

In our July newsletter: French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard released a report urging the Ontario government to make out-of-home advertising bilingual, and more

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# ONTARIO OMBUDSMAN NEWSLETTER



**French Language Services Commissioner urges Ontario to respect law; make all out-of-home advertising bilingual**

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**French Language Services Commissioner  
urges Ontario to respect law; make all  
out-of-home advertising bilingual**



On July 12, French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard released a report urging the Ontario government to make all of its out-of-home advertising bilingual, after his latest investigation found it systematically failed to meet its obligations under the *French Language Services Act (FLSA)* – even when communicating important public health information.

The investigation examined 17 advertising campaigns by or on behalf of the Ministry of Health between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2023. Only three included any out-of-home advertising in French. The result was that Francophones were left “without access to information critical to their health,” the Commissioner writes in the report, entitled *Missed Messages*.

Commissioner Bouchard makes seven recommendations in the report, including that the government use a bilingual format for all out-of-home advertising, to ensure messages are delivered across the province in English and French in an equivalent fashion and at the same time. Most were accepted, but the two key recommendations – to make all out-of-home government advertising bilingual and update the guidelines accordingly – are still “under review,” the Commissioner reported.

[Read the full report and the Commissioner's remarks](#)

#### In the news:

- [French language services commissioner calls on government to ensure ads in public spaces are bilingual](#) - The Trillium
- [Ontario government urged to make public health ads bilingual after investigation reveals shortfalls](#) - Law Times

- [LSF : des manquements systématiques de l'Ontario sur l'affichage extérieur en français](#) - ONFR (in French only)

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## Here, there and everywhere

### Promoting Pride – in June and beyond



June was Pride Month in Ontario! Ombudsman Ontario staff were honoured to celebrate Pride and demonstrate our support and allyship by participating in the Toronto Pride Parade and Streetfair, as well as at events focused on supporting queer youth in Durham and Toronto.

Our Office is committed to fighting for fairness and equality for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities year round.

### Engaging with Indigenous communities



On July 16 and 17, our Indigenous Circle team gave a presentation to the Grassy Narrows Child and Family Advocates team at Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek (Grassy Narrows First Nation). We spoke about Ombudsman Ontario's Children and Youth Unit's work and the other services we provide.

From July 19 to 20, Indigenous Circle team members attended a pow wow at Wauzhushk Onigum (Rat Portage) First Nation and distributed information about our work, including brochures in several Indigenous languages.

Watch for us at more gatherings this summer, including the Gathering of Our People (Moose Cree First Nation, July 30-August 2), and the Anishnawbe Keeshigun gathering and pow wow (Thunder Bay, August 17-18).



**Connecting with young people and service providers**

Over the past month, Children and Youth Unit staff spoke to a variety of service providers and students training to work in child welfare. When we speak to these groups, we explain the rights that young people have in care, and how young people and concerned adults can contact us.

On July 9, members of our 2SLGBTQIA+ outreach team visited YMCA Sprott House, which provides housing and shelter for at-risk youth between the ages of 16 to 24, to explain our mandate and work, and distribute brochures to youth and staff.

On July 18, we spoke to students in Trent University's "Youth Residential Services: Continuum of Care" class and explained how we can help ensure children in care are treated fairly.

On July 24, we spoke to staff at BridgeNorth, which offers programming for young people who are at risk of, or have experienced, human trafficking and exploitation. We focused on our investigation report, [\*Missing in Inaction: Misty's Story\*](#), which revealed how multiple child welfare organizations failed to ensure the safety of a vulnerable Indigenous girl in their care. All 58 of the Ombudsman's recommendations to the agencies involved in this case were accepted.

### **Principals and fairness**

On July 7, Senior Counsel Robin Bates gave a virtual presentation to future school principals and other administrative leaders in the Supervisory Officers' Qualification Program (SOQP), about how our Office works collaboratively with school boards to resolve complaints and improve governance.

[Click here for more on our Office's oversight of public education in Ontario.](#)

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## **[How we help: Case summaries](#)**



### [In the zone](#)

A homeowner reached out to us when the land around her home was rezoned from agricultural to industrial. She was concerned that her municipality hadn't engaged with residents before making the decision, and that proper environmental assessments were not done.

