

Annual Report

2021-2022





Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario

We are:

An independent Office of the Legislature that resolves and investigates public complaints about services provided by Ontario public sector bodies. These include provincial government ministries, agencies, boards, commissions, corporations and tribunals, as well as municipalities, universities, school boards, child protection services and French language services.

Land acknowledgement and commitment to reconciliation

The Ontario Ombudsman's work takes place on traditional Indigenous territories across the province we now call Ontario, and we are thankful to be able to work and live on this land. We would like to acknowledge that Toronto, where the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman is located, is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

We believe it is important to offer a land acknowledgement as a way to recognize, respect and honour this territory, the treaties, the original occupants, their ancestors, and the historic connection they still have with this territory.

As part of our commitment to reconciliation, we are providing educational opportunities to help our staff learn more about our shared history and the harms that have been inflicted on Indigenous peoples. We are working to establish mutually respectful relationships with Indigenous people across the province and will continue to incorporate recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into our work. We are grateful for the opportunity to work across Turtle Island.



August 2022

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Province of Ontario
Queen's Park

Dear Mr./Madam Speaker,

I am pleased to submit my Annual Report for the period of April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, 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', is written over a light blue circular background.

Paul Dubé
Ombudsman

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OMBUDSMAN'S MESSAGE

A gradual return

It is with cautious optimism that my colleagues and I turn the page on 2021-2022 and plan for a gradual return to the activities and methods of operation that we were forced to curtail with the onset of COVID-19 more than two years ago. Having recruited many new members to our Office, while seeing complaint volumes return almost to pre-pandemic levels, we are re-establishing the in-person teamwork that has always optimized our service to Ontarians.

While the health and well-being of our team has been and remains our top priority, returning to work at our office 2-3 days per week under protective protocols has been a welcome change from the remoteness and separation that we – like so many other Ontarians – have endured over the past two-and-a-half years.

An impactful year

Despite the challenges of working remotely, we continued our compassionate and impactful work this past year, as the stories and statistics in this report demonstrate. We received **25,161** cases – complaints and inquiries – between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022, an increase of 25% over the previous fiscal year. A substantial number of these continued to be driven by the COVID-19 pandemic – such as vaccine mandates in universities and colleges, and ongoing delays in many of the provincial programs we oversee. But a large portion involved the sort of complex administrative issues that have always been our forte – such as helping families access developmental services or social benefits.

As usual, we resolved the vast majority of these cases without formal investigation, and most of them (**52%**) within



June 29, 2021 • Ombudsman Paul Dubé releases last year's Annual Report at Queen's Park.

two weeks. As always, helping vulnerable people with difficult or unfair systems was a priority. For example, we escalated the complaints of Ontarians with disabilities who were not able to renew their health cards online because they did not have driver's licences, and the system has since been changed. Our staff helped numerous inmates access health care services. Recently, we even made sure that Ukrainians fleeing the war in their country were able to cut through red tape and obtain Ontario driver's licences quickly.

We published two investigative reports this spring – one on French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke's investigation into cuts to French-language programs at Laurentian University, and the other on my investigation of

“Without your efforts to help me, I would still be struggling to resolve my issue.... I was not aware before of the function of the Ombudsman's Office. I now totally believe this office is indispensable to our society for restoring fairness and justice to its citizens. I am most grateful to you and your institution.”

– Complainant

the sudden closure of youth justice programs in Northern Ontario. All of our recommendations in both cases were accepted.

Our work on two highly complex systemic investigations – into delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board and the government's monitoring of long-term care homes during the pandemic – also progressed substantially, and we look forward to their completion in the coming months.

In the municipal sector, we received a record number of complaints as municipalities dealt with, and sometimes struggled with, the legal and technical aspects of holding virtual and hybrid meetings while respecting the open meeting requirements of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

We issued dozens of reports and letters to help municipalities follow these rules, adding to the rich database of decisions available in our Open Meeting Digest online. General issues about municipalities – part of our mandate since 2016 – also continued to generate more cases than almost anything else.

Submissions to government

Every year, we take advantage of opportunities to comment on proposed legislative changes and issues that affect Ontarians. This is a little-known aspect of the

role of the Ombudsman that allows us to leverage our expertise – for example, regarding the monitoring of inmates in segregation, or the use of physical restraints in the child welfare system – to urge improvements. I made six submissions to government between May 2021 and May 2022.

Two of these (noted elsewhere in this report) stressed the importance of ensuring that Integrity Commissioners at the local level – for municipalities and school boards – are mandatory, and have robust complaint protocols that are consistent across the province. Three related to improving regulations designed to protect vulnerable young people, and one reiterated several of my earlier recommendations regarding segregation of inmates. We continue to actively engage with the province on these issues.

Children and youth

We also helped an ever-growing number of young people and adults who raised concerns about child protection services – part of our mandate since 2019. Now into its third year of operation, our dedicated Children and Youth Unit is committed to being as accessible as possible to children and youth in care. Our staff are constantly engaged in outreach to inform young people in care about their rights, and service providers about best practices.

Along with responding directly to complaints, the Children and Youth Unit works on many fronts to address issues affecting young people in the child welfare system, receiving updates on legislative developments and policy changes, monitoring Death and Serious Bodily Harm reports, and following up directly with many injured children. Our Office also works with our fellow members of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates to share best practices and lend our voice to calls for reform.

As well, this unit has started to build an approach to outreach and engagement aimed at addressing issues



May 25, 2022 • Ombudsman Paul Dubé and staff speak to members of the public about our services as part of the City of Toronto's Newcomer Day, Nathan Phillips Square, Toronto.

affecting Indigenous youth and other groups who are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system. Their experience in consulting on cases and with these communities will be key to the development of further outreach efforts by our Office as a whole.

The work we do in this area provides an opportunity to contribute to reconciliation. For example, our recent investigation into youth justice program closures in the North revealed that a lack of engagement with affected Indigenous groups by the province exacerbated the impact of the closures. As I noted in my report on that case, it is important to reflect on learnings from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the significance of meaningful engagement.

French language services

We have spared no efforts in building a passionate and dynamic French Language Services Unit that, with support from across our entire organization, continues to have significant success in supporting Commissioner Burke in the

promotion and protection of the rights of Franco-Ontarians, pursuant to the *French Language Services Act (FLSA)*. The Laurentian University investigation is a perfect example of how we marshalled skills and experience from across our Office and applied our evidence-based approach to determine the underlying problems and propose solutions for corrective action – in this case to two ministries and the university, all of which have committed to implementing the Commissioner's recommendations. The Commissioner's second Annual Report, released in December 2021, was similarly well received.

As the Commissioner will explain in more detail in her third Annual Report later this year, we resolve hundreds of cases each year in which Francophones feel that government services have not conformed to the standards prescribed by the *FLSA*. We intervene when appropriate to promote the right to receive services in French that are simultaneous with and equivalent to services in English.

Despite our hard work and positive outcomes, there are considerable challenges in this work. A key challenge we have faced is the degree of misunderstanding and the amount of misinformation about how an Ombudsman functions and the principles that guide our work – principles that have been codified internationally as the **Venice Principles** (more on this under the next heading).

As an independent and impartial Officer of the Legislative Assembly, our Office does not take any instructions from any authorities. The French Language Services Commissioner is empowered by that same independence and impartiality. The Commissioner is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the French Language Services Unit, oversees the handling of complaints and conduct of its investigations, and engages in outreach and proactive consultations with Francophone stakeholders.

As a parliamentary ombudsman, we also have "own initiative" or "own motion" powers, which means that complaints are not a prerequisite to investigations. We have used those powers in several instances over the

years, most recently to launch our ongoing long-term care investigation. Those powers are available to the French Language Services Unit as an integral component of our organization, and the Commissioner does not require complaints to investigate a matter.

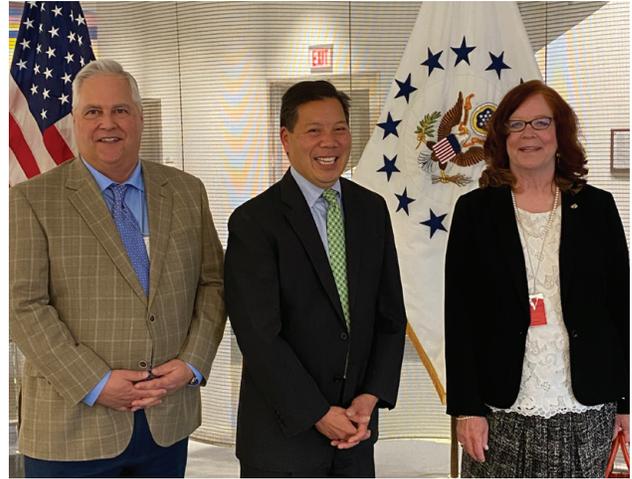
A global role

Questions about the role of the Ombudsman are not new, of course. The good news is that the past few years have seen remarkable progress in international recognition of this role as essential to democracy, and a clear set of principles to define it.

Following the 2019 proclamation of the Venice Principles – a set of 25 global standards to ensure stable, independent and effective ombudsman institutions around the world – the United Nations General Assembly endorsed those principles in December 2020 in its Resolution on the Role of Ombudsman and Mediator Institutions.

These declarations – which we have set out in detail in the next section of this report, **About our Office** – are important steps in setting global standards and protections for the ombudsman institution. They enhance the ability of offices like this one to promote fair administration, human rights, good governance and the rule of law. Collectively and individually, my international colleagues and I continue to work on ways to inform our governments, citizens, and stakeholders about those principles, as well as put them into practice through self-assessment and peer review.

In May 2022, I was pleased to be able to join my fellow members of the International Ombudsman Institute's Board of Directors at our Annual Meeting in New York – our first in-person meeting in three years – where we had productive sessions with several missions and permanent representatives to the United Nations to promote the Resolution and the Venice Principles, and strengthen our ties with the UN.



May 5, 2022 - Ombudsman Paul Dubé (left) and International Ombudsman Institute colleague Diane Welborn (Ombudsman of Dayton-Montgomery County, Ohio) meet with Christopher Lu (centre), U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations for Management and Reform, New York.

Such progress is a hopeful and fitting sign for a world that is yearning to overcome the heavy challenges of the past two years. Throughout this time, we have demonstrated through reports like this one that independent oversight of public services is essential for the protection of citizens. It is equally important that the concept of independent oversight itself be protected.

Back to the future

Against this backdrop, I look forward to being able to resume in-person outreach and build on the relationships and initiatives begun before the pandemic – in particular, our work with children and youth, our engagement with Indigenous communities, and our commitment to reconciliation. Most of all, I look forward to the next achievements my team and I will be able to realize for Ontarians as we are reunited – safely and gradually – under one roof.

ABOUT OUR OFFICE

What is an Ombudsman?

The institution of the parliamentary ombudsman, developed in Scandinavia more than 200 years ago, provides administrative oversight by promoting transparency, accountability, fairness and a respect for the rights of citizens. "Ombudsman" is a gender-neutral Swedish term that means "officer" or "commissioner," and which refers to a person who represents or protects the interests of the public at large.

A parliamentary ombudsman is appointed to investigate complaints of citizens who feel they have been subjected to maladministration or unfair treatment by public authorities.

If a complaint has merit, an ombudsman will first seek to resolve the dispute at the lowest level possible, but will conduct an investigation when necessary. Ombudsman findings and recommendations are based on an impartial assessment of the facts and evidence. An ombudsman acts impartially, not on behalf of either party.

Ontario Ombudsman

Established in 1975, the Ontario Ombudsman is a parliamentary ombudsman – an Officer of the Legislature, independent of the government and political parties. We promote fairness, accountability and transparency in the public sector by resolving and investigating public complaints and systemic issues within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.



