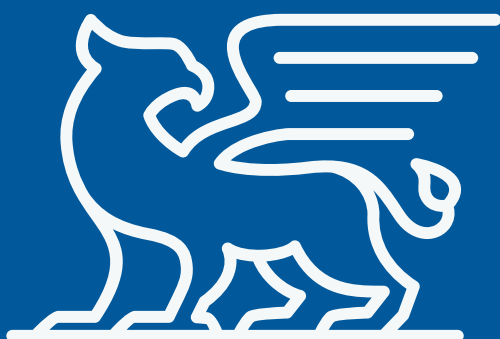


1975 - 2025

50
YEARS | ANS

Ombudsman
ONTARIO



ANNUAL REPORT

2024 ► 2025



Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario

We are dedicated to being an effective agent of positive change for the people of Ontario and ensuring that their rights are respected and that public services are delivered with professionalism and fairness.

Acknowledgement of Territory

The Ombudsman of Ontario acknowledges that the province of Ontario is situated on the lands and territory of more than 130 unique First Nations, each with its own distinct cultures, languages, and histories that predate the existence and boundaries of the province.

We acknowledge the existence of political confederacies on these lands that predate both Canada and Ontario, such as the Three Fires Confederacy and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, who among themselves have treaties and relationships that make up the dynamic landscape of this province.

We humbly recognize that we have collective responsibilities and obligations within the more than 40 treaties in Ontario, such as Treaty 3, Treaty 9, the Robinson Superior and Huron Treaties and the Williams Treaties.

We recognize that Indigenous peoples who have cared for these lands for millennia have been dispossessed by colonization, and we seek to find ways to remedy both historic and ongoing wrongs.

We are grateful to have travelled and worked in First Nation territories and with Métis and Inuit peoples in Ontario since the inception of the Ombudsman 50 years ago.

Ombudsman Ontario is committed to building respectful relationships with First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people and communities in Ontario through trust and transparency in order to be able to provide more services for a shared better future.

Aussi disponible en français.



June 2025

Hon. Donna Skelly, Speaker
Legislative Assembly
Province of Ontario
Queen's Park

Dear Madam Speaker,

I am pleased to submit my Annual Report for the period of April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025, pursuant to section 11 of the *Ombudsman Act*, so that you may table it before the Legislative Assembly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Dubé'.

Paul Dubé
Ombudsman

Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario

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10th Floor, South Tower
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2C9

Telephone: 416-586-3300

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50
YEARS | ANS

“The Ombudsman as an institution to further protect the rights of [Ontarians] is an idea whose time has come... There is no doubt in my mind that the Office of the Ombudsman will continue to serve an essential role in Ontario.”

– Arthur Maloney, first Ombudsman of Ontario,
1975-1976 Annual Report

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OMBUDSMAN'S MESSAGE

A strong voice for fairness – now more than ever

It is my great pleasure to present my 10th Annual Report as we mark Ombudsman Ontario's 50th anniversary. It has been an historic year in many respects.

As we mark a half-century of protecting Ontarians' rights and promoting fair, accountable public services, our role as an independent oversight body has never been more crucial.

Ontarians are turning to us in record numbers and benefiting from our unique ability to navigate bureaucracy, resolve problems in accessing public services, protect their fundamental rights, recommend systemic reforms and drive improvements in public administration.

In fiscal 2024-2025, we received **30,675** complaints and inquiries from people seeking our assistance. This represents a 30-year high, based on statistics we have reported every year since 1975-1976. Over that time, our intake processes evolved, our use of technology improved, and our jurisdiction expanded significantly. Given all of that, I can confidently report that in this milestone year, we have helped more Ontarians with more issues than at any other time in our history.

Correctional services – the urgent need for reform

The complaints brought to our Office often reflect deep public frustration with delays and failures in government



June 26, 2024: Ombudsman Paul Dubé releases his 2023-2024 Annual Report at a press conference at Queen's Park, Toronto.

services – even in cases where responsibilities and timelines are clearly defined. Our role is to ensure that public administration remains responsive, fair and accountable – principles we uphold across all areas of our mandate.

But many of the issues we confront go far deeper than poor service. They raise serious questions about basic human rights. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Ontario's correctional system, which is, frankly, in growing crisis. We received **6,870** cases about correctional facilities this past year – a staggering 55% increase over 2023-2024. While this sector has long been our top source of complaints, the nature and severity of what we are hearing – and witnessing firsthand during our visits – demand urgent attention.



March 27, 2025: Ombudsman Paul Dubé, centre, with members of our Investigations team, Maplehurst Correctional Complex, Milton.

Most people held in Ontario's jails are not serving sentences; they are awaiting trial, legally presumed innocent. Many institutions are dangerously overcrowded – some operating at over 150% of their intended capacity – and/or facing chronic staff shortages. The result is a deteriorating environment marked by escalating tensions and compromised safety for inmates and staff alike.

Respecting the rights of individuals in custody is a legal and moral imperative, and my team and I are intensifying our efforts to this end. Correctional institutions reflect the values of the society that maintains them. When we fail to uphold the basic dignity of people in custody, we do more than inflict harm – we erode public trust, degrade working

conditions for staff, and weaken the very foundations of our justice system.

That is why we recently launched an investigation into the province's response to the two-day incident at Maplehurst Correctional Complex in which inmates were forced to strip to their underwear and sit facing a wall with their wrists zip-tied. When an incident occurs in an Ontario correctional facility that impacts the administration of justice and the rights of inmates, it is imperative that we understand why it happened and what measures are being taken to ensure it does not happen again.

Recent media coverage has exposed just how far-reaching these failures can be. Violations of inmate rights' are not just internal matters – they are undermining the administration of justice itself. Courts have reduced sentences and granted early parole due to unlawful treatment behind bars. Some inmates have applied to have their charges – even murder charges – stayed.

This is not just a legal and policy failure, it is a moral one. If left unaddressed, the consequences will continue to reverberate through our courts, our communities and our collective conscience.

Ontario's correctional system is in urgent need of meaningful, systemic reform – not only to relieve pressure on overcrowded facilities and burned-out staff, but to realign the system with its rehabilitative purpose. This is a matter of public safety, human rights, and basic decency. We cannot afford to ignore it any longer.

Promoting good governance

Governments everywhere are grappling with financial pressures as they serve growing and diverse populations. Ontario is no exception. Ombudsman Ontario plays a key role in guiding public institutions toward solutions that are efficient, fair, and grounded in a respect for rights.



August 18, 2024: Ombudsman Paul Dubé, left, and Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay, at the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference, Ottawa.



June 3, 2025: OPP Commissioner Thomas Carrique, left, accepts the Ombudsman's Award for Good Governance from Ombudsman Paul Dubé. Both were attending the Canadian Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement's annual conference, Fredericton.



November 8, 2024: Ombudsman Paul Dubé, right, with Kimberly Murray, the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burials Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools, after Ms. Murray spoke to Ombudsman staff about her report, Toronto.

At its core, good governance is about giving people a voice and respecting their rights. Individuals must be able to access public services without unnecessary barriers, and their concerns should be heard and addressed meaningfully. We work continuously with public officials to reinforce the link between sound administration, democratic values, and the protection of rights.

Fortunately, Ontario benefits from thousands of dedicated public servants – across the provincial government, within its 444 municipalities, and throughout the many agencies in the broader public sector – who understand and value the importance of independent oversight.

In recognition of this, and building on principles established by this Office from the outset, I launched the

Ombudsman's Award for Good Governance this year, to reflect tangible actions by public sector bodies that have resulted in exemplary administration. I was pleased to present the first Good Governance Award to the Ontario Provincial Police for its efforts to enhance its provision of French language services. We plan to honour other bodies in the provincial government and municipal sector in the coming months.

Building together for the future

This year also marks the first milestone in the three-year **Strategic Plan** we unveiled last year. I am proud to report significant progress on our key objectives, including a major website redesign, enhanced outreach efforts and increased collaboration across our team (see more on page 11).

In particular, I am proud to highlight the co-development of our first **Indigenous Services Plan**, which reflects our dedication to meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples and communities, and to listening, learning, and acting in the spirit of reconciliation. The plan (detailed further in the next section of this report) will be developed collaboratively with Indigenous partners and will be a foundational step in ensuring that our services are more culturally responsive, respectful, and accessible. It marks not just a policy achievement, but a long-term commitment to building trust and advancing reconciliation through our daily work.

In times of economic and social strain, the need for reliable and transparent public services becomes even more critical. This was undeniably evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, as Ontario faces economic uncertainty due to newly imposed tariffs by the United States, it is more vital than ever that government actions designed to protect people, industries and jobs are executed with fairness,

transparency and unwavering respect for individual rights.

When the Ombudsman's Office was first proposed in 1975, Ontario's government pledged it would "ensure the protection of our citizens against arbitrary judgment or practices." Over the past five decades, we have remained a steadfast advocate for transparency, fairness, and accountability, working alongside democratic institutions across Canada and around the globe. Our mission aligns with the United Nations' 2024 Resolution recognizing the vital role that ombudsman institutions play in promoting and protecting human rights, good governance, and the rule of law.

We are stronger when we stand united, ensuring that fairness, accountability, and the protection of rights continue to be the cornerstones of our public institutions.

As your Ombudsman, I want every Ontarian to know that we are here for you, as we have been for 50 years. We are here to listen, to provide oversight, and promote good governance that upholds the values of justice and fairness that define us all.



December 3, 2024: Ombudsman Paul Dubé, left, signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Hong Kong Ombudsman Jick-Chi Jack Chan, Hong Kong (see more on p. 17).

INDIGENOUS SERVICES PLAN

Our commitment to reconciliation

Ombudsman Ontario is creating an Indigenous Services Plan that will guide our service delivery, collaboration, and engagement with Indigenous peoples, communities, and organizations.

Over the coming year, we will engage with Indigenous communities and service providers to co-develop this plan. Through this process, we aim to define key guiding principles, identify shared priorities, strengthen relationships, and improve how we serve Indigenous peoples.

This plan signals our commitment to reconciliation and building respectful relationships with First Nation, Inuit and Métis people in Ontario through trust and transparency, in order to provide services for a better shared future.

We are not just inviting participation – we are building partnership.

We have set out to **co-develop** a meaningful, culturally grounded strategy for engagement with Indigenous communities – one that informs both our outreach and our transformation as an organization. This approach aims to build relationships and identify opportunities for the Ombudsman to contribute to reconciliation by identifying issues and building the capacity necessary to address them effectively.

Ontario is home to the largest Indigenous population in Canada, and that population is growing at a rate faster than the non-Indigenous population. We are committed to creating meaningful and respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples and ensuring their access to the services we offer in all areas within our jurisdiction – from education and corrections to health care, child welfare, housing, natural resources and more.

Our commitment to respectful relationships

Through the resolution of complaints and investigation of systemic issues, Ombudsman Ontario plays a unique role in promoting fairness and a respect for rights. We can identify emerging challenges, propose improvements to public services, and serve as a bridge between people and the provincial institutions in Ontario that serve them.

Our mission is to acknowledge, respect, and affirm the cultures, traditions, and histories of Indigenous peoples – not only in individual cases but in the broader systemic change we seek to influence.

We also recognize the special constitutional relationship that Indigenous peoples hold with the Crown. Our work aims to support this relationship, inform constructive government-to-government dialogue, and contribute meaningfully to Ontario's reconciliation journey.

Opportunities in dialogue

For Indigenous peoples and communities:

- A stronger voice in identifying issues and shaping outcomes
- Recommendations that promote fairness, the protection of rights, and culturally responsive services
- A trusted, long-term partnership with an oversight body that is independent of government

For the people and institutions of Ontario:

- A deeper understanding of Indigenous perspectives and priorities
- More informed and inclusive policy decisions
- Guidance that supports meaningful reconciliation efforts

For the Ontario Ombudsman's office:

- A transformative opportunity to increase cultural humility, competence and responsiveness
- A foundation to serve all Ontarians with greater equity and awareness
- A leadership role in promoting good governance and learning through an Indigenous lens

This is more than access to services – it's about reconciliation in action.

- Staff training over the past four years through the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation
- Mandatory cultural safety training for all staff
- Establishment of a smudging room and Indigenous Circle within our office
- Participation in Orange Shirt Day and other commemorative events
- Adoption of trauma-informed practices

Education is the foundation of cultural safety and trust.

Outreach and relationship building

We have engaged directly with Indigenous leadership and organizations, and participated in community and cultural events:

- Meetings with First Nations Chiefs, Friendship Centres, and Indigenous women's organizations like the Ontario Native Women's Association
- Participation in conferences, community powwows, and a three-day visit to Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek (Grassy Narrows First Nation)
- One-on-one engagement with Chiefs
- Outreach to Indigenous organizations and political representatives

Transparency, listening, and cultural understanding are key to fostering trust and building respectful relationships.

Culturally responsive services

We are working to improve accessibility and service delivery by:

- Translating outreach materials into Ojibwe (Anishinaabemowin), Moose Cree (Ililimowin), Oji-Cree (Anishiniimowin), and Mohawk (Kanien'kéha)

Our first steps

Education and capacity building

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 57, we have begun by educating ourselves – acknowledging that internal change is a prerequisite for meaningful engagement. We have undertaken:

- Enhancing visibility of Indigenous services on our website
- Adapting complaint processes to reflect Indigenous cultural and contextual realities

Milestones to date

Our culturally responsive and proactive approach has already led to tangible improvements in cases involving Indigenous individuals and communities, including:

- Investigations and recommendations to improve child and family services
- Promoting access to spiritual and cultural programming in correctional institutions
- Supporting families of children with complex special needs in accessing services
- Resolving matters involving natural resource permits and land use

Supporting long-term transformation

To sustain and deepen this work, we are creating two dedicated positions:

1. **Indigenous Liaison Advisor (now operational):**
An Indigenous advisor working directly with the Ombudsman to build respectful, strategic partnerships with Indigenous Nations and organizations.
2. **Indigenous Services Coordinator (in progress):**
A leader within Ombudsman Ontario who will help ensure that all services and investigations are conducted with cultural awareness and sensitivity.

The individuals in these roles will be part of our collective effort to facilitate engagement and building relationships with Indigenous peoples, nations and communities,

and our commitment to embed principles of Truth and Reconciliation across our operations.

Looking forward

Our next phase of work includes:

- Expanding services to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples across Ontario
- Continuing staff training on the history and impacts of colonialism
- Strengthening government-to-government and nation-to-nation relationships
- Integrating calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and calls for justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls into our work

Measures of success

1. Accessibility and awareness
 - Co-development of an impactful Indigenous Services Plan
 - Indigenous-specific communications and outreach
 - Staff with enhanced cultural competence
 - Complaint resolution that reflects Indigenous experiences
2. Engagement and knowledge sharing
 - Ongoing relationships with Indigenous leaders and organizations
3. Systemic change and influence
 - Identification and resolution of systemic issues
 - Implementation of culturally grounded recommendations
 - Promotion of best practices in public sector equity and accountability

“This is not a checklist. It’s a long-term, living commitment to reconciliation and is rooted in truth, respect, and positive action.”

— Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

2024-2025



Our strategic plan, created a year ago and available on our website, sets our strategic priorities to support our vision and mission through fiscal 2026-2027. Here is a summary of the progress we have achieved in our first year.

PILLAR 1

PRIORITIZE SERVICE EXCELLENCE AND VALUE FOR ALL ONTARIANS

Prioritize innovative solutions and commitment to meeting the diverse needs of Ontarians.

PROGRESS

- Increased public outreach activities and measured reach to thousands of people across Ontario, including Indigenous and Francophone communities.
- Launched 50th anniversary engagement campaign.
- Recorded 15% increase in complaints and inquiries from public.
- Launched redesigned website with improved accessibility and interactivity.
- Upgraded tech devices and strengthened cybersecurity.
- Progressed the co-development of Indigenous Services Plan (see page 8).

PILLAR 2

STRENGTHEN AND IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES THROUGH EXEMPLARY OMBUDSMANSHIP

Promote accountability, transparency, fairness and a respect for rights.

PROGRESS

- Launched Ombudsman's Good Governance Awards.
- Shared best practices with more organizations across mandate.
- Conducted visits to correctional facilities, youth justice centres, provincial schools, group homes.
- Created new resources for local integrity commissioners and local services boards.
- Engaged with municipalities and a wide range of other bodies at conferences.
- Shared expertise with peers in national and international ombudsman and oversight bodies.

PILLAR 3

FOSTER A WORKPLACE THAT EMPOWERS AND UNIFIES OUR TEAM

Foster an environment where our valued, empowered team has a shared sense of purpose.

PROGRESS

- Recruitment efforts resulted in 92% of staff complement filled.
- Engaged all units in Operational Plan projects.
- Conducted cross-team training in investigation skills, unconscious bias and trauma-informed interactions.
- Set framework for Employee Resource Groups.
- Advanced new performance optimization program.
- Launched organization-wide management training program.

OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

50 years of protecting your rights

On March 11, 1975, Ontario became the seventh province in Canada to propose an independent parliamentary Ombudsman. Reading the Speech from the Throne that day, Lieutenant Governor Pauline McGibbon said the Ombudsman would help the people by serving as “a safeguard against the growing complexity of government.”

Two months later, the government introduced the *Ombudsman Act*, and Premier Bill Davis nominated well-known criminal lawyer Arthur Maloney as the first Ombudsman. This announcement touched off what Mr. Maloney later called “an avalanche of written and verbal requests for the Ombudsman’s help,” even before the legislation was passed.

“The office of Ombudsman will be a necessary additional tool to the already extensive program for the protection of civil rights which exists under the law of this province.”

— Premier Bill Davis, after nominating the first Ombudsman, May 1975

Ombudsman Maloney was officially sworn in by Lieutenant Governor McGibbon on October 30, 1975 – by which time he had already received more than 1,000 complaints. A great deal of these were about provincial bodies like correctional facilities – where the Ombudsman flagged serious concerns about overcrowding. He also addressed issues with social benefits, health agencies and youth justice in his first year.



October 30, 1975: Arthur Maloney is sworn in as Ontario's first Ombudsman by Lieutenant Governor Pauline McGibbon, right, at Queen's Park, Toronto.

As the office's symbol, Mr. Maloney chose a gryphon – a mythical half-eagle, half-lion that protects human rights. The original Ombudsman logo showed the gryphon seated amongst four trilliums (the province's floral emblem), representing the Indigenous peoples, Francophones, Anglophones, and all other diverse populations that make up the province.



The Ombudsman's original gryphon symbol from 1975, left, is reimagined in our 50th anniversary logo. The gryphon represents the Ombudsman's role as a protector of rights.

“And thus, the Ombudsman represents protection for the social rights and cultural integrity of all.”

— Arthur Maloney, first Ombudsman of Ontario, 1975-1976 Annual Report

He promised that everyone who contacted the Ombudsman would receive help, particularly vulnerable people. However, many of the problems people brought to him fell outside of his powers under the *Ombudsman Act*.

After three years, he published a 598-page report called *Blueprint for the Office of the Ombudsman*, in which he argued that the Ombudsman should be able to help people with more than just provincial government agencies. He pointed out that thousands of complaints had to be turned away about municipalities, school boards and other organizations, such as children's aid societies.

Today, thanks to legislative changes in 2015 and 2019, the Ombudsman's jurisdiction includes more than 1,000 public bodies – most of those mentioned in the

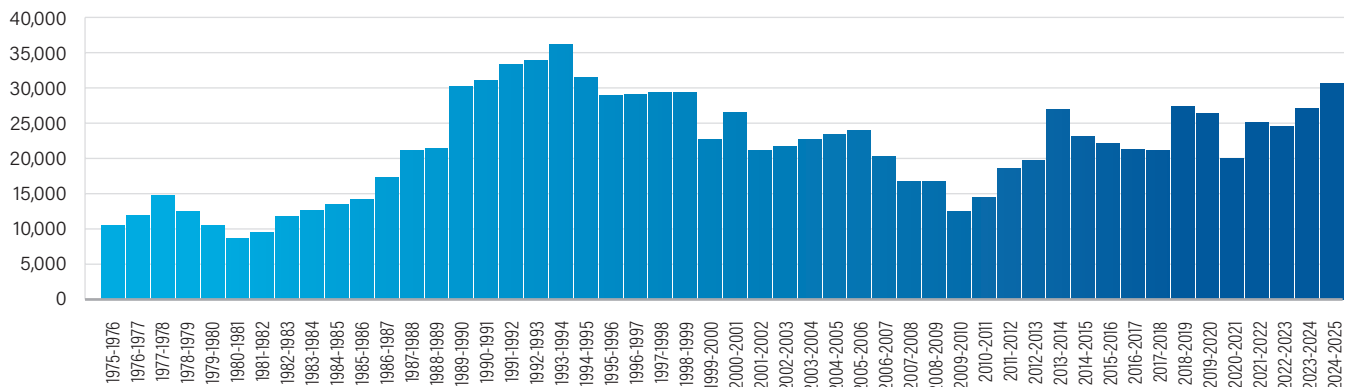


April 29, 2025: Ombudsman Paul Dubé with our public display case at Queen's Park, which details our role and impact as a democratic institution since 1975, Toronto.

Blueprint, and more. In addition to provincial government services, anyone can complain to us about municipalities, universities and school boards, child protection services and French language services.

In 50 years, we have handled more than **1 million** cases and conducted hundreds of investigations, resulting in more than **1,300** recommendations. The vast majority of Ombudsman recommendations to improve public services have been implemented, benefiting millions of Ontarians. These include: Expanded life-saving screening of newborn babies for metabolic diseases, a more fair and secure lottery system, protections for the rights of inmates in segregation, better pandemic preparedness in long-term care homes, enhanced de-escalation training for police, more supports and services for adults with developmental disabilities, improved provision of services in French, and improved recognition of the rights of children and youth.

CASES RECEIVED 1975-2025 ▶ TOTAL: 1,080,824



2024-2025 AT A GLANCE



1. August 17, 2024: Ombudsman staff at our booth at the Anishinaabe Keeshigun gathering and pow-wow, Thunder Bay. **2. May 11, 2024:** Ombudsman Paul Dubé, centre, speaks on a panel at the 13th World Conference of the International Ombudsman Institute, The Hague. **3. June 11, 2024:** Ombudsman staff at our booth at the Chiefs of Ontario Annual Chiefs Assembly, Ohsweken. **4. October 17, 2024:** French Language Services Unit Manager Jean-François L'Heureux gives a presentation at the annual conference for the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, Ottawa. **5. November 8, 2024:** Ombudsman Paul Dubé and French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard, centre, with Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay, right, greet interns from the Ontario Legislature Internship Programme, Toronto. **6. June 25, 2024:** Members of our Children and Youth Unit at the Wonderland Pride Prom, Toronto. **7. May 23, 2024:** Ombudsman staff at our booth at Toronto Newcomer Day, Toronto. **8. March 25, 2025:** Our staff at the East York Seniors Active Living Health and Wellness Fair, Toronto.



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9. August 18, 2024: Ombudsman staff speak to a delegate at the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference, Ottawa. **10. June 28, 2024:** Our Office's presence in the Toronto Pride Parade, Toronto. **11. February 28, 2025:** French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard, centre, and staff at our booth at the Centre francophone du Grand Toronto's Black History Month Gala, Toronto. **12. May 2, 2025:** Ombudsman staff and a sign language interpreter greet attendees at our booth at the Ontario Association of the Deaf's annual Mayfest event, Toronto. **13. November 14, 2024:** Ombudsman staff at the Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations' annual fair, Toronto. **14. March 10, 2025:** Ombudsman Paul Dubé, centre, with staff at our booth at the Little Native Hockey League Tournament, Markham. **15. August 2, 2024:** A member of the Children and Youth Unit's Indigenous Circle team greets attendees at our booth at the Gathering of Our People, Moose Cree First Nation.

ABOUT OUR OFFICE



Who we are

The Ombudsman is an independent, non-partisan Officer of the Ontario Legislature, appointed by all parties. Our role is to ensure that the provincial government and public sector serve people in a way that is fair, accountable, transparent and respectful of their rights.

The Ombudsman is a democratic institution, not a government department.

What we do

We receive complaints and inquiries from the public about the administrative decisions and actions of more than 1,000 public sector and government bodies in Ontario, as well as French language services and services provided in the child protection sector.

We intervene to resolve or investigate issues involving government and public sector administration and make evidence-based recommendations for corrective action when necessary.

We provide free assistance to people who need help accessing public services or having their rights respected.

What we don't do

There are some things we can't do. For example, we cannot take complaints about private businesses, federal government bodies, decisions of judges, the conduct of elected officials, or hospitals and long-term care homes. But if we can't help, we'll let you know who can.



Our vision

A public sector that serves Ontarians in a way that is fair, accountable, transparent and respectful of their rights.



Our mission

To be an effective agent of positive change for the people of Ontario by enhancing government and public sector fairness, accountability and transparency, as well as promoting a respect for rights.



Our principles

Impartiality
Independence
Confidentiality
Fairness



Our values

Trust
Respect
Accessibility
Excellence



May 12, 2025: (L-R) Ombudsman Paul Dubé signs Memoranda of Understanding with Netherlands Ombudsman Reinier van Zutphen, Curaçao Ombudsman Keursly Concincion, and Chief Ombudsman of Thailand, Somsak Suwansujarit, at the IOI General Assembly, Rabat.

Our affiliations

Our Office works collaboratively and shares insights, strategies and best practices with many other oversight bodies. Participation in organizations related to our oversight responsibilities provides valuable learning opportunities, optimizes our knowledge and skills, and enables us to better serve Ontarians. They include:

Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman

- Represents provincial and territorial parliamentary ombudsman offices across Canada.

International Ombudsman Institute (IOI)

- Represents 205 independent ombudsman institutions from more than 100 countries
- Ombudsman Paul Dubé has been President of the IOI's North American Region since 2016

L'Association des Ombudsmans et des Médiateurs de la Francophonie

- Represents independent ombudsman and human rights institutions throughout the French-speaking world

Plus:

Forum of Canadian Ombudsman

International Association of Language Commissioners

Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates

United States Ombudsman Association

Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement

National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement

International Corrections and Prisons Association

Stronger together: International collaboration

Ombudsman Paul Dubé participated in a number of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with his international peers this past year, to foster the exchange of professional knowledge and collaboration. In December 2024, he signed an MOU with the Hong Kong Ombudsman during an international summit financed by that office to mark its 35th anniversary (see photo, page 7).