**RESULT:** We reached out to municipal officials, who agreed to speak to the resident to answer her questions. After speaking to our staff, the woman contacted the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to raise concerns about the environmental assessments. When we followed up with her, she told us the Ministry agreed with her concerns and had broached them directly with the municipality.

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



### Telephone tag

A Francophone in Eastern Ontario reached out to tell us about her experience as a witness to a situation while camping. She had wanted the police to intervene because it appeared as if a few individuals were harassing some senior citizens, so she contacted the local OPP detachment and 911. She told us that she was put on hold after requesting police services in French. The 911 operator transferred her call to a local OPP detachment, which put her on hold and then transferred her call to an answering machine. She was unable to speak with a live officer. We brought these two issues to the OPP and the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

**RESULT:** In light of our intervention, the OPP created a separate platform dedicated to French 911 calls. The OPP also reviewed its process and made changes to the French version of the automated call waiting message for 911 calls and for the local detachment's phone line. The woman thanked us for our work.

**Learn more about our French Language Services Unit, which answers questions and takes complaints about services in French**



### [Ready, set - redo](#)

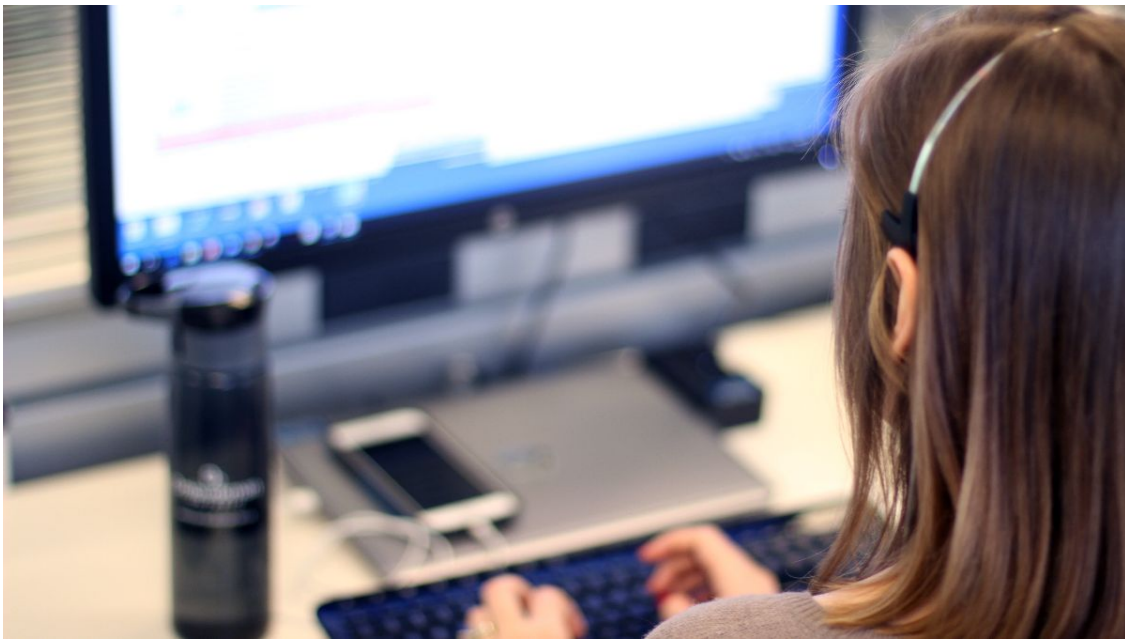
Three months after he turned 18, a young man told us he had been forced to rely on social assistance because he had never been registered for “Ready, Set, Go” funding, which supports young people transitioning out of care. He said he had signed a Voluntary Youth Services Agreement (VYSA) through his children’s aid society (CAS), which he was told would also provide him with funding, but he was now being told it was never approved.

**RESULT:** We reached out to senior officials at the CAS, who reviewed the teen’s file. They confirmed that he was indeed entitled to VYSA funds, and they issued him a cheque immediately. They also ensured he was enrolled in a continuous support program that would extend until he turned 26.

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

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## [Careers](#)



We continue to hire new staff – and currently have openings for an [Information Technology Manager](#) and a [People and Culture Specialist](#)!

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

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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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