

In our September newsletter: Ombudsman launches new investigation into child welfare practice of placing children and youth in hotels, offices and trailers

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ONTARIO OMBUDSMAN NEWSLETTER



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NEW INVESTIGATION

On September 5, Ombudsman Paul Dubé [launched an investigation](#) into the practice of children's aid societies placing children and teens in hotels, motels, offices, and trailers.

"We are aware of numerous incidents across the province of children being placed in these unlicensed settings, many of which have raised some serious concerns about their safety, privacy and comfort," the Ombudsman said.

Some children's aid societies have indicated that they place children in these types of unlicensed settings – including spaces in their own offices – as a last resort, due to a lack of appropriate housing options, particularly for young people with special needs and/or challenging behaviours.

In addition to the use of this practice by children's aid societies, the investigation will look at how the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services has responded to the practice.

[Read the full press release](#)

In the news:

- [Ontario ombudsman investigating child welfare placements in motels](#) (Canadian Press via Toronto Star)
 - [Inappropriate child welfare housing under investigation in Ontario](#) (CBC)
 - [Ontario child-welfare groups housing kids in offices, trailers under probe](#) (Global News)
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French Language Services Commissioner celebrates Franco-Ontarian Day in the North





The Franco-Ontarian flag is raised every September 25, on Franco-Ontarian Day, to recognize and celebrate Francophones all over the province. In that spirit, French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard was honoured to mark the occasion this year by visiting several communities in the northeast from September 23-26.

His tour started in Hearst with a visit to Université de Hearst and to Hôpital Notre-Dame, a local hospital designated under the *French Language Services Act*, where he met with the hospital's Chief Nursing Officer and chatted with healthcare workers.

On September 25, Franco-Ontarian Day, he attended a flag-raising ceremony on the Hearst University campus and met with faculty members and students. He then travelled to Moonbeam to speak to over 500 students from the region in grades 3 to 8 – and later to Kapuskasing where he met with leaders in the health and immigration sectors. The day ended in Timmins where he spoke at the official opening of Le Centre culturel La Ronde, a cultural hub for Francophones in the city.

The Commissioner's goal with this tour, as with his previous tours of Sudbury, Ottawa and Southwestern Ontario, is to meet Francophones where they are, speak to them about their rights, and explain how our Office can help them obtain services in French from the government of Ontario.

Have you had difficulty accessing public services in French? [Contact us today.](#)

[Honouring the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#)

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation



Monday, September 30, is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Created as a response to Call to Action #80 from the [Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#), this day marks a time to honour survivors, their families and communities and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

September 30 is also known as “Orange Shirt Day”, a day to publicly recognize and to honour the children who never returned home, the survivors, and their communities. The day originated with the story of one former student, Phyllis (Jack) Webstad, who had her new orange shirt taken away from on her first day at the St. Joseph Mission Residential School in British Columbia when she was just six years old.

Ombudsman Ontario is committed to reconciliation and continues to work towards establishing mutually respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples across the province. We are providing educational opportunities to help our staff learn more about our shared history and the harms that have been inflicted on Indigenous peoples. We continue to incorporate recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls into our work.

[Find the Ombudsman’s full statement on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on our website.](#)

[Read about the symbolism in the above image, shared by the Government of Canada.](#)

Please note that our Office will be closed September 30.

[Here, there and everywhere](#)

Sending off summer at a sixth pow wow



Members of the Children and Youth Unit and Indigenous Circle attended a pow wow at Curve Lake First Nation from September 21-22, 2024. We were honoured to participate in six pow wows across the province this summer, engaging with members of Indigenous communities to learn more about their concerns with public services, and better understand how our Office can help them.

Raising the Franco-Ontarian flag



Ombudsman Paul Dubé and our French Language Services Unit staff participated in Franco-Ontarian Day events at Queen's Park and Toronto City Hall on September 25. The Ombudsman also attended a post flag-raising event hosted by Lieutenant Governor Edith Dumont.

Connecting with Black queer youth

Ruth Hislop and Kevin Panton from the Children and Youth Unit's 2SLGBTQIA+ Outreach Team and Black Children, Youth and Families Table met with the Black Queer Youth group

at Sherbourne Health in Toronto on September 18, to discuss how our Office could assist in addressing their concerns about public services.

Sharing expertise with ombuds-in-training

Ombudsman Paul Dubé and colleagues shared their expertise at several sessions of the Essentials for Ombuds training co-hosted by Osgoode Hall Law School and the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman, held in downtown Toronto from September 23-27.

The Ombudsman provided insight into relationship building for those who work in oversight roles. He highlighted the benefits of ombudsman offices and the opportunities to effect positive change by building trust and credibility with stakeholders.

Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay discussed how to plan and execute individual and systemic investigations, while General Counsel Laura Pettigrew and Senior Counsel Joanna Bull spoke about best practices for writing investigation reports and recommendations that have an impact.

[Click here to find all of our systemic investigation reports.](#)

How we help: Case summaries



Fair trade

A student sought our help after his college told him he would have to retake a trade course he had already effectively completed, which would delay his graduation and the full-time

employment he had arranged. His college had given him under 48 hours to accept an opportunity to complete additional coursework – but when he wrote back, he did not receive a response, and encountered issues with getting information in the ensuing months.

RESULT: After we raised the case with college officials, they offered the student a new solution – a chance to complete a practical assessment, which would satisfy his graduation requirements.

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



[Uninterrupted visits](#)

A 13-year-old in the care of a children's aid society (CAS) contacted us because he hadn't heard back from his CAS about making arrangements to see his mother. The youth had regular weekly visits scheduled with his mother at his grandmother's house, but with his grandmother going away for three weeks, he wanted to know how his visits would be managed.

RESULT: We reached out to a supervisor at the CAS, who confirmed they had made new plans for the youth to visit his mother. We stayed involved until the CAS connected with the youth, who was satisfied with the temporary arrangement.

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



[The portal is open](#)

The doctor of a Francophone woman who needed surgery was of the opinion that it would be too risky for her to drive. He sent her file to the Ministry of Transportation's Driver Medical Review Office to ask them to suspend her driver's licence. The woman got a letter with a personal identification number (PIN) to create an account on the Ministry's portal so she could track any changes in her file. The letter was in English, with a paragraph in French outlining the process for submitting a request to receive a French copy. The woman thought that this process was too complicated for people who didn't understand English, and our Office raised the issue with the Ministry.

RESULT: As a result of our intervention, the Ministry made the letter bilingual and now sends it to drivers at the beginning of the process. That way, when someone first accesses the portal, they can choose their preferred language, which will be linked to their account for the duration of the process. The woman said she was very happy with the response.

Learn more about our 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 an [Indigenous Liaison Advisor](#) and a [Bilingual Administrative Assistant](#)!

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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