In May 2025, in honour of Ombudsman Ontario's 50 years of commitment to promoting fairness, accountability and transparency, he signed MOUs with the Netherlands Ombudsman, the Ombudsman of Curaçao, and the Chief Ombudsman of Thailand during the Annual General Assembly of the International Ombudsman Institute in Morocco.

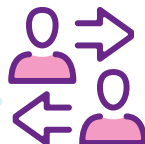
HOW WE WORK



COMPLAINT INTAKE

We take complaints via the complaint forms on our website, by email, phone or letter, or in person by appointment. Our staff will contact you for more details to review your complaint. We will not divulge your name or information to anyone without your consent, and there is no charge for our services.

Not a complaint? No problem – we also handle inquiries. Our staff can answer general questions or point you in the right direction.



REFERRALS

If your complaint is not within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, we will refer you accordingly. If you haven't tried existing complaint mechanisms, we'll suggest you do that first – and return to us if the issue isn't resolved.



REVIEW AND RESOLUTION

We always seek to resolve complaints at the lowest level possible. To do so, we often make inquiries and requests for information with the relevant bodies. Our review might determine the organization acted fairly. If we find problems, we might also share best practice suggestions to improve services to the public.



INVESTIGATION

If we are unable to resolve the matter, the Ombudsman may decide to conduct an investigation. Some investigations involve multiple interviews and extensive evidence gathering. The Ombudsman may also launch a systemic investigation if there is a potential systemic issue of significant public interest underlying a complaint or group of complaints.



FINDINGS AND REPORTS

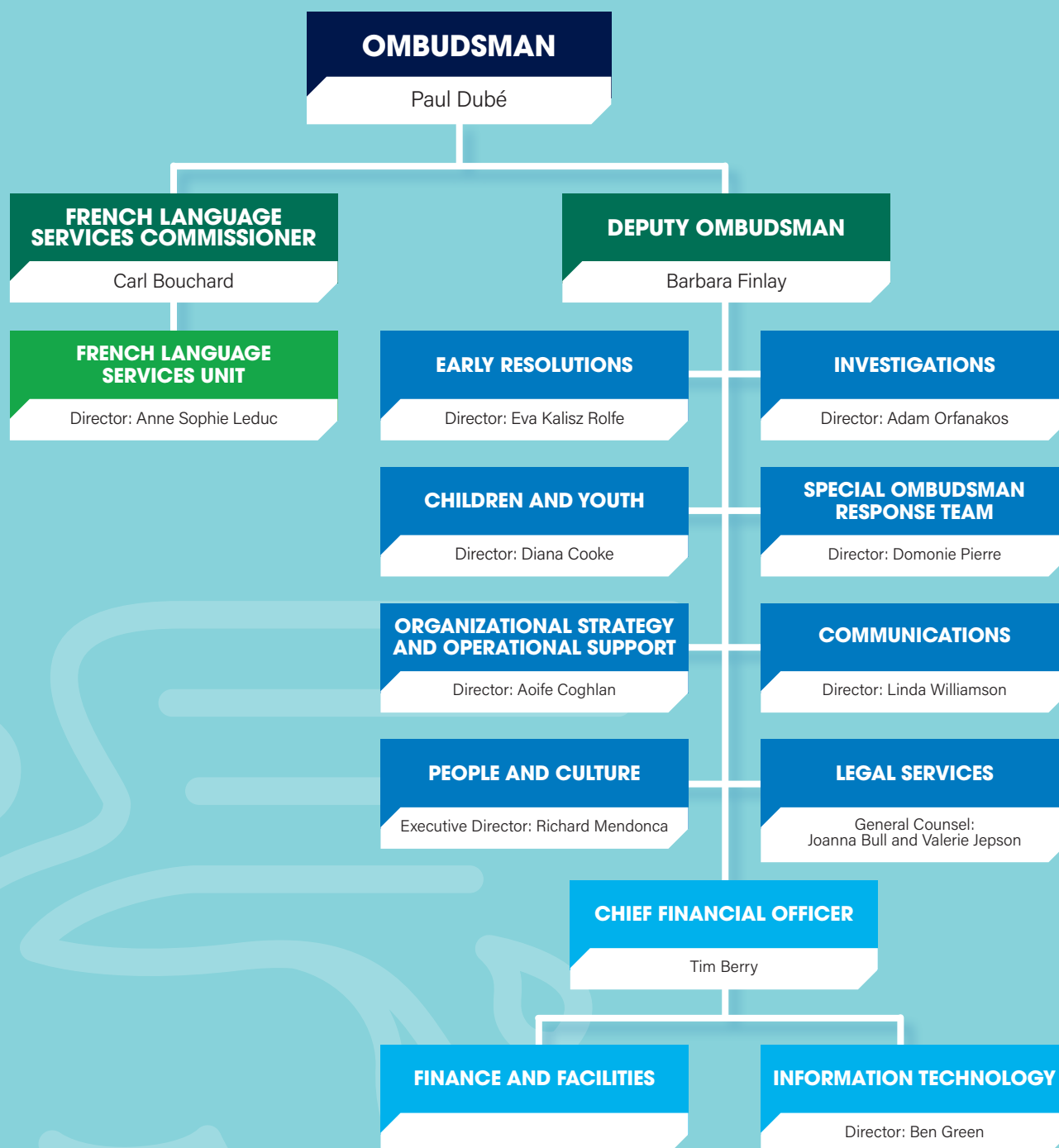
When an investigation is completed, the Ombudsman provides the findings to the organization in question for a response before they are finalized. His findings and recommendations are published in investigation reports and/or in our Annual Reports, and shared publicly on our website, via social media, news media and our e-newsletter. Copies are also available from our Office.



RESULTS

We communicate the outcome of individual investigations and most reviews and resolutions to complainants and the relevant public sector bodies, as warranted. Summaries of many such cases are published in our Annual Reports and other communications. When the Ombudsman's recommendations are accepted, our staff follow up until they are implemented, and we monitor in case problems recur.

WHO WE ARE





“What I love most about this job is the sense of purpose it gives me. Knowing that we’ve made a difference for someone who really needed support is incredibly fulfilling. People trust us with really personal stories and difficult situations. It’s a privilege to be that support, to guide them when they feel overwhelmed.”

— Mobolaji, Early Resolution Officer, General Unit

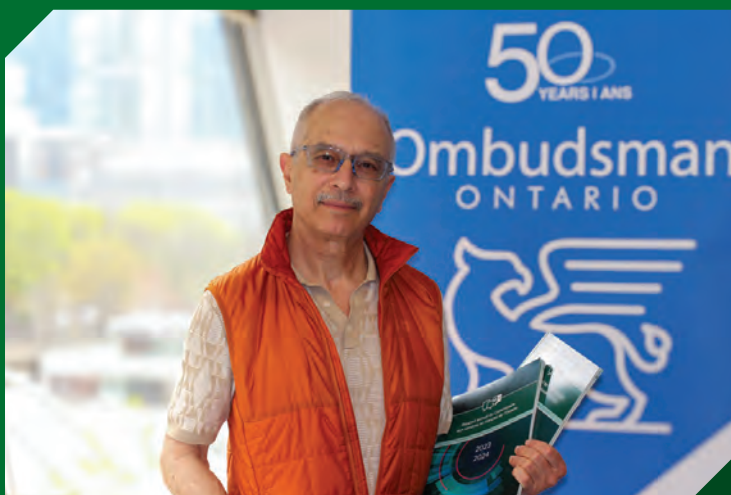
“There’s a strong emphasis here on collaboration, and everyone is approachable and professional. I’m constantly learning and feel challenged every day in a positive way. The most meaningful moments for me are always the cases where I’ve been able to highlight the voices of children and youth, especially because they are some of the most vulnerable people in our society.”

— Jessica, Investigator, Children and Youth Unit



“Being able to work in French and English is one of the main reasons I came to work here. There’s also a strong sense of collaboration and a deep respect for human rights and dignity. It’s rewarding to see the positive impact we can have at the individual level, and on how services are delivered overall.”

— Toufic, Investigator, French Language Services Unit



ABOUT THIS REPORT

Cases discussed in this report were received between **April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025**. Significant events occurring between March 31, 2025 and the time of publication may also be included.

We use “**cases**” to mean complaints and inquiries. Cases sometimes involve multiple issues or complainants and several different public sector bodies.

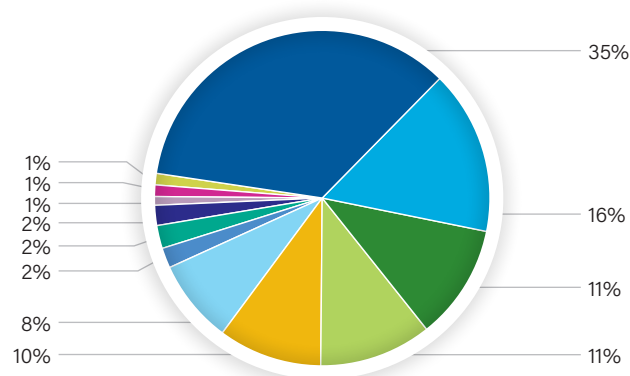
This report is organized by topic area, rather than by government body. The chapters are arranged in order of case volume, as shown in the accompanying pie chart. Each topic chapter discusses the main complaint trends and significant cases of the past year.

We recognize people of all **gender expressions**, and we do our best to use accurate pronouns. In anonymized case descriptions, gendered and non-binary pronouns are sometimes randomly assigned, or changed to protect the person’s identity.

We’re grateful for the feedback we receive from the people we help, and have included some of their comments throughout this report, while preserving their confidentiality.

A breakdown of complaints by ministry, program, municipality, etc. can be found in the **Appendix**.

Cases by topic



Cases by type

Within each topic area, the most common complaint – by far – is service delivery. Here are the 10 most common types of complaints we receive.

- 1. Service delivery**
2. Administrative decisions
3. Communication
4. Delays
5. Legislation and/or regulations
6. Enforcement of rules or policies
7. Broader public policy matters
8. Procedures
9. Internal complaint processes
10. Fees or funding

**GOOD
TO KNOW**



Watch for “Good to know” boxes throughout this report for explanatory notes.

2024-2025 HIGHLIGHTS



TOTAL CASES RECEIVED

30,675*



42%

resolved within
one week



53%

resolved within
two weeks



41%

received
online



46%

received
by phone



13%

by mail
or fax

*See more statistical breakdowns in the [Appendix](#)

TOP 10 CASE TOPICS

6,870



Correctional facilities

3,908



Municipalities and
municipal meetings

2,129*



Children and youth

1,261



School boards

1,237



Tribunals Ontario

1,038



Ontario Disability
Support Program

708



Universities and
colleges

423



Family Responsibility
Office

281**



French language
services

218



ServiceOntario

*Cases received by the Children and Youth Unit, and about youth justice centres

**Cases received by the French Language Services Unit – details of these will be published in a separate annual report in late 2025.

2024-2025 HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNICATIONS

199,710

website visitors
from **187** countries



1,484,263 pageviews

f **10,547**
people
Facebook reach

7,300
YouTube views

X **309,630**
X impressions

in **117,073**
LinkedIn impressions

560
print and digital
media articles

281
broadcast
media stories

OUTREACH



131

events
(in-person and virtual
presentations, speeches,
conferences, meetings, etc.)



186

**consultations
and responses**
to requests from bodies we oversee

REPORTS ON INVESTIGATIONS



- ▶ *Missed Messages* – July 2024 – Investigation by the French Language Services Commissioner into unilingual government advertising regarding health services
- ▶ Municipal open meetings – **35** reports and letters issued in fiscal 2024-2025
- ▶ School board open meetings – **3** reports and letters issued in fiscal 2024-2025

5 SUBMISSIONS TO GOVERNMENT



- ▶ April 2024: Proposed changes for integrity commissioners and meeting procedures for school board trustees
- ▶ June 2024: Proposed policy directives for children's aid societies
- ▶ May 2024: Bill 188, *Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024*
- ▶ January 2025: Amendments to designated areas under *French Language Services Act*
- ▶ February 2025: Proposed changes to municipal code of conduct and integrity commissioner framework

YEAR IN REVIEW



LAW AND ORDER

Overview

In 2024-2025, cases in this category reached a record high, due to a 55% surge in complaints about correctional facilities. The Ombudsman has signalled this alarming increase to the Ministry of the Solicitor General, along with our observations from visits to several correctional facilities.

It was also an historic year with respect to oversight of policing, as legislative changes extending the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to all of the province's police oversight bodies came into effect, closing a longstanding gap.

We continued to receive complaints about delays at administrative tribunals like the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario and the Landlord and Tenant Board. Tribunals Ontario, which is part of the Ministry of the Attorney General and includes both of those tribunals and more, was again the single most complained-about organization, although cases declined to **1,237** from last year's 1,457.

Trends in cases – correctional services

Ensuring the fair and humane treatment of individuals in Ontario's correctional facilities is a core responsibility

of our Office. We take swift action on urgent issues – especially those involving health, safety, and basic rights – and work to ensure that no voice goes unheard.

We also maintain confidential channels for inmates to reach us, including toll-free phone access and self-sealing letters that cannot be opened by facility staff. This ensures that inmates can safely share concerns and access our services without fear of reprisal.

This past year saw a significant increase in complaints from correctional institutions, many of which were operating over capacity. We received **6,870** complaints and inquiries about them, representing a **55%** increase over 4,444 in 2023-2024.

The most frequent complaints we reviewed involved:

- Inadequate health care
- Overcrowding (three or more inmates in cells built for two)
- Frequent lockdowns
- Segregation (solitary confinement)
- Use of force by correctional officers

We received nearly **2,800** complaints about conditions related to overcrowding and lockdowns. At Central East Correctional Centre, **366** inmates submitted a group complaint highlighting deteriorating living conditions. At Central North Correctional Centre, **197** inmates reported unsanitary cells and some vermin infestations.

Site visits and proactive oversight

We visited **12** correctional facilities across Ontario in 2024-2025 to view conditions firsthand and meet with senior staff and inmates. These visits strengthen our oversight and ensure that our work is informed by our firsthand observations.

Between July 2024 and April 2025, we visited: Central East Correctional Centre, Central North Correctional Centre, Elgin Middlesex Detention Centre, Kenora Jail, Maplehurst Correctional Complex, Ontario Correctional Institute, Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre, Quinte Detention Centre, South West Detention Centre, Thunder Bay Jail, Toronto South Detention Centre and Toronto East Detention Centre.

Examples of issues raised during these visits include:

- At Kenora Jail: Access to feminine hygiene products and the need for improved Indigenous supports.
- At Central North Correctional Centre: Overcrowding, frequent lockdowns, and the absence of a Native Inmate Liaison Officer.
- At Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre: Complaints about mold, poor air quality, and extreme temperatures.

We engage regularly with senior officials at the Ministry of the Solicitor General and with leaders at correctional institutions. These proactive discussions allow us to flag systemic issues early and support timely solutions.

We also meet with organizations such as the John Howard Society, which offers support to individuals in conflict with the law. These interactions help us stay informed about community-based concerns and improve our responsiveness to issues raised by incarcerated individuals and their advocates.

Maplehurst Correctional Complex – overcrowding and strip search

We noted a substantial increase in the volume and seriousness of complaints coming out of Maplehurst Correctional Complex in 2024-2025 – **722** cases, up from 357 in 2023-2024. Many inmates complained about poor living conditions, including frequent lockdowns and overcrowding.

In March 2025, the Ombudsman was copied on numerous emails sent to the Premier and Solicitor General by members of the public concerned about the conditions at Maplehurst. The emails raised concerns about inmates' human rights, an outbreak of invasive Group A streptococcal disease that resulted in the death of two inmates, and a troubling 2023 strip search action by the Institutional Crisis Intervention Team (ICIT) involving nearly 200 inmates that came to light in court cases in April (with one judge calling it a "rather shocking situation").

We received complaints directly from inmates at Maplehurst, as well as their family members, about this incident. They told us inmates were strip searched and zip-tied and given no access to showers, phones, socks, shoes, or blankets. They believed that this was a retaliation for an inmate assaulting a correctional officer. Several of the inmates said they were assaulted by officers.

The Ombudsman visited Maplehurst with a team of staff in late March. He also raised the complaints we received with senior Ministry leadership in April and communicated that he was contemplating an investigation.

On June 9, 2025, the Ombudsman notified the Ministry of the Solicitor General that he had launched an investigation to examine the Ministry's response to the December 2023 ICIT activation and its impact on the rights of inmates.

 **The fair and humane treatment of people in Ontario's correctional facilities, including their health and safety, is a priority for our Office. The issues that you raised in your letter are vital to the health and well-being of inmates and the Ombudsman takes these issues very seriously.** 

— Excerpt from our response to a group complaint regarding conditions at Maplehurst Correctional Complex, April 2025

Health care

We prioritize urgent cases where inmates' safety and well-being might be at risk. When dealing with access to health care, we help inmates access the specialists, medication, and mental health services they need. The Ministry has told us it is working to improve health care delivery for inmates through its Health Services Division.

We regularly speak with senior Ministry officials about their efforts to address frequent complaints, such as delays in seeing medical professionals and receiving medication, and scheduling urgent appointments with specialists.

Some examples:

- After an inmate was given the wrong medication because her file was switched with someone else's by mistake, we followed up with the facility to make sure the records were corrected.
- An inmate with sleep apnea needed a part for a machine that helped him breathe at night; we made sure it was delivered to him directly.
- When an inmate in a wheelchair was transferred into a unit that wasn't wheelchair accessible, we spoke with senior staff, who moved him back to a unit that could accommodate his mobility needs.
- A group of inmates were notified that they might have been exposed to a blood-borne virus during dental visits, due to dental equipment that was not properly cleaned. We are following up with the Ministry on its actions to prevent further such incidents.

We also helped inmates access crucial mental health supports:

- An inmate at his "breaking point" desperately needed mental health services; we ensured he was quickly seen by a physician and psychiatrist.
- We prompted a facility to confirm an inmate's prescriptions and fill them after he told us he had gone without his prescribed mental health medications for a month.

Access to Indigenous services

Complaints about access to traditional spiritual practices and services for Indigenous inmates skyrocketed in 2024-2025 – to **275**, from just 19 the previous year. The bulk of these were from inmates who had issues accessing Native Inmate Liaison Officer (NILO) services.

Correctional facilities are required to provide Indigenous inmates with access to their traditional spiritual practices in a manner that recognizes and encourages their traditions. NILOs play a crucial role in ensuring Indigenous inmates can engage in their cultural and spiritual traditions. In many of the cases we handled, there was no NILO at the facility, but we helped ensure that Indigenous inmates had access to spiritual and cultural supports, such as smudging kits, and that smudging occurred regularly within facilities.

In April 2024, we received **195** complaints about lack of access to a Native Inmate Liaison Officer at Central North Correctional Centre. A year later, there was still no NILO at the facility. We continue to work with this facility and others, as well as the Ministry, to resolve inmates' concerns.

Cultural and diet issues

Although we refer most inmates' complaints about food back to the facilities themselves, we reviewed recent changes to the Ministry's special diet policy to confirm it was being followed consistently. We helped several inmates access kosher or halal meals, as well as other cultural and religious supports and services.

For example:

- We helped an inmate get a prayer mat after he had submitted multiple requests over a month, and had resorted to using a towel for his daily prayers.
- Another inmate was waiting to receive a prayer mat and Quran, and had requested meals without pork as a religious accommodation. After our intervention, all three requests were filled.

Personal property and trust accounts

When we receive complaints from inmates about their personal property going missing or about difficulty accessing things like their important court documents, we liaise with facility staff to ensure the matter is looked into. We also routinely hear from inmates about issues with their trust accounts, where money can be deposited to allow them to make phone calls or purchase canteen items within the facility.

Some examples:

- Several inmates told us they had waited months to get access to documents related to ongoing criminal court proceedings. Once we stepped in, each of them was provided with their documents and able to review them in a private space.
- We discovered an inmate's trust account had been mixed up with the account of another inmate with the same name. After our intervention, the facility made sure the inmate's funds were restored.

Investigations – correctional services

Tracking of inmates in segregation



Report: *Out of Oversight, Out of Mind*, released April 2017

Investigation update: The Ministry of the Solicitor General has made significant progress in implementing most of the Ombudsman's **32** recommendations in this 2017

report. His investigation was prompted by a high volume of complaints about the Ministry's use and tracking of segregation – solitary confinement – as well as the troubling case of Adam Capay, an Indigenous man who was held in segregation for more than four years while awaiting trial.

As we noted in last year's Annual Report, we continue to monitor the Ministry's process for regular reviews of segregation placements by an internal team which includes the input of a human rights advisor.

We are also keeping a close eye on the frequent use of segregation for people with mental health issues, which is supposed to be prohibited. In both 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, Ministry figures showed there were more than **1,000** people who had been diagnosed with or had symptoms of a serious mental illness who were nonetheless placed in segregation. Ministry officials have shared with us several ways in which they are trying to mitigate this problem, but these will, at best, only reduce the number of placements rather than end this troubling practice.

Trends in cases – policing

Although the Ombudsman does not have the authority to investigate most aspects of police conduct directly, we play a key role in promoting transparency and accountability across Ontario's police oversight framework. It has been most gratifying to hear leaders in policing and police oversight thank the Ombudsman for our work, acknowledge its positive impact, and affirm that our observations and recommendations remain relevant.

This past year, the Ombudsman's mandate was expanded to include oversight of all provincial police oversight bodies.

Local and First Nations police services, police service boards, and Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) detachment boards remain outside our jurisdiction.

Police and oversight bodies

On April 1, 2024, legislation came into force to expand the Ombudsman's jurisdiction over police oversight bodies. It now includes:

- The new Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (LECA), which takes complaints about police conduct;
- The Inspectorate of Policing, which deals with compliance with policing legislation, police board member conduct, local police policies, and more; and
- The Ontario Police Arbitration and Adjudication Commission (which addresses police labour relations issues)

The Special Investigations Unit, which investigates incidents of police-involved serious injury or death, has been within our mandate since its inception in 1990; this remains unchanged.

In 2024-2025, we received **97** complaints about LECA, which deals with cases of police conduct. About a quarter of these were about incidents that occurred before April 1, 2024, which are outside our mandate. Most of the rest related to delays or a lack of response from LECA; we were able to resolve many of these by facilitating communication between complainants and LECA. We received **163** complaints about the OPP, up from 130 in 2023-2024. Our role in such cases is not to redo investigations or overturn decisions – it is to make sure these organizations follow fair processes.

We also received **352** cases about municipal and First Nations police, which are outside of our jurisdiction. We referred these cases to existing complaint mechanisms.

Special constables

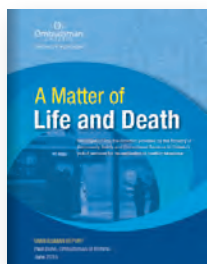
Special constables work for police services, transit agencies, universities, court transportation units, and community housing corporations. LECA does not take complaints about

their conduct; police services must have a separate process for these and must publish that process online.

We received **2** complaints from inmates about the special OPP constables working in the vehicles that transport them to and from court appearances. The inmates were unable to access the complaint process because it was only online. We flagged this to the OPP and the Ministry of the Solicitor General, emphasizing that the special constable complaint process should include a meaningful way for inmates to file complaints.

Investigations – policing

Police de-escalation training



Report: *A Matter of Life and Death*, released June 2016

Investigation update:

The Ombudsman made **22** recommendations to improve the way police across Ontario are trained in using de-escalation techniques. Many of these echoed recommendations

from inquests into police shooting deaths dating back two decades. He called for, among other things, a new model that would require police to try to de-escalate situations of crisis before using force.

Although all of his recommendations were accepted, very little changed until 2023, when the Ministry of the Solicitor General introduced a new training aid (replacing its old use-of-force model) encouraging the use of de-escalation techniques wherever possible. Our investigators visited the Ontario Police College in late 2024 to see this training in action, along with other improvements the Ombudsman suggested, like using more real-world training scenarios. Mental health crisis response training is also now mandatory for all police services.

However, the Ministry has decided not to act on the Ombudsman's recommendation that de-escalation be mandated by regulation. Ministry officials told us they believe existing legislation, regulations and training are sufficient. We continue to monitor the Ministry's progress on the remaining recommendations.

Operational stress injury and suicide affecting Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)



Report: *In the Line of Duty*, released October 2012

Investigation update: In our 2012 report, the Ombudsman made **34** recommendations aimed at addressing the issue of police suicide provincewide and within the OPP. Although most of the

recommendations have been addressed, in 2018, the Ombudsman announced an assessment of new issues in light of new suicide cases and 90 new complaints.

The OPP has since made numerous organizational changes and implemented mental health services and supports for members with operational stress injuries. It also requires all members to take a suicide prevention course.

In 2021, the OPP unveiled a memorial at its Orillia headquarters that honours members who have died by suicide since 1989. In June 2024, it held the first of what is planned to be an annual service to remember these officers, at which 51 names of those who died because of the line of duty were honoured.

The Ombudsman welcomed this effort and continues to dialogue with the OPP Commissioner on this issue. We received **13** related complaints over the past five years, **2** of them in 2024-2025.

Other trends in cases

Administrative tribunals

Tribunals Ontario – a collection of 13 administrative tribunals that deal with approximately 100,000 cases each year – was the subject of **1,237** complaints and inquiries in 2024-2025. This is down from 1,457 the previous year, and well below the record high of 2,043 cases in 2022-2023.

Most of these cases were about delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB), which was the subject of an Ombudsman report in May 2023, and has seen a decline in complaints as it continues to implement the Ombudsman's recommendations (for more, see the **Money and Property** chapter of this report).

Still, we continue to receive complaints about delays at several Tribunals Ontario bodies. In particular, the **Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO)** was the subject of **199** cases, up from 135 the previous year. The HRTO has faced challenges, including recruitment and retention of adjudicators, contributing to a significant backlog. We helped resolve several cases by facilitating communication with the appropriate officials.

The HRTO's delay issues mirror several of those we identified in our 2023 report on the LTB. The HRTO has reviewed our recommendations in that report and is using them to take a proactive approach to addressing delays in its own processes. Over the past year, HRTO staff have worked closely with us and communicated openly about their challenges and their efforts to address them.