Ombudsman findings and recommendations are based on an impartial assessment of the facts and evidence.

The *Ombudsman Act* stipulates that complaints to our Office are confidential and investigations are conducted in private. Our services are free of charge.

The role of the Ombudsman

The role of the Ombudsman is to impartially investigate complaints from people who feel they have been unfairly treated by the providers of certain public services, or investigate unresolved matters regarding the provision of those services. In our case, these include:

- Ontario government departments and public sector agencies
- Municipalities
- School boards
- Universities and colleges
- French language services
- Child protection services

The Ombudsman's role was captured by Justice Brian Dickson of the Supreme Court of Canada in 1984 in a description that is no less true today:

“The traditional controls over the implementation and administration of governmental policies and programs—namely, the legislature, the executive and the courts—are neither completely suited nor entirely capable of providing the supervision a burgeoning bureaucracy demands. The inadequacy of legislative response to complaints arising from the day-to-day operation of government is not seriously disputed.

“The demands on members of legislative bodies are such that they are naturally unable to give careful attention to the workings of the entire bureaucracy. Moreover, they often lack the investigative resources necessary to follow up properly any matter they do elect to pursue... The Ombudsman represents society's response to these problems of potential abuse and of supervision. His unique characteristics render him capable of addressing many of the concerns left untouched by the traditional bureaucratic control devices.”

The International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) defines it as follows:

“The role of ombudsman institutions is to protect the people against violation of rights, abuse of powers, unfair decisions and maladministration. They play an increasingly important role in improving public administration while making the government's actions more open and its administration more accountable to the public.”

The Ombudsman role is therefore vital to democracy. The services of the Ombudsman's office are free to use and are accessible to individuals who cannot obtain redress for their complaints about government or public sector services through elected officials or the courts. As an interface between government administration and citizens, the Ombudsman is uniquely positioned, either as a first or last resort, to set matters straight.

For example, in addition to the thousands of individual complaints resolved every year by Ombudsman Ontario, our extensive systemic investigations and resulting recommendations have prompted widespread government reforms, benefiting millions of Ontarians through improved services, reduction of waste, and even saving lives. Some of these changes include enhanced de-escalation training for police, improved screening of newborn babies for preventable diseases, better access to drug funding, overhauls of lottery ticket retailing and property tax assessment, and more supports for adults with developmental disabilities. Our Office also handles thousands of complaints about municipalities and school boards, promoting accountability and transparency at the local government level.



May 6, 2022 · Ombudsman Paul Dubé (left) and International Ombudsman Institute President Chris Field (right) meet with Richard Arbeiter, Canadian Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York.

The International Ombudsman Institute

The International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) was founded in 1978 in Canada. It promotes the development of ombudsman institutions around the world as important to democratic oversight, and supports them through research, training and information exchange. It is the only global organization for the co-operation of 205 independent ombudsman institutions from more than 100 countries worldwide. The IOI is organized into six regional chapters - Africa, Asia, Australasia and Pacific, Europe, Caribbean and Latin America, and North America.

While not a national institution, the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario is one of the most respected ombudsman institutions in the world. Ombudsman Paul Dubé is actively involved in the IOI as President of the IOI's North American Region, serving on its Board of Directors and as a member of the IOI United Nations Working Group. To mark the IOI's 40th anniversary in May 2018, Ombudsman Dubé hosted the annual meeting of the IOI's Board of Directors in Toronto, welcoming ombudsman institutions from all over the world.

The Venice Principles

The ombudsman concept has evolved in a variety of constitutional settings throughout the world over the past 200 years. Ombudsman offices are now found in rich, poor, old and new countries, with a wide variety of political systems and economies.

The institution has proliferated because it is so effective in addressing maladministration, protecting human rights, and promoting fairness. However, that effectiveness in holding governments to account has sometimes caused ombudsman offices to come under threat. According to the IOI:

“Threats to ombudsman institutions come in a variety of forms but have a common denominator: They come as a direct response to the complaint handling work of ombudsmen and their efforts to protect human rights and fight corruption.”

It was in response to those threats that the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe developed the Venice Principles in 2019, a set of 25 principles that promote and protect the ombudsman institution.

Emphasizing that the ombudsman is an important element in states based on democracy, the rule of law, good administration, and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the 25 Venice Principles represent the first internationally accepted standards for the proper functioning and independence of parliamentary and public services ombudsmen.

They stipulate, among other things, that a state or parliamentary ombudsman should have a “firm legal foundation, preferably at the constitutional level,” that

the state should “refrain from any action undermining its independence,” and that ombudsman appointments should be “according to procedures strengthening to the highest possible extent the authority, impartiality, independence and legitimacy of the institution.” They specify that an ombudsman shall only be removed from office according to an exhaustive list of reasonable conditions established by law, relating solely to narrowly interpreted criteria, including “inability to perform the functions of office” or “misbehaviour.” They stress that the parliamentary majority required for such a removal – by parliament itself or by a court on request of parliament – shall be equal to, and preferably higher than, the one required for election, and that the procedure be public, transparent and provided for by law.

United Nations Resolution on the Ombudsman institution

On December 16, 2020, the UN General Assembly adopted this Resolution on **“The role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law.”** This was an important step in securing worldwide recognition for the ombudsman institution, endorsing the Venice Principles as the global standard.

The Resolution stresses the importance of financial and administrative independence for ombudsman offices, as well as the need for stability of these institutions:

“Underlining the importance of autonomy and independence from the executive or judicial branches of government, its agencies or political parties, of Ombudsman and mediator institutions, where they exist, in order to enable them to consider all issues

related to their fields of competence, without real or perceived threat to their procedural ability or efficiency and without fear of reprisal, intimidation or recrimination in any form, whether online or offline, that may threaten their functioning or the physical safety and security of their officials.”

It also stresses the key principles of ombudsman institutions, including independence, objectivity, transparency, fairness and impartiality, and recognizes the work of ombudsman institutions around the world in promoting good administration and human rights.

Our memberships

In addition to the IOI, our Office works collaboratively with many other provincial, national and international oversight bodies to share insights, strategies and best practices. Participation in organizations related to our jurisdiction enhances our knowledge and skills and enables us to better serve Ontarians. They include:

Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman (CCPO): Every province and territory that has a parliamentary ombudsman is part of the CCPO. Through the CCPO, we support each other and share expertise to optimize our service to the people and institutions we serve.

Forum of Canadian Ombudsman (FCO): The FCO brings together a range of ombudsman offices across Canada, including those that operate within public sector bodies or organizations. Our Office participates in FCO conferences and workshops, including its “ombudsman essentials” training program with Osgoode Professional Development.

International Association of Language Commissioners

(IALC): The French Language Services Commissioner represents our Office in the IALC, which shares best practices and expertise in protecting minority language rights around the world.

Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates

(CCCYA): Our Office is a member of the CCCYA, an association of independent officers of the legislature from across Canada who have mandates to advance the rights of children and youth.

L'Association des Ombudsmans et des Médiateurs de la Francophonie (AOMF)

The AOMF supports independent ombudsmen, mediators and human rights commissioners throughout the French-speaking world.

United States Ombudsman Association (USOA):

The USOA fosters the development of professional ombudsman offices across the U.S., Canada and elsewhere.

Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (CACOLE)

Our Office regularly shares expertise in oversight of law enforcement with members of CACOLE, which advances the application of civilian oversight of law enforcement throughout Canada and abroad.

National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE)

Our Office participates in discussions and knowledge-sharing with members of NACOLE, which works to enhance accountability and transparency in policing in the United States through civilian oversight.

International Corrections and Prisons Association

(ICPA): An international organization of correctional services professionals and oversight bodies, the ICPA promotes standards for humane and effective correctional practices.



Our Office works collaboratively with many other provincial, national and international oversight bodies to share insights, strategies and best practices.

HOW WE WORK



COMPLAINT INTAKE

We take complaints via the complaint form on our website, by email, phone or letter, or in person (when COVID-19 protocols permit). 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 assist as much as possible by providing helpful information and referring 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.



EARLY RESOLUTION

We always seek to resolve complaints at the lowest level possible. To do so, we often make informal inquiries and requests for information with the relevant bodies, for example, to learn more about their processes and policies.



INVESTIGATION

If we are unable to resolve the matter informally, the Ombudsman may decide to conduct an investigation. We notify the organization in question, and we may conduct interviews and request documents or other relevant evidence. If the Ombudsman determines that there is a potential systemic issue underlying the complaints, he may decide to launch a systemic investigation.



FINDINGS AND REPORTS

The Ombudsman provides his 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 newsletter. Copies are also available from our Office.



RESULTS

We communicate the outcome of individual investigations and most reviews and informal 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 to ensure they are implemented, and we monitor to ensure problems don't recur.

WE CAN:

- Review and investigate complaints about provincial government organizations, administrative tribunals, municipalities, universities, school boards, child protection services and French language services.
- Help you connect with the appropriate officials, if you have not already tried to resolve your complaint.
- Refer you to others who can help, if the matter is not within our jurisdiction.
- Attempt to resolve your problem through communication with the organization(s) involved, if your efforts to do so have failed, and the matter is within our jurisdiction.
- Determine whether or not the organization's actions or processes were fair.
- Flag trends in complaints to government officials and recommend best practices and/or ways to improve administrative fairness.
- Assist public sector officials with general questions about our processes or best practices.
- Conduct a formal investigation, if the Ombudsman determines it is warranted, and make recommendations for constructive change.



WE CANNOT:

- Overturn decisions of elected officials or set public policy.
- Redo the work of other investigative bodies or accountability mechanisms.
- Take sides in disputes.
- Provide legal advice or representation.
- Act as an advocate for a person or public body; we advocate for fairness.
- Take complaints about:
 - Conduct of individual elected officials at the provincial or federal levels
 - The Premier, Cabinet and its decisions, and political staff
 - Judges and the provincial and federal courts
 - Legal disputes
 - Criminal activity
 - Private companies or individuals
 - Local, provincial or federal police services or their conduct (except some Ontario Provincial Police administrative matters)
 - The federal government and its departments and agencies
 - Federally regulated industries (banks, insurance companies, etc.)
 - Self-regulating professions (e.g., lawyers, doctors, nurses)
 - Student associations and student unions
 - Local public health units
 - Hospitals and long-term care homes (except those designated under the *French Language Services Act*)


Ombudsman
 ONTARIO

ONTARIO'S WATCHDOG

VALUES, MISSION AND VISION



OUR VALUES

- Fair treatment
- Accountable administration
- Independence, impartiality
- Results: Achieving real change



