

In our January newsletter: Ombudsman Ontario is hiring investigators, sharing our expertise in child-centered systemic investigations, and more

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ONTARIO OMBUDSMAN NEWSLETTER



Help improve fairness in Ontario: We're hiring Investigators!

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Help improve fairness in Ontario: We're hiring Investigators!



Are you interested in working to improve fairness and accountability in Ontario's public sector? Join us – we currently have open positions for Investigators!

We handle some 25,000 complaints every year about government organizations (like ServiceOntario, ODSP, OHIP, the Family Responsibility Office, and social services), tribunals (such as the Landlord and Tenant Board), municipalities, school boards, and universities, as well as child protection services and French language services. Although we resolve most complaints and inquiries without need for a formal investigation, some issues need to be escalated for a closer look – and that's where our Investigators shine.

What does an Investigator do? Read this interview with Richard, an Investigator in our Generalist Unit.

What do you do at the Ombudsman's Office?

Investigators review and investigate complaints from the public about unfairness in government administration. Our team handles complaints that are more complex, or that have systemic implications.

What do you like about working here?

I enjoy being challenged and I feel like I'm growing every day. I am constantly learning about new aspects of government operations, building expertise and gaining new skills, and assisting other teams on special projects. I appreciate having the opportunity to learn from and work with colleagues with a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences.

What does an average day look like for you?

There's no such thing as an average day for an Investigator. Similarly, there's no such thing as a standard investigation, since administrative investigations do not lend themselves to a linear approach. However, on any day, you can find me conducting intake calls with complainants to hear their concerns, planning or making inquiries with government officials to gather relevant facts and information, conducting legislative and policy research, analyzing and summarizing relevant evidence, and consulting with colleagues.

What is your educational background?

I'm a lawyer by profession. I hold both a bachelor's degree in public administration, which is a field that studies how the government works, and a law degree from the University of Ottawa. I also worked in the provincial legal aid system prior to joining the Ombudsman's Office.

What are skills you use daily?

I rely on both hard and soft skills. I use my research and analysis skills most often, including my ability to spot key issues and separate relevant and irrelevant information. I also rely on my communication skills, especially my ability to listen carefully, digest the information provided, ask relevant follow up questions, and work together with complainants and government officials.

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

The culture here is very collaborative and supportive. Guidance is always available and feedback is always constructive. Our Office places a high emphasis on the merits of each case we resolve and investigation that we conduct, which satisfies me that the hard work that I do is done in pursuit of the greater good of all Ontarians.

APPLY NOW

**[Sharing our expertise in child-centered
systemic investigations](#)**



On January 15 and 16, Ombudsman Paul Dubé and Children and Youth Unit Director Diana Cooke were invited by the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Tasmania to deliver training, on a cost-recovery basis, on child-centered investigations.

Staff from oversight agencies across Australia attended the course, including from the Australian Capital Territory Human Rights Commission, the Australian Capital Territory Public Advocate, the Guardian for Children and Young People, the Office of the Tasmanian National Preventive Mechanism, WorkSafe Tasmania, and the Queensland Family and Child Commission, among others. They discussed topics such as promoting and protecting the rights of vulnerable youth, trauma-informed approaches, cultural considerations, and inclusive report writing.

As Ombudsman Dubé noted on social media: “People who devote their professional lives to promoting and protecting the rights of vulnerable youth are special indeed, and it is a pleasure to collaborate and share best practices with our overseas colleagues who share that passion and commitment.”

Municipal matters: ROMA, new integrity commissioner guides, and more!



On January 21 and 22, our Office participated in the annual Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference in Toronto, which brought together more than 1,600 delegates from nearly 300 municipalities.

Our staff had the opportunity to connect with council members and municipal staff, answering delegates' questions and sharing information about how we handle complaints about municipalities, such as issues related to by-law enforcement, housing, infrastructure and closed meetings.

On January 24, Ombudsman staff spoke to the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. We explained our role in working with municipalities to ensure administrative fairness, and shared resources, including [our new best practice guidance about integrity commissioners](#). We also provided information about [our open meetings case digest](#), a helpful database of the Ombudsman's recent decisions on closed meeting investigations.

In the News:

- [Casselman council 'flagrantly violated' open meetings rules, Ontario ombudsman says](#) (Ottawa Citizen)
- [Ontario Ombudsman finds three councillors violated open meeting rules during visit to Unity Project](#) (CTV News London)

Here, there and everywhere

Connecting with the Francophone immigrant community in Kingston



On January 24, our staff gave a presentation to Kingston members of the Réseau de soutien à l'immigration francophone de l'Est de l'Ontario (Francophone Immigration Support Network). We explained our Office's work and how our French Language Services Unit can help newly arrived Francophones understand their linguistic rights and access provincial government services in French. We also shared our [poster](#), which encourages anyone who has an unsatisfactory experience with public services in French to contact us.

How we helped: Case summaries



[Alert unheard](#)

As he drove to Hamilton in a snowstorm, a driver noticed that the French version of the government's emergency weather alerts broadcast on the radio were garbled and unintelligible. The three alerts advised the public to shelter in place and warned that emergency personnel would be unable to help people trapped in their cars by the snowstorm. We brought this issue to the attention of Emergency Management Ontario (EMO). EMO stated that the operator had not properly changed the system language for the second alert, which was supposed to be in French. As a result, both the English and French versions of the message were read by the system in English, resulting in the French alert being unintelligible.

As a result of our intervention, EMO added another step to the daily alert system tests to ensure that the correct language is selected in the system prior to broadcasting. EMO also included a reminder in its operator training about how language selection works.

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



[On her own](#)

A 16-year-old in the care of a children's aid society felt her needs were being overlooked after a change in caseworkers. She reported to our Children and Youth Unit that she had to visit the hospital alone, despite previously informing her worker about her health issues.

Additionally, she indicated that her new caseworker had not initiated the process for a Voluntary Youth Services Agreement, which she needed to secure her own accommodation, winter clothing, and food. With her permission, we reached out to the

caseworker, who confirmed that they were actively seeking housing solutions for her. We subsequently followed up with the youth, who verified that she had since received the necessary funds for housing, clothing, and sustenance.

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



[Permanent solution](#)

A man was trying to renew a health card on behalf of his son, who has a disability and does not have a driver's licence. The only way his card could be renewed was to visit ServiceOntario in person, or have a family doctor fill out a form exempting him from the photo and signature requirement. He pointed out that even though this form specified that his son's disability was "permanent," he still had to redo the form each time his health card expired. We spoke with staff at the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery about this case and the issue in general. They confirmed that they would update the information in their system and the man would not have to fill out the form again.

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

[Careers](#)



We continue to hire new staff – and currently have openings for [Investigators](#), [Early Resolution Officers](#), [Legal Counsel](#) and a [Communications Officer](#)!

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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