We acknowledge this collaborative approach and continue to monitor the HRTO's efforts to reduce its backlog, including making improvements to its website and case management system, modifying its training and onboarding of adjudicators, and consulting with the community about its processes.

Animal welfare

We received **14** cases this year about the Animal Welfare Services (AWS) branch of the Ministry of the Solicitor General. This branch enforces provincial animal welfare legislation, including conducting investigations, inspecting facilities such as zoos and aquariums, and responding to public concerns.

“[Your Early Resolution Officer] proved to be the consummate professional. She was patient, listened carefully, answered questions, made thoughtful, useful suggestions, and emailed important information. It was such a pleasure speaking with her that just for the moment, I forgot the deep problems with which I am dealing.”

Most complaints were about communication issues and enforcement decisions. We resolved these individually, and also provided best practice suggestions to senior officials to improve their public communications and the transparency of their investigations and complaint processes.

Some case examples:

- A woman with a disability who can't use the telephone told us AWS offered no way for her to report an animal abuse case. We confirmed she could use email, and AWS also added a teletypewriter line to its contact options on its website.
- A woman came to us when she didn't get a response after filing a complaint about an inspector's conduct. We ensured the AWS provided her with a written response explaining the results of its complaint review.

Case summaries

Urgency overlooked

An injured inmate sought our help with complications related to his eye socket, which had become seriously swollen. He told us he had raised this multiple times with health care staff, who had dismissed his concerns, suggesting it was just swelling and not a cause for alarm.

RESULT: We immediately reached out to health care staff at the facility to make sure the man could see a doctor as soon as possible. The doctor ordered a scan of his head, which confirmed the man's orbital bone was fractured, and he was referred for surgery.

A history of violence

An inmate reached out to us after getting in a fight with another inmate. Both had previously been involved in physical altercations with each other, and should have

been placed in separate units within the facility to prevent further ones.

RESULT: Our Office spoke with senior staff at the facility, who determined that the appropriate notice about the pair's previous fights had not been entered into their tracking system. As a result of our work, a notice was sent to all staff reminding them of their obligations to promptly and properly input security notifications.

A timely response

An individual who sent a complaint letter to the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) came to us for help, saying they had been told the SIU had no formal complaint process or timeline for receiving a response. As a fairness best practice, we generally recommend that public bodies establish a clear timeline for responding to complaints, including a reasonable deadline for acknowledging receipt of the complaint.

RESULT: We shared these suggestions with the SIU, which told us it was in the process of redeveloping its existing policies and would be publicly posting a revised complaint policy in the coming months. In the meantime, the SIU posted its existing policy online, and apologized to the complainant for the delay.

Get me to the court on time

An inmate reached out to us to complain about a rapidly approaching court date. He was scheduled to appear in court in person, but the courthouse was a 15-hour drive away, and facility staff had not made travel arrangements to get him to court.

RESULT: We made immediate inquiries with senior staff at the facility, who confirmed that they had made an error when adding the inmate's court date into the system. They took care of the arrangements and made sure the inmate was transported to court for his scheduled appearance.



MUNICIPALITIES

Overview

Municipalities have always been a significant source of complaints to the Ombudsman, even though they were outside of our jurisdiction for the first few decades of our history. Shortly after taking office in 1975, the first Ombudsman, Arthur Maloney, noted that a large volume of the complaints he received were about municipalities, and argued that the Ombudsman should not be restricted from helping people with local problems.

That restriction began to change in 2008, when we were able to take complaints about closed municipal meetings only. Finally, in January 2016, the Ombudsman's jurisdiction was fully extended to include complaints and inquiries about all municipal services and administration. This is our 10th year of reporting on general municipal cases.

As of the end of the fiscal year covered by this report, we have received **27,468** complaints and inquiries about general municipal issues. We resolved the vast majority of these without need for formal investigation. We have published **6** investigation reports, and the Ombudsman's recommendations in those have been largely implemented. They have also served as guidance for many other municipalities, who can adopt the recommendations and best practices. In fact, recommendations from our very first investigation of a municipal complaint, from 2017, continued to bear fruit this year (see **Investigations**).

Overall, our work has helped municipalities improve their processes and services, and connected residents with the information they need.

Improving local fairness, transparency and accountability

Our overall approach to municipal cases is that local issues are best solved at the local level. We refer people to local complaint and appeal mechanisms where they exist. If they don't, or if they aren't fair and transparent, we will often



August 18, 2024: Ombudsman Paul Dubé and Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay, both at left, with staff at our booth at the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference, Ottawa.

suggest best practices to the municipalities in question to fix issues and avert future complaints.

We share resources with local officials and the public on things like how to create fair complaint processes and codes of conduct. We also publish guides for integrity commissioners and for following the open meeting rules.

The Ombudsman and staff regularly interact with municipal leaders and officials at conferences – like those of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario – to share these resources and the many ways we can help them and their residents.

Also of note this year:

- New legislation created open meeting rules to cover

local services boards, which can provide services such as water, waste collection and fire protection in areas of Northern Ontario where there is no municipal government. Starting on **August 1, 2025**, complaints about closed meetings of these boards can be filed with us. We created a new “tip card” about these rules, available on our website.

- We shared best practices with local public health units, whose meetings are also subject to open meeting rules. We also reached out to the four new units created last year in the Northeastern, South East, Grand Erie, and Haliburton-Kawartha-Northumberland-Peterborough regions, and sent them our open meeting guide (also on our website).

Trends in cases – general municipal issues

We received **3,809** cases about general municipal issues in 2024-2025, a record high, up from last year's 3,595. We also received **68** cases about shared local boards and **91** about shared corporations.

As in most years, the most common case topics were by-law enforcement, councils and committees, and infrastructure matters. We also saw more issues regarding local accountability officers, and suggested best practices based on our experience in this area.

Accountability officers

The Ombudsman takes a special interest in municipal accountability officers – integrity commissioners, local ombudsmen, lobbyist registrars, etc. He made a submission to the government on its pending legislation for provincewide standards for local integrity commissioners, and called attention to potential conflicts and barriers that could compromise them.

GOOD TO KNOW



Cases about Ontario Works can be found in the **Social Services** chapter of this report. Cases about municipal hydro can be found in the **Energy and Environment** chapter.

We received **94** cases about municipal accountability officers in 2024-2025, up from 80 the previous year.

Our role in such cases is to bolster fairness, transparency and accountability at the local level. We do not redo the work of local accountability officers, but can review their processes and suggest improvements to them and/or the municipality as warranted.

Some individual examples:

- After several residents complained that the **Township of Rideau Lakes** would not release its integrity commissioner's report about a local councillor's conduct, the Ombudsman strongly encouraged the council to reconsider, noting the *Municipal Act* did not permit withholding the report. The municipality made it public shortly thereafter.
- We advised a municipality to post clear information about its integrity commissioner's process on its website.

We regularly share best practices and tailored resources with municipalities to improve their local accountability processes, such as our handbook, ***Codes of Conduct and Integrity Commissioners: Guide for Municipalities*** (available on our website or in hard copy from our office).

Submission to government

In February 2025, the Ombudsman made a submission to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as part

of its consultation on proposed changes to the municipal code of conduct and integrity commissioner framework. The Ombudsman supported the Ministry's efforts to standardize codes of conduct and integrity commissioner processes across the province, and made **22** proposals based on our experience with complaints about integrity commissioners.

New legislation incorporating some of these changes was pending at the time of writing this report.

Potential conflicts of interest

The Ombudsman raised concerns about the independence and potential conflict of interest of accountability officers who hold multiple roles, such as when an individual serves as a municipality's legal counsel and integrity commissioner at the same time. We received several complaints about this issue in multiple municipalities, including **Tay Valley Township, Hastings Highlands, North Grenville, and Mississippi Mills**.

The Ombudsman warned the municipalities that this practice undermines public confidence in the important role of integrity commissioner, and should be avoided. He strongly encouraged the municipalities to make the roles separate.

“Having the same official toggling between the function of providing legal advice to municipal council and the role of municipal integrity commissioner detracts from the importance of the role played by the Integrity Commissioner in promoting ethical conduct and accountability among council members and decreases the public's confidence that a truly independent official is performing this important function.”

— Ombudsman Paul Dubé, letters to the councils for Tay Valley Township, Hastings Highlands and North Grenville, January 27, 2025

Fees and other barriers

In the interest of fairness, the Ombudsman has always argued that there should be no barriers to making a complaint to an accountability officer, such as fees or other onerous requirements like having to swear an affidavit.

For example, in the spring of 2025, he wrote to the council for the **Town of Iroquois Falls**, which already required complaints to the integrity commissioner to be witnessed by a commissioner of oaths, and was considering imposing a \$200 fee as well. He urged against both, however, the municipality chose to go ahead with the fee.

“When the burden of filing a complaint becomes too difficult, individuals may be discouraged from raising legitimate concerns, undermining the purpose of the code of conduct.”

— Ombudsman Paul Dubé, letter to Town of Iroquois Falls council, March 2025

By-law enforcement

The top topic of complaints and inquiries about municipalities in 2024-2025 was by-law enforcement, with **533** cases – up from 449 last year. When people raised concerns about why or how by-laws were (or were not) enforced, we often helped by liaising with the municipality.

For example:

- A woman was worried that tall weeds on the vacant property next to hers could attract pests, and she couldn't get answers from her municipality. We contacted by-law enforcement staff who met with her, inspected the property, and ensured the neighbour fixed the issue.
- We helped a couple with disabilities who were ordered by local by-law enforcement to remove snow markers

on the municipal road adjacent to their property. They told us the markers were frozen in place and they were unable to move them. We relayed this to municipal staff, who arranged to remove the snow markers at no cost to the couple.

- We worked with a city's by-law department to have a man's parking ticket declared void, after he told us he hadn't visited that city in 45 years. The city confirmed the ticket was issued in error.

We also flagged issues of fairness and suggested best practices to help municipalities forestall complaints. For example:

- A dogsitter sought our help after a dog in his care escaped and rushed at a passing dog walker, and he was fined under a municipal by-law. He pointed out that the by-law only applied to dog bite cases, which this was not – and it offered no opportunity for appeal. We raised this with municipal officials and shared best practices for setting up an appeal process, which they agreed to consider.
- A resident complained about a lack of fairness in the **Township of Ramara's** by-law appeal process. An appeal tribunal upheld a fine against him for breaking the municipality's short term rental by-law. But it did not give him any reasons for its decision, even though the by-law requires it to do so. The Ombudsman wrote to the municipality, suggesting best practices for improvement.

“Providing written reasons will increase transparency and strengthen accountability by allowing individuals to know how and why a decision was made and to demonstrate that the appeal tribunal considered the issues and arguments in a fair and lawful manner.”

— Ombudsman Paul Dubé, letter to Township of Ramara council, October 2024



May 6, 2024: Ombudsman staff at our booth at the annual conference of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, Sudbury.

Councils and committees

We received **517** complaints and inquiries about councils and committees in 2024-2025 – down from 653 in 2023-2024.

As in previous years, many of the concerns we heard were about council decisions and the conduct of elected officials. In such cases, we clarify that we cannot reverse decisions of elected officials, and that complaints about their conduct should be directed to the local integrity commissioner.

However, we can review a council's decision-making process for fairness and transparency, and to determine whether local procedures and by-laws were followed.

Some examples:

- A resident complained to us that her municipality had passed a new by-law but hadn't made it public. We spoke with the municipal clerk, who explained the reasons for the delay and ensured the by-law was posted online shortly thereafter.
- We received **23** complaints from residents concerned about a lack of transparency in a municipality's decision to build a new administrative centre and its potential costs to ratepayers. Our review determined that the municipality had provided information and feedback opportunities to the public throughout the decision-making process, including through public consultations, a dedicated website page about the project, and an ad hoc residents' committee.
- Residents reached out to us about their concerns that their city was permitting an encampment in a local park. We made inquiries with the city and shared the information with the residents, including that the city was working closely with public health and police officials and had a policy with clear guidelines on encampments.

We also suggest best practices to municipalities when we find fairness concerns. For example:

- A low-income resident complained to us that the **Town of Tillsonburg** charged a \$100 fee to appeal an order that banned him from public transit for a year. He could not afford it, so he abandoned his case. The Ombudsman wrote to the municipal council, urging it to remove the fee or at least empower staff to waive it in some circumstances.

“ There should be no fee or other barrier to file an appeal of a service suspension, as it penalizes individuals and may prevent legitimate appeals from being brought forward due to concerns about financial cost.”

— Ombudsman Paul Dubé, letter to council for the Town of Tillsonburg, May 2024

Housing

Municipalities are responsible for providing affordable and supportive housing programs and services. We received **465** cases about these services, up from 401 in 2023-2024 – and helped many people with common complaints about things like accessing supportive housing. We also helped find shelter for some people who were experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

For example:

- A woman in crisis called us for help. She was living outside in a tent with her dog and needed help accessing a shelter for the upcoming winter. She couldn't stay at the previous shelter she was in because she could not afford to pay for vaccinations for her dog. We made inquiries with a local emergency housing provider who agreed to provide housing for the woman and her dog.
- We worked with a municipal housing provider to help a woman who couldn't accept the unit she was offered because relatives of her abusive ex-husband lived in the same building.
- A woman was locked out and stuck on her balcony for four hours before a neighbour called a locksmith. The woman told us she had repeatedly called the housing provider's emergency phone line, but no one answered – and the provider would not pay her back for the cost of the locksmith. After we intervened, the provider reimbursed her.

Infrastructure and water/sewer issues

We received **173** cases about municipal infrastructure, such as roads and sidewalks, up from 152 in 2023-2024. Most of these were about issues related to roads, bridges and snow removal.

We also received **92** complaints and inquiries about municipal water and sewer services, consistent with last year's 100. These were primarily related to fees and billing, as well as decisions made by service providers.

Some examples:

- A man told us his property was being damaged by flooding from a poorly maintained municipal ditch. We raised the case with municipal staff, who confirmed that previous repairs had not fixed the problem and made sure it was addressed.
- We prompted municipal officials to explain to a resident why it had taken so long to apply calcium (a dust-control measure) to the unpaved road near his property.

We also shared best practices in cases where we identified fairness issues. For example:

- A landlord whose tenants had failed to pay their rent or water bills complained to us that the **Town of Essex** had simply added the unpaid water bills to his property tax bill, without notifying him of the arrears. We raised this with the municipality, which was in the midst of taking over responsibility for water bills from another provider. It accepted the best practices we suggested, including publicizing a clear policy on billing, payment options and arrears collection, and it addressed the concerns of landlords by eliminating separate water accounts for tenants.

Planning, zoning and land use

We received **150** complaints related to planning, zoning and land use, up from 135 in 2023-2024. Many of these were from people concerned about local planning decisions and the lack of communication about them. We helped by sharing information about how these decisions are made, and facilitating communication

with municipal officials. For example:

- After our inquiries, municipal planning staff offered to speak directly with a group of concerned residents to answer their questions about a proposed zoning by-law and official plan amendment.

Investigations – general municipal issues

Trespass orders and service restrictions (Township of Red Rock)



Report: *Counter Encounter*, released May 2017

Investigation update:

The Ombudsman's recommendations from this 2017 report took on new life in 2024, when a woman sought our help about a trespass notice issued to

her by the Township of Red Rock.

She complained that the township had escalated an earlier order that barred her from two properties, extending it to a blanket ban without explanation. She also said she was not told whether she could appeal or request a review of the decision, or how long the restriction would last.

The case had clear similarities with the *Counter Encounter* case – the Ombudsman's first formal investigation of a complaint about a municipality. In that case, the complainant was a member of the township council who had been banned from municipal property for two years.

The Ombudsman found that this ban was “excessive and unjust,” and made 11 recommendations to improve the municipality's policies and practices, particularly with regard to trespass notices and service restrictions.

We have since shared these recommendations as best practices with numerous municipalities, and they have been widely adopted. (Others, like the Ombudsman's call for the municipality to implement a code of conduct and appoint an integrity commissioner, are now mandatory across the province.) However, several of the recommendations remained unaddressed in Red Rock.

We took the opportunity to revisit the Ombudsman's recommendations with municipal officials in light of this new case, with positive results.

They agreed to implement an “R-zone” (“respect zone”) policy (a combined policy covering trespass notices and respectful conduct, explained in the Ombudsman's report), that includes examples of conduct that will result in a restriction, procedures for issuing trespass notices, time limits for restrictions, and a process for the affected individual to appeal or request a review.

“We appreciate the thorough review conducted by your Office and your ongoing commitment to promoting fairness in public sector administration... We appreciate your guidance on these matters and are committed to improving our processes to uphold the principles of fairness and transparency.”

— Letter from the Township of Red Rock's Chief Administrative Officer, responding to the Ombudsman's best practice suggestions

Trends in cases – open meetings

All municipal meetings, whether held by council, committees, or local boards, must be open to the public unless they meet very specific exceptions outlined in the *Municipal Act, 2001*. Anyone who thinks a meeting was improperly closed to the public can make a complaint.

Most of Ontario's 444 municipalities use the Ombudsman as their closed meeting investigator, although they can choose to appoint their own. The Ombudsman is now responsible for investigating closed meetings in **286** municipalities, up from 268 last year – the highest number since the open meeting rules were established in 2008.

In 2024-2025, we received **99** complaints about closed meetings, consistent with the previous year. Of those, **74** were about municipalities where the Ombudsman is the investigator; the rest were referred to the investigators appointed by those municipalities.

We looked into **66** meetings by **32** municipalities and local boards. We issued **12** letters and **23** reports on the Ombudsman's findings in these cases. The Ombudsman found that **21** meetings (**32%**) were illegal (they violated the open meeting requirements). He also identified **28** procedural issues and made **14** best practice recommendations to help those municipalities be more transparent in their meeting practices.

The municipalities in question make these reports and letters public when they are released. We also make them all available on our website, in our searchable database, ***Open Meetings: Case Digest***.

Our handbook about the open meeting rules and how they should be interpreted – ***Open Meetings: Guide***



June 10, 2024: Ombudsman staff at our booth at an Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario conference, Collingwood.

for Municipalities – is also available to the public and municipal officials, on our website, or in hard copy upon request.

As in previous years, the top topics of complaints about closed meetings were about procedural issues or glitches with electronic meetings, and how municipalities applied the exceptions cited in the *Municipal Act*.

Livestreaming

We regularly hear concerns about livestreaming meetings, which are considered “open meetings” as long as the public has advance notice and can access the proceedings in real time. When people complain about virtual meetings, it is often due to technical issues or inaccurate information that left them unable to attend virtually. For example:

- The Ombudsman found the **Municipality of Whitestone** showed a “critical misunderstanding of the public’s democratic right to access meetings and observe government in action” when councillors decided to proceed with a meeting, even though the livestream link was not made available to the public due to website maintenance.
- The Ombudsman found the **Municipality of West Elgin** contravened the open meeting rules when it published notices for council meetings that included mention of a livestream, even though council had stopped offering it.

“The Act requires that the public be able to observe council meetings in process, including electronic meetings. [...] Compliance with the law is not optional.”

— Ombudsman Paul Dubé, report on closed meetings in the Municipality of Whitestone, September 2024

Meetings by email or text message

A “meeting” of council is defined as when a quorum of council gathers to advance council business. If this happens via email or text, it violates the open meeting rules because it’s closed to the public. The Ombudsman has cautioned council members to take care to avoid discussing council business or decision-making this way.

For example:

- In reviewing complaints about a text message conversation by members of council for the **Township of The North Shore**, the Ombudsman found that a quorum of council participated, but the discussion did not materially advance council business. Nonetheless, he cautioned that exchanging text messages or emails constitutes “being present in an electronic place” and could be considered a “meeting” subject to the open meeting rules.

Common issues – closed meeting exceptions and procedural matters

Meetings may be closed to the public if they fall within certain limited exceptions, such as a training session or to protect information that is personal in nature. Most of the cases we review centre on whether or not the exceptions fit the subject matter of the meetings.

For example, here are some cases where the Ombudsman found meetings should not have been closed under the “education or training” exception:

- The **City of Elliott Lake**’s closed meeting on changes to the local procurement by-law did not count as “education or training” because councillors talked about proposed changes to existing procurement practices which were going to be the basis of future decision-making.
- A **City of Cornwall** meeting on strategic planning was not about “education or training” because councillors were working on the substance of the strategic plan, rather than learning about the process.
- When councils for the **Town of Grimsby**, the **Town of Lincoln**, and the **Township of West Lincoln** met behind closed doors to discuss a potential amalgamation, it was not “education or training” because they shared opinions and ideas intended to form the basis of imminent decisions.

Case summaries

Saved, not sold

A man called us in distress, saying he would become homeless if he could not immediately pay nearly \$25,000 in property tax arrears and fees. He said he had just learned that his municipality had seized his properties for unpaid taxes and put them up for auction. The properties would go to the successful bidders unless he came up with the money to cancel the sale.

RESULT: After we spoke with staff at the municipality, they provided the man with additional time to make the required payments and keep his properties. We also shared best practices with the municipality, which it relayed to its finance staff for future policy development. These include providing reasonable notice for owners whose property is subject to a tax sale to vacate the property, and ensuring that they are informed about available financial and housing supports.

Sudden shutoff

A woman who was in hospital sought our help after water service was cut off to her home, where her son, who has autism and medical needs, was receiving at-home care in her absence. She told us she had a payment plan with the water service provider and had paid her bills. She was worried for her son, whose treatment would have to be put on hold without water service.

RESULT: We made inquiries with the municipality and the utility and discovered that the woman's water bill payments had been sent to the wrong account. The service provider clarified what information they required to turn the mother's water back on and relayed this back to her so it could be restored.

One for the price of two

A man sought our help in getting money back from his municipality for a nonexistent water line. He told us that when he bought the property, he was told there were two water lines, and he would be billed for both. He said municipal staff assured him the second line was there, even though it was not connected to a meter.

Two years later, during a construction project, a municipal engineer discovered there was only one water line to the property. However, the municipality only offered him a partial refund for the two years' worth of fees he had paid.

RESULT: We made inquiries with municipal staff. After we intervened, the municipality agreed to give the owner a full refund of more than **\$6,000**.

Parting words

A Francophone man was let go from his position as a volunteer firefighter with a municipality. He complained to us that the municipality sent him a letter explaining his termination in English only. He asked if we could help him connect with someone who could send it in French, given that his relationship with the municipality was strained.

RESULT: While the municipality was not required under the *French Language Services Act* to do so, after we raised the issue with the clerk, they said they were happy to provide the letter to him in French. He received it and thanked us for our help.



SOCIAL SERVICES

Overview

Over the past year, thousands of people reached out to us with questions and concerns about their experiences with social service agencies. We helped them by clarifying eligibility requirements, facilitating communication, and following up on delays.

Many of those who depend on social services are navigating complex systems while in vulnerable situations. When possible, we step in to help resolve their concerns. We also share best practices for improving fairness and service delivery, and flag recurring issues to senior officials in relevant agencies and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

When issues are persistent and particularly complex, we are able to look into the root causes through our systemic investigations, while resolving individual cases wherever possible. In the spring of 2025, we completed the field work in our investigation into cases of adults with complex special needs who are inappropriately hospitalized, and the Ombudsman's report is in progress.

We also continue to help families of children with complex special needs who sometimes have no choice but to surrender custody of them to children's aid societies in order to get the residential care they need – an issue we first investigated 20 years ago (see more on both of these investigations under **Investigations**).

Trends in cases

The top subjects of complaints and inquiries in the social services sector are consistently the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Ontario Works (OW), and the Family Responsibility Office (FRO). Cases about the first two agencies were up slightly in 2024-2025 over the previous year, while we saw fewer cases about the FRO.

People who wish to contest decisions by ODSP and OW about their benefits can file an appeal with the Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT), part of Tribunals Ontario. We can review complaints about the SBT's services and processes. For example:

- A community legal clinic complained to us about the Social Benefits Tribunal's process for deciding applications for the Mobile Access Terminal service offered by Tribunals Ontario, which is supposed to provide a private space, computer and internet access to people who cannot otherwise participate in virtual hearings. The clinic told us the SBT denied all of its clients' applications for this service. Both the SBT and Tribunals Ontario have provided us with information about the decision-making process for this service. At the time of writing this report, our review of this issue was ongoing.

Ontario Disability Support Program

The ODSP provides income and employment support to Ontarians with disabilities. It also includes benefits like dental care, prescription drug coverage, and other disability-related supports.

In 2024-2025, we received **1,038** cases about ODSP, an increase from 978 the previous year. Many of these were from people who had difficulty reaching caseworkers or getting answers to questions. An MPP also shared concerns with us about constituents having trouble with some of ODSP's new digital tools for submitting documents – an issue we are actively reviewing.

We helped connect many ODSP recipients with people who could answer their concerns. Some examples:

- When the ODSP didn't respond to a man's eligibility documents and his benefits were put on hold, we contacted senior officials. His benefits were reinstated

retroactively to October 2022. He told our staff: "I could not have gotten through this without you."

- We contacted the ODSP on behalf of a woman whose benefits were suspended and who couldn't reach her caseworker. She was relieved to have her benefits reinstated in time to pay her rent.
- We helped a woman reach her caseworker after she transitioned from Ontario Works benefits to ODSP. She got her questions answered after receiving no response for two months.

People often seek our help with decisions about their ODSP income support and benefits. In these cases, we assist by addressing administrative errors and delays. For instance:

- We helped a man whose ODSP file had been neglected after a tribunal decision confirmed his disability. After we stepped in, the ODSP reopened his case and provided more than **\$11,000** in back payments plus an additional benefit of **\$400**.
- We helped an ODSP recipient successfully challenge a 2021 overpayment assessment, resulting in a reimbursement of **\$1,500** plus an additional **\$200**.
- We looked into a surprise \$600 utility bill for a woman whose utilities are normally paid directly by the ODSP as part of her benefits. We discovered the issue was a communication error between the woman's case worker and the utility company – and confirmed the bill was paid.

Ontario Works

Through Ontario Works, people in financial need can receive money for food, shelter, and other expenses. The program is administered by municipalities and district social services administration boards. We received **412** complaints about OW in 2024-2025, up from 390 in the previous year.

