

October newsletter: Ontario Ombudsman
releases his 2022-2023 Annual Report
underlining the value of independent oversight,
Ombuds Day 2023, and more

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ONTARIO OMBUDSMAN NEWSLETTER



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Annual Report: Ombudsman underlines value of independent oversight



Releasing his eighth Annual Report on October 5, Ombudsman Paul Dubé reflected on how our Office's "stronger, broader, more consistent oversight" has allowed us to help more vulnerable Ontarians and improve public services by "extending our ability to promote transparency, accountability, fairness, and a respect for rights."

The Ombudsman received **24,551 cases** in 2022-2023, and resolved 54% of them in two weeks or less. In a year when many Ontarians struggled to make ends meet, there were increases in cases about programs like Ontario Works (up 75%) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (up 22%, on top of a 37% increase the previous year).

Since his last Annual Report, the Ombudsman has completed four major investigations and made **137 recommendations**, all of which were accepted. Cases have also increased 16% across all areas in the first six months of fiscal 2023-2024 (April 1-September 30), the Ombudsman reported.

READ THE OMBUDSMAN'S 2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Watch this quick video for highlights.

Ombudsman calls for mandatory, standardized de-escalation training for police in new submission

In early October, Ombudsman Paul Dubé made a submission to the Ministry of the Solicitor General's public consultation on the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*. He noted that little has changed since his 2016 report, [*A Matter of Life and Death*](#), which recommended police be required to use de-escalation techniques before force wherever possible when dealing with persons in crisis.

"I once again reiterate the importance of regulatory standards requiring training and the use of de-escalation whenever possible," he wrote in the submission. "While I welcome the Ministry's proposals that would require periodic use-of-force training and special courses for trainers and 'coach officers,' I remain concerned about the ongoing refusal to make de-escalation training standardized and mandatory for all frontline officers across Ontario."

[Read the full submission.](#)

Ombuds Day: “Diverse in role, united in service”



On October 12, we recognized Ombuds Day, an internationally observed opportunity to raise awareness among the public about Ombudsman offices like ours – the roles we play, the services we offer, and most importantly, the value we provide.

This year's Ombuds Day theme, “Diverse in role, united in service,” pays tribute to the thousands of ombudsman offices around the world that function in various capacities.

[Read Ombudsman Paul Dubé's statement on Ombuds Day here.](#)

On October 30, our Office also marked 48 years since the first Ombudsman of Ontario, Arthur Maloney, took office in 1975. Since then, we've helped ensure hundreds of thousands of people are treated fairly by public services, and our systemic investigations have sparked reforms that have benefited millions of Ontarians. [Read more about our work.](#)



Watch this quick video to learn more on Ombuds Day.

Here, there and everywhere



Constituent concerns: How we help MPPs

As part of our ongoing outreach to Members of the Provincial Parliament, Director of Investigations Adam Orfanakos spoke virtually to constituent assistants from the office of

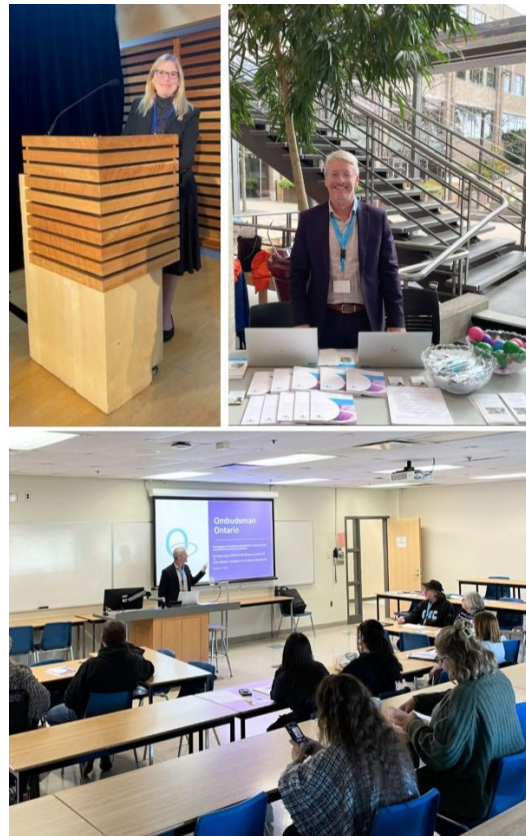
London-Fanshawe MPP Teresa Armstrong on October 11, explaining how we resolve and escalate complaints about a broad range of provincial public services.