OUR MISSION

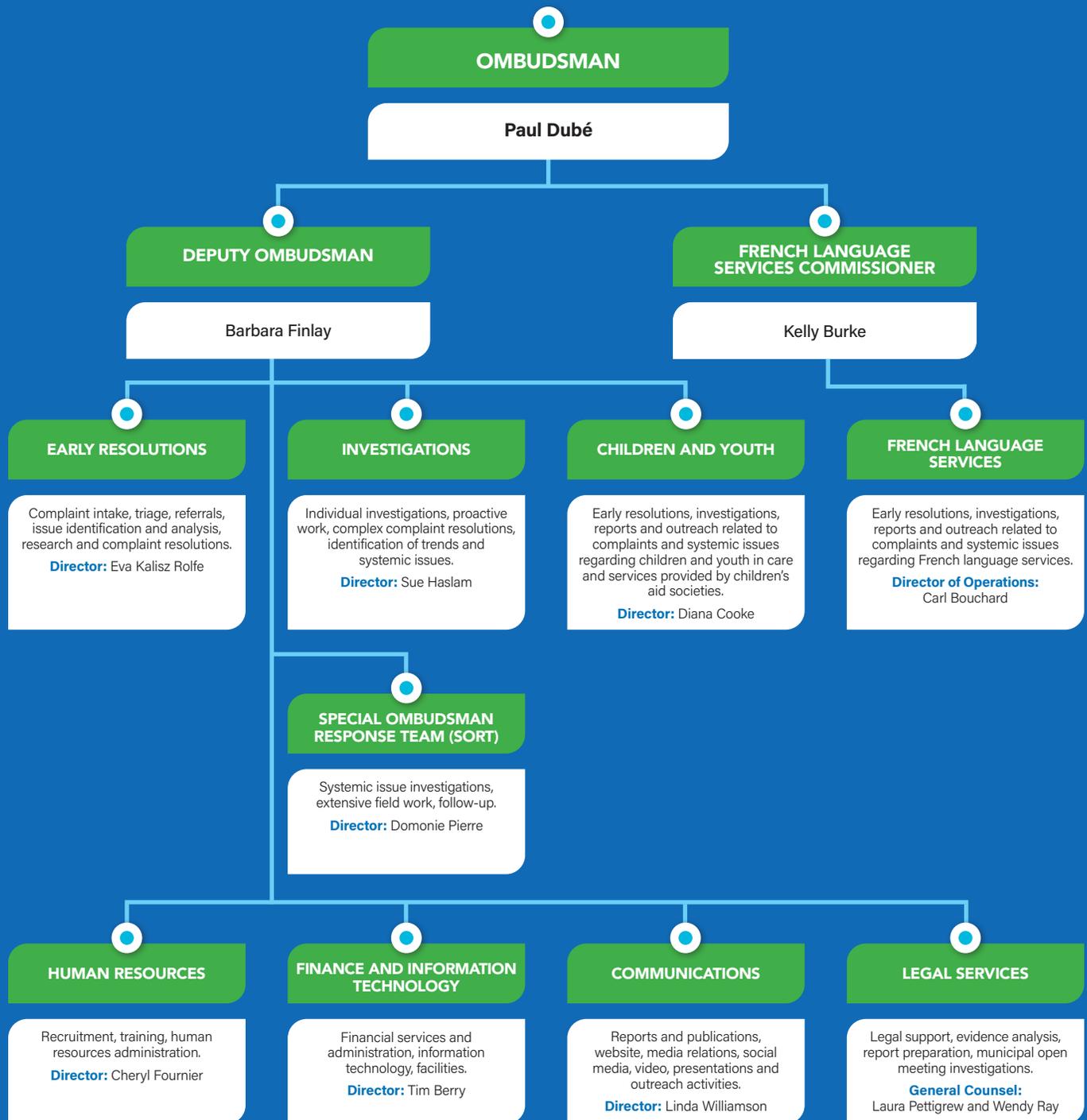
We strive to be an agent of positive change by enhancing fairness, accountability and transparency in the public sector, and promoting respect for French language service rights as well as the rights of children and youth.



OUR VISION

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

WHO WE ARE



ABOUT THIS REPORT

Cases discussed in this report were received between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022.

We use “cases” to mean individual complaints and inquiries. Individual cases often involve multiple issues and several different public sector bodies, requiring input and collaboration from teams across our Office.

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 chart. Each topic chapter discusses the main complaint trends and significant cases of the past year.

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

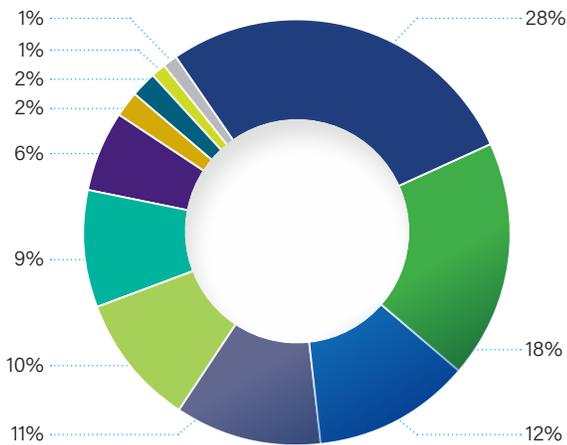
Good to know



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

CASES BY SUBJECT

- LAW & ORDER
- MUNICIPALITIES
- CHILDREN & YOUTH
- EDUCATION
- SOCIAL SERVICES
- MONEY & PROPERTY
- TRANSPORTATION
- FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES
- EMPLOYMENT
- ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT
- CERTIFICATES & PERMITS



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 Delays
- 4 Legislation and/or regulations
- 5 Communication
- 6 Enforcement of rules or policies
- 7 Broader public policy matters
- 8 Procedures
- 9 Internal complaint processes
- 10 Funding

2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS



25,161

Total cases received



45%
received online



48%
received by phone



7%
received by mail or fax

40%
resolved within one week



52%
resolved within two weeks

OUTREACH WITH STAKEHOLDERS



65
virtual events
(presentations, speeches, etc.)



164
stakeholder consultations
and requests answered

2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNICATIONS



176,698

website visitors from **195** countries

685,960

pageviews



1,305

print media articles



1,625

broadcast media items



211,674 people

Facebook reach



97,957 people

Instagram reach



1,597,101

Twitter impressions



5,692

YouTube views

TOP 10 CASE TOPICS



3,691

Correctional facilities



3,068

Municipalities and
municipal meetings



1,792*

Children and youth
in care



1,110

Tribunals Ontario



755

Ontario Disability
Support Program



722

School boards



705

Universities and
colleges



361**

French language
services



350

Family Responsibility
Office



288

ServiceOntario

***Cases received by the French Language Services Unit – details of these will be published in the Annual Report of the French Language Services Commissioner in late 2022*

YEAR IN REVIEW



LAW & ORDER

Overview

This case category includes all aspects of the justice system, correctional system, and policing that are within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, and continues to be the largest category of complaints we receive. Year after year, we receive more complaints and inquiries about services provided through the Ministry of the Solicitor General (**3,920** in 2021-2022) and the Ministry of the Attorney General (**1,567**) than anything else.

Cases about correctional facilities (**3,691**), remained consistent with the previous fiscal year, but well below 2019-2020's peak of 6,000. Tribunals Ontario, which includes the Landlord and Tenant Board, was the single most complained-about organization for the third year in a row, with cases reaching a new high of **1,110**, largely due to ongoing delays and technical issues.

The Ombudsman's mandate does not include judges or court decisions, municipal police services or police service boards. Wherever possible, we refer people to other avenues where they can complain about these matters.

Trends in cases – policing

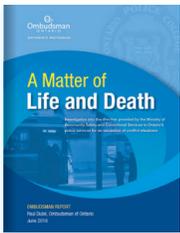
Although the Ombudsman does not have jurisdiction over municipal police, we do have jurisdiction over some aspects of police oversight, such as the Special

Investigations Unit. Whenever the *Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019* fully comes into force, it will make changes to the province's other police oversight bodies – such as the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) – and extend the Ombudsman's oversight to all of them.

We received **302** complaints about municipal police in 2021-2022, which we referred to the OIPRD or other appropriate avenues.

Investigations – policing

Police de-escalation training



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

Investigation update: The Ombudsman's 22 recommendations in this case – which stemmed from the fatal police shooting of an 18-year-old on a Toronto streetcar in 2013 – echoed

those of 20 years of coroners' inquests. All of them, including that all police be trained to first use de-escalation techniques before using force when in conflict situations with people in crisis, were accepted by the then-Minister.

However, little progress has been made since. The Ministry of the Solicitor General decided not to proceed with a specific regulation for de-escalation, and other initiatives – including a new use-of-force model, revised training, and guidance to police services about body-worn cameras – have stalled. Instead, the Ministry has advised that it is developing a “visual training aid” for officers. The province has also revised its mental health crisis response training curriculum, but it is optional, not mandatory for all police services.

In May 2022, the Hamilton Police Service announced in a press release that it was the first in the province to offer this Mental Health Crisis Response Training Program, “designed as a direct response” to the Ombudsman's recommendations, along with those of former justice Frank Iacobucci in his 2014 report, *Police Encounters with People in Crisis*, “and numerous inquests into fatal police encounters calling for vast improvements to police training in mental health crisis intervention.”

The Ombudsman remains committed to engaging with the Ministry on this issue, and is considering whether a follow-up investigation is warranted.

Trends in cases – correctional services

We deal with thousands of complaints from people in Ontario correctional facilities every year, and are committed to ensuring their health, safety, and fair treatment. In addition to COVID-19 outbreak concerns, we also resolved issues related to lockdowns, segregation, health care and other matters affecting inmates' well-being.

We meet regularly with senior officials to proactively flag complaint trends, and to receive updates on outbreaks and ongoing health and safety measures to protect inmates and correctional staff. As well, we continue to monitor the Ministry's progress on hiring more staff and modernizing facilities to improve conditions, such as its planned expansions of facilities in Kenora and Thunder Bay, slated for completion in late 2022.

“ I just wanted to thank you and your other co-workers who listened to my problem and contacted the [relevant officials]. I know that it was the Ontario Ombudsman staff that got this situation moving ... please pass on my thanks to them all.”

– Complainant

COVID-19 and access to services

The pandemic continued to pose huge challenges for correctional facilities, which struggled with staffing shortages and the logistics of isolating inmates during outbreaks. Many inmates complained to us about prolonged lockdowns, when they were sometimes confined to their cells for all but 30 minutes per day. They also cited the impact of such restrictions on their mental health.

Our Office speaks regularly with senior Ministry and facility officials to discuss their measures to manage COVID-19 while ensuring that inmates have access to services and amenities. For instance, we confirm that inmates on lockdown or in medical isolation have regular access to phones, showers, and health care. The Ministry has also hired more correctional officers as part of its strategy to address staffing shortages and manage rising inmate population numbers.

Medical issues

Aside from COVID-19 concerns, health concerns – including mental health – continued to be the most common topic of complaint regarding correctional facilities. These cases often involve availability of doctors or specialists, delays in receiving certain types of treatment, or problems accessing prescribed medication. We prioritize serious cases where inmates are in distress, and resolve

them through good co-operation with facility health care staff.

For example:

- When an inmate called our Office in crisis, expressing thoughts of self-harm, we immediately contacted the facility to ensure he was safe, and he was moved to a unit with extra supports.
- We helped a distressed inmate who was going through opioid withdrawal – and had been told she would have to wait a week to get medication for her symptoms. She received the medication the day after we contacted the facility.
- After an inmate told us the CPAP machine he used to help him breathe at night was broken, we arranged with facility staff to have it fixed.
- We alerted a facility to an inmate who told us he was in pain while waiting to have his wisdom teeth removed, and they arranged for him to see a dentist without further delay.

Cultural and diversity issues

We often receive complaints from inmates who are unable to access cultural and spiritual programming and services, and we receive regular updates from the Ministry on such initiatives as hiring Native Inmate Liaison Officers and worship leaders, as well as introducing Indigenous Justice Circles at certain facilities. We generally resolve these cases directly with facilities.

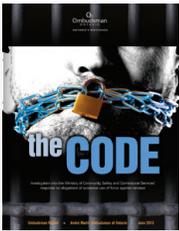
For example:

- An inmate on a vegan diet who was observing Ramadan complained that he had been unable to eat for three full days, because the only Halal meal provided to inmates for Ramadan was non-vegan. Once we intervened, he began receiving vegan Halal meals.

- After we escalated a complaint from an Indigenous inmate that the smudging kits he and other inmates received were empty, they received full kits and were able to smudge.

