

Position Description

Position Title:	Communications Officer (Bilingual), Children & Youth Unit
Team:	Communications
Reports To:	Manager, Communications – French Language Services and Children & Youth Units
Classification:	Bargaining unit member
Affiliation:	Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario (AMAPCEO)

A. Position Summary

Communications and media relations are essential components of the work of the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman, and vital elements in ensuring its public profile and credibility. The Communications team is responsible for all of the Office's public-facing products, including its website, published reports, brochures, newsletters, videos, social media channels, as well as speeches and presentations by the Ombudsman, Deputy Ombudsman, French Language Services Commissioner/Deputy Ombudsman, Directors, and staff. It also plans, co-ordinates and staffs outreach activities with stakeholders, and monitors news and social media to keep the Office up to date on relevant and evolving issues.

The Office's jurisdiction includes more than 1,000 public sector bodies across Ontario, including all provincial government ministries, agencies, corporations, boards, commissions and tribunals, as well as municipalities, universities, school boards, child protection services and French language services.

The Children & Youth Unit (CY Unit), is directed by the Director, Children & Youth, who reports to the Ombudsman and Deputy Ombudsman. The CY Unit is a team of Investigators and Early Resolutions Officers who resolve and investigate complaints about any matter concerning children and youth who are receiving services from Ontario children's aid societies, foster homes, group homes, secure treatment facilities and youth justice facilities. In addition to reviewing and investigating complaints from children and adults, CY Unit staff meet regularly with children and youth in care, service providers and youth justice facility staff, conduct outreach with community groups and professionals

who help young people, liaise with and provide advice to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, follow up on Death and Serious Bodily Harm reports relating to young people receiving child protection services, and promote and protect young people's rights.

The Communications team supports the outreach activities, investigations, reports and stakeholder engagement efforts of the Ombudsman and the CY Unit in raising awareness of their work and the Office as a whole among child protection stakeholders and the public at large.

Communications services provided by the Communications Officer, Children & Youth include (but are not limited to): Extensive news and social media monitoring, research and analysis; media liaison; production of communications materials including press releases, speeches, presentations, videos, brochures, e-newsletters and reports, website and social media content; producing a regular e-newsletter; planning, co-ordinating and/or participating in training and stakeholder outreach activities and presentations (including to children and youth in care); and supporting the Office's participation in a variety of professional organizations (such as the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates).

This position reports to the Manager, Communications – French Language Services and Children & Youth Units.

B. Responsibilities

Media monitoring, research and analysis: Monitors a wide variety of English and French media sources including print, radio, television, online news sources and social media (with the assistance of outside monitoring services) on a continual basis to ensure that the Office is constantly up to date on news and developments relevant to the CY Unit, the Ombudsman and/or the Office's operations. Monitoring begins early each day and may continue during evenings and weekends.

Engages in daily and at times more frequent review and analysis of press releases and media coverage of news items relevant to the CY Unit, the Ombudsman and/or the Office's operations.

Monitors proceedings of the Legislature and provides summaries and reports on relevant matters as warranted.

Prepares analytical reports, using outside services and resources, on media coverage, website traffic, social media activity and public awareness of activities of the Ombudsman and the CY Unit (e.g., the publication of press releases and reports).

Regularly conducts research of media items on issues relevant to the CY Unit, the Ombudsman and/or the Office's operations.

Media liaison: Provides communications support for response to media inquiries as needed, including researching information to respond to media queries and fielding contacts, where requested by managers. Also provides co-ordination and support for media interviews and appearances by the Ombudsman or other staff regarding matters relevant to the CY Unit's work, including conducting research, preparing briefing notes, remarks and key messages, and attending and taking notes during interviews, as requested.

Provides communications support and assistance in issuing press releases and organizing press conferences by the Ombudsman regarding the CY Unit's work, including co-coordinating and attending press conferences, preparing relevant materials and providing information to members of the media and other stakeholders as requested.

Communications materials: Researches material for and writes and edits a variety of communications materials, including reports, press releases, backgrounders, videos, speeches, key messages, correspondence, outreach materials and e-newsletter content, related to the work of the Children & Youth Unit (these are usually written in English and translated into French). Also provides support and assistance as needed in the design, production and publication of such materials, and in developing new products and content that promotes and explains the work of the Ombudsman and CY Unit to the public and stakeholders, including children and youth in care.

Liaises as required with graphic designers, printers, photographers, translators, and others to support the production of publications relevant to the work of the CY Unit.

Co-ordinates distribution of reports, releases and other communications materials to external parties in a variety of formats (e.g., digital, print, video).

Social media and website: Contributes to the planning, design, regular administration, maintenance, monitoring and updating of information on the Ombudsman website, Intranet and social media sites that is relevant to the work of the CY Unit.