In our Annual Report, [MPPs can find a chart listing the number of cases received from each riding](#). We encourage MPPs and staff to learn more about how we can help with complaints and inquiries from constituents, or provide informational presentations about our work. Contact us at info@ombudsman.on.ca.

Enhancing child welfare: Sharing insights in Toronto, Niagara and Ottawa

On October 20, Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay shared valuable and practical lessons from our Children and Youth Unit's latest investigations with professionals at the annual conference of the **Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Ontario**.

Along with Children and Youth Director Diana Cooke, the Deputy Ombudsman discussed the Ombudsman's findings in our reports [A Voice Unheard: Brandon's Story](#), and [Missing in Inaction: Misty's Story](#). Ms. Finlay highlighted how our approach to investigations, including gathering undeniable evidence, was key to having all of the Ombudsman's recommendations accepted by the agencies in question.



The Children and Youth Unit was also prominent at the **Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care** conference in Niagara-on-the Lake October 26-27, where we welcomed delegates to our booth, and our staff delivered a presentation on our critical role in amplifying and protecting the rights of children and youth in care.

And in mid-October, Children and Youth staff gave presentations in **Ottawa at Mary Homes** and the **Ottawa Children's Aid Society**, focusing on our services and the legal obligations of agencies to protect and respect the rights of children in their care.

Appreciation for APSW referrals

On October 19, ombudsman investigators spoke at the annual conference for the Adult Protective Service Association of Ontario in Barrie, discussing updates from our recent and ongoing investigations into services for adults with developmental disabilities. They noted

that adult protective service workers (ASPs) are trusted voices within the community and we appreciate them referring people in need to our Office.



Educating counsellors on how we help students

At the Ontario School Counsellors Association's annual conference in Mississauga on October 16, we had the chance to connect with guidance and career education workers, school board members, colleges and universities. We shared how we can help students across Ontario by looking at a wide range of issues, at every level of public school and post-secondary education.

[Learn more about our work in the education sector.](#)



Promoting Ontario's Francophonie: Events in Toronto, Kingston, Richmond Hill and Ottawa

Interim French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard and our French Language Services Unit participated in numerous events in October, meeting with individual Francophones and stakeholder groups across the province. Watch for a detailed list of our outreach events in our 2022-2023 Annual Report of the French Language Services Commissioner, coming in December. Some highlights from this month:

Interim Commissioner Bouchard moderated a panel, “**Capitalizing on the Francophonie’s Commercial Edge**,” at the **Toronto Global Forum** on October 13. On October 19, he met with fellow members of the **International Association of Language Commissioners** to discuss issues of common interest.

On October 21, our staff once again welcomed visitors to our booth at **Kingston’s annual Franco-Foire**, where we explained how we can help Franco-Ontarians get better services in French from the province, and handed out our [new poster](#).

On October 23, French Language Services Unit staff gave a virtual presentation about our work as part of **La Semaine sur l'accès à la justice** (Access to Justice Week), organized by the **University of Ottawa’s Faculty of Law**.

On October 27 and 28, we also had a booth at the **Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario’s** Annual Conference in Richmond Hill. At the same event, the Interim Commissioner addressed delegates on October 27 about our latest work and best practices for the delivery of public services in French.



Helping seniors: Come see us at OSSCO's November events!

Come visit us at two upcoming Toronto events hosted by the Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations (OSSCO):

- **November 2:** "55+ Lifestyle and Learning Exhibition 2023," Timothy Eaton Memorial Church
- **November 16:** "Aging: The Future is Here" conference, Jamaican Canadian Association. [You can find full details.](#)

We'll share how we resolve issues with driver's licences, health cards, ServiceOntario, social services programs such as the Ontario Disability Support Program, and much more. See you there!