Investigations – correctional services

Use of force in correctional facilities



Report: *The Code*, released June 2013

Investigation update: In the nine years since the release of this report, the Ministry of the Solicitor General has implemented **42** of the Ombudsman's 45 recommendations to address a

pervasive “code of silence” among correctional officers in cases of excessive use of force against inmates. Among other things, it has implemented a code of conduct for staff and updated its definition of “serious” injuries.

The Ministry continues to work on the outstanding recommendations, installing closed-circuit cameras in all correctional facilities and monitoring the number of use-of-force incidents awaiting investigation.

Individual cases: We continue to address individual complaints about excessive use of force by correctional officers. In 2021-2022, as inmate populations generally rose (after declining at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic), we received **84** such cases, up from 51 the previous year. In these cases, we speak directly to the facility to ensure that immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and that investigations are conducted as required.

Tracking of inmates in segregation



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

Investigation update: This investigation was prompted by the case of Adam Capay, a young Indigenous man held in segregation (the Ministry of the Solicitor General's term for solitary confinement) for more than four years. It revealed significant flaws in the Ministry's tracking and reporting on inmates in segregation.

The Minister at the time accepted all 32 of the Ombudsman's recommendations, including a more precise definition of “segregation,” improved technology to track inmates' time in segregation across facilities, and an independent panel to review all segregation placements. The Ministry has implemented **26** of the recommendations. Others are stalled, in part because relevant legislation that was passed in 2018 – the *Correctional Services Transformation Act, 2018* – has not been proclaimed in force.

Ombudsman's submission to the Ministry

In May 2021, the Ministry sought feedback on proposed changes to Regulation 778 of the *Ministry of Correctional Services Act*. The Ombudsman made a submission to the Ministry on these matters, and the Ministry's amendments came into effect in August 2021. Among other things, the definition of “segregation” was changed to focus on conditions of confinement, rather than where an inmate is housed, as the Ombudsman recommended in 2017.

Other changes to the regulation included that segregation generally not last beyond 15 days (and generally no more than 60 days per year), and that inmates with a mental health disorder cannot be placed in segregation. It now also provides for “independent” reviews of placements every five days. However, in his submission, the Ombudsman raised concerns about the actual independence of this process, noting that our Office’s understanding is that it “consists of forms filled in by facility staff that are ‘reviewed’ by the regional office or Assistant Deputy Minister’s office.”

“This process falls well short of the independent oversight panels that my Office recommended [...] Key recommendations of my Office related to segregation remain outstanding and I once again call on the Ministry to commit to improving its practices.”

– Ombudsman Paul Dubé, submission to the Ministry of the Solicitor General’s consultation on Regulation 778, May 2021

Other trends in cases

Administrative tribunals

Complaints about Tribunals Ontario – a cluster of 13 administrative tribunals that collectively deals with 100,000 cases each year – reached a new high in 2021-2022 of **1,110** cases (up from 935 the previous year). The bulk of these (**964** cases) were about the Landlord and Tenant Board, whose delays and other issues are the subject of our ongoing investigation (for more, see the **Money & Property** chapter of this report).

We also received complaints about the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, the Social Benefits Tribunal, and the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (which has since been dissolved). The most common issues across all of these bodies were delay and other service-related problems. Some people complained about waiting several years for decisions on their cases or appeals.

We resolved many cases by escalating concerns about backlogs, communication and delay to senior tribunal officials.

For example:

- We helped a social assistance recipient navigate the Social Benefits Tribunal’s appeal process, after she waited nearly two years for a response about a hearing date.
- We asked the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO) about its plan to address backlogs after a woman complained to us about waiting almost four years to have her case heard.

- We prompted the HRTO to prioritize a written decision for a man with a disability who had been waiting for it for three years.

Case summaries

The right to know

After an inmate complained to us that he was pushed to the ground and attacked by several correctional officers, we intervened to verify that a local investigation had been conducted. We discovered that the investigation found that excessive force had been used against the inmate – but that facility staff were not willing to share this information with him. We raised the issue with senior officials at the Ministry of the Solicitor General and pointed out that their policy requires facility staff to inform inmates about whether or not their complaints are substantiated by local investigations. The inmate was informed about the investigation's findings.

Supplemental care

An inmate with HIV complained that he hadn't been receiving testosterone and other supplements he required to prevent muscle deterioration. He told us he needed to see a specialist, and that health care staff at his facility weren't responding to calls from his HIV support worker. After our staff intervened, the facility arranged for his testosterone and supplements and sent his bloodwork to a specialist for assessment.

Email retrieved

A man contacted us in frustration after his application to have his issue heard by the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO) was dismissed. The reason given was that he hadn't filed a response to them as requested. He had indeed sent the response – and had email evidence to prove it – but had been unable to reach anyone at the HRTO to resolve the issue. Once our staff spoke with HRTO officials, they acknowledged they had overlooked the man's email in error, and they reopened his file.

Voting rights – and wrongs

A man who was in jail awaiting sentencing complained to us that correctional officials had told him he could not vote in the September 2021 federal election, even though he was eligible. We immediately contacted senior staff at his facility, who acknowledged that they made a mistake and he should be permitted to vote. They made arrangements with Elections Canada for him to do so on another day. We followed up with the inmate and he confirmed he had been allowed to vote.





MUNICIPALITIES

Overview

The Ombudsman has had full oversight of Ontario’s municipalities since January 2016, and has been the closed meeting investigator for hundreds of municipalities since 2008. In these roles, we help thousands of Ontarians with issues that are close to home – and encourage local accountability and fair municipal governance.

This past year, we dealt with **2,877** cases about general municipal issues – up from 2,281 in 2020-2021. None of these resulted in a formal investigation, as we resolve the vast majority of cases by working closely with municipalities to facilitate resolutions and share best practices to help them improve their processes. Since the Ombudsman’s mandate was first expanded to this area in 2016, we have received more than 20,000 complaints and inquiries, and conducted **6** formal investigations.

Complaints about closed municipal meetings have also increased sharply over the past two years, coinciding with the advent of electronic meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to releasing numerous reports on these cases, our Office developed guidance for municipalities to ensure their meetings remain open and accessible. We also provided informational presentations at municipal conferences and virtual events, answered inquiries from municipal staff, and added to our online resources on this topic.

Good to know



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

Trends in cases – general municipal issues

Year after year, the most common complaints and inquiries about municipalities relate to councils and committees, by-law enforcement and housing, and this was true again in 2021-2022. Other common issues included infrastructure and zoning, and concerns about local accountability officers.

COVID-19 pandemic

As the pandemic entered its second full year, we continued to receive complaints about health-related measures implemented by municipalities, such as mask requirements, limits on public gatherings, and vaccination requirements for municipal staff. The Ombudsman does not generally intervene in policy decisions by elected officials, but wherever possible we referred these concerns to the appropriate avenues of complaint.

We also received complaints about how the City of Ottawa dealt with extended protests against COVID-19 mandates in February 2022. Some people felt the city council and police had not done enough to ensure public safety, while others felt they overstepped their authority. As the Ombudsman's oversight does not include municipal police services, we referred several of these cases to the provincial Office of the Independent Police Review Director.

Councils, committees and conduct

Councils and committees were once again the top topic of concern in 2021-2022, with **422** cases. We resolve many cases related to council procedures – often by verifying or suggesting improvements to them.

For example:

- A resident complained that a municipality failed to follow its own process in response to his requests to speak at a council meeting. We discussed the case with municipal staff, who agreed the procedure by-law was unclear. A new process was adopted by council and explained to the resident.
- A property owner complained to us that council had increased the cost to purchase a shoreline allowance by 40%, without giving notice to the public. Municipal staff told us they had in fact announced the rate change months before, on their website and on social media. The council agreed to consider the owner's request to purchase the allowance at the old rate, but ultimately did not grant it.

Integrity Commissioners and local accountability

Complaints about the conduct of elected officials are dealt with by an Integrity Commissioner (IC), which all Ontario municipalities were required to appoint in 2018. Municipalities can also opt to appoint other accountability officers, like a local ombudsman or auditor general. Our Office's role is not to redo the work of these officers, or act as an appeal body for their decisions. When we review IC cases, we look at whether they followed a fair process, in accordance with legislation, policies and by-laws.

For example:

- We contacted an IC after a man told us he had twice complained to him about a council member and received no response. The IC told us he thought the resident wasn't interested in pursuing the complaint. We emphasized the best practice of communicating with complainants if a review is not going to proceed,

and the IC said he would consider the complaint if the man wished to pursue it.

- We prompted an IC to explain to a resident why he had dismissed his complaint about a councillor making inappropriate comments on social media. The IC's decision stated that the man's allegation that the comments violated the councillor's oath of office was outside his authority. After we spoke with the IC, he agreed to explain to the resident that although he could consider the oath of office, the councillor's conduct had not violated it or the code of conduct.
- The Ombudsman spoke out against the practice of charging fees for making a complaint to an Integrity Commissioner, after a man complained that he could not afford the \$100 fee to complain about the conduct of a Hamilton city councillor. The Ombudsman noted that instead of charging fees, municipalities should empower ICs to dismiss frivolous or vexatious complaints. The City of Hamilton has since removed the fee.

“There should be no fee or other barrier to make a complaint to the Integrity Commissioner [...] Charging a fee to complain is entirely inconsistent with the primary intent of the Integrity Commissioner scheme, which is to foster democratic legitimacy and public trust at the local level.”

– Ombudsman Paul Dubé, letter to Hamilton city council, January 12, 2022

We also resolved several complaints this year about other municipal accountability officers. For example:

- After a man complained to us that his municipality's ombudsman took too long to investigate his complaint,

we reviewed the local ombudsman's report and discovered the man had refused to provide any information during the investigation. We explained the role of a municipal ombudsman to him.

- We reviewed a municipal auditor general's handling of a complaint about a local development project, and determined his findings were based on a thorough review of the evidence and he provided detailed written reasons.

Public conduct

Municipalities can also set standards for conduct by members of the public while they are on municipal property or interacting with municipal staff. In many cases, we offer guidance to municipalities to ensure that any restrictions on individuals are justified, minimally impair the person's rights, and are issued through a fair process.

For example:

- A woman's complaint about her municipality's Chief Administrative Officer resulted in a third-party investigation, but she wasn't provided with the results – instead, her communications with the municipality were restricted and she wasn't told why. After we made inquiries, the municipality explained the outcome of the review to her, and updated its policies to clarify how it addresses cases of unreasonable public conduct.

Ombudsman's submission to the Ministry

In July 2021, the Ombudsman made a submission to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as part of its consultation on strengthening accountability for municipal council members. He noted our Office's years of experience in reviewing complaints about accountability officers, and raised concerns about a lack of consistency in Integrity Commissioner complaint processes from municipality to municipality:

“Some municipalities have robust processes for code of conduct complaints, while others have none at all – leaving members of the public confused about how to submit a complaint and how the Integrity Commissioner will carry out a review. Integrity Commissioners are also left without the detailed guidance they need to ensure their processes are fair and consistent.”

– Ombudsman Paul Dubé, Submission to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing’s consultation on strengthening accountability for municipal council members, July 2021

The Ombudsman called on the province to:

- Mandate and standardize complaint protocols for Integrity Commissioners.
- Standardize and expand requirements for codes of conduct.
- Mandate accreditation and training for Integrity Commissioners.

By-law enforcement

By-law enforcement consistently generates complaints to our Office – in 2021-2022, the number of by-law related complaints jumped to **406** from 239 the previous year. We helped resolve concerns about by-laws that were unclear, too strict, not strict enough, or that weren’t being enforced.