Monitors activity on social media relevant to the Ombudsman and CY Unit as well as concerns of stakeholders and the public, and responds to public inquiries as needed, in consultation with managers as appropriate.

Creates and plans regular social media posts and campaigns and website content relevant to and in promotion of the work of the Ombudsman and CY Unit, in consultation with managers. Monitors and analyses the engagement with and reach of these posts, and responds with strategies to reach and build engagement with stakeholders and the public, including children and youth in care.

Outreach activities and presentations: Provides support and assistance in the organization of events, meetings, presentations and other activities promoting the work of the Ombudsman and the CY Unit and engaging with stakeholders.

Organizes and participates in outreach activities to promote awareness of the work of the Ombudsman and the CY Unit.

Provides support and assistance to the Ombudsman and other staff who are delivering speeches or other presentations relevant to the work of the CY Unit.

Builds and maintains contacts, mailing lists, social media followers and subscriptions to the e-newsletter amongst stakeholders and interest groups in the child protection sector.

Participation in professional organizations: Provides support for the Office's participation and membership in professional organizations, including various ombudsman organizations and the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates.

Acts as a liaison and/or point of contact for the Ombudsman or CY Unit staff and provides support for their participation in conferences, speaking engagements, training sessions etc.

Monitors coverage of issues of interest regarding these organizations and shares relevant articles and content related to the work of the Ombudsman or CY Unit staff.

Other communications-related functions, as assigned.

C. Position Qualifications

- **Education:** Post-secondary degree from a recognized university and/or college program in communications/marketing/journalism or an equivalent acceptable combination of education and experience.
- **Experience:** Experience in providing communications materials, support and services, planning and participating in outreach events, and liaising with members of the media. Preference will be given to candidates with a minimum of 3 years' communications experience.

Experience working in the public sector, in a capacity related to children and youth, or for an officer of the Legislature or other oversight body will be considered an asset.

- **Personal suitability:** This position requires a candidate with a high level of professional interpersonal skills and excellent communications ability in English and French, who is comfortable responding to inquiries from members of the media and the public, including interest groups and stakeholders. All communications must be handled with a high level of respect, courtesy and professionalism at all times.

The successful candidate must be reliable and demonstrate excellent judgment, as well as a high degree of professionalism, initiative and discretion.

- **Language: Oral and written communications skills at the superior level in both English and French are required.**
- **Knowledge, skills and abilities:** Excellent oral communication skills in English and French are required, including the ability to represent the Office in outreach activities and to handle requests from members of the media, the public, interest groups and stakeholders.

Excellent written communication skills in English and French, including the ability to prepare communications materials that reflect the organizational direction of the CY Unit, as well as the Ombudsman's Office as a whole, are required.

The successful candidate will have the ability to work successfully on multiple projects and priorities within established timelines, superior research skills, and digital skills to support communications functions, such as knowledge of PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, Excel, Adobe Photoshop, MailChimp, website content management systems, video editing software and social media platforms.

Knowledge of the parliamentary and legislative process in Ontario and the role of the Ombudsman, as well as of the child welfare system and child protection sector, will be considered an asset.

D. Work Environment

Must be highly professional, with excellent interpersonal skills and communications ability, capable of working as part of a busy Communications team and comfortable dealing with competing projects and priorities, at times under tight deadlines.

Must demonstrate a high degree of professionalism and excellent judgment, initiative and discretion, including the judgment to seek advice from management as necessary.

Frequent overtime may be required on evenings and weekends. Occasional travel may also be required.

Time pressures: Must be capable of multitasking and dealing professionally with a high volume of work. Must be highly organized and flexible, and capable of dealing with competing demands and priorities.

Must work effectively and efficiently with minimal supervision, taking the initiative to find solutions to problems that occur and to identify creative ways to improve the quality of service provided. Must be able to work with a high degree of autonomy, but also exercise good judgment by consulting with managers where appropriate.

Effect of errors: Must apply Office policy and procedures and act with a high degree of professionalism at all times. Failure to present a professional, courteous and competent image or to provide accurate and timely information to members of the public or the media has the potential to have an adverse impact on the Office, its credibility and reputation, and ultimately its operations. Failure to provide timely, professional and high-quality communications support internally could also impact negatively on the Office's profile with the media and the public, its credibility and reputation, and its operations.

Freedom to make decisions: Must work independently in a structured environment and take initiative in organizing the day-to-day functions of the position. Must be generally guided by policy but exercise good judgment and discretion in an appropriate and professional manner, consulting where appropriate.

Interpersonal contacts: Must deal with inquiries from members of the media and the public, including interest groups and stakeholders, and liaise with service providers as well as those involved in professional organizations and events organized by the Office. All communications must be handled with a high level of professionalism, courtesy and respect and demonstrate a high level of competency commensurate with the position.