Most cases involved poor communication or customer service, as well as delays in payments or decisions about people's eligibility for benefits. We referred OW recipients to other community supports when possible, and flagged cases that had been overlooked.

For example:

- We connected OW with a mother who was staying in a shelter with her baby, who has special needs. She received **\$500** in OW emergency funding the same day she contacted us, to buy formula and other necessities for her baby. We also provided her with other referrals for support.
- A father's benefits were increased after we escalated his case to an OW manager, who identified an error in their calculation of rent expenses for him and his daughter.
- A man who was experiencing homelessness sought our help in replacing his OW benefit card so he could rent a place to live. We flagged his case as urgent and he received a new card and funding the same day so he could make a deposit on a rental unit.

As of March 1, 2025, employment-related services provided locally through Ontario Works, such as job search support, were taken over by Employment Ontario. We are monitoring the effects of this change.

Family Responsibility Office

The Family Responsibility Office enforces court-ordered child and spousal support payments. In 2024-2025, FRO-related cases decreased slightly to **423** from 440 the year before. The most common complaints involved incorrect or inadequate enforcement of child or spousal support orders. We also heard from frustrated clients that their case workers gave them little or no explanations in response to their concerns.

We meet regularly with senior FRO staff to address recurring case themes and discuss improvements to the FRO's procedures. Over the past year, we held several discussions about improving its internal complaint processes. We also highlighted concerns about its failure to follow its own procedures and take timely action to enforce support orders, and continue to follow up on this issue.

Some examples:

- We helped expedite the processing of a court order for support for a woman who had been trying to have it registered and enforced by the FRO for more than four years.
- We helped a woman get more than **\$2,000** in unpaid support after we pointed out that the FRO had not sought to garnish the payor's federal benefits.
- We helped a support payor get a clean credit rating after the FRO mistakenly reported her to the credit bureau for non-payment.
- We helped a father get his child support arrears reduced by **\$55,000** – and garnishment of his pension stopped – after we determined the FRO had never received the paperwork ending his child support obligations in 1995.

Services for children with developmental disabilities

Special Services at Home

We received **171** complaints and inquiries about Special Services at Home (SSAH), which helps families caring for children with developmental disabilities. Similar to last year, the bulk of these cases were about delays in receiving reimbursements for expenses, despite SSAH's 30-day reimbursement standard. For example:

- A woman told us she was suffering financial strain as she waited to be reimbursed for four months' worth of

expenses, totaling **\$6,700**. Through our inquiries, we confirmed that the receipts were approved and that the payment would be issued.

Senior Ministry officials told us internal system changes were made to address these delays, increasing the number of reimbursements processed. However, they noted other factors contributing to delays, such as high volumes at certain times of year or data entry backlogs in some regions.

We also received a group of **23** cases from families in the Central Region about delays in their annual SSAH funding package for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. We discovered that the Ministry had updated the SSAH policy just prior to the new fiscal year and the region had delayed the packages to include information about the update. After our inquiries, families were able to submit their receipts for reimbursement before the packages were sent out in June and July.

Ontario Autism Program (OAP)

The Ontario Autism Program supports families of children and youth with autism. AccessOAP is its intake organization, which helps them connect with services and manage benefits. AccessOAP's Independent Review Office (IRO) handles complaints about their services. We received **92** cases related to these programs in 2024-2025, a slight decrease from 110 last year.

A key issue families raised with us was a lack of information from AccessOAP and the Ministry about the wait times to receive an invitation for core clinical services. They said neither organization provides information to families about how long their wait time may be, or how many people are in front of them. Some said they struggle to estimate how long they can afford to pay for services out-of-pocket while they wait, and they are unable to financially plan for their children's services needs.

Families also told us they were frustrated with delayed or unclear responses from AccessOAP's IRO to their complaints.

We made suggestions to the Ministry to address these concerns. We strongly encouraged the Ministry to provide families with more information about the estimated length of time they can expect to wait for an invitation to core clinical services. Although the Ministry has said individual estimates are not feasible because there are so many variables, we continue to follow up on this lack of information, given its serious effect on so many families.

We also suggested the Ministry work with AccessOAP to improve communication about the IRO's processes and decisions. The Ministry has agreed to pursue improvements and we are receiving regular updates about its efforts.

Meanwhile, we resolved many of these complaints individually. For example:

- We helped a mother raise concerns about her son's assessment, leading to a reassessment that determined the family should get **\$30,000** more in supports.
- We helped a mother resolve a six-month delay in decisions about funding services for her son, identifying some procedural issues. The family received **\$20,000** more in supports as a result.

Children with complex special needs

We received **29** complaints in 2024-2025 from families who had difficulties accessing programs and services through the Ministry's Children With Special Needs Division.

Families often contact us about their children not getting the mental health and developmental supports they need. Many tell us they feel overwhelmed by the complex system and the emotional and financial stress it causes. Urgent help is often hard to find, especially in remote areas where there are fewer support and treatment options.

Here are some examples of how we helped individual families:

- We helped secure a supported living arrangement for a teen with complex needs after repeated hospitalizations, failed group home placements, and a violent incident involving a weapon that put his toddler sibling at risk.
- A teen who had been living in a residential placement since age 3 needed to move when the facility stopped serving children. He uses a wheelchair and requires 24-hour care, making it difficult to find an appropriate placement. After we raised the case with the Ministry, a long-term placement that could meet his needs was found.
- We worked with the Ministry and others to find a home for a 17-year-old non-verbal refugee with complex needs in Northern Ontario who had been inappropriately housed in hospital for months, after his mother told us she could no longer manage his violent behaviour and no suitable options were available.

Children's aid society involvement

In some cases, the lack of appropriate services puts children at risk of self-harm or harming others, and they are placed in the care of a children's aid society (CAS). Although we always work to resolve these cases individually, the Ombudsman has also launched investigations into the troubling systemic issues that underlie them:

- We continue to see cases where families have to surrender custody of their children to CASs to obtain the supports and care they require, an issue we have followed up on consistently since our investigation in 2005. See our update on this issue under **Investigations**.
- Our latest investigation, launched in September 2024, is looking at the provincewide practice of child welfare agencies placing children – many of whom have complex special needs – in hotels, motels, trailers

and their own offices because of a lack of appropriate homes and supports. See more on this in the **Children and Youth** chapter.

Adults with developmental disabilities

We continue to receive complaints about services and supports for adults with developmental disabilities – often from family members who are struggling with caring for them or finding adequate assistance.

We work with the families and decision-makers to resolve individual cases wherever possible. For example:

- We helped find additional support for the aging parents of a 26-year-old with a developmental disability, seizures, and other medical issues, as their own health challenges posed a risk to his care. After we intervened, the Ministry approved funding for overnight assistance at their home.
- A mother told us her own health problems left her in need of more support for her 32-year-old son, whose developmental disability and mental health issues were escalating. After we intervened, the family was referred for urgent support funding and a reassessment.

We received **43** complaints about the Ministry's decision and process for ending funding to Jake's House, a care residence for adults with developmental disabilities. The Ministry shared details with us about its decision and the current care arrangements for the residents. Our review of this issue is ongoing, including examining the Ministry's process for ensuring the safe relocation of the residents.

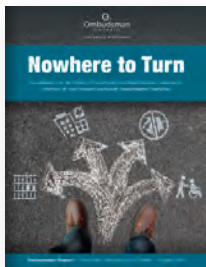
The Ombudsman has twice investigated the systemic issues that have resulted in people with developmental disabilities living in inappropriate settings such as hospitals. At the time of writing this report, his latest findings on this situation are in the process of being finalized (see more under **Investigations**).

Investigations

Cases of adults with developmental disabilities who are inappropriately housed in hospitals

and

Services for adults with developmental disabilities who are in crisis



New investigation launched:
March 2023

Previous report: *Nowhere to Turn*,
released August 2016

Investigation update: The Ombudsman's 2016 report, *Nowhere to Turn*, examined crisis cases where adults with developmental

disabilities ended up in hospitals, shelters and jails because of limited community supports and services. We have closely followed the progress of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services in implementing the Ombudsman's **60** recommendations, all of which it accepted.

However, we continued to receive complaints about the inappropriate hospitalization of adults with developmental disabilities. In some cases, individuals remain in hospitals for years, diminishing their independence and quality of life.

In March 2023, the Ombudsman launched an investigation into whether the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Health were taking adequate steps to facilitate transition of such individuals

from hospital to appropriate community supports and supported living options.

We have completed the investigative field work in this case. Once the Ombudsman's findings and recommendations have been shared with the Ministries for input, as per our normal process, his report will be finalized and published.

This investigation included more than 120 interviews with affected individuals, family members, health care professionals, advocacy groups, service agencies and government staff. We also reviewed thousands of documents in addition to online research.

We continue to receive complaints relevant to this investigation – more than **30** since 2023 – from families who are facing similar issues and are desperate for help, as well as hospital staff and support agencies. We resolve individual cases wherever possible while the investigation is pending.

Individual cases:

- We continued to follow up with the Ministry and service agencies about a 27-year-old man with a developmental disability, chronic health conditions and violent behaviours, who finally transitioned into a permanent supported living residence in 2024 after more than four and a half years residing in a hospital.
- A woman complained that her 22-year-old daughter spent more than four years in hospital due to a lack of suitable community supports, but after we connected the family with a DSO Transition Coordinator to develop a support plan, she was able to return home.
- A 59-year-old woman with developmental disabilities and complex mental health and behavioural needs spent nearly three years in hospital due to a lack of local assisted living options. After we raised her case with agencies and the Ministry and reviewed their planning efforts, she was able to move into a suitable community placement.

Care and custody of children with complex special needs



Report: *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, released May 2005

Investigation update: Twenty years ago in this investigation, we highlighted the issue of families who felt pressured to give up custody of their children with special needs in order to get them

the care they needed. The children were placed in the care of children's aid societies (CASs) even though there were no child protection concerns.

At the heart of these cases – which we have consistently flagged ever since – is a complex, difficult-to-navigate system that lacks resources for families, particularly in urgent situations.

In 2024-2025, we received such **15** cases. The families told us they surrendered custody of their children to CASs because they:

- Were desperate to secure funding for supportive living options for their children on an urgent basis and could find none (particularly in Northern Ontario);
- Felt they had no choice, because they could not access services and funding any other way;
- Were denied funding through the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services' Complex Special Needs division; or

- Were advised by agencies that the CASs could access more resources for their children than they could.

In some cases, families made this choice because their children had been discharged from an intensive treatment facility or a youth justice centre and could not be cared for at home.

We meet regularly with senior Ministry officials and have alerted them to these complaint trends. The Ombudsman's ongoing investigation into the practice of CASs placing children in hotels, motels, offices and trailers is also exploring some similar issues about available funding and supports (see more in the **Children and Youth** chapter). At the same time, we help families navigate the system to access the supports their children need wherever possible.

For example:

- The parents of a 15-year-old who had been denied Complex Special Needs funding sought our help in finding a supported living option for him, as he had been charged with assaulting one of them and it was not safe for him to remain in their home with another child. A CAS stepped in to help fund a placement while the family sought other sources of funding. After we raised this case with the Ministry, the youth was reassessed and approved for funding and supported living.
- A family in Northern Ontario was struggling to cope with the aggressive behaviour of a 10-year-old with high needs, alongside their six other children. A local CAS stepped in and moved the child to a separate apartment. After we raised the case with the Ministry, the child was admitted to an appropriate treatment facility and connected with ongoing support services.

“Thank you for helping me out with this matter. I'm really grateful for all your help.”

Case summaries

Bridging support

The mother of a 17-year-old Indigenous youth with complex special needs sought our help, concerned that her son was about to lose his residential placement. She said he was turning 18 in a month, and no plan had been created to transition him to adult services. With no other options, the mother relinquished custody to a children's aid society (CAS) even though there were no protection concerns. The CAS covered the cost of a residential placement, but additional funding for respite workers was needed.

RESULT: We raised this case with multiple agencies, leading to the CAS securing additional federal funding through a First Nations Child and Family Services program that supports youth transitioning to adult services. We also brought the case to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, resulting in the youth being transitioned to a supported living arrangement. Following our inquiries, the Ministry initiated a review of its transition planning for Indigenous youth receiving federal funding for adult services. We continue to monitor the progress of this review.

Subsidy sorted

A mother had been trying to reach her Ontario Works (OW) caseworker for more than a month about her daycare subsidy application. She was paying the full rate for her child's daycare while she waited for a response.

RESULT: After we made inquiries with OW about her case, the mother was approved for the subsidy and was issued a full refund for the more than **\$2,000** in child care costs she incurred because of the delay. The mother told us: "I sincerely don't think I would have had much luck if

it wasn't for your intervention, and consistent pressure on them to rectify the situation. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart... you made the holidays far less stressful, and helped make it possible to actually give my children gifts this year."

Unwarranted hold

An Indigenous woman who had moved from a city to a First Nations reserve was referred to us by her local legal aid clinic for help with her Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits. The ODSP had confirmed her medical eligibility, but she had been waiting for seven months and still hadn't received any support.

RESULT: We reached out to the woman's ODSP manager, who explained that the decision was put on hold because they couldn't contact her by phone. We helped them connect with her, and the woman received more than **\$6,500** in retroactive benefits, as well as ongoing monthly support. ODSP staff said they would speak to her about her rights and responsibilities. She confirmed that she was receiving the payments and thanked us for our help.

Balance reset

A mother sought our help in stopping the Family Responsibility Office (FRO) from enforcing a child support order against her from 40 years ago. She said a court had previously terminated the support order and she did not owe any money – but the FRO was still going to court to get her to pay what it said was \$35,000 in arrears. Her passport and driver's licence had been suspended as part of FRO's enforcement action.

RESULT: We discovered that the FRO was not aware of the earlier court order that terminated the woman's support obligations. After our intervention, it took steps to reverse the woman's arrears and waived the fees for reinstating her identification.



EDUCATION

Overview

We help people with problems across the education sector, from daycare and kindergarten through university. Ontarians can complain to us about school boards, school authorities, universities and colleges – and the Ontario Student Assistance Plan.

Throughout our history, the Ombudsman has always been able to take complaints about the Ministry of Education and post-secondary education programs under what is now called the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, including colleges of applied arts and technology. But school boards and universities were outside of our scope until a decade ago. We began handling cases about school boards in September 2015, and universities in January 2016.

This is our 10th report on those cases. We have helped thousands of students and their families with school boards and universities in just under 10 years. Between September 1, 2015 and the end of the fiscal year covered by this report (March 31, 2025), we received **8,499** cases about school boards. Between January 1, 2016 and the end of this fiscal year, we received **2,391** cases about universities.

In 2024-2025, we received **661** cases about the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, a steep increase from 472 the previous year. This increase, which includes a record **434** cases about colleges of applied arts and technology, is partly due to concerns arising from the federal government's cap on international student visas and its impact on college programs. Cases about universities remained steady at **274**.

Complaints and inquiries about school boards remained at near-record levels (**1,261**, second only to last year's record high of 1,334) this year, while those about the Ministry of Education dropped to **79** from 142.

Our work also had an impact on transparency and accountability at the school board level, as several of the Ombudsman's proposals for improving school board codes of conduct were incorporated into law, and we continued to promote open school board meetings.

Trespass notices

A common area of concern we see across all levels of the education sector is about trespass notices issued by educational institutions. Trespass notices can be used to limit a person's access to property or events. We routinely share best practices with school boards, universities and colleges about these notices to ensure they are fair.

For example:

- A mother complained to us after her child's school board issued her a trespass notice for posting a profane rant about a school sporting event on social media. We shared best practices with the school board, which agreed to add an expiry date to the notice and clarify which types of school events the woman was barred from attending.
- A school board said it would consider revising its approach after we raised a complaint from a mother who received a trespass notice that didn't include a time limit, options for appeal, or clear language about how she could still pick up her child from school.
- A college of applied arts and technology revised a trespass notice against a man after we flagged that its scope was unclear.
- A university agreed to review a longstanding trespass notice against a student who wanted to resume her studies online. Once we reached out, the university said it would consider updated information about her circumstances.

Trends in cases – early years through Grade 12

The most common concerns we hear about school boards, year after year, tend to be related to enrolment, student safety, and support services for students with special needs. We resolve most cases by connecting families of students with the right officials, and escalating concerns to school board leadership or the Ministry of Education as warranted.

We also recently completed the field work in the Ombudsman's investigation into the Ministry of Education's administration of its direct payment programs (read more under **Investigations**).

Special education, accommodations and student safety

Programs for students with special needs can be difficult for families to navigate. Parents and guardians often seek our help with things like student safety plans or Individual Education Plans. We liaise with school board officials to help families get the information they need.

Some examples:

- We helped a mother who had received no response to her request for additional learning supports for her son. We contacted a school board superintendent who agreed to reach out to her directly.
- We helped a grandmother meet in person with the local superintendent and school administrators to raise her concerns about her granddaughter being bullied and to develop a personal safety plan for the child.
- We helped three families who had difficulty registering their children in intensive special needs programs at a public school board when transferring from the

local Catholic school board. The families said the board raised safety concerns about the students' past behavioural incidents, and some were told they would have to wait several months to register in the program. After we intervened, the board published information online to clarify when parents can transfer their children from another board into its intensive special needs programs. We also confirmed with the Ministry of Education that school boards cannot deny registration of students based on safety concerns.

Enrolment

We frequently help parents who have difficulty enrolling their children in certain schools or programs, or transferring between school boards. For example:

- A mother who was experiencing homelessness sought our help in ensuring that her son was enrolled in high school. We facilitated communication between her and the local school board to make them aware of her exceptional circumstances.
- A mother who was trying to register her children in a new school reached out to us because she had received no response from the school board after she withdrew her children from their previous school. We ensured administrators provided her with instructions to correctly complete the students' transfer.

Last year's Annual Report noted that we received more than a dozen complaints after the **Durham District School Board** designated a "holding school" to temporarily accommodate students in areas with new housing developments. The cases raised concerns about the board's designation process and how it communicated with affected communities. In 2024-2025, we shared best practices with the board for future improvement. It has since committed to clarifying its community information and consultation processes and to developing and publishing a new school boundaries procedure.

“We appreciate the time and effort your Office has dedicated to this matter and the constructive feedback provided. [...] We value our ongoing collaboration with your Office and remain committed to reflecting and evolving our practices to better respond to the needs of the students we serve.”

— Letter to Ombudsman from Durham District School Board
Superintendent of Equitable Education and Head of Facilities Services,
February 2025

Tuition fees for temporary residents

Although school boards are permitted to charge tuition fees for children whose parents or guardians are temporary residents of Ontario, the *Education Act* outlines exemptions to this rule, such as when a parent or guardian is claiming refugee protection, or awaiting a work permit or approval of permanent resident status. As we noted in last year's Annual Report, we helped resolve complaints about this issue with several different school boards.

We have since helped three families – who were charged tuition fees even though they should have been exempt – receive refunds ranging from **\$7,000** to more than **\$15,000**. We continue to follow up with the school boards about their tuition refund policies and practices.

We also raised this matter with the Ministry of Education, which provides guidance to school boards on the eligibility criteria for tuition-free enrolment. After we shared best practices with the Ministry, it updated its guidance to school boards in August 2024, correcting some areas that were inconsistent with the *Education Act*. We continue to monitor this issue.

TVO Independent Learning Centre and credit recognition

After we identified issues with the way it awards credits for prior learning, the TVO Independent Learning Centre (TVO ILC) – a virtual online high school operated on behalf of the Ministry of Education – committed to a full review of its processes and a website update.

We stepped in after a parent told us her son, who was homeschooled, had difficulty getting consistent answers about why TVO ILC had revoked his prior learning credits after initially granting them. We shared best practices with the centre about the importance of clearly communicating its eligibility criteria and process for awarding credits, and ensuring that it aligned with Ministry policies. We continue to monitor the centre's efforts to address these issues.

Transportation

We received **102** complaints about school transportation in 2024-2025, including about busing for children with special needs, transfers between schools, and bus stop locations. We resolve these wherever possible by connecting people with the relevant officials. For example:

- A mother complained that the local school bus consortium would not provide what is known as a "courtesy seat" on the bus for her eldest child so he could ride to school with his younger siblings. She had unsuccessfully appealed the decision but was not told there was a second appeal option. After we spoke with the consortium, it agreed to hear the woman's appeal and updated its correspondence in such cases to include information about additional appeals.
- The mother of a kindergarten student who only takes the school bus occasionally complained to us after her son was put on a school bus on a day when she did not request it. The mother was not aware her son would be on the bus, and as a result, she was not waiting at the

bus stop for him. We confirmed with the superintendent that in response to the incident, the school had put new departure procedures in place.

School board governance and open meetings

School boards were recently required to update their trustee codes of conduct to reflect amendments to the *Education Act*, including the formal adoption of an integrity commissioner role for school boards. In July 2024, the government made new regulations under the *Education Act* to improve school board governance, incorporating several proposals made by the Ombudsman in a submission that spring. These included adding anti-reprisal provisions in trustee codes of conduct, and requiring references to matters like receiving gifts and disclosing confidential information.

The Ombudsman can take complaints about school board integrity commissioners, as well as the new appeal process for their code of conduct findings.

We also review complaints about closed school board meetings. Under the *Education Act*, all meetings of a board of trustees or a committee of the board must be open to the public, with some narrow exceptions. Like municipal council and committee meetings (discussed in the **Municipalities** chapter of this report), all school board meetings must follow the relevant open meeting rules to ensure transparency and accountability.

The Ombudsman has reviewed **16** meetings of **6** school boards since 2022, including **3** in 2024-2025. His findings were made public by the boards in question, and can be found in the **Education** section of our website.

The Ombudsman shares best practices or recommendations related to improving meeting procedures. For example, in December 2024, the Ombudsman suggested that the **Greater Essex County**

District School Board expand its safety protocol to address exceptional circumstances, after it relocated a June 2024 meeting due to public disruptions.

“In the face of increasing security concerns faced by the school board, it may wish to revise its safety protocol to specifically address how to respond if [...] it is necessary to reconvene a meeting in a different room. This clarity will help ensure transparency in the event the school board faces similar disruptions in the future.”

— Letter from Ombudsman Paul Dubé to Greater Essex County District School Board, December 17, 2024

Investigations

Direct payment programs for parents and students

Launched: December 2023

Investigation update: The Ombudsman launched this investigation to examine the Ministry of Education's administration of five direct payment benefit programs between 2020 and 2023, which dispersed more than \$2 billion to Ontarians.

These programs provided financial support to parents and guardians with school-aged children and youth who were affected first by labour action by education workers and then prolonged school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We received more than **200** complaints about the Ministry's administration of these programs, including

some from parents who were denied payments for children in their custody because someone else (such as a non-custodial parent) had claimed the money first. We have completed the field work for this investigation, and as of the writing of this report, the Ombudsman's findings are in the process of being drafted.

School busing issues in Toronto



Report: *The Route of the Problem*, released August 2017

Investigation update: This investigation stemmed from a bus driver shortage in the fall of 2016, resulting in more than 1,000 students in the Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board facing severe bus delays and route changes.

We are pleased to report that both the boards and their transportation consortium have substantially implemented the Ombudsman's **42** recommendations from this report. New bus contracts have been signed, a new incident reporting protocol has been established, and an updated parent guide has been created. Buses are now equipped with GPS technology, enabling real-time tracking and better identification of service delays.

Trends in cases – post-secondary

The record **434** cases we received about colleges of applied arts and technology in 2024-2025 reflect the impact of the federal government's January 2024 cap on international student visas. Colleges that relied on international student enrolment were particularly affected

by the repercussions of this, and several cut programs due to a lack of revenue.

There were **274** cases about universities, consistent with 289 in 2023-2024.

Across the post-secondary sector, the most common complaints were about course work and class accommodations, admissions, document requests, grade appeals, and requests for tuition refunds.

We helped students connect with relevant officials, or intervened to make sure their concerns were addressed.

Repercussions of changes in policy on international students

As a result of changes in federal immigration policy in 2024, the number of international students in Ontario was dramatically reduced, causing many institutions to lose revenue and cut programs. Many students whose permits had been denied or delayed sought our help in getting tuition refunds from Ontario colleges. Others had issues with obtaining the “attestation letters” Ontario required to allow them to study here. We also heard from students who were left in the lurch by program cuts.

For example:

- A prospective student from Ghana complained to us after an Ontario college took so long to confirm that he had paid a deposit on his tuition that he could not receive his attestation letter in time to study here. After

we intervened, the college acknowledged its error and refunded him the **\$9,000** he had paid.

- We received **20** complaints related to **Fleming College’s** decision to suspend a number of programs. We referred individuals to the appropriate channels to raise their concerns with the college, but continue to monitor the effects of the changes.

Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP)

We received **187** cases about OSAP loans and grants in 2024-2025, up from the previous year’s total of 160. We helped students resolve problems related to documentation requirements, delays, communication issues, and conversions of grants to loans. For example:

- When a student’s **\$19,000** grant was converted to a loan, we determined that OSAP hadn’t properly verified the student’s documents; as a result, OSAP converted the loan back to a grant.
- In two cases involving international students, we discovered that OSAP had converted grants to loans because it mistakenly calculated the students’ family incomes using outdated foreign exchange rates.
- After confusion between OSAP and the federal National Student Loans Service Centre about who would lift a restriction on a student’s account, we intervened so the student could access funding just in time to make his tuition payment.

““ I appreciate that you read my email and responded to my concerns. It makes me feel really good about the Ombudsman’s office.””

Case summaries

Without consent

A First Nations grandparent complained to us after a school board used medicated lice shampoo on one grandchild and attempted to use it on another, both times without consent. The grandparent likened this action to past treatment of Indigenous students in residential schools.

RESULT: The family raised their concerns with the board, which investigated the incident and met with them. The board ultimately apologized, made staffing changes, and implemented new staff training to avoid similar incidents in future. Ombudsman staff stayed in touch with the family throughout and reviewed the board's response. We confirmed that it had taken steps to address the grandparent's concerns.

Credit carryover

A student came to us for help after trying for months to get her out-of-province post-secondary credits recognized by her Ontario college of applied arts and technology.

RESULT: After we intervened, the college agreed to review the coursework and confirmed with the student that her out-of-province courses would count towards her Ontario program requirements.