For example:

- We confirmed with a municipality that a restaurant was in compliance with local by-laws when it extended its drive-through hours, and that the province had confirmed it did not exceed excessive noise levels.

- We facilitated communication between a municipality and a tenant, after a landlord failed to comply with a by-law officer’s orders.
- After we pointed out that a municipality had not responded to a man’s by-law complaint about his neighbour’s shed for almost a year, they sent another by-law officer to the property, who confirmed the shed was not properly set back.

Housing

Municipalities and district social services administration boards administer social housing, and in 2021-2022, we received **311** cases about this topic, up from 217 in 2020-2021. We often resolve such cases by connecting directly with local officials.

For example:

- A woman who had been unhoused for a year after a fire in her last social housing placement sought our help connecting with local housing officials. After we spoke with municipal staff, they immediately contacted her to discuss available housing.
- A man told us he had repeatedly complained about being bitten by insects in his social housing unit, but the municipality would not respond. We spoke with municipal staff, who explained that they had inspected the man’s unit multiple times, but found no evidence of the type of insects he described. They had also previously had the man’s unit fogged and covered his laundry and hotel costs during the process, but they arranged a further inspection of his unit in light of his complaint.

Infrastructure and zoning

Municipalities are generally responsible for local infrastructure, including roads, bridges, sewage treatment, culverts and ditches. We received **137** complaints about infrastructure in 2021-2022, as well as **141** about municipal water and sewer services, and **161** related to planning, zoning, and land use.

We resolved hundreds of cases by connecting people with municipal officials, helping them navigate local complaint and appeal processes, or contacting the municipality directly.

For example:

- A woman sought our help after she repeatedly complained to her municipality that the asphalt on her road was not properly secured and floated away during heavy rain. After we intervened with municipal staff, they confirmed to the woman that the road would be repaired.
- A tenant in rent-geared-to-income housing told us she was confused about why she received a water bill from the municipality, when other tenants were not billed directly for water. After our inquiries, the municipality switched the bill to the landlord's name and confirmed the woman's water bills would be covered by her social benefits.

Investigations – general municipal issues

Hiring process for Regional Municipality of Niagara's Chief Administrative Officer



Report: *Inside Job*, released November 2019

Investigation update: This investigation revealed that the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) hired by the Regional Municipality of Niagara in 2016 had been provided with inside information

during the hiring process. It also exposed serious inadequacies in the local ombudsman's review of the matter. The Ombudsman made 16 recommendations to improve the Region's processes for hiring a CAO and engaging a local ombudsman; **15** have since been implemented. The one outstanding recommendation relates to training municipal officials on the proper use of corporate email and document retention, which the Region has promised to do.

Trends in cases – open meetings

All municipal meetings must be open to the public, unless they meet certain narrow exceptions set out in section 239 of the *Municipal Act*. Anyone who thinks the open meeting rules may have been violated can make a complaint. The rules apply to all municipal councils, local boards, and committees of either of them – and since 2020, this includes electronic or "virtual" meetings.

Good to know



See the **Appendix** of this report for more statistics on cases received about municipalities.

The Act designates the Ombudsman as the investigator for these complaints in all municipalities except those that have appointed their own. The number of municipalities using the Ombudsman as their investigator continues to grow: As of March 31, 2022, it was **261**, up from 256 last year (the highest number since the open meeting complaint system was established in 2008). We also received a record number of complaints about closed meetings – **191**, more than double last year’s 94. Of those, **152** were within the Ombudsman’s jurisdiction; others related to municipalities that use another investigator, and we referred them accordingly.

We issued **36** reports and letters about open meeting complaints in 2021-2022, compared to 26 the previous year. Some **20** of the **52** meetings we reviewed were found to be illegal (**38%**), up from 17% in 2020-2021. The Ombudsman also found **14** procedural violations and made **26** best practice recommendations.

Many of these meetings were found to be illegal because the public could not access them in real time. For example, they were not properly broadcast or the broadcast failed midstream, or the municipality did not provide public notice of the meeting. In each instance, our Office worked with the municipalities to suggest improvements to their practices and bring them in line with the open meeting requirements.

All of these reports and letters can be found on our website and in our searchable **Open Meetings Digest** online.

Electronic meetings

Whether a meeting is virtual, in-person or a hybrid of the two, the open meeting rules still apply: The public continues to have the right to observe municipal government in process, minutes must be recorded, and a resolution must be passed in open session before a

meeting can be closed. Municipalities must also publicize the date and time of a meeting and how to access the livestream or the teleconference. They should also have a plan in place to make sure technical issues don’t block the public’s access to observe a meeting.

Some case examples:

- The Ombudsman found the **City of Hamilton’s** LGBTQ Advisory Committee contravened the *Municipal Act* when it continued with a meeting, even though the livestream had stopped.
- The **Township of Bonfield** violated the Act when it first began holding meetings over Zoom – and failed to make them available to the public in any way. The Ombudsman recognized that these were the first meetings held by the Township during the pandemic, but made clear that the open meeting requirements remained the same.

In other cases, such as in the cities of **Greater Sudbury and Niagara Falls, and the Municipality of Temagami**, the Ombudsman found that the failure to broadcast resolutions to move into closed session rendered meetings illegal. A resolution provides information to the public about the general nature of the matters that will be discussed, and must be passed in open session.

Informal gatherings

We often receive complaints about council members exchanging information outside of formal meetings. In order for a gathering to be a “meeting” subject to the open meeting rules, a quorum of members must be present, and business or decision-making must be materially advanced. The rules are not meant to discourage informal conversations or socializing amongst council members, but to ensure that council business is conducted openly and transparently.

For example, the Ombudsman found that:

- When a member of council for the **Township of Loyalist** called other council members to share information before a meeting, a quorum of members was not present, and the discussions did not materially advance council business.
- When three members of council for the **Township of McKellar** met to welcome a new member of staff, they did not violate the open meeting rules because no council business was advanced.
- The same was true when two members of a committee for the **Municipality of St.-Charles** met with local residents in a parking lot to discuss a garbage collection issue.

As noted in last year's Annual Report, the Ombudsman has raised concerns about the definition of "meeting" – because requiring that a "quorum of members is **present**" means that councils could use email or other virtual means to skirt the open meeting rules. He has called on the province to remove the words "is present."

Exceptions to the rules – most common issues

The bulk of our investigations of municipal meetings involve the various exceptions set out in the *Municipal Act* that allow meetings to be closed, and whether councils used them appropriately. On our website, our **Open Meetings Guide** and **Digest** provide detailed information about these exceptions and numerous examples of the Ombudsman's decisions on how they should be used and interpreted.

Before going into a closed session, councils must pass a resolution in open session that cites the relevant exception. The law also states that any such resolution must also describe the general nature of the subject matter to be discussed behind closed doors.

Personal matters

The exception in section 239(2)(b) of the *Municipal Act*, for discussing "personal matters about an identifiable individual," is the most commonly used. In many cases we reviewed this past year, the Ombudsman found that the discussions fit within this exception – but others did not.

For example:

- When the councils for the **Township of Lanark Highlands** and the **Town of Hawkesbury** talked about the conduct of specific individuals, the discussion fit the "personal matters" exception.
- When the **Town of Grimsby** scrutinized the performance of its appointed Integrity Commissioner, the discussion was sufficiently personal in nature to fit within the exception.
- However, when the **Township of McMurrich/Monteith** discussed a disagreement between property owners over the location of a road, the information was already public and the discussion did not belong in closed session.

Confidential information

The Ombudsman has emphasized that councils cannot close meetings simply to discuss something that is considered sensitive or confidential. However, there are matters that fall within the prescribed exceptions for this type of discussion, such as information received in confidence from another level of government, confidential information provided by a third party, where disclosure could harm a competitive position or negotiations, and discussions about a position, plan, procedure, criteria, or instruction to be applied to negotiations. In several closed meetings we reviewed, the Ombudsman found these exceptions were appropriately used.

For example:

- The **Township of Russell** had been explicitly asked by another level of government to keep information confidential until both parties made a joint public statement.
- The **Town of South Bruce Peninsula** discussed information regarding a company's development plans, expected profits, and intended use of proprietary technology.
- The **Township of McKellar** discussed its position ahead of negotiations with other municipalities and First Nation communities relating to a pool and wellness centre.

Minutes, recordings, and notice

Ensuring the public is informed about when and where a meeting will take place is important for transparency and for ensuring trust in municipal decision-making. A closed meeting can be illegal if there is inadequate public notice.

For example:

- The **Saugeen Municipal Airport Commission** violated this rule for eight meetings by failing to provide adequate public notice about where and when they would be held.
- The **Township of Nairn and Hyman** attempted to exempt itself from this rule by passing a resolution stating that an investigation committee it established did not need to provide public notice of meetings. The Ombudsman found that a municipal by-law cannot override the notice requirements in the *Municipal Act*, which meant the meetings were illegally closed.

The Act also requires that the proceedings of all meetings be recorded, whether they are open or closed to the

public, and that minutes should describe all resolutions, decisions and proceedings. The Ombudsman found some municipalities failed to meet the mark in 2021-2022, for example:

- The **Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan** did not take minutes, and instead relied on an incomplete audio recording of a closed meeting. The Ombudsman cautioned that an audio recording cannot replace written meeting records.
- The minutes kept by the townships of **Kirkland Lake, Bonfield, and Lanark Highlands** failed to include a sufficient record of what took place during their meetings. Minutes should include all resolutions and decisions, as well as detailed descriptions of the matters discussed.

In addition to minutes, it is a best practice for municipalities to make audio or video recordings of closed meetings. Doing so creates a record that greatly assists during our investigations, and can reinforce local transparency and accountability. The Ombudsman recommends that all municipalities make recordings of their meetings, open and closed, and recently commended the **Municipality of Grey Highlands** for adopting this best practice.

“I wanted to thank you for escalating this matter so it can get the attention it deserves. You've been very helpful. It's been almost two years of trying to figure out what steps I need to take.... This matter is long from done, but it seems like now the right people are listening.”

– Complainant

Case summaries

Culvert conundrum

A homeowner complained to us that her municipality was demanding she pay more than \$5,000 in fees for a permit for a culvert that had been built under her driveway years ago. The woman maintained the municipality had installed the culvert, but municipal staff told us they had no record of this. They also explained the permit fees were required regardless of who did the installation. However, when Ombudsman staff pointed out that the city's own evidence indicated that the culvert had been in place for at least a decade, they agreed to lower the permit fees to 2012 levels, reducing the woman's fee to **\$2,356**.

Personal reasons

A man seeking a property tax deferral complained to us that council had unfairly rejected his request because there wasn't time to consider it. We spoke with municipal officials, who clarified that the man's application had been discussed before it was declined, but the discussion took place in a closed meeting to protect his privacy, because it included significant personal information. They agreed to contact him to explain this.

Triple trouble

A woman complained to us that she had no idea why her water bill had tripled in a few months with no change to her consumption, and the municipal billing department would not help. After we helped identify who she should speak with to escalate her concerns at the municipality, the woman told us that they had frozen her bills and that senior staff were looking into the consumption issue.

Paying the piper

After water rates were increased in a small municipality, we received 48 complaints from local residents who disagreed with the increase. We made inquiries with municipal staff, who explained that council had approved the hike at an open meeting, based on a staff report that detailed significant issues with the municipality's aging water and sewer pipes. They also noted that efforts were made to inform residents of the upcoming change on their water bills. The municipality also put an information line in place for residents to call if they had questions, and developed a Frequently Asked Questions document to be sent out with the next round of water bills and posted on the municipality's website.