[How we helped: Case summaries](#)



[Every vote counts](#)

Shortly before the day of the October 2022 municipal election, several voters in one municipality complained to us that their mail-in ballots arrived too late. Municipal clerks are responsible for local elections, and in this municipality, the clerk confirmed that Canada Post had delivered some mail-in ballots too late for voters to return them by mail in time to be counted. To ensure they still had the opportunity to vote, the municipality allowed them to drop off these ballots at City Hall and a second location on election day. We shared this information with the complainants and explained that the municipality had addressed the delays by providing affected voters with an alternative way to use their mail-in ballots.

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



[Home security](#)

A 16-year-old complained that staff at his group home were unhelpful after his personal belongings, including a laptop, were stolen or damaged by other residents. When we contacted the agency responsible, they confirmed a resident exploited a security flaw in the key card system. Despite their usual policy of not compensating for damaged items, we asked for flexibility due to the lock's security issue. The agency agreed to replace the laptop and repair the home's locks.

[Click here to learn more about how we helped with issues or problems concerning children and youth](#)

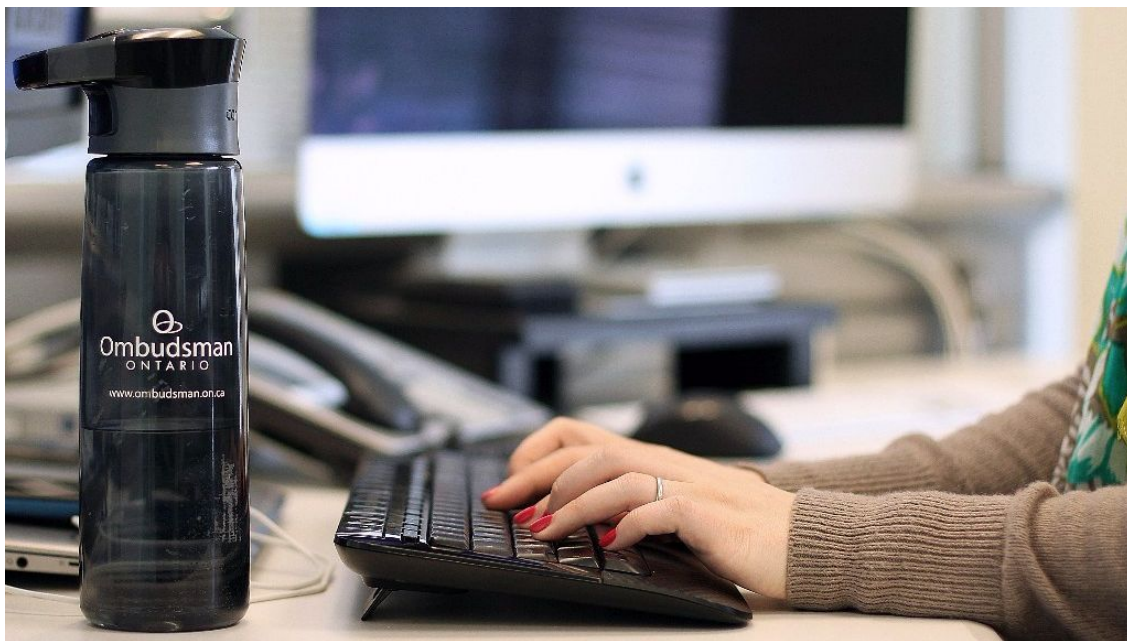


[Help is en Route](#)

A Francophone man who wanted some information about renewing his licence plate contacted our Office because he was unable to obtain service in French from a ServiceOntario office in a designated area. We raised the issue with the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery, which ensured that the ServiceOntario office hired additional bilingual staff. As a result of our intervention, the Ministry hired two bilingual employees at this location to provide services in French over the phone and in person at all times.

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

[Careers](#)



We continue to hire new staff – and currently have openings for [Early Resolution Officers in our General Unit](#) and a [Communications Officer \(bilingual\) in our Children & Youth Unit!](#)

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

APPLY NOW!

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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