principals' Council.

Participants learned about how our Office assesses cases related to school boards and what boards expect should we contact them. Ms. Bates led them through several interactive case scenarios while outlining our complaint resolution process and highlighting the nature of our interactions with school boards.

[Click here to read about some of our school board-related cases.](#)



Reaching out to Francophones in their own milieu

On July 19 and 26, French Language Services Unit staff provided information sessions to older adult residents of Toronto's Centres d'Accueil Héritage, an organization that provides assistance to Francophone seniors and their families in sourcing appropriate services and programs. FLS Unit staff also spoke directly to seniors to hear about their experiences seeking French-language services, and assisted them with concerns accessing services in their language.



On June 29, FLS Unit staff were at the Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario (Cooperation Council of Ontario)'s open house in Toronto, where we promoted our Office's services and encouraged people to contact us directly if they have issues receiving services in French.

HOW WE HELPED



Watchful help

A mother contacted our Children and Youth Unit because she was concerned that her son

might have been hurt by a staff member in a group home. We reached out to the teenager immediately, and also relayed the mother's concerns to her son's children's aid society (CAS). The CAS conducted an investigation, made recommendations to his group home about de-escalation techniques, and informed the youth about these recommendations.

When we followed up with the teenager, he told us he felt better and no longer had concerns about his placement in the group home. We will remain involved to monitor the group home's response to the recommendations of the CAS.

Learn more about the [Children and Youth Unit](#), which answers questions and takes complaints about child protection services.

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



[Have licence, will travel](#)

A woman seeking to renew her driver's licence was given a temporary one, valid for three months, and told her new licence would be mailed in 6-8 weeks.

When it did not arrive in the mail, she made several calls to inquire about it. Each time, she was told the matter would be looked into, but almost 12 weeks later, with the temporary licence about to expire, she contacted our Office.

She explained the matter was now urgent, as she was travelling internationally in about two weeks, and would not be able to drive during her trip if she didn't receive her new

licence in time.

Ministry officials acknowledged to our staff that an error on their end had delayed the woman's licence. They expedited it and ensured the woman received her licence a few days later, in time for her trip.

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



[French connections](#)

A person complained that some LinkedIn accounts of the Ontario government and its agencies, including those of the Ministry of Transportation and Ontario Health, showed a unilingual English logo and title. We contacted the Cabinet Office, which completed a ministry-wide audit to ensure that all accounts comply with the requirements of the *French Language Services Act*.

In another case, a man complained that Cancer Care Ontario's promotional messages on LinkedIn about virtual access to health care appeared in English only. We raised the issue with Ontario Health, the agency responsible for Cancer Care Ontario, which acknowledged that its promotional messages on LinkedIn were only available in English. As a result of this complaint and discussions with our Office, Cancer Care Ontario started to create and publish bilingual messages on LinkedIn.

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

[We're looking for bilingual staff – join us!](#)



We continue to hire new staff – and currently have openings for a [bilingual Early Resolution Officer \(ERO\)](#) , and a [bilingual Communications Officer](#)!

Check out what two EROs from our Office have to say about their role:

“My job is to ensure everyone is treated in an equitable manner, and with procedural fairness. The government can be a black box to people – I can help by shining a light.” - Victor, ERO with our Generalist Unit

“It’s important in my role that I listen without judgment, act compassionately, and use a trauma-informed approach.” - Maxim, ERO with our Children and Youth Unit

APPLY NOW!

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
- Ongoing training and professional development opportunities

[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. The Ombudsman's investigations have benefited millions of Ontarians and prompted widespread reforms, including improved newborn screening, a more secure lottery system, and better tracking of inmates in segregation.

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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