CHILDREN & YOUTH

Overview

Under Ontario's *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA)*, children and youth "in care" – young people living in foster homes, group homes, treatment placements and youth justice facilities – have specific rights and certain entitlements while they receive services from the province's child welfare and residential care system. Children and youth who are not in care but are receiving services from a children's aid society also have certain rights.

Our dedicated Children and Youth Unit works to promote, protect and monitor these rights to ensure young people and families receiving services from Ontario's child welfare and residential care system are treated fairly.

In carrying out this role, we:

- Receive and respond to complaints from young people in the residential care system and/or receiving services from a children's aid society, or those who have concerns about the services provided to young people in these circumstances;
- Meet with children and youth in care to educate them about their rights and how to contact our Office if they have any concerns;
- Educate service providers and families about children's rights, the obligations of service providers under the *CYFSA*, and how our Office can help;
- Conduct investigations;
- Administer the Death and Serious Bodily Harm reporting system; and
- Provide advice and make recommendations to government.

“I am very grateful for everything you have done for me.”

– Complainant

The Ombudsman made two submissions to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, in October 2021 and May 2022, offering comments and recommendations as part of its consultations on the *CYFSA* regulations. He made specific suggestions to improve proposed changes to the regulations regarding plans of care, the use of physical restraints, complaint processes and police record checks.

Investigations involving children and youth involve a high degree of confidentiality and are rarely announced or discussed publicly. In some individual cases, we communicate investigation results via issue briefings to the Ministry; in others, we publish reports. Other significant issues, such as the use of physical restraints in care settings, are part of our regular work and reporting.

Our Office also has a dedicated team that handles cases related to youth justice centres. In April 2022, the Ombudsman released our Office's first investigative report in this area, on the closure of two youth justice programs in the North.

Within the Children and Youth Unit, three specialized teams focus on concerns of specific groups of young people and consult on individual cases of children in these groups:

- **Indigenous Circle:** Created in 2020 in response to concerns about the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in the child welfare system, this group is led by Indigenous staff, and has the capacity to incorporate Indigenous practices such as smudging, talking circles and Elder participation into our Office's work. They review Death and Serious Bodily Harm reports involving Indigenous children and youth every week,

and provide insight and guidance on individual cases and investigations.

- **Black Children, Youth and Families Table:** Established in 2021, this team leads outreach to Black children and youth in care and engages with agencies working with Black children, youth and families to provide information about children's rights and service providers' obligations under the law. They presented (virtually) to more than 200 young people in 2021-2022.
- **2SLGBTQ+ Outreach:** This team focuses on raising awareness of young people's right to receive services that take their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression into account, in response to concerns that those who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ often feel unsafe, isolated and marginalized in residential care.

Our Office participates as a member of both the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and the United States Ombudsman Association's Children and Youth chapter, to share expertise and to discuss national and international systemic issues.

Trends in cases

Between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022, our Children and Youth Unit received **1,337** cases from adults (service providers, family members, police, etc.), and **314** from children and youth. This is a substantial increase from the previous year (1,051 cases from adults, 291 from young people). Our Office also received **141** cases about youth justice centres, a slight decline from 173 in 2020-2021.

We received **1,273** complaints and inquiries about children's aid societies, **178** about residential licensees (group homes and foster homes), and **30** about secure treatment facilities.

The most common issues raised by young people included requests to be moved to another placement, access to

siblings, feelings that their culture or personal identity was not respected in their placement, the refusal of a children's aid society to offer a Voluntary Youth Services Agreement, and conflicts with peers and staff at their placement.

Adults, including parents and extended family members, most frequently complained about their children's living situation, or that the children's aid society was not responsive to their concerns.

Use of physical restraints

The use of physical restraints in care situations – and also in youth justice centres – is a key concern in our work, and one often cited in complaints from young people. We treat such complaints with priority, as we do with any Death and Serious Bodily Harm report we receive about a young person who has been injured as a result of a physical restraint.

We follow up on every one of these reports by contacting the injured young person directly to check in with them. In 2021-2022, we followed up on **59** such cases.

In recent years, we have also closely monitored the measures the Ministry has taken with respect to physical restraints, and how it communicates these to service providers, foster parents and young people. This past year, the Ministry proposed changes to Regulation 155/18, which requires service providers to explain the rules governing the use of restraints to young people, and to inform them of the reason when they are used. Previously, the Ministry enhanced documentation and reporting requirements, developed a fact sheet on physical restraints for service providers and created a "rights" section on its website that offers information to young people about their rights regarding physical restraints.

Our Office continues to review the Ministry's efforts in this area, and we are in the process of preparing related

outreach materials for service providers and youth. These will help ensure young people in care are made aware of the appropriate use of restraints, how restraint use is reported, and how they can contact our Office if they have any concerns about being physically restrained.

Ombudsman's submission to the Ministry

In October 2021, the Ombudsman made a submission to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services about changes to *CYFSA* Regulations 155/18 and 156/18. Among other suggestions, he proposed two specific amendments – one to ensure that children are informed repeatedly and at specified times about the use of restraints, and the other to require service providers to ask children if they have any concerns about the use of restraints and to let them know they can raise concerns with them or the Ombudsman.

Death and Serious Bodily Harm (DSBH) reports

Children's aid societies and licensed residential service providers are required to notify the Ombudsman's Office when they become aware of an incident of death or serious bodily harm to a child or youth who has received services from a children's aid society within the past 12 months. The Children and Youth Unit's DSBH team reviews all death and serious bodily harm reports weekly to identify cases that require follow up, and analyze data monthly to identify potential systemic issues.

We received **1,915** DSBH reports in 2021-2022, relating to **134** death incidents, and **1,496** incidents of serious bodily harm (in some cases, multiple agencies are required to submit reports about the same incident).

Part of our follow-up involves ensuring that all agencies involved in a case who should have submitted a report did so. We also follow up if we identify any safety concerns. In every case where a report states that a child or youth was

injured as the result of a physical restraint, we follow up directly with the young person to check in with them.

Each month, the DSBH team meets with representatives from the Office of the Chief Coroner's Child and Youth Death Review Analysis Unit to identify whether there were any cases that were not reported to us by an agency, and to flag any issues of concern about a particular report. After the Coroner's death investigation review process is complete, we may make further inquiries, or initiate an investigation if we believe there are concerns about the services provided (by a children's aid society or a licensed residential service provider) prior to the death that were not addressed as part of the Coroner's investigation. For example, we recently opened an investigation into one case that involves the issue of access to Voluntary Youth Services Agreements.

The DSBH team delivered **38** presentations to children's aid societies and residential licensees over the last year in 2021-2022, to enhance awareness about the reporting requirements.

Youth justice centres

Young people who are awaiting trial or who are serving criminal sentences may be held in open or secure custody or detention at one of 27 youth justice facilities across the province. These facilities are either directly operated by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services or run by third parties that receive funding from the Ministry.

Among the **141** complaints we received, the most common issues were staff conduct, health care, disciplinary consequences, living conditions and transfers. We prioritize cases where a young person's safety or well-being is at risk.

For example:

- We flagged a youth's complaint that he had tooth pain and had not been able to see an orthodontist for a year. Shortly after our inquiries, the facility arranged for him to see an orthodontist.

- We prompted a centre to review its handling of a youth's complaint about inappropriate staff conduct, resulting in the staff member being suspended for 15 days without pay.
- We helped a youth who had been refused a transfer in the wake of altercations with another resident. We confirmed the centre had added extra staff to the unit to keep the youth safe, but in light of our inquiries, it arranged to move him to another facility within days.

We meet on a monthly basis with senior officials in the Ministry's Youth Justice Division and flag serious issues and trends in cases. These include ongoing concerns about a lack of consistency across facilities in identifying when local issues should be investigated, and in the application of disciplinary consequences.

For example:

- After one youth began punching another – apparently unprovoked – while watching TV, staff at the centre required him to stay in his room for 72 hours. The youth complained to us that this penalty was excessive, and our review found that it was contrary to the facility's own handbook. As a result, the facility amended the consequence to align with the handbook.
- Our review of a case where a youth complained that staff were told not to restrain him from self-harm revealed a lack of consistent processes for investigating such cases. Senior Ministry officials agreed to provide guidance for all staff in similar cases. The Ministry is also reviewing its suicide policy and provision of mental health services for youth in light of this.

We also alerted the Ministry to a concerning trend in complaints from youth in these facilities who have serious mental health challenges and have been the subject of multiple serious occurrence reports. Staff also complained of being burned out from their efforts to support these young people, and about a lack of options

- in some cases, youth were taken to hospital but not admitted.
- We received calls almost daily from a 12-year-old with serious mental health challenges and developmental disabilities, about the facility's response to his suicide attempts. Our review indicated that staff had tried to support this youth, and that the Ministry was involved. We will continue to monitor such cases and the Ministry's work on modernizing mental health supports and treatment across the youth justice system.

Investigations

Closures of youth justice programs in Kenora and Thunder Bay



Report: *Lost Opportunities*, released April 2022

Investigation update: The Ombudsman launched this investigation after receiving complaints about the abrupt closures of the secure custody and detention programs at Creighton Youth

Centre in Kenora and J.J. Kelso Centre in Thunder Bay in March 2021. The investigation focused on how the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services carried out the closures, rather than the government's policy decision to reduce the number of youth justice programs across the province.

The investigation revealed that the Ministry's planning was shrouded in secrecy, which left it without valuable insight into the unique nature of these programs and the Indigenous youth they served. The Ministry's tight control of information restricted its ability to leverage the knowledge and experience of its own staff and prevented it from fully benefiting from consultation with external

“Young people living in custody and detention are extremely vulnerable and they deserve maximum support and need a voice.

“At the heart of all 16 of our recommendations is to encourage public bodies to reflect on learning from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in operations like this. At the heart of reconciliation is consultation.

“So if there is a next time, I would expect much more consultation and engagement from the Ministry with the youth involved and the staff – and definitely with the Indigenous groups and communities and more involvement from the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs.”

– Ombudsman Paul Dubé, as quoted by *TBnewswatch* (Thunder Bay), April 27, 2022

resources. As a result, its plans for communicating with Indigenous communities about the closures failed. The Ombudsman found that the Ministry's conduct was unreasonable and wrong, under the *Ombudsman Act*.

Investigators conducted 91 interviews, including with the affected youths, their families, Ministry officials and staff from the programs, and reviewed a large volume of briefing notes, policies, emails and other relevant documents.