Transcript tribulations

A man hoping to return to university needed a college transcript for courses he had taken several decades ago. He had been trying for more than two months to get a copy of his transcript, even though the college's typical turnaround time for such requests was 7-10 days.

RESULT: We raised his case with staff at the college, who acknowledged the poor communication on their part and expedited the transcript request so the man could register in time for his new course.

Work permit woes

A student from abroad whose attendance at an Ontario university was dependent on his father's federal work permit needed our help when the extension of his father's permit was delayed. If his parent could not produce a current work permit, the university would charge him the tuition fee of an international student, rather than the Ontario rate. Although the student had a letter from Canadian immigration authorities confirming his father's status and the pending work permit decision, the university rejected it.

RESULT: After we intervened and explained that the source of delay was Immigration Canada, the university agreed to accept the status letter as proof of the student's status in Ontario. His fees were reverted from the international student rate (roughly \$30,000) back to the domestic rate (roughly **\$3,000**) for the upcoming semester. This change in practice also benefited five other students in the same situation, after the university proactively let them know that it would accept a status letter in lieu of an updated work permit.



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Overview

We are the Ombudsman for all children in Ontario. We work to make sure the rights of children and youth are respected by the many government and public sector bodies that interact with them and their families.

In all cases related to children and youth, we take a child-centred approach. Our staff speak directly to young people every day about a wide range of issues affecting them. We listen to their experiences and help them find solutions.

In many cases, we connect them with the support they need, and make sure their voices are heard. We also hear from hundreds of concerned adults – such as family members, social workers, educators, police and medical professionals – about issues affecting children and youth.

We have teams who specialize in helping Indigenous, Black and 2SLGBTQIA+ children and youth, as well as blind, Deaf and deafblind children and youth who reside at provincial and demonstration schools, and youth in detention or custody at youth justice centres.

We also interact with young people and adults who work with them at events across the province, including events for Black, Indigenous and 2SLGBTQIA+ youth – and speak about our work to organizations across the child welfare, youth justice, social services and education sectors.

Stories about the results we've achieved for children and youth can be found not just in this chapter – which focuses on services provided to them under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* – but throughout this report, such as in the **Education, Social Services** and **Health** chapters.



May 17, 2024: Children and Youth Unit staff at our booth at Pride Toronto's Youth Conference, Toronto.

Children and Youth Unit

Our Children and Youth Unit was established on May 1, 2019, when the Ombudsman's jurisdiction was extended to include child protection services. From that day to the end of the fiscal year covered by this report (March 31, 2025), we have received **9,997** complaints and inquiries from children and concerned adults. We have also published reports on **4** investigations and have **2** new investigations pending (see more under **Investigations**).

In that time, we have visited hundreds of young people in foster homes, group homes, and youth justice facilities, and worked proactively with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to flag and address serious concerns affecting children across Ontario.

Our staff have specialized expertise in child welfare, residential care, and the youth justice system and can provide guidance about the best way to resolve issues brought to our attention.

Five specialized outreach teams conduct outreach and consult on individual cases and investigations. They are:

- 2SLGBTQIA+ Outreach Team
- Black Children, Youth and Families Roundtable
- Indigenous Circle
- Provincial and Demonstration Schools Outreach Team
- Youth Justice Outreach Team

Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA)

Under the CYFSA, all children and youth living in foster homes, group homes, treatment facilities, and youth justice centres have a legislated right to privately contact the Ombudsman. This includes receiving visits from our team. Students residing at any of the provincial schools for the Deaf, deafblind, blind, or students with severe learning disabilities (known as demonstration schools) have similar rights.

Over the past year, the government amended the CYFSA and its regulations to enhance rights and safeguards, several of which were called for by the Ombudsman. The CYFSA now requires service providers to inform children and youth in care or in custody about their right to contact the Ombudsman whenever they make a complaint to a service provider, and again after a children's aid society or residential licensee has reviewed their complaint.

Outreach, specialized teams and proactive work

We delivered more than **60** presentations in 2024-2025 – many directly to children and youth in care, at youth justice

centres, and in provincial and demonstration schools. Others were to staff at children's aid societies, group and foster homes and youth justice centres, as well as to conferences of workers in the child welfare and residential services field, and post-secondary students and faculty.

Whenever we speak to young people, we follow up with each of them privately to ensure they have a chance to share their concerns with us directly.

Our specialized outreach teams met with hundreds of young people at powwows across the province, at 2SLGBTQIA+ Pride events, and events like PowerUp! (an event for Black children and youth in care), and Mayfest (a Deaf community event). They also met with youth in custody at youth justice centres and with students and their parents at several provincial and demonstration schools.

Sharing expertise with our peers is another important facet of our work, and we do so regularly with fellow members of the Canadian Council of Children and Youth Advocates.



March 20, 2025: Children and Youth Unit staff at our booth at Sherbourne Health Centre's Trans and Non-Binary Career Fair, Toronto.

We also liaise with the Children and Families Chapter of the United States Ombudsman Association and the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children.

We meet regularly with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to proactively discuss important case trends and issues, as well as with organizations in the child welfare sector such as the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, the Association of Native Child and Family Service Agencies of Ontario, the Foster Parents Society of Ontario, and more.

Trends in cases

We received **2,129** complaints and inquiries in 2024-2025 regarding children and youth in care and in youth justice centres, up from 1,924 the previous year.

Most cases – **1,533** – were related to children's aid societies, an increase from last year's 1,451. Residential licensees (group homes and foster homes) were the subject of **103** cases, and there were **12** about secure treatment facilities; both down from the previous year's respective totals of 175 and 27. We also saw a significant spike in complaints and inquiries about youth justice centres in 2024-2025: There were **423** cases, more than double the previous year's 202.

Children's aid societies and residential licensees

The most common complaints we hear in this area are about young people's placements, the level of support they get from children's aid societies (CASs) and concerns about the difficulty of transitioning into adult services.

One concerning trend that we noted across the province was the practice by several agencies of placing children and youth in their care – including some with complex

special needs – in hotels, motels, offices and trailers. The Ombudsman launched an investigation on his own motion into this practice (see more under **Investigations**).

We also continued to encounter cases where 16- and 17-year-olds were not able to get the care they are entitled to when they request Voluntary Youth Service Agreements (VYSAs), the subject of our most recent investigation report (also under **Investigations**).

We resolve most of the cases we receive about child welfare agencies by listening to the young person's concerns, escalating them where necessary to the right workers or officials, and following up.

Some examples:

- A youth in care sought our help in reconnecting with her siblings, but neither she nor we could reach her case workers. We escalated the request to a supervisor at the CAS, who arranged for her to connect with her family.
- After our staff gave a presentation at a group home, one resident asked for help in reaching someone at their CAS to retrieve a bicycle they had left behind at a previous placement. We reached a CAS worker who picked up the bike and delivered it to the home.

Death and Serious Bodily Harm (DSBH) reports

Children's aid societies and residential licensees are required to notify us when they become aware of an incident of death or serious bodily harm involving a child or youth who has received services from a CAS within the past 12 months.

In 2024-2025, we received **1,767** DSBH reports about a total of **1,578** incidents, reflecting **131** deaths and **1,447** cases of serious bodily harm (this means any injury

requiring treatment beyond first aid, any injury from a physical restraint, and sexual assault).

We follow up on every case where a young person in care was injured because of a physical restraint (**40** cases this past year compared to 66 in 2023-2024), and as warranted. Although death investigations are the responsibility of the Office of the Chief Coroner, once they are completed, we can look into any outstanding concerns about the services the child received. At the time of writing this report, we have one such investigation in progress.

Youth justice centres

Young people who are in detention while awaiting trial or in custody while serving sentences under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* are held in youth justice centres. In 2024-2025, we met in person with 125 young people in these centres, part of our commitment to visit every secure youth detention and custody facility in the province over the next year.

We conducted a two-day visit at the Roy McMurtry Youth Centre in Brampton in November 2024, and toured the Arrell Youth Centre in Hamilton in February 2025. We spoke to youth there about their rights and how we can help them, and relayed their concerns to staff at the centres.

Overall, the most common youth justice complaints were about health care, living conditions, and staff conduct. We resolved these by flagging them to facility staff, and in some cases escalating concerns to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

Some examples:

- We made inquiries to confirm that a youth's school credits had been correctly added to his academic record when he was transferred from one youth centre to another.

- We prompted a youth centre to review its food handling practices after a youth who requested a religious diet told us the facility was not respecting the required food preparation protocols.
- We helped a youth get transferred to a centre that was closer to his family, after he submitted three transfer requests and got no response.
- A youth centre added another staff member to monitor a young person who told us he had been threatened by another youth in the same unit and feared for his safety.

Strip searches

We also conducted a review of the Ministry's response to concerns raised about strip searches at youth justice facilities – including some that drew the attention of the judge in the trial of several teen girls charged in the death of an unhoused Toronto man. Several media reports highlighted the routine use of strip searches of youth as young as 13, strip searches conducted contrary to Ministry policies, and the Ministry's lack of data on the subject.

We confirmed that the Ministry is taking steps to ensure consistency and oversight across all youth justice centres. It is developing a standardized training regime for strip searches, and working on a new process to collect data on this issue. We are closely monitoring these efforts.

Investigations

We have published **4** investigation reports regarding children and youth in care or custody since 2019. As with all our investigations, we follow up on the implementation of the Ombudsman's recommendations. All of the recommendations from our first investigation – *A Voice Unheard: Brandon's Story* (regarding the Children's Aid Society of Toronto) – have been implemented. Updates on the others are detailed in this section.

Two new investigations are pending at the time of this report:

- Child welfare agencies placing youth in unlicensed settings; and
- Services provided by a child welfare agency prior to the death of a child (for reasons of confidentiality, no further details can be published about this investigation until it is completed).

Child welfare agencies placing youth in unlicensed settings

Launched: September 2024

Investigation update: This ongoing investigation is focused on the practice of child welfare agencies placing young children and teens – many of whom have complex special needs – in hotels, motels, offices and trailers. Prior to launching the investigation, we visited several of these children and youth and observed their living conditions.

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 high needs and/or challenging behaviours.

As the investigation progresses, we are:

- Speaking with children and youth who are directly affected, using a child-centred, trauma-informed and culturally sensitive approach;
- Conducting interviews with organizations across the children's services sector as well as officials in the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services; and
- Reviewing documents from the relevant organizations.

“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. [...] It is our intent to determine why this is happening and, if applicable, make recommendations to ensure the rights of these vulnerable young people are respected.”

— Ombudsman Paul Dubé, press release announcing investigation, September 5, 2024

Services provided to missing and at-risk Indigenous girl



Report: *Missing in Inaction: Misty's Story*, released April 2023

Investigation update:

The Ombudsman made **58** recommendations as a result of this investigation, which detailed the experience of 13-year-old “Misty,” an Indigenous girl from a northern First

Nation who went missing several times while in the care of a foster agency in a southwestern Ontario city in 2020.

Misty was placed with Johnson Children's Services Inc. foster homes in a city far from home because her local Indigenous child and family well-being agency, Anishinaabe Abinoojii Family Services (AAFS), could not find an appropriate place for her. During the time she went missing, she was physically and sexually assaulted and suffered a drug overdose.

Both agencies, along with the children's aid society (CAS) in the city (unnamed to protect Misty's identity) accepted

all of the Ombudsman's recommendations to improve their practices and ensure the rights of Indigenous youth like Misty are respected.

The city CAS has implemented the 5 recommendations directed at it. Johnson Children's Services, the subject of 31 recommendations, is no longer licensed. AAFS continues to make progress in implementing the 23 recommendations that apply to it. The agency is in the final stages of a full policy review process and has implemented several new procedures related to service delivery. We continue to work collaboratively with this agency and monitor its progress on the recommendations.

Services provided under a Voluntary Youth Services Agreement



Report: *Rights Unrecognized: Mia's Story*, released April 2024

Investigation update: This investigation examined the services provided to 16-year-old “Mia” by the York Region Children's Aid Society before she died suddenly in 2020. In late 2019, Mia had asked

to be placed in foster care, but the CAS had refused and suggested she go to a shelter.

The Ombudsman found the CAS had failed to provide her with the protection services to which 16- and 17-year-olds are entitled under Voluntary Youth Services Agreements (VYSAs). He made **20** recommendations to the CAS, including that it improve staff training in the use of such agreements and ensure the rights of the teens who seek them are respected.

York Region CAS accepted all the recommendations and has made good progress to date. This includes the creation of a new policy statement specifically geared to this age group of young people, a revised VYSA procedure, and staff training initiatives.

Broader impact: Although focused on one CAS, this investigation has resulted in improvements across the province. We identified similar issues in cases from across the province involving teens seeking VYSAs, and flagged **90** of these cases to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

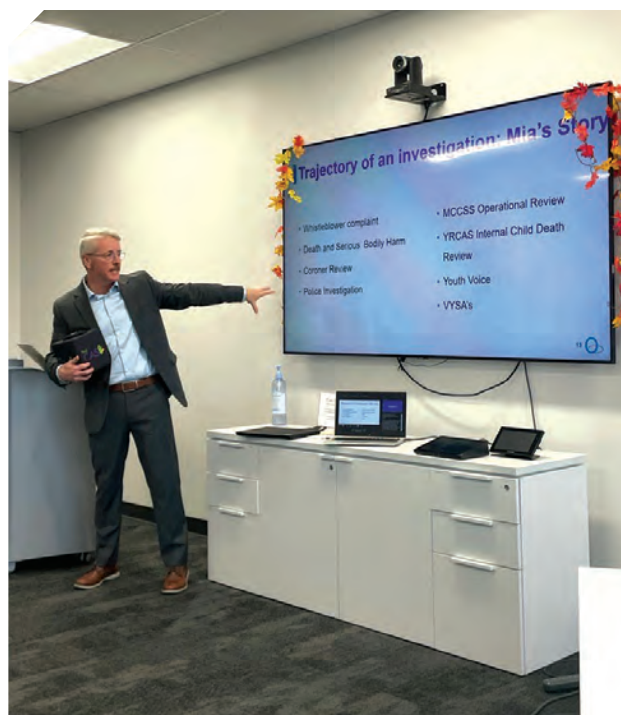
For example, some CASs were suggesting shelters as adequate housing, failing to consider whether the youth in question needed protection, not notifying the Office of the Children's Lawyer as required when a VYSA is requested, or simply not taking the youth's voice into account. The Ministry committed to improving education about the administration of VYSAs.

It has since reviewed the VYSA policies of all CASs and Indigenous child and family well-being agencies, and updated its website to clarify expectations and requirements around VYSAs. As well, it is working with the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies to develop resources specific to working with 16- and 17-year-olds. We are very pleased with the action the Ministry has taken in response to our concerns.

We continue to monitor this progress and liaise with the organizations that have brought VYSA concerns to our attention.

Individual cases: We helped some 16- and 17-year-olds who still had difficulties obtaining VYSAs in 2024-2025. For example:

- A teen sought a VYSA after fleeing to a shelter to escape physical abuse by a parent, but was told by shelter staff and a CAS that she didn't qualify because



November 21, 2024: Children and Youth Unit Investigator James McGuirk gives a presentation to the Peel Children's Aid Society, Mississauga.

her father had said she could return home. After we stepped in, the CAS notified the Office of the Children's Lawyer as required, and police helped her retrieve her belongings from the family home. She was approved for a VYSA, received financial support, and moved into stable housing.

- A CAS denied a VYSA to a youth who had been living outside the family home for four years. Despite documented abuse in the home, a CAS specialist's opinion was that he could return home. We determined that the specialist had never spoken to the youth, which we flagged to CAS leadership. The CAS offered the youth a VYSA three days later, and he received financial support to live on his own.

Closure of youth justice centres



Report: *Lost Opportunities*, released April 2022

Investigation update: The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services accepted all **16** of the Ombudsman's recommendations arising from our investigation of the sudden closure of two youth justice centres, in Kenora and Thunder Bay, in March 2021. The investigation revealed that the planning of the closures was shrouded in secrecy and failed to consider the best interests of the residents, including Indigenous and transgender youths.

The Ministry has taken some significant steps to transform how it approaches such closures, including consulting with staff, other jurisdictions, the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation and Indigenous partners to identify best practices. It also revised several related policies and procedures.

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The Ministry is creating a best practices manual to guide staff in future program or facility closures, which it says will ensure a more transparent and youth-centred approach to closures, and sufficient time for communication with relevant youth justice and facility staff and interested parties.

As we noted in last year's Annual Report, we raised concerns with senior Ministry staff about another youth justice centre closure in the spring of 2024, which lacked transparency and communication with affected parties. They told us these issues will be addressed in their best practices manual, which is expected to be finalized this year.



August 2, 2024: A member of the Children and Youth Unit's Indigenous Circle team at our booth at the Gathering of Our People, Moose Cree First Nation.

Case summaries



Coming of age

A group home director contacted us about an Indigenous youth with special needs who had been in the home's care for seven years. The youth was nearing her 18th birthday, and the director was concerned that nothing had been done to ensure that she was transitioned to adult support services by referral to Developmental Services Ontario. He noted that normally, this is done through a children's aid society case worker, and the process starts at age 16.

We reached out to the Indigenous child, youth and family well-being agency that was involved with the youth, and learned that it had only recently assigned a case worker to her, and had not developed a plan to transition her to adult services.

RESULT: The service director at the well-being agency committed to reviewing the youth's transition plan and addressing her medical needs, which included hearing aids, glasses and braces. We followed up with the youth and confirmed that she had received hearing aids, started orthodontic treatment, and moved into an adult home while staying connected to her former group home.

Healthy review

A young person in a youth justice centre contacted us after an incident where mechanical restraints were used on him. He complained that he was never assessed by the health care team at the centre after this use of restraints, which is his right and normally required by policy.

RESULT: We reviewed the incident and found that the facility had not followed its policy. We raised this case with staff at the centre, who acknowledged their error. They also updated their process and shared a memo with staff to prevent similar errors in the future.

Hair help

A group of nine youths detained at a youth justice centre complained to us that they could not get hair oil. They complained that this left them with dry hair that was prone to breakage.

RESULT: We made inquiries with the centre and discovered it had provided these youths with an out-of-date form for

requesting hygiene products like this – and hair oil was available on the updated form. Once it implemented the right form, we confirmed that the youths were able to obtain the product they needed.

Continued care

A young woman who had been in the care of a children's aid society (CAS) sought our help because she was not provided with continued care and support – including mental health supports – after she turned 18, even though she was entitled to it. She was also denied help with an application to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP).

At the time, the province had issued a moratorium preventing CASs from ending services for young people over 18 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has since continued services for those transitioning out of CASs up to the age of 23.

RESULT: After we raised the case with senior staff at the CAS in question, they agreed to help the young woman with her OSAP application and even cover the cost of the first semester of her college program. They also agreed to cover the cost of an assessment for mental health help and provide her with the support funding that she should have received between November 2022 and April 2023, had she not been inappropriately discharged from CAS care.

“Thank you so much for reaching out and helping to get this issue resolved. I really appreciate what your office does to help when the situation requires it.”



MONEY AND PROPERTY

Overview and trends in cases

This category includes complaints and inquiries about provincial ministries, agencies and corporations that deal with financial and property matters, such as the Ministry of Finance, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO), the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG), and the Ontario Cannabis Store.

It also covers cases related to organizations under the Ministry of the Attorney General, such as the Landlord and Tenant Board, and the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, which handles money and property for people who are unable to do so themselves.

Cases about these organizations declined overall in the past year. There were **23** cases about the LCBO and also **23** about MPAC, whose provincewide property assessments were paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Complaints about the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB), part of Tribunals Ontario, decreased in 2024-2025, to **971** cases, from the previous year's 1,284. The dominant issue continued to be delays in getting LTB hearings or orders. Still, Tribunals Ontario and the LTB continued to make progress on implementing the recommendations from the Ombudsman's 2023 report on our investigation into delays at the LTB. In a similar vein, we proactively shared best practices with the Rental Housing Enforcement Unit of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (see more under **Investigations**).

Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee

The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT) helps manage money and property matters for people

who are incapable of doing so for themselves. We liaise regularly with the OPGT to discuss complaint trends and the OPGT's efforts to improve services for the vulnerable people it serves.

In 2024-2025, we received **195** cases about the OPGT, consistent with 199 the previous year. Complaints were primarily about slow service, poor communication, and disagreements with OPGT decisions. We resolved such cases by facilitating communication with OPGT staff and raising concerns with senior officials.

For example:

- With our help, the OPGT reviewed and increased a woman's monthly allowance to **\$390**, to better support her needs.
- A man complained to us that he was struggling to afford groceries on his OPGT allowance. We encouraged the OPGT to find a more affordable cellphone and Internet plan for the man, which reduced those costs by more than \$100 a month.
- We helped a man connect with the OPGT about a missing cheque for **\$149**, which it replaced once it determined it had been lost in the mail.

OLG Super Bowl winnings delays

Over the past year, we monitored the OLG's response to complaints received about delays in accessing winnings from the OLG's 2024 "Super Bowl LVIII" promotion – an issue highlighted in our Annual Report last year. New players complained to us about significant delays in getting their bank accounts verified as part of the withdrawal process after the OLG could not keep pace with these requests given the popularity of the promotion. Many also complained about the lack of information from the OLG about processing times. We raised these concerns with the OLG, which has since improved communication with affected players, increased capacity to process withdrawal requests during high-demand

periods, and changed its internal processes to prevent delays from recurring.

Ministry of Finance - Ontario First Nations HST rebate program

We continue to follow up with the Ministry of Finance about ongoing delays in reimbursements under the Ontario First Nations HST rebate program, which allows eligible First Nations individuals, bands, and band councils to claim a rebate of the provincial portion of the HST (8%) paid on qualifying purchases made off-reserve.

The Ministry has acknowledged delays in issuing rebates and committed to improvement by, for example, exploring resource strategies and examining opportunities to modernize and digitize the program to help it meet its 8-week service standard. We are actively monitoring these efforts.

Investigations

Delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board



Report: *Administrative Justice Delayed, Fairness Denied*, released May 2023

Investigation update: This investigation looked into whether the Ministry of the Attorney General and Tribunals Ontario were taking adequate action to address the

delays and backlogs at the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB).

We found that delays and backlogs pervaded almost every aspect of the Board's process, from the scheduling of

hearings to order production, affecting tens of thousands of landlords and tenants. These delays worsened over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic when the LTB suspended in-person hearings and all hearings related to eviction proceedings.

The Ombudsman made **61** recommendations to improve the LTB's processes and address delays. The LTB, Tribunals Ontario and the Ministry accepted all of the recommendations.

Since then, they have taken action on many of them to reduce backlogs and make LTB services more efficient. The LTB now has 81 full-time and 52 part-time adjudicators, and is continuously monitoring the status of recruitments and appointments to ensure a sufficient complement is maintained. They are now scheduling more than 1,000 tenant matters each month. They have also taken action to ensure that the Board is better able to provide services in French.

Updates to the Tribunals Ontario portal were made to help with the application process, such as screening applications for errors so they can be corrected before a hearing takes place.

The LTB has also provided guidance to members to help them produce orders in a timely manner. Vice Chairs also now directly monitor the volume of outstanding orders for members on a monthly basis.

The province's recent *Bill 227, Cutting Red Tape, Building Ontario Act, 2024*, will, among other things, allow the LTB

to expedite certain files and allow matters to be reassigned if decisions aren't provided within a reasonable time.

As a result of the ongoing efforts made to address our recommendations, the LTB is now resolving more cases than it is receiving, which is helping to reduce the overall backlog. Application processing times have also improved to an average of 3-7 months, compared to 8-10 months in prior years.

In 2024-2025, we received **971** cases about the LTB. Of those, **542** involved complaints about delays. We continue to work closely with the Ministry, Tribunals Ontario and the LTB to ensure that their changes have the desired impact on backlogs and delays and result in a more timely process.

Individual cases: We continue to help people resolve their issues with the LTB. For example:

- A landlord had been waiting eight months for a hearing at the LTB. After we raised his case with administrators, a hearing was scheduled.
- A tenant's lawyer asked us to help because the LTB had not responded to his request for the recording of a hearing. After we intervened, he received it.
- After we flagged the case of a landlord who had been waiting close to two years to reschedule a hearing to LTB officials, they gave him the first available timeslot.

Rental Housing Enforcement Unit

In addition to our work with the LTB, we also proactively

“ I cannot thank you enough. This was stalled and not going anywhere until you got involved. Honestly, so impressed with how the process worked through your office.” ”

shared best practices with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Rental Housing Enforcement Unit (RHEU), in light of media reports about its caseload and track record, as well as some complaints and inquiries. The RHEU's role is to enforce the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants under the *Residential Tenancies Act*. Our suggestions included ways for the RHEU to raise their public profile and review and investigate complaints more efficiently.

Case summaries

Pending licence

A financial advisor who had paid the fee to renew his licence with the Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario (FSRA) complained to us after waiting more than two months for a confirmation from them. He told us he was frustrated because without his licence, he could not continue to serve clients looking to set up life insurance policies.

RESULT: The man's new licence was issued on the same day we made inquiries with the FSRA.

Misrouted rent

A landlord came to us for help after her tenant finally paid her overdue rent directly to the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) – and the money was sent to the previous owner of the building instead.

RESULT: After we stepped in, the LTB agreed to pay the landlord the overdue rent while it recouped the payment it had mistakenly sent to the previous owner. We also worked with the LTB to implement best practices to prevent similar administrative errors in the future.

Service connection

The family of a client of the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT) told us they were alarmed to hear from their relative's cellphone provider that their bills – which the OPGT is supposed to pay on the client's behalf – had not been paid in several months. The family paid the arrears to prevent a service disconnection, but told us OPGT staff never responded to them when they asked them to look into what happened.

RESULT: We made inquiries and discovered the cellphone provider had switched the account to online billing without notifying the OPGT. The OPGT arranged to pay the bills and advised the family they would be reimbursed.

Cost of ownership

A woman contacted us for help in correcting the ownership information for her deceased parents' house, which had been in the family for close to 50 years but had mistakenly been left in the previous owner's name at the time they bought it. The error in the land registry documents resulted in the wrong name on their property tax bills – but the woman's parents had simply continued to pay the taxes without attempting to change it.