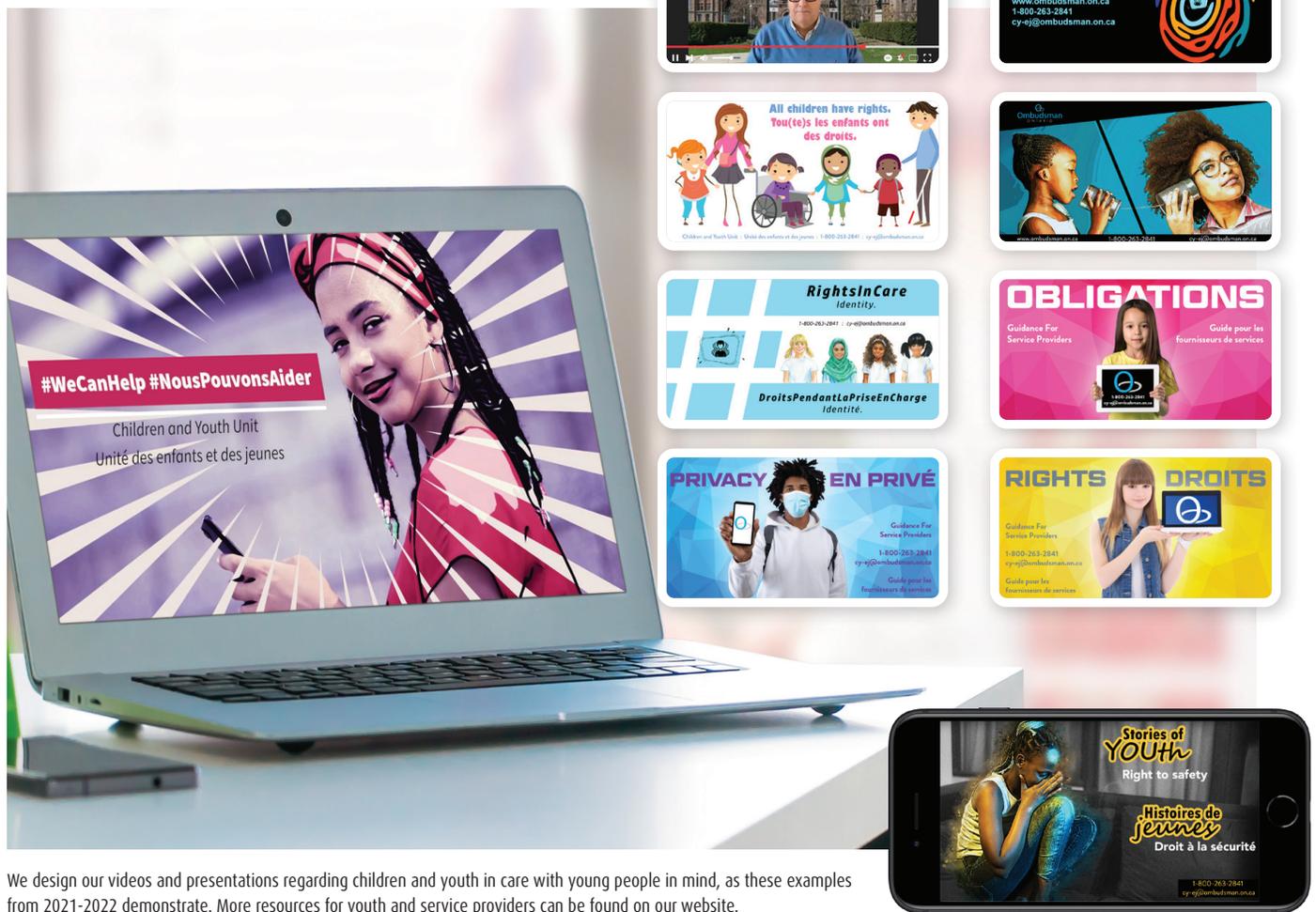
The Ombudsman made **16** recommendations to improve the planning and implementation of such closures in future. The Ministry accepted all of his recommendations and will report back to our Office every six months on its progress in implementing them.

Communications and outreach

Over the past year, staff from the Children and Youth Unit made **41** virtual presentations to children and youth in foster homes, group homes and secure treatment centres, explaining their rights in care and how our Office can help them. After each presentation, we followed up privately with every youth who attended, to ask if they had concerns.

We also conducted two virtual presentations for students at Centre Jules-Léger, a French-language school for children who are Deaf or hard of hearing, blind, deafblind or have learning disabilities.

As well, we distributed posters, “Know Your Rights in Care” brochures and wallet cards to all children’s aid societies and child and family well-being agencies across the province.



We design our videos and presentations regarding children and youth in care with young people in mind, as these examples from 2021-2022 demonstrate. More resources for youth and service providers can be found on our website.

Case summaries

Refusal reversed

A 16-year-old complained to us that her children's aid society (CAS) had refused to allow her to enter into a Voluntary Youth Services Agreement (VYSA) after she had left her home due to the abusive behaviour of her aunt. VYSAs are offered to 16- and 17-year-olds who have left home because of concerns about their safety. CAS officials initially told us they were unable to verify that the youth's aunt was abusive. As we looked into the situation further, we discovered that her younger brothers had been removed from the home out of concerns for their safety. We asked the CAS to review the girl's allegations about her aunt again, and based on their review, the CAS agreed to offer her a VYSA.

Overcoming obstacles

A youth in care sought our help in filing a complaint about staff at her residential placement. She complained about the required forms not being made available, staff lacking knowledge about the complaints process, and not receiving a timely response. After we reached out to its director, the residence committed to ensuring the youth received the necessary forms, as well as assistance from staff. She was able to file her complaint, but told us it went unanswered for more than two weeks, so we contacted the director again. The youth later confirmed to us that her issues had been addressed, and she was happy with the outcome.

Online schooling okayed

A 14-year-old in care told us her worker was insisting that she go to school in person, even though her preference was to continue to attend school online. The youth had mental health issues, including anxiety, and felt more comfortable with virtual schooling. We followed up with her worker, who said that the children's aid society (CAS)

had indicated that all children should participate in school in person unless there were extenuating circumstances. She agreed to meet with the youth to discuss her situation. The CAS ultimately agreed to the youth's online learning request.

ID help

A 14-year-old needed our help getting identification documents to register for school and access health care, after he was removed from his home by a children's aid society (CAS) over safety concerns. The youth looked to his CAS worker for support because he was unable to get his identification documents from his mother. When he didn't hear back from the worker in more than two weeks, he contacted our Office. We spoke to the youth's worker, who said he would have to write an "advocacy letter" on the youth's behalf, then take him to a nearby ServiceOntario centre to obtain the ID. We asked him to schedule this, which he did, and the youth received his new temporary ID within three days.





EDUCATION

Overview

The Ombudsman oversees the province’s 72 school boards, 10 school authorities, all publicly funded universities and colleges of applied arts and technology. We also oversee the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, and their programs.

All of these bodies continued to be significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021-2022, although the relaxing of public health restrictions meant that students had more in-person classes than in the previous year.

We received **126** complaints and inquiries about the Ministry of Education and its programs, as well as **722** about school boards. In the post-secondary sector, we received **543** cases about the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (including **344** about colleges of applied arts and technology), and **361** about universities.

The increases in cases about school boards and universities were largely related to COVID-19 concerns, such as mask and vaccine requirements, issues with virtual or hybrid classes, and benefit programs for learners’ families. We helped many students and parents resolve individual issues, and worked with several universities to suggest best practices for vaccine policies.

The Ombudsman continues to support robust oversight of education, including Integrity Commissioners for school boards, and ombudsman offices at the university and college level.

Trends in cases – early years through Grade 12

We received **722** cases about school boards in 2021-2022, a substantial increase from 569 the previous year, and the highest number since 2018-2019. The most common

issues were similar to the previous year, including pandemic-related school shutdowns, problems with virtual learning, mask mandates and restrictions on extra-curricular activities, as well as perennial problems like the conduct of school board officials, student safety and transportation services.

The Ombudsman does not generally intervene in the broad public policy decisions of elected representatives, but we were able to help many people resolve administrative issues, and/or refer them to relevant processes to address their concerns.

COVID-19 testing in schools

We received more than **1,200** complaints and inquiries in January 2022 after the government announced new limitations on some COVID-19 testing and removed the obligation for school boards to report daily cases. Although the Ombudsman cannot overturn policy decisions by elected officials, our staff contacted officials within the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health to make them aware of the nature and volume of the complaints. These were largely from parents expressing concern that the changes would make schools less safe. Ministry officials explained that these decisions were based on directives from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and provided background information that we passed on to the complainants. We also assessed individual issues raised by these complainants on a case-by-case basis.

Trustee conduct and Integrity Commissioners

The conduct of school board trustees continues to be a common topic of complaint, and the Ombudsman encourages boards to have clear complaint processes, as well as their own Integrity Commissioners (ICs) to deal with them. Only a handful of boards have ICs,

“I’m very happy this is resolved. I fixed the problem with your help – your Office was very helpful.”

– Complainant

but we receive complaints about them as well. As in cases about municipal ICs, we do not redo the work of these officials, but we look to see if a fair process was followed, and/or suggest ways to improve their practices.

For example:

- A woman contacted us after her complaint about a trustee was dismissed by the school board, and the board’s IC wouldn’t respond to her. We spoke to the IC, who acknowledged she had missed the woman’s emails and promised to get back to her.

Ombudsman’s submission to the Ministry

In October 2021, the Ombudsman made a submission in response to the Ministry of Education’s consultation to improve school board governance. He noted that most of the 126 cases we received about trustees in the previous four years were about the conduct of trustees and how boards dealt with breaches of codes of conduct.

He urged the government to make Integrity Commissioners and codes of conduct mandatory for all school boards. In all, he made 14 proposals, including that:

- Codes of conduct should be standardized and consistent across school boards.
- School boards should be required to adopt complaint protocols explaining how complaints made under the code of conduct will be reviewed and investigated.
- Stakeholders other than trustees should be able to make complaints under the trustee code of conduct, freely and without fear of reprisal.

“Ethical conduct in decision-making is important for all governance bodies. Given the specialized role of school boards and the direct impact of their decisions on public education, ensuring trustees are accountable for their conduct is a matter of good governance and in the public interest.”

– Ombudsman Paul Dubé, Submission to the Ministry of Education’s consultation regarding school board governance, October 2021

- Codes of conduct should provide for the discretion to decline to investigate complaints that are frivolous, vexatious, or not in good faith.

Virtual learning and pandemic benefits for learners

As students continued to learn from home for several months of the 2021-2022 fiscal year, issues with virtual schooling – and sometimes the transition to and from in-person learning – continued to spark complaints. We facilitated communication between many parents and boards.

For example:

- A mother complained to us that her daughter’s teacher was repeatedly absent from virtual classes. After we contacted the board, it took steps to ensure a supply teacher was available to cover such absences.
- A Grade 10 student wanted to continue attending virtual classes at her Ontario school while living temporarily with a family member in another province – but her vice-principal said she would have to switch to a school in that province instead. With our help, her

mother escalated her concerns to the board, and the student was allowed to remain in her Ontario virtual class.

We also addressed more than **75** complaints about the Ministry of Education’s pandemic-related support programs for students and their families, such as Support for Families, Support for Learners and COVID-19 Child Benefit. Common concerns included applications being denied, missing payments, or communication issues – and we resolved many of these by contacting the programs directly.

For example:

- A mother who applied for the COVID-19 Child Benefit before the deadline discovered too late that her application had been automatically rejected because she had entered an incorrect identification number. After we contacted Ministry officials, they processed her application and she received **\$400**.

Special education, accommodations, and student safety

Schools are required to convene Identification, Placement and Review Committee meetings at the request of parents or principals, to determine appropriate supports or placements for students with special needs. Boards also must develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for such students. We often hear from families who need help navigating the processes for these or other necessary accommodations and supports.

For example:

- After parents of a student with an IEP complained that the board was not supplying assistive learning devices as the plan required, we made inquiries with the board and confirmed that a laptop with the necessary technology was made available to him.

- When we connected with a superintendent, they ensured a transgender child would be prioritized to receive the psychoeducational testing their family requested.

We also dealt with cases relating to student safety, bullying and discipline. In several instances, we connected students and parents with the appropriate school board officials, ensured any urgent concerns were dealt with in a timely way and confirmed the boards fairly applied their policies.

Ombudsman's submission to the Ministry

In June 2021, the Ombudsman made a submission to the Ministry as part of its consultations on a proposed new regulation that would update standards for residences at provincial and demonstration schools (for students who are Deaf, blind/low vision, deafblind or have severe learning disabilities).

He urged the Ministry to model the regulation on provisions of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, including prohibiting corporal punishment of children, respecting their physical, emotional, cultural, spiritual, language, identity and developmental needs, and requiring that children in these residences are informed that they can contact our Office for help.