The woman told us she tried for years to get clarification from her municipality about the incorrect property tax bills. She said for lack of answers, she stopped paying them. The municipality warned her it could put the home up for auction if she did not pay.

RESULT: We raised her case with provincial officials, who explained she could apply to correct the land registry documents to show the current owner. We also raised the issue with the municipality, which agreed to work with the woman on a plan to pay her overdue property taxes.



TRANSPORTATION

Overview and trends in cases

We help Ontarians with a wide range of concerns related to driving, roads and public transit. The Ministry of Transportation is responsible for many of the programs and agencies that people complain to us about in this area, such as driver and vehicle licensing, highways, and public transit services like Metrolinx and GO Transit.

In 2024-2025, we received **528** complaints and inquiries related to transportation – a significant decrease from 718 in 2023-2024. This is largely due to the marked decline in complaints about DriveTest, thanks to efforts by that agency and the Ministry to reduce backlogs in booking road tests, which was a key topic of complaint in previous years. We received **146** complaints about DriveTest this fiscal year, but none related to road test backlogs.

Driver licensing issues

We helped many drivers with licensing problems, like suspensions and issues related to medical reviews. In a few cases, we helped people with vision impairments who required special exemptions to drive, including getting their licences reinstated or clarifying processes to reduce the number of medical reports they were required to submit.

Some other examples:

- A man whose licence had been suspended for medical reasons sought our help in having it reinstated. He had had the required medical tests within the required time frame, but the Ministry's review of his documents was not completed until after the time frame lapsed. We helped him get his licence reinstated without further testing – and a refund for the tests he had booked.
- We helped a member of the military returning to Ontario who was unable to update his licence after

running into issues with his name being spelled differently on various identity cards.

- Our intervention ensured a woman's commercial licence was quickly reinstated after it was incorrectly downgraded to a G licence without notice.

We also highlighted apparent inconsistencies and unfairness in the application of regulations and legislation, and helped drivers with licences from outside Canada navigate the process to get their driving experience recognized.

Licences for drivers from outside Canada

We often hear from drivers from outside of Canada who are denied Ontario licences, or treated as new drivers because their international experience is not recognized. We help by sharing information or escalating their concerns to the Ministry.

In one such case, after a 17-year-old complained that his foreign experience was not recognized, the Ministry clarified its policy about recognizing foreign driving credentials for novice learners to ensure these new Ontarians can book driving tests.

Some other examples:

- After DriveTest refused to accept a man's Pakistan driver's licence because of a blurry photo, we stepped in

to ensure his foreign experience was recognized so he could get his Ontario licence.

- We helped a man whose new Ontario licence – issued to replace his licence from another country – went astray. We discovered the Ministry had mailed it to an old address it had on file for him. We confirmed that he received a new one, and that the one sent to the wrong address was cancelled so it could not be misused.

New tow truck driver and operator requirements

We were contacted by tow truck drivers and operators after their applications for certification were denied under the new *Towing and Storage Safety and Enforcement Act, 2021*, which came into force in January 2024. The law requires drivers and operators to get certified under the Act, but certain criminal convictions and court orders (such as weapons bans) disqualify them, and there is a limited appeal process. We inquired with the Ministry of Transportation, which confirmed that the denials were legitimate. The legislation had also been upheld by the courts as reasonable for public safety. However, in light of our inquiries, the Ministry updated its website to clarify that it would review instances where drivers believed there were mistakes on their files, such as being denied a licence for a criminal record when no such record exists.

“Your attention to detail and comprehensive approach has provided me with clear insights and helped me move forward... I truly appreciate the effort, patience and professionalism you've demonstrated throughout this process. Thank you for your hard work and dedication.”

Ignition Interlock Program

We uncovered a data issue affecting people with alcohol-related driving offences who were denied access to this program. The program allows eligible drivers to have their licence suspensions reduced and resume driving sooner if they use a device in their car that prevents it from starting if alcohol is detected on their breath. We discovered that some people's cases had been misidentified as drug-related convictions, which are not eligible for this program. We worked with the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of the Attorney General to identify the cause of this issue and to try to prevent it from happening again.

Case summaries

Breathe easy

Tired of the GO trains that often sat idling near his home, a man asked us for help in raising the matter with Metrolinx. He told us he believed the fumes were causing him health issues.

RESULT: We spoke to Metrolinx staff, who confirmed GO trains do not idle for more than 30 minutes at a time. In light of our inquiries, Metrolinx reviewed other possible locations for the trains to idle. Metrolinx officials also provided the man with an air purifier and extra replacement filters as a goodwill gesture.

Sticky situation

A man complained to us that he was wrongly charged more than **\$1,800** for the licence plate stickers on his heavy commercial vehicle. He said the charges should not apply to him, as his vehicles are only used seasonally and not for the full year.

RESULT: We contacted senior officials at the Ministry of Transportation, who reviewed the use of the man's vehicles. Ministry staff confirmed that the charges were incorrect, and the man received a full refund.

Secret sale

A man visited a ServiceOntario location to renew his licence plate after he tried to renew it online without success. He was shocked to learn that the vehicle was no longer registered in his name and that ServiceOntario records indicated it had been sold and scrapped. He called us for help in determining how such an error could happen.

RESULT: We spoke with ServiceOntario and Ministry of Transportation officials, who verified it was not an error on their end. Rather, the man appeared to be a victim of identity fraud, and he was advised to contact police, who launched an investigation. In the meantime, we confirmed that he was able to re-register the vehicle in his name and renew his plate.



EMPLOYMENT

Overview and trends in cases

Most of the complaints and inquiries we handle regarding employment are related to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development and the programs and agencies it is responsible for. These include the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), the Occupational Health and Safety Branch, Skilled Trades Ontario, and the WSIB's internal ombudsman, the Fair Practices Commission.

In 2024-2025, we received **470** cases about the Ministry and its programs, a slight increase from 427 the previous year. The WSIB accounted for the bulk of these, with **213** cases, consistent with 218 the previous year. Complaints about the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal declined from 57 in 2023-2024 to **37** in 2024-2025.

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

Cases we receive about the WSIB often involve delays, poor communication, or disputes about claim decisions. We facilitate communication and make inquiries with the WSIB, and when needed, refer complainants to the Office of the Worker Advisor (OWA) or the Fair Practices Commission. For example:

- The daughter of a man who made multiple WSIB claims dating back to the 1990s sought our help because neither she nor her father were able to determine the status of the claims. We helped them get a detailed update from the WSIB on the man's claims, and connected him with the OWA for support if they chose to file any appeals.
- A man told us his compensation claim for a 2014 injury had stalled for nearly 10 years, and he couldn't reach his OWA advisor. We discovered there had been frequent turnover at the OWA and the man's advisor had been absent for several months. The man told us that thanks to our inquiries, a manager had prioritized his file.

Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program

Cases about the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) jumped to **57** in 2024-2025, from just 4 the previous year. This program assesses and nominates people for permanent residence in Ontario based on their skills and experience, although the federal government makes final determinations to approve permanent residence.

Most of the complaints we heard were about delays – several from frustrated applicants who waited for up to a year for a decision from the OINP. Some cases were urgent – for example:

- An applicant contacted us urgently as their work permit was about to expire and they had been waiting eight months for a decision from the OINP. A week after our inquiries, the OINP confirmed the application was approved.

We are monitoring the impact of delays at the OINP, and reviewing its decision-making processes more broadly, while following up directly with the Ministry on individual cases.

Case summaries

Translation error

A paralegal for an employer complained to us that a decision by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) on the case of a worker from Quebec who was injured in Ontario took almost a year to process because of translation delays. She said many of the documents in the case were in French and the WSIB had to have them translated into English. The claim was submitted in December 2023, but there was no decision until November 2024.

RESULT: Our French Language Services Unit intervened in this case and found that the delay was due to a lack of French-speaking staff at the WSIB after the bilingual caseworker on the file left. The translation was also unusually

delayed because of administrative errors. The WSIB has since implemented measures to prevent this from happening again, including ensuring that its translation service has processes in place to confirm receipt of large and urgent documents.

Trade trouble

An electrician whose work experience was from outside Canada was frustrated by the length of time Skilled Trades Ontario (STO) was taking to process his application to become a certified construction and maintenance electrician. He told us it wasn't clear what documentation he had to submit to receive his qualification.

RESULT: Our review found that the man's application was missing necessary paperwork to document that his experience met trade standards. At our request, STO staff contacted him directly to explain what was missing, helped him finish his application, and expedited it once the paperwork was complete.

Respectfully reviewed

A Métis man sought our help after he was cut off from Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) assistance two weeks after getting approved for it, because his employer offered him the opportunity to take on lighter work. He told us that he felt that his Métis status was being ignored by WSIB officials, and he felt disrespected when his concerns were met with a service restriction that limited him to written correspondence only. He told us he escalated his concerns to the Fair Practices Commission (FPC) but never heard back.

RESULT: We contacted the FPC and confirmed that it had reached out to the man and had made inquiries with the WSIB. Shortly thereafter, the WSIB reinstated his benefits, approved one month's pay to recoup the loss of earnings, authorized physiotherapy and a knee brace, and reassigned his case to the Complex Injury Adjudication Unit. The man confirmed he had started physiotherapy and gotten a knee brace, thanked us for our help and told us he felt he was now being treated with more respect.



HEALTH

Overview and trends in cases

We help Ontarians with problems related to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Long-Term Care – and their programs, including those responsible for long-term care inspections and funding of drugs and medical devices. We also take complaints about the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

There are some areas of the health care system where we can't intervene directly, although we receive many complaints and inquiries about them. For instance, we received **489** cases about hospitals, and **57** about long-term care homes. We refer complainants in these cases to the Patient Ombudsman, which handles matters related to patient care. We also received **22** cases about public health units in 2024-2025, which are outside of our jurisdiction and neither we nor the Patient Ombudsman can review.

In June 2024, the province established Ontario Health atHome, a new division of Ontario Health that co-ordinates and provides home health care services, including care plans, nursing and therapy services and medical equipment. We have limited oversight of Ontario Health atHome and received **23** complaints about it in 2024-2025. When we receive complaints about the professional, personal support, or homemaking services it provides, we refer individuals to the Patient Ombudsman.

Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP)

We received **65** cases in 2024-2025 about OHIP, consistent with 62 the previous year. We heard from people who had difficulty renewing their health cards, obtaining coverage, and understanding their eligibility for services.

For example:

- After a transgender youth had issues renewing his health card and was told it would take 10 weeks to review, we stepped in immediately to get the renewal expedited so the youth could get help with his ongoing health issues.
- We made sure an Ontario resident studying in another province was able to renew her OHIP card, after she had originally been told to submit unnecessary information.

Drug programs

This year, we received **54** cases about Ontario's drug programs, compared to 47 in 2023-2024. These included **8** about the Exceptional Access Program (EAP), and **35** about the Trillium Drug Program. Many were about communication issues, delays, or decisions not to provide funding for specific medications.

For example:

- We helped a man with a developmental disability get coverage for his medication and a reimbursement of **\$1,800**. Our inquiries resulted in the EAP reviewing additional information from his doctor under the special case review process.
- We escalated a senior's application for the Seniors Co-Payment Program for drug expenses to Ministry of Health officials, flagging that he could face serious health consequences if he could not pay for his medication. His application was expedited and approved.

Investigations

Oversight of long-term care homes during COVID-19



Report: *Lessons for the Long Term*, released September 2023

Investigation update: The Ombudsman launched this investigation in June 2020 on his own initiative after shocking conditions in five long-term care homes were revealed by Canadian Armed Forces

personnel who had been called in to support the homes during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our investigation uncovered serious problems with the Ministry of Long-Term Care's pandemic preparedness and inspection process. The Ombudsman made **76** recommendations aimed at ensuring the safety of long-term care residents and staff in future emergencies.

Since the release of our report, the Ministry's actions in response to these recommendations include:

- Creating a plan to keep its inspector staffing at full complement;
- Hiring staff with the expertise to inspect infection prevention and control;
- Introducing a policy on inspector testing and the movement of inspectors between homes; and
- Committing to ensuring that residents can always access complaint avenues.

While the implementation of some recommendations remains a work in progress, the Ombudsman is satisfied that significant corrective actions have been taken to improve the Ministry's posture for the next pandemic. We continue to work with Ministry staff and to monitor their efforts to address the remaining recommendations.

Oversight of complaints about ambulance services



Report: *Oversight 911*, released May 2021

Investigation update: The Ministry of Health accepted all **53** of the Ombudsman's recommendations in the wake of this investigation, aimed at improving how it receives and

reviews complaints and reports about ambulance services. In the four years since, it has improved its public communications, internal complaint processes, recruitment and training.

These changes give the public a better idea of how complaints are handled, and improvements in recruitment and training have positively impacted the land and air ambulance branches of the Ministry.

During the 2024-2025, we received **7** complaints about delayed investigations and communication with complainants. We continue to escalate these individual files as necessary.

Case summaries

Fiscal fumble

A woman complained to us that the Trillium Drug Program made a mistake in calculating her out-of-pocket costs because they used an income tax return from the wrong year.

RESULT: After speaking with program staff, we confirmed they were required to use information from the previous tax year, but their forms did not clarify this or include clear reassessment instructions. As a result, they updated their informational documents and application form to include these details.

Decades later

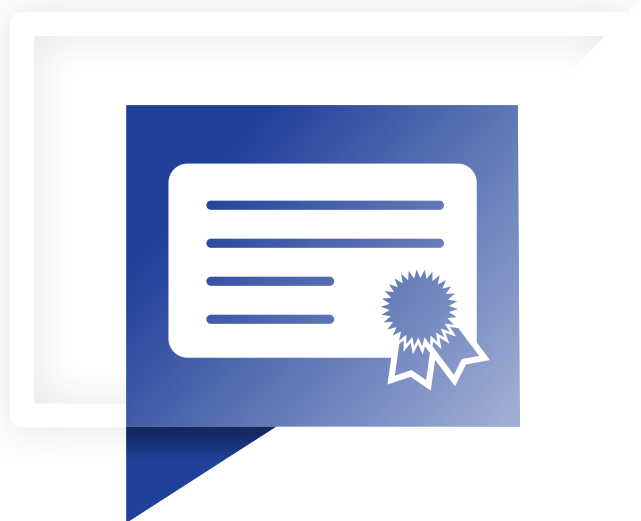
A man who was born in Portugal but has been a Canadian citizen for more than 50 years sought our help in renewing his health card. He did not have his original citizenship documents, and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan had extended his coverage to allow him time to get replacements. However, he had not been able to do so, due to serious health issues.

RESULT: After we raised the man's case with Ministry of Health officials, his request for another extension was processed on an urgent basis, and he thanked us for our help.

Language bridge

A Russian-speaking woman came to us for help in dealing with her daughter's care through Ontario Health atHome. Since this matter falls under the mandate of the Patient Ombudsman, we referred her to them. However, she struggled to navigate the automated phone system and could not reach a live representative who could help her in Russian.

RESULT: We reached out to the Patient Ombudsman's office to explain the woman's situation. They called her the same day with the help of an interpreter.



CERTIFICATES AND PERMITS

Overview and trends in cases

We help people with a wide range of problems with all kinds of documents that are important to daily life – including birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, as well as permits issued by provincial and municipal agencies.

Most of the complaints and inquiries we receive relate to ServiceOntario, which provides all types of identity documents, and the Office of the Registrar General, which issues birth and death certificates. In 2024-2025, we received **218** cases about ServiceOntario, a slight increase from 187 in the previous year, and **85** cases about the Registrar General, down from 109 in 2023-2024.

Document delays and confusion

Many of the cases we handle are about delays people experience in accessing official documents – which often affect their access to other services, including health care. We often help by finding the source of the delay and connecting people with relevant officials.

Some examples:

- A mother was unable to enrol her son in a new school while she waited for months to obtain his birth certificate from the Registrar General, whose website said only that the file was “in progress.” We discovered her application had actually been stalled because of errors, and due to the urgency of the situation, Registrar General staff contacted her directly to sort them out.
- We helped a woman finally get her marriage certificate after months of miscommunication, including a request that she return a document to the Registrar General that she had never received.

- A woman discovered that her granddaughter's birth had never been registered when the girl was in the care of a children's aid society. We uncovered an error on the original application and ensured it was expedited so the child could be registered for school.
- A young man who had previously been in the care of a children's aid society had trouble getting an Ontario Photo Card because the agency hadn't provided him with the documents he needed. We stepped in to get him an appointment with ServiceOntario to review what documents he did have, and he received his card.

We often receive complaints from people who don't know how to update their documents after accidental errors in filling them out.

For example:

- We helped a woman whose application to change the last name of her three children was repeatedly rejected for missing information. Each reapplication cost her time and money. After we intervened, Registrar General staff agreed to work with her directly to ensure she provided all the information they required.

Access to services for Indigenous communities

In last year's Annual Report, we described our work with Indigenous communities to address complaints about administrative barriers to obtaining birth certificates, which are generally required to access government services and programs. Many communities don't have nearby ServiceOntario locations, which makes it difficult to get help.

Over the past year, we worked with officials across multiple branches of the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement to explore solutions. We continue to follow up with senior staff and with a political territorial organization representing the affected Indigenous communities.

Case summaries

Certified win

A man with a winning lottery ticket came to us for help after the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation refused to release the six-figure prize to him because the only identification he had was an old and damaged birth certificate. He told us he had tried for months to get a new one, but the Office of the Registrar General insisted on birth and parental information that he was unable to provide.

RESULT: We made extensive inquiries with ServiceOntario and the Deputy Registrar General in this case. Ultimately, ServiceOntario matched his signature with one on the application for his old birth certificate, and provided him with a new one. He was then able to get the required photo ID and claim his lottery winnings.

**GOOD
TO KNOW**



Cases related to driver's licences can be found in the **Transportation** chapter of this report. Cases related to health cards can be found in the **Health** chapter.



Payment found

After four years of trying to change her legal last name, including a trip to India to get an affidavit verifying her name change from a previous marriage, a woman came to us for help.

RESULT: We discovered the woman's file was stalled because her payment to the Registrar General for the name change had not been registered. A day after we stepped in, the Registrar General confirmed that her file was processed, and the change of name certificate would be sent to the woman via courier.



Resolved with gratitude

A woman came to us after trying for nine months to get an error corrected on her mother's death certificate. Her mother's birthplace was incorrect on the document, and this was causing issues in managing her estate.

RESULT: We raised the issue with officials at the Registrar General, who agreed to make the correction and to contact the woman directly to explain and apologize for the delay. We followed up after the matter was resolved, and the woman thanked the Ombudsman staff member who worked on her file. She said she was grateful for "his professionalism, hard work, and efforts" and noted that his "ongoing communication with me, and exceptional effort and proactive service to escalate this matter to a senior contact at the Registrar's office resulted in a quick resolution."



“Your service has been incredibly helpful, and I genuinely appreciate the comprehensiveness and value of the information you have provided. Your time in listening, advising, and educating me has been invaluable. I now feel more confident about how to navigate the steps I need to take. I cannot thank you enough for your time and support.”



FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES

Overview and trends in cases

The linguistic rights of French-speaking Ontarians are enshrined in the *French Language Services Act (FLSA)*, and since May 2019, we have been responsible for monitoring compliance with the *FLSA* to protect those rights.

Reporting to the Ombudsman, French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard and our French Language Services (FLS) Unit conduct outreach, review complaints and trends, and issue reports with recommendations. This work, supported by our entire Office, delivers real and lasting benefits that support the province's Francophone community.

From its inception on May 1, 2019 to March 31, 2025, the FLS Unit – a specialized team of Investigators and Early Resolution Officers – has handled **2,137** complaints and inquiries. In the past year, together with the Commissioner, they also published an investigation report and the Commissioner's Annual Report, launched a major new investigation and participated in dozens of outreach events in Francophone communities across the province.

In fiscal 2024-2025, the FLS Unit received **281** cases. Key complaint topics included issues with service in French at designated hospitals, in post-secondary programs, and in government signage. The FLS Unit also supported efforts to ensure compliance with the *FLSA* at the University of Sudbury and designated daycares, and prompted improvements in the use of French on government social media accounts.

Outreach and engagement

Commissioner Bouchard is highly accessible to Francophone communities and continued to actively engage with them in 2024-2025. At numerous events, meetings and gatherings across diverse communities and sectors, the Commissioner

and FLS Unit staff shared practical examples of how we help people access government services in French.

These engagements help strengthen the Commissioner's ongoing efforts to ensure compliance with the *FLSA*. Details of these outreach activities can be found in the Commissioner's Annual Reports, available on our website.

Ombudsman's Award for Good Governance

In February 2025, Ombudsman Paul Dubé launched this award for public sector bodies that have demonstrated exemplary administrative practices, as part of our 50th anniversary activities. For the first such award, he chose the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) for its efforts to improve its provision of services in French.

The OPP received the award because it fixed longstanding technical problems with issuing AMBER Alerts simultaneously in English and French, and because of its efforts to provide an "active offer" of service in French, as required under the *French Language Services Act*. These improvements were noted by French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard in his 2023-2024 Annual Report.

GOOD TO KNOW



We publish a separate Annual Report of the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario. The next one, covering cases received between October 1, 2024 and September 30, 2025, will be released in December.

“The OPP is grateful to Ombudsman Ontario for recognizing the continued improvement of our French-language service delivery capabilities, the goal of which is to forge and promote partnerships with Francophone communities.”

— Letter to Ombudsman from OPP Chief Thomas Carrique, April 2025

Annual Report of the French Language Services Commissioner 2023-2024



Commissioner Bouchard released his second Annual Report – covering the **395** cases received by the FLS Unit between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024 – in December 2024.

His report called attention to the longstanding challenges that people face in determining where they can receive services in French. He recommended that the Ministry of Francophone Affairs publish a digital directory of services covered by the *FLSA*, so people can find service in French more easily.

He also reported progress on the 17 recommendations made in previous annual reports, including in:

- Training all frontline provincial employees in their obligations under the *FLSA*;
- Ensuring government social media accounts are bilingual;
- Posting all provincial job opportunities in French as well as English; and
- Updating Ontario Regulation 398/93, which lists designated agencies offering “public services” within the meaning of the *FLSA*.

“With a digital tool that pulls together all the information on which services are available in French, and where we can find them around us, Ontarians who wish to be served in French will be able to access these services efficiently, without having to wonder whether or not they have the right to them.”

— French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard, speaking at the release of his Annual Report, December 5, 2024

Investigations

Frontline service in French at ServiceOntario

Launched: April 2025

Investigation update: French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard launched this investigation on his own initiative, focusing on in-person services offered in French at ServiceOntario locations. It is examining the extent to which ServiceOntario is complying with the *French Language Services Act (FLSA)*, which specifies designated areas where an “active offer” of frontline service in French is required, and covers ServiceOntario locations that are in or serve such areas.

The investigation is looking into:

- Whether ServiceOntario staff at locations that are required to provide service in French under the *FLSA* are aware of their obligations;
- How the *FLSA* is applied in ServiceOntario locations; and



December 5, 2024: French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard releases his 2023–2024 Annual Report at a press conference at Queen’s Park, Toronto.

- The quality of in-person service in French, including whether an active offer is made, and whether bilingual staff are available who can provide equivalent service in French.

“Ontarians have a legislated right to be served in French with the same quality of service delivered in English. But they are telling us those rights are not being respected, and they are not receiving an equivalent service in French at locations where they should receive help obtaining their driver’s licences, health cards, and other documents that are essential to their day-to-day life.”

— French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard, commenting in a press release about his investigation, April 2, 2025

Unilingual out-of-home government advertising



Report: *Missed Messages*, released July 2024

Investigation update: Launched in July 2023 in response to the apparent lack of French in provincial government out-of-home advertising, this investigation reviewed 17 out-of-home advertising campaigns led by or on behalf

of the Ministry of Health between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2023. Several of them contained important health information for Ontarians during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Only three of the 17 campaigns included out-of-home advertising in French – and they were not equivalent to or simultaneous with the English ads.

Commissioner Bouchard found that none of the campaigns reflected the spirit of the *French Language Services Act*, or met the government's own rules for communications in French. He made **7** recommendations to Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Francophone Affairs. Five recommendations were accepted and two are under review – including one that all out-of-home government advertising be in a bilingual format. The ministries continue to report back to us on their efforts to address the recommendations.

Cuts to French-language programs at Laurentian University



Report: *Strengthening the Designation: A Collaborative Effort*, released March 2022

Investigation update: This investigation examined the impact of the cuts made by Laurentian University to French-language programming as a result of its

financial restructuring in 2021. It concluded that the university, the Ministry of Francophone Affairs, and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities failed to fulfil their responsibilities under the *French Language Services Act*.

In his December 2023 Annual Report, Commissioner Bouchard noted that all three parties had made significant progress on the report's **19** recommendations.



March 20, 2025: Ombudsman Paul Dubé, right, and French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard, at the raising of the International Francophonie Day flag, Toronto.

Among other things, for instance, the Ministry of Francophone Affairs has a new policy to ensure regular compliance assessments of all designated agencies. It has also implemented a new digital tool for designated agencies to improve communication with them about their obligations.

All three parties continue to report back to the Commissioner on their progress on the recommendations every six months.

Case summaries

Legal obligation

A Francophone woman complained to us after she went to a provincial courthouse for a family court case in a region that is designated under the *French Language Services Act* (meaning services in French must be available by law). She said she was unable to obtain services in French at the clerk's counter. She said she was told that the only bilingual clerk was absent that day.

RESULT: We raised this incident with senior managers at the courthouse in question, and with the Ministry of the Attorney General. The courthouse has since recruited more bilingual staff and arranged to have more than one bilingual person working at the clerk's counter consistently. They also made sure all courthouse staff were aware of their obligation to provide an "active offer" of service in French, and the procedures for doing so.

The Ministry also told us that all courthouse staff are provided with a list of bilingual employees, and have been instructed to contact them in the event that someone needs assistance in French. They said that regional managers regularly discuss the provision of services in French at team meetings.

Eclipse of the chansons

As part of a promotion of places in Ontario to view the total solar eclipse in April 2024, Destination Ontario posted a playlist of eclipse-themed songs on its website, such as "Ain't No Sunshine," and "I Can See Clearly Now." A Francophone man complained to us that all of the songs on the playlist were in English only, on both the English and French versions of the site. He said he had called the agency and observed that there are plenty of French songs it could have included. Instead, it removed the playlist entirely.

RESULT: We raised the matter with Destination Ontario officials, who acknowledged it was a mistake not to have included songs in both French and English on the playlist. They said they simply took it down when the man complained because it was only a few days before the eclipse. They committed to taking French songs into account for similar events in future.

A few months later, the organization updated its website style guide to require that all content is representative of English and French products, operators and artists. All staff received training on this style guide update.

Signs of the times

We noticed that signs put up by Metrolinx around the construction site of the Scarborough subway extension were in English only. Metrolinx is a government agency and its communications, including signage, are required to be in English and French.

RESULT: We pointed these signs out to Metrolinx officials, who told us they had been in place for more than three years. They noted that since that time, the organization has committed to fully bilingual signage, and said that these signs were in the process of being changed. They noted that bilingual signs were recently installed near this site as part of the same project and that the new signs will be similar.



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Overview and trends in cases

Complaints in this area involve a wide variety of issues in the energy and environment sectors. Although we can't take complaints about Hydro One (we refer them to its internal ombudsman), we can help with problems related to municipal utility companies – as well as the Ministry of Energy and Mines and its programs.

We also handle cases about the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and conservation authorities across the province. These include matters relating to Indigenous hunting and fishing rights.

In 2024-2025, we received **106** cases about the provincial ministries in this category, consistent with 142 last year. We resolved these by sharing best practices with the ministries regarding fair and transparent decision-making, and suggested improvement in how decisions are communicated to the public.

Indigenous hunting and fishing rights

In recent cases where Indigenous communities and individuals have communicated concerns about consultation and their ability to exercise their hunting and fishing rights, we have worked to help the relevant government bodies improve their policies and processes, as well as to resolve the specific complaints wherever possible.

Some examples of our ongoing work:

- We helped a First Nations man whose crossbow had been confiscated by a conservation officer while he was hunting in a provincial park on traditional Haudenosaunee lands. Our review confirmed that he did not need permission to practice his traditional hunting

practices in the park. We are now reviewing how the Ministry of Natural Resources recognizes and respects established Indigenous treaty rights on Crown land across Ontario. As part of this review, we pointed out the importance of processes that are sensitive to Indigenous practices.

- We received complaints from Indigenous groups in Northern Ontario about industrial development affecting the traditionally significant Boreal caribou, a threatened species. They told us they are seeking ongoing and meaningful consultation with respect to the conservation of caribou and want the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to enforce protective measures. We are meeting with the groups to learn more about their concerns, and have reached out to the Ministry to better understand what work it is doing in response.

Municipal hydro

Municipal utility companies provide millions of Ontarians with electricity and are majority-owned or controlled by one or more municipalities. We received **132** complaints and inquiries about municipal hydro in 2024-2025, consistent with last year's 125. The most common issues were disconnections and billing disputes.

In some urgent cases, we stepped in to help vulnerable people who faced having their electricity cut off. Some of them raised issues like lack of notice of overdue payments, or mistakes on the utility's part about the status of their accounts.

For example:

- A woman whose husband had died had her power disconnected because the hydro account was in his name. She told us the company repeatedly refused to speak with her. After we intervened, the utility restored her service and contacted the woman to set up a payment plan.

- A new father who had paused his utility payment plan while on parental leave from his small business sought our help when the utility nonetheless sent him a bill for \$5,000 in arrears. We prompted the utility to investigate, and it ultimately apologized to him and set up a plan for him to pay down the arrears when he resumed his business.
- We helped save a hydro customer from disconnection when we discovered that the company had accidentally applied a debit to his bill instead of a credit. The company apologized to him for the error and corrected the account.

Land use and environmental issues

In areas of the province that do not fall within a specific municipality, it is the Ministry of Natural Resources that issues permits and authorizations for things like building and land use. We received several questions and complaints about such permits. For instance:

- A group of residents concerned about the size and potential environmental impact of a structure their neighbour was building asked us to flag their concerns to the Ministry. We found that the Ministry had done an environmental assessment and confirmed that the structure met building regulations before it issued a building permit. Ministry staff also completed a site visit and spoke with concerned neighbours to answer questions and explain its process.

Well and water safety

We also received several complaints about potential contamination of drinking water in private wells. Owners are responsible for maintaining private wells, but the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks provides technical guidance for their construction,

maintenance and use – and it conducts inspections in some cases.

Some case examples:

- A well owner was concerned about the effect nearby sewer construction could have on their water quality. We confirmed that the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks had tested the water multiple times to confirm that the construction had not contaminated the water source. The Ministry provided the results of its testing to the owner as well as information about how to best maintain their well.
- Several well owners in Chatham-Kent sought our help in getting information from the Ministry of Health about the quality of well water in their area. A report commissioned by the Ministry in 2022 recommended further testing, but residents said they had heard nothing since. When we raised the matter with Ministry of Health officials, they acknowledged the delay and lack of communication. We continue to follow up with them on plans to address remaining water quality concerns and communicate with affected residents.
- We confirmed that a municipality had a response plan in place to address residents' concerns about an issue that was causing an odour and discolouration in its drinking water. In response to several complaints from residents, we made inquiries with the local public health unit and Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and learned the issue was due to the effects of hot, dry weather on the concentration of manganese in the water. We also spoke with the municipality about its communication with residents about the issue.

Case summaries

Peace of mine

A resident was concerned about a municipality that was using aggregate (mining waste) from an abandoned mine as part of an infrastructure project and asked us to look into their concerns about this material. They wanted information about the potential environmental harm posed by the use of mining waste.

RESULT: We contacted the Ministry of Energy and Mines. Senior staff told us the Ministry had analyzed samples from the project and determined that the material would not cause environmental harm. Through these discussions, we also raised questions about how mining waste is regulated, particularly at abandoned mines. We continue to discuss related matters with Ministry officials, including the regulation of tailings dams (where mine waste is stored) and aggregate.

Slow build

A man who had purchased a plot of undeveloped land came to us after waiting almost two years for a development permit from the Niagara Escarpment Commission. The Commission's role is to safeguard the area's environmental features, and it specifically considers the impact of development on the landscape and natural environment of the Escarpment when issuing a permit.

RESULT: Officials at the Commission explained to us that staffing shortages were causing delays, but they were working to streamline their application process and increase the timeliness of their decisions. Shortly thereafter, the landowner received conditional approval to undertake work on his land.

Keeping the lights on

A mother contacted us in a panic when she received notice that her electricity would be disconnected the next day. She told us this would seriously impact her ability to care for her daughter, who has special needs that require her to have lights on through the night.

RESULT: We stepped in quickly to figure out what happened. We learned that Ontario Works (OW) had sent a cheque to the hydro company to cover overdue payments. We connected the OW caseworker with the hydro company to confirm the cheque details, and the disconnection was cancelled.

When a tree falls...

A man told us he was camping at a provincial park when a crew that was cutting trees damaged several trailers, including his. He said he wrote to the park superintendent to ask them to pay for the damage, but got no response.

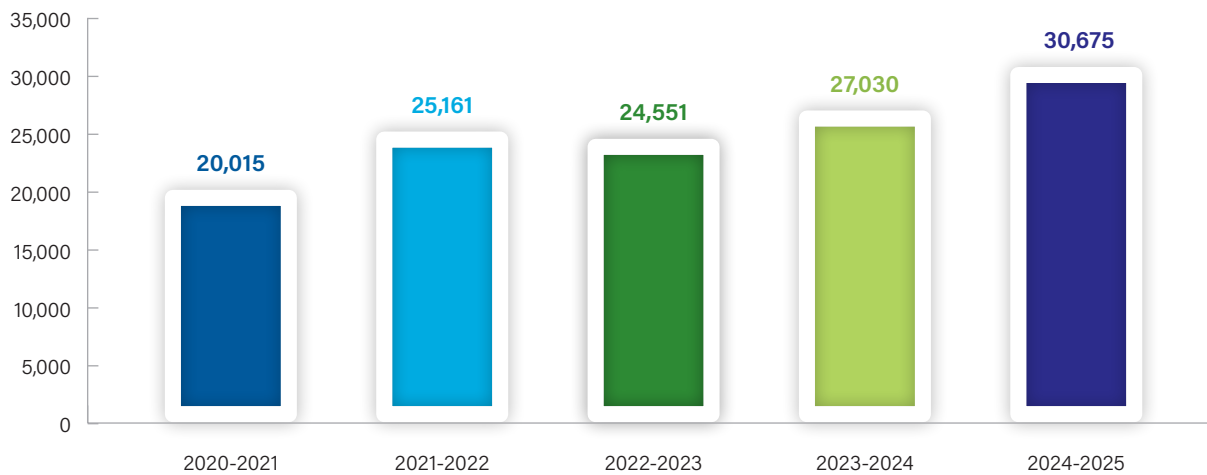
RESULT: We reached out to staff at Ontario Parks, which is part of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. We confirmed that they had sent the man's claim to their Risk Management and Insurance Branch. After we spoke with them, they let the man know the status of his claim.

“ I would like to highlight the level of professionalism and dedication [of your Early Resolution Officer]. She explored several avenues to find a solution, made numerous calls, and was extremely patient, even when I was less so. I hope I never need to use your services again, but I would not hesitate to recommend them.”

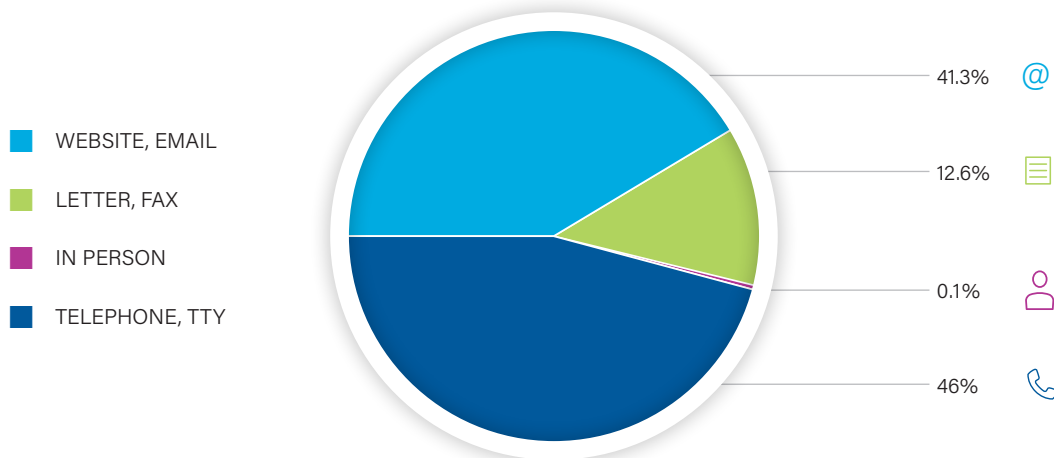
APPENDIX

STATISTICAL CHARTS

TOTAL CASES RECEIVED, FISCAL YEARS 2020-2021 - 2024-2025



HOW CASES WERE RECEIVED, 2024-2025



DISPOSITION OF CASES, 2024-2025



30,675

CASES RECEIVED IN FISCAL 2024-2025



186

consultations
or questions



792

information
submissions



118

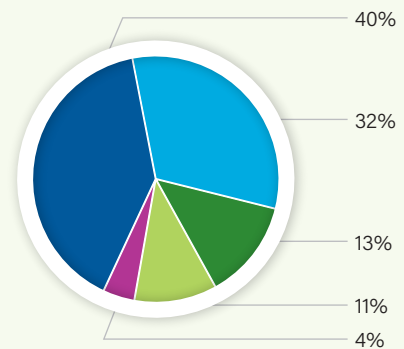
instances of best
practices suggested

CASES CLOSED 2024-2025

20,040

cases within the
Ombudsman's
authority

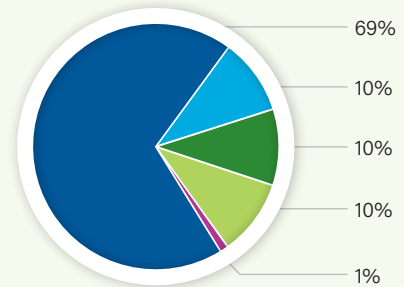
- INQUIRIES MADE OR REFERRAL GIVEN
- RESOLVED WITH OMBUDSMAN INTERVENTION AND/OR BEST PRACTICES SUGGESTED
- CLOSED AFTER OMBUDSMAN'S REVIEW
- DISCONTINUED BY COMPLAINANT
- RESOLVED WITHOUT OMBUDSMAN INTERVENTION



8,870

outside the
Ombudsman's
authority

- PRIVATE
- PROVINCIAL OUTSIDE AUTHORITY*
- FEDERAL
- BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR OUTSIDE AUTHORITY**
- OUTSIDE ONTARIO



% OF CASES CLOSED IN 2 WEEKS



42%

Closed in 1 week



53%

Closed in 2 weeks

*E.g., complaints about officials and bodies outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

**E.g., complaints about hospitals, long-term care homes, public health units, municipal police.

TOTAL CASES RECEIVED FOR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND SELECTED PROGRAMS, 2024-2025 *

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND AGRIBUSINESS		11
MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL		1,997
ALCOHOL AND GAMING COMMISSION OF ONTARIO	39	
CHILDREN'S LAWYER	36	
COURT ADMINISTRATION	138	
HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE	16	
LAW ENFORCEMENT COMPLAINTS AGENCY	97	
LEGAL AID CLINIC	24	
LEGAL AID ONTARIO	107	
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN AND TRUSTEE	195	
ONTARIO LAND TRIBUNAL	19	
ONTARIO VICTIM SERVICES	18	
TRIBUNALS ONTARIO	1,237	
MINISTRY OF CHILDREN, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES		2,457
ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES PROGRAM	12	
DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES - PASSPORT PROGRAM	18	
DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES	86	
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE	423	
MINISTRY FUNDED SERVICE PROVIDER - CHILDREN AND YOUTH	15	
MINISTRY FUNDED SERVICE PROVIDER - COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES	96	
ONTARIO AUTISM PROGRAM	92	
ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM	1,038	
SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAMS - CHILDREN	29	
SPECIAL SERVICES AT HOME	171	
YOUTH JUSTICE CENTRES - DIRECT OPERATED	279	
YOUTH JUSTICE CENTRES - MINISTRY FUNDED	144	
MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND MULTICULTURALISM		6
MINISTRY OF COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AND SECURITY		661
COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY	434	
ONTARIO STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	187	
PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES BRANCH	27	
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION		79
CHILD CARE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND LICENSING BRANCH	10	
TVO - ONTARIO EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY	28	
MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINES		32
ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD	23	
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, CONSERVATION AND PARKS		41
ONTARIO PARKS	10	
MINISTRY OF FINANCE		146
FINANCIAL SERVICES REGULATORY AUTHORITY	29	
LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO	23	
MUNICIPAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENT CORPORATION	23	
MINISTRY OF HEALTH		408
ASSISTIVE DEVICES / HOME OXYGEN PROGRAMS	22	
HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPEAL AND REVIEW BOARD	25	
MINISTRY FUNDED SERVICE PROVIDER	35	
ONTARIO HEALTH	121	
ONTARIO HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN - OHIP	65	
ONTARIO PUBLIC DRUG PROGRAMS	54	

*Total figures are reported for each provincial government ministry including agencies and programs falling within its portfolio. Each government agency or program receiving 10 or more cases is also included. Cases related to French language services are not included.

TOTAL CASES RECEIVED FOR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND SELECTED PROGRAMS, 2024-2025

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS AND FIRST NATIONS ECONOMIC RECONCILIATION		3
MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE		5
MINISTRY OF LABOUR, IMMIGRATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT		470
BETTER JOBS ONTARIO	14	
EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES BRANCH	20	
FAIR PRACTICES COMMISSION	16	
MINISTRY FUNDED SERVICE PROVIDERS	11	
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY BRANCH	22	
OFFICE OF THE WORKER ADVISER	18	
ONTARIO LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD	16	
SKILLED TRADES ONTARIO	18	
WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE APPEAL TRIBUNAL	37	
WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD	213	
MINISTRY OF LONG-TERM CARE		33
LONG-TERM CARE INSPECTIONS BRANCH	23	
MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING		26
RENTAL HOUSING AND ENFORCEMENT UNIT	14	
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES		33
MINISTRY OF NORTHERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH		1
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC AND BUSINESS SERVICE DELIVERY AND PROCUREMENT		354
CONSUMER PROTECTION ONTARIO	26	
REGISTRAR GENERAL	85	
SERVICEONTARIO	218	
MINISTRY FOR SENIORS AND ACCESSIBILITY		2
MINISTRY OF SPORT		2
MINISTRY OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL		7,186
ANIMAL WELFARE SERVICES BRANCH	14	
CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES	6,870	
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CORONER	13	
ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE	163	
OPP - CHIEF FIREARMS OFFICE	13	
PRIVATE SECURITY AND INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES BRANCH	15	
PROBATION AND PAROLE	47	
MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND GAMING		78
ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING	73	
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION		528
DRIVER LICENSING	132	
DRIVETEST	146	
METROLINX/ GO TRANSIT	55	
TRANSPORTATION - MEDICAL REVIEW	81	
VEHICLE LICENSING	22	
TREASURY BOARD SECRETARIAT		18

CASES BY PROVINCIAL RIDING, 2024-2025*

AJAX	100
ALGOMA—MANITOULIN	158
AURORA—OAK RIDGES—RICHMOND HILL	99
BARRIE—INNISFIL	125
BARRIE—SPRINGWATER—ORO-MEDONTE	177
BAY OF QUINTE	204
BEACHES—EAST YORK	132
BRAMPTON CENTRE	106
BRAMPTON EAST	62
BRAMPTON NORTH	81
BRAMPTON SOUTH	137
BRAMPTON WEST	117
BRANTFORD—BRANT	166
BRUCE—GREY—OWEN SOUND	166
BURLINGTON	111
CAMBRIDGE	132
CARLETON	101
CHATHAM-KENT—LEAMINGTON	129
DAVENPORT	96
DON VALLEY EAST	104
DON VALLEY NORTH	114
DON VALLEY WEST	77
DUFFERIN—CALEDON	154
DURHAM	186
EGLINTON—LAWRENCE	89
ELGIN—MIDDLESEX—LONDON	149
ESSEX	137
ETOBICOKE CENTRE	96
ETOBICOKE NORTH	94
ETOBICOKE—LAKESHORE	154
FLAMBOROUGH—GLANBROOK	108
GLENGARRY—PRESCOTT—RUSSELL	158
GUELPH	104
HALDIMAND—NORFOLK	127
HALIBURTON—KAWARTHA LAKES—BROCK	170
HAMILTON CENTRE	203
HAMILTON EAST—STONE CREEK	140
HAMILTON MOUNTAIN	96
HAMILTON WEST—ANCASTER—DUNDAS	130
HASTINGS—LENNOX AND ADDINGTON	158
HUMBER RIVER—BLACK CREEK	106
HURON—BRUCE	133
KANATA—CARLETON	78
KENORA—RAINY RIVER	83
KIHWETINOONG	15
KINGSTON AND THE ISLANDS	139
KING—VAUGHAN	91
KITCHENER CENTRE	129
KITCHENER SOUTH—HESPELER	102
KITCHENER—CONESTOGA	106
LAMBTON—KENT—MIDDLESEX	116
LANARK—FRONTENAC—KINGSTON	111
LEEDS—GRENVILLE—THOUSAND ISLANDS AND RIDEAU LAKES	139
LONDON NORTH CENTRE	177
LONDON WEST	121
LONDON—FANSHAWE	164
MARKHAM—STOUFFVILLE	99
MARKHAM—THORNHILL	52
MARKHAM—UNIONVILLE	64
MILTON	90
MISSISSAUGA CENTRE	101
MISSISSAUGA EAST—COOKSVILLE	129

MISSISSAUGA—ERIN MILLS	90
MISSISSAUGA—LAKESHORE	109
MISSISSAUGA—MALTON	113
MISSISSAUGA—STREETSVILLE	101
MUSKEGOWUK—JAMES BAY	38
NEPEAN	108
NEWMARKET—AURORA	117
NIAGARA CENTRE	194
NIAGARA FALLS	237
NIAGARA WEST	104
NICKEL BELT	128
NIPISSING	176
NORTHUMBERLAND—PETERBOROUGH SOUTH	176
OAKVILLE	117
OAKVILLE NORTH—BURLINGTON	99
ORLÉANS	90
OSHAWA	231
OTTAWA CENTRE	169
OTTAWA SOUTH	128
OTTAWA WEST—NEPEAN	106
OTTAWA—VANIER	165
OXFORD	123
PARKDALE—HIGH PARK	94
PARRY SOUND—MUSKOKA	188
PERTH—WELLINGTON	129
PETERBOROUGH—KAWARTHA	171
PICKERING—UXBRIDGE	130
RENFREW—NIPISSING—PEMBROKE	157
RICHMOND HILL	110
SARNIA—LAMBTON	168
SAULT STE. MARIE	157
SCARBOROUGH CENTRE	88
SCARBOROUGH NORTH	51
SCARBOROUGH SOUTHWEST	88
SCARBOROUGH—AGINCOURT	72
SCARBOROUGH—GUILDWOOD	113
SCARBOROUGH—ROUGE PARK	119
SIMCOE NORTH	196
SIMCOE—GREY	253
SPADINA—FORT YORK	150
ST. CATHARINES	146
STORMONT—DUNDAS—SOUTH GLENGARRY	134
SUDBURY	175
THORNHILL	82
THUNDER BAY—ATIKOKAN	134
THUNDER BAY—SUPERIOR NORTH	106
TIMISKAMING—COCHRANE	193
TIMMINS	72
TORONTO CENTRE	181
TORONTO—DANFORTH	132
TORONTO—ST. PAUL'S	117
UNIVERSITY—ROSEDALE	112
VAUGHAN—WOODBIDGE	101
WATERLOO	98
WELLINGTON—HALTON HILLS	134
WHITBY	144
WILLOWDALE	101
WINDSOR WEST	216
WINDSOR—TECUMSEH	132
YORK CENTRE	129
YORK SOUTH—WESTON	114
YORK—SIMCOE	142

*All cases where a postal code was available, including those related to municipalities, universities and school boards, but excluding correctional facilities.

TOP 10 CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES BY CASE VOLUME, 2024-2025

		NUMBER OF CASES
1	CENTRAL EAST CORRECTIONAL CENTRE	1,430
2	CENTRAL NORTH CORRECTIONAL CENTRE	1,376
3	MAPLEHURST CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX	722
4	TORONTO SOUTH DETENTION CENTRE	582
5	OTTAWA-CARLETON DETENTION CENTRE	381
6	HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DETENTION CENTRE	315
7	NIAGARA DETENTION CENTRE	261
8	VANIER CENTRE FOR WOMEN	249
9	KENORA JAIL	239
10	SOUTH WEST DETENTION CENTRE	205

TOP 10 PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS BY CASE VOLUME, 2024-2025*

		NUMBER OF CASES
1	TRIBUNALS ONTARIO	1,237
2	ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM	1,038
3	COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY	434
4	FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE	423
5	SERVICEONTARIO	218
6	WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD	213
7	OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN AND TRUSTEE	195
8	ONTARIO STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	187
9	SPECIAL SERVICES AT HOME	171
10	ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE	163

*Excluding correctional facilities and youth justice centres.

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES, 2024-2025 ► TOTAL: 3,809

ADDINGTON HIGHLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	2
ADELAIDE METCALFE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
ADJALA-TOSORONTIO, TOWNSHIP OF	6
AJAX, TOWN OF	15
ALGONQUIN HIGHLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	7
ALNWICK/HALDIMAND, TOWNSHIP OF	13
AMARANTH, TOWNSHIP OF	4
AMHERSTBURG, TOWN OF	6
ARMOUR, TOWNSHIP OF	2
ARNPRIOR, TOWN OF	2
ARRAN-ELDERSLIE, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
ASHFIELD-COLBORNE-WAWANOSH, TOWNSHIP OF	1
ATIKOKAN, TOWN OF	4
AUGUSTA, TOWNSHIP OF	2
AURORA, TOWN OF	27
AYLMER, TOWN OF	1
BALDWIN, TOWNSHIP OF	1
BANCROFT, TOWN OF	2
BARRIE, CITY OF	20
BAYHAM, MUNICIPALITY OF	10
BELLEVILLE, CITY OF	15
BLACK RIVER-MATHESON, TOWNSHIP OF	4
BLANDFORD-BLENHEIM, TOWNSHIP OF	1
BLIND RIVER, TOWN OF	2
BLUEWATER, MUNICIPALITY OF	5
BONFIELD, TOWNSHIP OF	8
BONNECHERE VALLEY, TOWNSHIP OF	4
BRACEBRIDGE, TOWN OF	4
BRADFORD WEST GWILLIMBURY, TOWN OF	11
BRAMPTON, CITY OF	60
BRANT, COUNTY OF	14
BRANTFORD, CITY OF	23
BRIGHTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
BROCK, TOWNSHIP OF	4
BROCKTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
BROCKVILLE, CITY OF	7
BROOKE-ALVINSTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
BRUCE, COUNTY OF	1
BRUDENELL, LYNDON AND RAGLAN, TOWNSHIP OF	2
BURK'S FALLS, VILLAGE OF	1
BURLINGTON, CITY OF	14

CALEDON, TOWN OF	16
CALLANDER, MUNICIPALITY OF	5
CALVIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
CAMBRIDGE, CITY OF	20
CARLETON PLACE, TOWN OF	1
CARLING, TOWNSHIP OF	4
CARLOW/MAYO, TOWNSHIP OF	2
CASEY, TOWNSHIP OF	1
CASSELMAN, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
CENTRAL ELGIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	8
CENTRAL FRONTENAC, TOWNSHIP OF	4
CENTRAL HURON, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
CENTRAL MANITOULIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
CENTRE WELLINGTON, TOWNSHIP OF	7
CHAMPLAIN, TOWNSHIP OF	3
CHAPLEAU, TOWNSHIP OF	2
CHATHAM-KENT, MUNICIPALITY OF	17
CHATSWORTH, TOWNSHIP OF	3
CHISHOLM, TOWNSHIP OF	1
CLARENCE-ROCKLAND, CITY OF	10
CLARINGTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	11
CLEARVIEW, TOWNSHIP OF	4
COBALT, TOWN OF	5
COBOURG, TOWN OF	4
COLLINGWOOD, TOWN OF	3
CONMEE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
CORNWALL, CITY OF	14
CRAMAHE, TOWNSHIP OF	11
DAWN-EUPHEMIA, TOWNSHIP OF	2
DEEP RIVER, TOWN OF	2
DESERONTO, TOWN OF	2
DOURO-DUMMER, TOWNSHIP OF	4
DRUMMOND/NORTH ELMSLEY, TOWNSHIP OF	2
DRYDEN, CITY OF	5
DUFFERIN, COUNTY OF	3
DURHAM, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	48
DUTTON-DUNWICH, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
DYSART ET AL., MUNICIPALITY OF	4
EAST FERRIS, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
EAST GARAFRAXA, TOWNSHIP OF	2
EAST GWILLIMBURY, TOWN OF	3

Note: Municipalities that were not the subject of any cases are not listed. This does not include cases about municipal police, public health units, or library boards.

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES, 2024-2025

EAST HAWKESBURY, TOWNSHIP OF	2
EDWARDSBURGH/CARDINAL, TOWNSHIP OF	2
ELGIN, COUNTY OF	2
ELIZABETHTOWN-KITLEY, TOWNSHIP OF	2
ELLIOT LAKE, CITY OF	9
ENGLEHART, TOWN OF	1
ENNISKILLEN, TOWNSHIP OF	4
ERIN, TOWN OF	9
ESPANOLA, TOWN OF	2
ESSA, TOWNSHIP OF	3
ESSEX, COUNTY OF	3
ESSEX, TOWN OF	6
EVANTUREL, TOWNSHIP OF	1
FARADAY, TOWNSHIP OF	2
FAUQUIER-STRICKLAND, TOWNSHIP OF	1
FORT ERIE, TOWN OF	5
FORT FRANCES, TOWN OF	1
FRENCH RIVER, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
FRONT OF YONGE, TOWNSHIP OF	2
FRONTENAC ISLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	1
FRONTENAC, COUNTY OF	1
GANANOQUE, TOWN OF	2
GEORGIAN BAY, TOWNSHIP OF	2
GEORGIAN BLUFFS, TOWNSHIP OF	3
GEORGINA, TOWN OF	13
GILLIES, TOWNSHIP OF	3
GODERICH, TOWN OF	1
GORE BAY, TOWN OF	1
GRAND VALLEY, TOWN OF	1
GRAVENHURST, TOWN OF	6
GREATER MADAWASKA, TOWNSHIP OF	3
GREATER SUDBURY, CITY OF	89
GREENSTONE, MUNICIPALITY OF	8
GREY HIGHLANDS, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
GREY, COUNTY OF	17
GRIMSBY, TOWN OF	9
GUELPH, CITY OF	13
GUELPH/ERAMOSA, TOWNSHIP OF	5
HALDIMAND COUNTY	5
HALIBURTON, COUNTY OF	6
HALTON HILLS, TOWN OF	5

HALTON, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	31
HAMILTON, CITY OF	120
HAMILTON, TOWNSHIP OF	4
HANOVER, TOWN OF	3
HASTINGS HIGHLANDS, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
HASTINGS, COUNTY OF	23
HAVELOCK-BELMONT-METHUEN, TOWNSHIP OF	3
HAWKESBURY, TOWN OF	5
HEAD, CLARA & MARIA, UNITED TOWNSHIPS OF	1
HEARST, TOWN OF	1
HIGHLANDS EAST, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
HILLIARD, TOWNSHIP OF	1
HORNEPAYNE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
HORTON, TOWNSHIP OF	3
HOWICK, TOWNSHIP OF	1
HUDSON, TOWNSHIP OF	1
HUNTSVILLE, TOWN OF	5
HURON EAST, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
HURON-KINLOSS, TOWNSHIP OF	3
HURON, COUNTY OF	7
IGNACE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
INNISFIL, TOWN OF	7
IROQUOIS FALLS, TOWN OF	8
JOCELYN, TOWNSHIP OF	2
KAPUSKASING, TOWN OF	4
KAWARTHA LAKES, CITY OF	47
KEARNEY, TOWN OF	1
KENORA, CITY OF	8
KILLALOE, HAGARTY AND RICHARDS, TOWNSHIP OF	4
KILLARNEY, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
KINCARDINE, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
KING, TOWNSHIP OF	9
KINGSTON, CITY OF	19
KINGSVILLE, TOWN OF	2
KIRKLAND LAKE, TOWN OF	2
KITCHENER, CITY OF	24
LA VALLEE, TOWNSHIP OF	3
LAIRD, TOWNSHIP OF	1
LAKE OF BAYS, TOWNSHIP OF	1
LAKESHORE, TOWN OF	5
LAMBTON SHORES, MUNICIPALITY OF	5

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES, 2024-2025

LAMBTON, COUNTY OF	12
LANARK HIGHLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	2
LANARK, COUNTY OF	6
LARDER LAKE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
LASALLE, TOWN OF	2
LAURENTIAN HILLS, TOWN OF	2
LAURENTIAN VALLEY, TOWNSHIP OF	5
LEAMINGTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	8
LEEDS AND GRENVILLE, UNITED COUNTIES OF	10
LEEDS AND THE THOUSAND ISLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	11
LENNOX & ADDINGTON, COUNTY OF	3
LINCOLN, TOWN OF	5
LONDON, CITY OF	107
LOYALIST TOWNSHIP	2
LUCAN BIDDULPH, TOWNSHIP OF	3
MACDONALD, MEREDITH & ABERDEEN ADDITIONAL, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MACHIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
MADAWASKA VALLEY, TOWNSHIP OF	3
MADOC, TOWNSHIP OF	4
MAGNETAWAN, MUNICIPALITY OF	7
MALAHIDE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MANITOUWADGE, TOWNSHIP OF	7
MAPLETON, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MARKHAM, CITY OF	31
MARKSTAY-WARREN, MUNICIPALITY OF	11
MARMORA AND LAKE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
MATACHEWAN, TOWNSHIP OF	3
MATTAWA, TOWN OF	2
MCGARRY, TOWNSHIP OF	5
MCKELLAR, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MCMURRICH/MONTEITH, TOWNSHIP OF	3
MCNAB/BRAESIDE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MEAFORD, MUNICIPALITY OF	8
MERRICKVILLE-WOLFORD, VILLAGE OF	2
MIDDLESEX CENTRE, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
MIDDLESEX, COUNTY OF	1
MIDLAND, TOWN OF	4
MILTON, TOWN OF	17
MINDEN HILLS, TOWNSHIP OF	2
MINTO, TOWN OF	2

MISSISSAUGA, CITY OF	56
MISSISSIPPI MILLS, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
MONTAGUE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MOOSONEE, TOWN OF	4
MORRIS-TURNBERRY, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
MUSKOKA LAKES, TOWNSHIP OF	9
MUSKOKA, DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY OF	15
NAIRN AND HYMAN, TOWNSHIP OF	1
NEEBING, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
NEW TECUMSETH, TOWN OF	14
NEWBURY, VILLAGE OF	2
NEWMARKET, TOWN OF	10
NIAGARA FALLS, CITY OF	32
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, TOWN OF	10
NIAGARA, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	54
NIPISSING, TOWNSHIP OF	1
NORFOLK COUNTY	25
NORTH ALGONA WILBERFORCE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
NORTH BAY, CITY OF	13
NORTH DUMFRIES, TOWNSHIP OF	3
NORTH DUNDAS, TOWNSHIP OF	4
NORTH FRONTENAC, TOWNSHIP OF	5
NORTH GLENGARRY, TOWNSHIP OF	3
NORTH GRENVILLE, MUNICIPALITY OF	12
NORTH HURON, TOWNSHIP OF	1
NORTH KAWARTHA, TOWNSHIP OF	5
NORTH MIDDLESEX, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
NORTH PERTH, MUNICIPALITY OF	8
NORTH STORMONT, TOWNSHIP OF	4
NORTHEASTERN MANITOULIN AND THE ISLANDS, TOWN OF	1
NORTHERN BRUCE PENINSULA, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
NORTHUMBERLAND, COUNTY OF	9
OAKVILLE, TOWN OF	28
OLIVER PAIPOONGE, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
ORANGEVILLE, TOWN OF	3
ORILLIA, CITY OF	5
ORO-MEDONTE, TOWNSHIP OF	7
OSHAWA, CITY OF	39
OTONABEE-SOUTH MONAGHAN, TOWNSHIP OF	4
OTTAWA, CITY OF	172

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES, 2024-2025

OWEN SOUND, CITY OF	5
OXFORD, COUNTY OF	11
PAPINEAU-CAMERON, TOWNSHIP OF	6
PARRY SOUND, TOWN OF	3
PEEL, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	130
PELEE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
PELHAM, TOWN OF	3
PEMBROKE, CITY OF	3
PENETANGUISHENE, TOWN OF	4
PERRY, TOWNSHIP OF	5
PERTH SOUTH, TOWNSHIP OF	3
PERTH, COUNTY OF	2
PERTH, TOWN OF	2
PETAWAWA, TOWN OF	2
PETERBOROUGH, CITY OF	24
PETERBOROUGH, COUNTY OF	3
PETROLIA, TOWN OF	1
PICKERING, CITY OF	16
PLUMMER ADDITIONAL, TOWNSHIP OF	1
PLYMPTON-WYOMING, TOWN OF	7
PORT COLBORNE, CITY OF	8
PORT HOPE, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
POWASSAN, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
PRESCOTT AND RUSSELL, UNITED COUNTIES OF	2
PRESCOTT, TOWN OF	2
PRINCE EDWARD, COUNTY OF	14
PUSLINCH, TOWNSHIP OF	6
QUINTE WEST, CITY OF	8
RAMARA, TOWNSHIP OF	9
RED LAKE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
RENFREW, COUNTY OF	14
RICHMOND HILL, CITY OF	11
RIDEAU LAKES, TOWNSHIP OF	20
RUSSELL, TOWNSHIP OF	4
SABLES-SPANISH RIVERS, TOWNSHIP OF	4
SARNIA, CITY OF	27
SAUGEEN SHORES, TOWN OF	4
SAULT STE. MARIE, CITY OF	32
SCHREIBER, TOWNSHIP OF	1
SCUGOG, TOWNSHIP OF	7

SEGUIN, TOWNSHIP OF	2
SEVERN, TOWNSHIP OF	2
SHELBURNE, TOWN OF	1
SIMCOE, COUNTY OF	42
SIOUX LOOKOUT, MUNICIPALITY OF	5
SIOUX NARROWS-NESTOR FALLS, TOWNSHIP OF	2
SMITHS FALLS, TOWN OF	2
SMOOTH ROCK FALLS, TOWN OF	4
SOUTH BRUCE PENINSULA, TOWN OF	5
SOUTH DUNDAS, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
SOUTH FRONTENAC, TOWNSHIP OF	2
SOUTH GLENGARRY, TOWNSHIP OF	4
SOUTH HURON, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
SOUTH RIVER, VILLAGE OF	1
SOUTH STORMONT, TOWNSHIP OF	1
SOUTH-WEST OXFORD, TOWNSHIP OF	1
SOUTHGATE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
SOUTHWOLD, TOWNSHIP OF	1
SPRINGWATER, TOWNSHIP OF	3
ST. CATHARINES, CITY OF	17
ST. CLAIR, TOWNSHIP OF	4
ST. THOMAS, CITY OF	8
STIRLING-RAWDON, TOWNSHIP OF	2
STONE MILLS, TOWNSHIP OF	1
STORMONT, DUNDAS & GLENGARRY, UNITED COUNTIES OF	1
STRATFORD, CITY OF	25
STRATHROY-CARADOC, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
STRONG, TOWNSHIP OF	3
SUNDRIDGE, VILLAGE OF	2
TARBUTT, TOWNSHIP OF	2
TAY VALLEY TOWNSHIP	2
TAY, TOWNSHIP OF	5
TECUMSEH, TOWN OF	1
TEHKUMMAH, TOWNSHIP OF	1
TEMAGAMI, MUNICIPALITY OF	33
TEMISKAMING SHORES, CITY OF	2
THAMES CENTRE, MUNICIPALITY OF	5
THE ARCHIPELAGO, TOWNSHIP OF	1
THE BLUE MOUNTAINS, TOWN OF	6
THE NATION MUNICIPALITY	2

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES, 2024-2025

THE NORTH SHORE, TOWNSHIP OF	3
THESSALON, TOWN OF	3
THOROLD, CITY OF	11
THUNDER BAY, CITY OF	24
TILLSONBURG, TOWN OF	3
TIMMINS, CITY OF	31
TINY, TOWNSHIP OF	36
TORONTO, CITY OF	429
TRENT HILLS, MUNICIPALITY OF	6
TRENT LAKES, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
TUDOR & CASHEL, TOWNSHIP OF	1
TWEED, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
TYENDINAGA, TOWNSHIP OF	2
UXBRIDGE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
VAL RITA-HARTY, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
VAUGHAN, CITY OF	23
WAINFLEET, TOWNSHIP OF	12
WARWICK, TOWNSHIP OF	1
WASAGA BEACH, TOWN OF	18
WATERLOO, CITY OF	13
WATERLOO, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	45
WELLAND, CITY OF	17
WELLESLEY, TOWNSHIP OF	1
WELLINGTON NORTH, TOWNSHIP OF	5
WELLINGTON, COUNTY OF	13
WEST ELGIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	8
WEST GREY, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
WEST LINCOLN, TOWNSHIP OF	4
WEST NIPISSING, MUNICIPALITY OF	11
WEST PERTH, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
WESTPORT, VILLAGE OF	1
WHITBY, TOWN OF	13
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE, TOWN OF	8
WHITESTONE, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
WHITEWATER REGION, TOWNSHIP OF	3
WILMOT, TOWNSHIP OF	4
WINDSOR, CITY OF	78
WOLLASTON, TOWNSHIP OF	6
WOOLWICH, TOWNSHIP OF	2
YORK, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	60
CASES WHERE A MUNICIPALITY WASN'T SPECIFIED	50

SHARED CORPORATIONS INCLUDING CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES	
ALECTRA	51
CENTRAL LAKE ONTARIO CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	1
CONSERVATION HALTON	1
ELEXICON ENERGY	4
ENOVA POWER CORP.	5
ENTEGRUS POWERLINES	2
ESSEX POWER CORPORATION	1
GRANDBRIDGE ENERGY	3
GRAND RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	1
HALDIMAND NORFOLK HOUSING CORPORATION	1
HAMILTON CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	3
KAWARTHA CONSERVATION	1
LAKELAND POWER DISTRIBUTION LTD.	1
NEWMARKET-TAY POWER DISTRIBUTION LTD	1
NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	1
NORTH BAY-MATTAWA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	1
NOTTAWASAGA VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	2
OTTAWA RIVER POWER CORPORATION	1
RIDEAU VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	2
SAUGEEN VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	1
SOUTH NATION CONSERVATION	2
ST. CLAIR REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	2
SYNERGY NORTH	1
TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	1
WESTARIO POWER	1
SHARED LOCAL BOARDS	
COCHRANE DISTRICT SERVICES BOARD	5
DISTRICT OF NIPISSING SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	3
DISTRICT OF PARRY SOUND SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	6
DISTRICT OF SAULT STE. MARIE SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	19
DISTRICT OF TIMISKAMING SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	5
KENORA DISTRICT SERVICES BOARD	9
MANITOULIN-SUDBURY DISTRICT SERVICES BOARD	4
RAINY RIVER DISTRICT SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	1
SAUGEEN MUNICIPAL AIRPORT COMMISSION	1
THUNDER BAY SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	11
CASES WHERE NO LOCAL BOARD WAS SPECIFIED	4

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT CLOSED MUNICIPAL MEETINGS, 2024-2025 ► TOTAL: 99

CASES ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES WHERE OMBUDSMAN IS THE INVESTIGATOR*	74
CASES ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES WHERE ANOTHER INVESTIGATOR HAS BEEN APPOINTED**	25

*Not all cases result in investigations; multiple cases may relate to the same meeting.
 **These cases were referred accordingly.

SUMMARY OF COMPLETED INVESTIGATIONS				
MUNICIPALITY	MEETINGS & GATHERINGS REVIEWED	ILLEGAL MEETINGS	PROCEDURAL VIOLATIONS FOUND	BEST PRACTICES SUGGESTED
AMHERSTBURG, TOWN OF	7	0	3	2
BLACK RIVER-MATHESON, TOWNSHIP OF	1	0	2	1
CALLANDER, MUNICIPALITY OF	2	0	2	0
CALVIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	0**	0	4	0
COCHRANE, TOWN OF	1	1	0	0
CORNWALL, CITY OF	1	1	0	0
ELLIOT LAKE, CITY OF	1	1	0	0
GREATER SUDBURY, CITY OF	1	0	0	0
GRIMSBY, TOWN OF*	1	1	1	0
HALTON HILLS, TOWN OF	1	1	2	0
HAMILTON, CITY OF	1	0	0	1
IROQUOIS FALLS, TOWN OF	1	0	1	0
JOCELYN, TOWNSHIP OF	5	1	2	1
LANARK HIGHLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	3	0	1	1
LEEDS AND GRENVILLE, UNITED COUNTIES OF	1	1	0	0
LINCOLN, TOWN OF*	1	1	1	0
LONDON, CITY OF	1	0	0	0
MARKSTAY-WARREN, MUNICIPALITY OF	2	0	2	0
MCGARRY, TOWNSHIP OF	1	0	0	0
MCMURRICH/MONTEITH, TOWNSHIP OF	2	0	0	0
NORFOLK COUNTY	4	2	1	0
OSHAWA, CITY OF	1	0	1	1
RUSSELL, TOWNSHIP OF	6	0	0	1
SAUGEEN MOBILITY AND REGIONAL TRANSIT	1	1	1	1
SPRINGWATER, TOWNSHIP OF	1	0	0	0
TEMAGAMI, MUNICIPALITY OF	1	0	0	2
THE NORTH SHORE, TOWNSHIP OF	3	0	0	1
TINY, TOWNSHIP OF	0**	0	0	0
WEST ELGIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	5	3	0	0
WEST LINCOLN, TOWNSHIP OF*	1	1	1	0
WHITESTONE, MUNICIPALITY OF	8	6	2	1
WOLLASTON, TOWNSHIP OF	1	0	1	1

*A joint meeting held between three councils.
 **This review did not focus on a specific meeting, but on whether the body is subject to the open meeting rules.

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT SCHOOL BOARDS, 2024-2025 ► TOTAL: 1,261

ENGLISH CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARDS	
ALGONQUIN AND LAKESHORE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
BRANT HALDIMAND NORFOLK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	4
BRUCE-GREY CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO	6
DUFFERIN-PEEL CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	29
DURHAM CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	14
HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	17
HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	5
HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1
KENORA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1
LONDON DISTRICT CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD	13
NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	9
NIPISSING-PARRY SOUND CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	4
NORTHEASTERN CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
OTTAWA CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD	14
PETERBOROUGH VICTORIA NORTHUMBERLAND AND CLARINGTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	19
RENFREW COUNTY CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
SIMCOE MUSKOKA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	16
ST CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	5
SUDBURY CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	8
SUPERIOR NORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1
THUNDER BAY CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	7
TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	36
WATERLOO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	11
WELLINGTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	10
YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	20
ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS	
ALGOMA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	11
AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	7
BLUEWATER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	11
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA	17
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ONTARIO NORTH EAST	9
DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	63
GRAND ERIE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	14
GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	36
HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	15

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	28
HASTINGS & PRINCE EDWARD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	12
KAWARTHA PINE RIDGE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	25
KEEWATIN-PATRICIA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	7
LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	7
LIMESTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	11
NEAR NORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	11
OTTAWA-CARLETON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	142
PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	48
RAINBOW DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	7
RAINY RIVER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3
SIMCOE COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	45
THAMES VALLEY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	41
TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	222
TRILLIUM LAKELANDS DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	11
UPPER CANADA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	8
UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	10
WATERLOO REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	25
YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	35
FRENCH CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARDS	
CONSEIL DES ÉCOLES CATHOLIQUES DU CENTRE-EST	15
CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE DES GRANDES RIVIÈRES	2
CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE FRANCO-NORD	1
CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE MONAVENIR	9
CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE PROVIDENCE	6
CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DE DISTRICT CATHOLIQUE DE L'EST ONTARIEN	9
CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DE DISTRICT CATHOLIQUE DES AURORES BORÉALES	1
FRENCH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS	
CONSEIL DES ÉCOLES PUBLIQUES DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO	12
CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DU GRAND NORD	5
CONSEIL SCOLAIRE PUBLIC DU NORD-EST DE L'ONTARIO	4
CONSEIL SCOLAIRE VIAMONDE	7
SCHOOL AUTHORITIES	
MOOSONEE DISTRICT SCHOOL AREA BOARD	1
CASES WHERE NO SCHOOL BOARD WAS SPECIFIED	
	45

Note: Boards that were not the subject of any cases are not listed.

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY, 2024-2025 ► TOTAL: 434

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE	25
CAMBRIAN COLLEGE	12
CANADORE COLLEGE	12
CENTENNIAL COLLEGE	27
COLLÈGE BORÉAL	5
CONESTOGA COLLEGE	39
CONFEDERATION COLLEGE	4
DURHAM COLLEGE	19
FANSHAW COLLEGE	26
FLEMING COLLEGE (SIR SANDFORD FLEMING COLLEGE)	39
GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE	19
GEORGIAN COLLEGE	18

HUMBER COLLEGE	41
LA CITÉ COLLÉGIALE	10
LAMBTON COLLEGE	6
LOYALIST COLLEGE	6
MOHAWK COLLEGE	27
NIAGARA COLLEGE CANADA	18
NORTHERN COLLEGE	1
SAULT COLLEGE	3
SENECA COLLEGE	31
SHERIDAN COLLEGE	19
ST. CLAIR COLLEGE	10
ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE	17

Note: Colleges that were not the subject of any cases are not listed.

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT UNIVERSITIES, 2024-2025 ► TOTAL: 274

ALGOMA UNIVERSITY	13
BROCK UNIVERSITY	5
CARLETON UNIVERSITY	10
LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY	4
LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY	10
MCMASTER UNIVERSITY	17
NIPISSING UNIVERSITY	11
NOSM UNIVERSITY (NORTHERN ONTARIO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE)	2
OCAD UNIVERSITY	3
ONTARIO TECH UNIVERSITY	7
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY	12

TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY*	18
TRENT UNIVERSITY	7
UNIVERSITÉ DE L'ONTARIO FRANÇAIS	3
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH	16
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA	15
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO	26
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO	12
UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR	19
WESTERN UNIVERSITY	17
WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY	14
YORK UNIVERSITY	30
CASES WHERE NO UNIVERSITY WAS SPECIFIED	3

Note: Universities that were not the subject of any cases are not listed. *Formerly Ryerson University.

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES, 2024-2025 ► TOTAL: 1,533

AKWESASNE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	2
ALGOMA, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	34
ANISHINAABE ABINOOJII FAMILY SERVICES	13
BRUCE GREY CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	22
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF GRAND ERIE	25
DILICO ANISHINABEK FAMILY CARE	32
DNAAGDAWENMAG BINNOOJIIYAG CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES	46
DUFFERIN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	7
DURHAM CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	45
FRONTENAC, LENNOX AND ADDINGTON, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF	39
GUELPH AND WELLINGTON COUNTY, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF	25
HALTON CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	33
HAMILTON, CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	5
HAMILTON, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	42
HIGHLAND SHORES CHILDREN'S AID	37
HURON-PERTH CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	31
JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILD SERVICES	1
KAWARTHA-HALIBURTON CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	26
KENORA-RAINY RIVER DISTRICTS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	4
KINA GBEZHGOMI CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES	5
KUNUWANIMANO CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES	6
LANARK, LEEDS AND GRENVILLE, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF	23
LINCK (CHATHAM-KENT CHILDREN'S SERVICES)	20
LONDON AND MIDDLESEX, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	58
NIAGARA, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES	81
NIJJAANSINAANIK CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	9

NIPISSING AND PARRY SOUND, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF	28
NOGDAWINDAMIN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES	15
NORTH EASTERN ONTARIO FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES	15
OGWADENI:DEO	11
OTTAWA, THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	51
OXFORD COUNTY, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	30
PAYUKOTAYNO JAMES AND HUDSON BAY FAMILY SERVICES	7
PEEL CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	46
RENFREW COUNTY, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF	12
SARNIA-LAMBTON CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	28
SIMCOE MUSKOKA FAMILY CONNEXIONS	51
ST. THOMAS AND ELGIN COUNTY, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF	20
STORMONT, DUNDAS AND GLENGARRY, THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF THE UNITED COUNTIES OF	23
SUDBURY AND MANITOULIN, THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICTS OF	47
THUNDER BAY, THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF	19
TIKINAGAN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	27
TORONTO, CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	26
TORONTO, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	109
TORONTO, NATIVE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF	13
VALORIS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS OF PRESCOTT-RUSSELL	6
WATERLOO REGION, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF THE	52
WEECHI-IT-TE-WIN FAMILY SERVICES	9
WINDSOR-ESSEX CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	40
YORK REGION CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	40
CASES WHERE NO CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY WAS SPECIFIED	137

Note: Children's aid societies that were not the subject of any cases are not listed.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY, 2024-2025

Our Office's budget for the fiscal year 2024-2025 was **\$33.10** million. Actual expenditures (unaudited) were \$30.09 million. All unspent funds were returned to the Ministry of Finance. The financial statements of the Ombudsman are audited on an annual basis; however, the annual audit occurs after the publication of the Annual Report.

	(IN \$ THOUSANDS)
OPERATING EXPENSES	
SALARIES & WAGES	19,657
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	4,631
COMMUNICATION & TRANSPORTATION	533
SERVICES	4,540
SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT	726
TOTAL ANNUAL OPERATING EXPENSES	30,088



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