Transportation

With schools closed to in-person learning for many months, transportation and busing-related complaints have declined in the past two years, but the pandemic has also exacerbated issues related to staffing and planning. We were able to resolve several cases involving students with complex transportation needs.

For example:

- The mother of a child with special needs complained to us that her daughter's school bus kept arriving late or not at all, forcing her to drive the girl to school. We spoke to the superintendent, who agreed to work out the issue with the school bus consortium.
- The mother of a Grade 9 student with special needs sought our help in meeting his specific transportation requirements, which included that an adult accompany him on the bus. We contacted school board officials, who worked with her on various accommodation options for her son, including a unique afternoons-only busing schedule and other supports. We also spoke with the transportation consortium about how similar issues will be handled in future.

Property tax designations of support for French-language school boards

As noted in last year's Annual Report, we are monitoring efforts by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) to address a longstanding issue related to property tax designations of support for school boards – specifically French-language school boards.

Under the *Assessment Act*, MPAC is responsible for collecting information about school board supporters across the province. Although this data no longer determines school funding (which is now based on the Ministry of Education's per-pupil funding formula), it does determine how many trustees a school board has, and who can run and vote in trustee elections.

MPAC's system assumes property owners are supporters of their local English public school board – unless they submit a form declaring that they support the local English Catholic, French public or French Catholic board instead. In recent years, we have flagged several complaints to MPAC from Francophones who submitted forms supporting French-language boards, only to discover their support had defaulted to English boards.

We raised this issue with MPAC's Quality Services Commissioner in 2020. MPAC has since sent letters to school boards informing them of its plan to modernize its data collection, and it held a virtual session in February 2022 to gather their feedback. It plans to make other improvements after the next municipal and school board elections in October 2022, and will update us on its progress.

Trends in cases – Post-secondary

COVID-19 continued to be a dominant concern for universities and colleges and their students in 2021-2022, especially as they transitioned back to in-person classes in the fall of 2021. We met with many post-secondary officials to discuss best practices for communicating things like vaccine policies to their communities, and resolved numerous individual concerns related to virtual, in-person and hybrid classes.

Cases increased significantly overall – we received **361** about universities and **344** about colleges of applied arts and technology, compared to 213 and 200 in 2020-2021 – a 70% total increase.

Other common topics of complaint were issues related to admissions, loans and grants, academic appeals, and student services. We also heard from communities surrounding colleges and universities – for instance:

- In the fall of 2021, several members of the public complained to us about how a local university was handling student parties that were causing property damage and raising safety concerns. We alerted the university, and referred the residents directly to officials there.

In March 2022, the French Language Services Commissioner also reported on her investigation into Laurentian University's cuts to French-language programs, stemming from complaints received during its financial restructuring in the spring of 2021. All of her recommendations were accepted by the university, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, and the Ministry of Francophone Affairs. For more, see the **French Language Services** chapter of this report.

COVID-19 vaccination policies

As of March 2022, universities and colleges were no longer required to mandate vaccines for in-person learning – although many opted to keep them in place for the rest of the 2021-2022 academic term. We received **75** complaints in fiscal 2021-2022 about these vaccine mandates and the institutions' exemption request processes. Some students struggled to find information about how the policy applied to them, or the criteria for exemption. Some weren't comfortable about being required to return to large in-person classes, while others were angry that their courses were only available online.

We heard from some unvaccinated students and educators who were barred from classes – even though they were taught online.

Our Office met with the Council of Ontario Universities and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to gather information and to share our Office's insight into these concerns. We also met directly with senior officials at several universities, and shared best practices to increase the administrative fairness of their processes. For example, we suggested that they:

- Provide reasons why a vaccine exemption was accepted or denied, take any specific evidence provided into account, and include information about the qualifications of the people making the decision (e.g. doctor, faith leader) and the specific criteria used.

- Provide clear information about what circumstances entitle a student to a medical or non-medical exemption.
- Provide information about what further steps exist to address concerns about the university's decision, such as a referral to the university ombudsman.
- Provide a clear contact for questions or concerns.

Although most vaccine mandates were dropped as of May 2022, these best practices can be used as a guide when developing future policies.

Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP)

We routinely help students with issues related to loans and grants from OSAP, particularly its income verification requirements and appeal processes. For example:

- We helped a student whose OSAP grant had been converted to a loan because she hadn't verified her income within the necessary timeframe. She had gone to the university's ombudsman, but we discovered that her appeal was never forwarded to OSAP. After we intervened and OSAP officials verified her income, they converted her **\$5,727** loan back to a grant.

Fees and enrolment

In many cases involving tuition fees, enrolment, and similar issues, our inquiries prompted post-secondary institutions to review the circumstances and improve their internal processes. For example:

- A student in India was scheduled to begin studying in Ontario, but decided to postpone her plans due to the pandemic. She requested a refund of almost **\$20,000**

Good to know



See the **Appendix** of this report for more statistics on cases received about school boards, universities and colleges of applied arts and technology.

that she had paid for a full year's tuition – but was told she was only eligible to receive half because she had missed the refund deadline. Our review found that she had repeatedly requested to defer her studies through the agent who facilitated her application to the university. We raised this with university officials, who acknowledged the miscommunication and refunded her the full amount.

- After her mother passed away on the first day of college, a student struggled to continue studying, and withdrew from her courses a few months later. It wasn't until the next year that she became aware she had an outstanding debt to the college of **\$4,000** in tuition fees. We contacted college officials, who conceded that they hadn't fully reviewed the circumstances of her withdrawal, and forgave her tuition.
- A woman complained to us that a college refused to admit her to a program she had paid for, on the grounds that she had missed the fee deadline. After our review determined that it had never communicated the deadline to her, the college apologized, offered to pay her first semester fee of **\$1,300**, and updated its communications to clarify fee deadlines.

Case summaries

Far and unfair

We received a complaint from the father of a student with disabilities who resides during the week at a provincial demonstration school in southern Ontario. He said school officials had insisted that he pick up his daughter within two hours, because she was exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. This was impossible, because he lives a 15-hour drive away. He said the school also refused to test the girl, even though it has its own medical staff. We flagged this case to Ministry of Education officials, who agreed to fly the man to southern Ontario and provide him and his daughter with accommodation if the need arose in future. The Ministry also committed to reviewing its policies to avert similar situations.

Vaccination pass

A university student who was exclusively enrolled in online courses and as an online teaching assistant complained to us that he was “unenrolled” because he did not provide proof that he had received the COVID-19 vaccine. He complained that there was no clear appeal process, and no distinction was made between students who were on campus and those who weren’t. After our staff made inquiries with the university, he was re-enrolled and approved to continue his studies and TA duties off campus.

Conversion confusion

A man who had accidentally submitted incorrect information to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) sought our help when OSAP converted his **\$32,000** grant to a loan. He told us that because of the mistake, OSAP had concluded that his wife was employed, when in fact she lived in Afghanistan and had no income, and she had submitted a notarized letter to that effect. Our review determined that the man had received

confusing information about OSAP’s requirements from his university’s financial aid office. After we helped him take steps to appeal the decision, OSAP converted his loan back to a grant.

Please remain seated

A man studying online for his real estate certification complained to us after he was accused of leaving his seat during a virtual exam and then locked out of the program. He insisted that he had never left his seat, and that a glitch in the virtual proctoring technology had mistakenly identified him as an “imposter.” He had already raised the issue with the college, which acknowledged the error – but didn’t absolve him of cheating, which he feared would affect his academic standing. As a result of our review, the college apologized to the man, officially acknowledged he had not cheated, and said it would review its relationship with the company that provided the virtual proctoring service.



SOCIAL SERVICES

Overview and trends in cases

Ontarians receive social services and benefits from a range of programs provided through the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, such as the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), the Family Responsibility Office (FRO) and the Ontario Autism Program (OAP). Municipalities and local social services administration boards also administer social assistance through Ontario Works (OW).

The most common issues we see in the cases we receive in this area are communication and customer service problems and delays. These have been exacerbated by the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, both for the recipients and the public servants who administer the programs. Thanks to our longstanding relationships with senior officials responsible for the most complained-about programs, we are able to resolve most complaints and flag issues proactively.

Family Responsibility Office

The FRO is responsible for enforcing court-ordered child and spousal support payments, and has historically been one of the top sources of complaints to our Office. Cases have declined in recent years due to some customer service improvements, and have been relatively steady during the past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic (**350** cases in 2021-2022, compared to 381 the previous year). Ombudsman staff work closely with FRO officials to resolve complaints, which usually centre on the FRO's interpretation and enforcement of child and spousal support obligations.

For example:

- A father was in serious financial distress after the FRO mistakenly garnished his wages as enforcement for

child support, which he was no longer required to pay. He sought our help after learning his refund from the FRO would take nearly a month. After we contacted them, FRO officials confirmed a refund cheque would be sent to him in the next week.

- After the FRO took payments for child support from a father beyond the end date stated in his court order, it then told him the money could not be returned because it had already gone to the children's mother. We contacted FRO officials, who confirmed that they had not informed the man he had to file a particular form in order to stop the payments. He was reimbursed **\$1,500**.
- When a woman complained to us that she was no longer receiving her monthly spousal support payment, we confirmed with FRO officials that a federal garnishment issued against her former spouse had lapsed. After our intervention, it was reinstated and the woman received **\$686** owed to her.

Ontario Disability Support Program

The ODSP provides income and employment supports to Ontarians with disabilities, including coverage for prescriptions, dental care, and disability-related costs. We received **755** complaints about ODSP in 2021-2022 – a sharp increase from 553 in 2020-2021, but on par with 2019-2020's (mostly pre-pandemic) total of 754.

In many cases, we helped correct system errors and missing information that would have jeopardized recipients' income or housing. For example:

- We helped a man who was recovering in hospital and waiting to receive ODSP support. We learned ODSP officials had recently mailed him a document to confirm his financial eligibility. Once his family helped him complete this, he received an ODSP payment of **\$7,000**.
- A woman with Stage 4 cancer told us she was waiting to be approved for ODSP benefits but could not afford

to pay for her medication in the meantime. With our intervention, her application was sent for expedited review and approved the next day.

Ontario Works

Ontario Works falls within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction over municipalities and local boards. We received **210** complaints about Ontario Works (OW) in 2021-2022, up from 143 last year.

Some examples:

- After a woman told us her Ontario Works payments had stopped and her rent was due the next day, we contacted OW staff. They explained her account had been frozen because she had missed appointments with her caseworker, but as a result of our call, they connected with her and restarted her payments.
- A woman sought our help when her OW benefits were suddenly cut off and she was told she had been overpaid **\$1,400**. She could not pay her rent and was facing eviction. After we helped her reach OW staff, they determined the overpayment was an error and restarted her benefits. The woman was grateful and called our staff member a "magician."

Ontario Autism Program

The OAP offers support to families with children and youth on the autism spectrum. We received **88** complaints and inquiries about the program in 2021-2022, up from 18 the previous year, but substantially below the surge of 569 we saw in 2018-2019, when significant changes were made to the program.

Delays were the most common topic of complaint – in processing program registrations, receiving interim funding and reconciling expenses. Families told us they could not reach a live person at the OAP, and their messages asking

about the status of their applications went unanswered for months. Many said they felt they were living in a vacuum, not knowing if they had registered on time, if their application forms were being processed, or when their child would begin to receive services.

Much of our work focused on facilitating communication between the parents and the OAP, to help them obtain information about their applications and raise other questions. Senior Ombudsman staff also meet regularly with Ministry officials to share families' concerns and receive updates on the latest changes to the program.

A promise of interim one-time funding – which the province initially committed to deliver to families on the waitlist before April 2020 – was extended due to the impact of COVID-19. Some families complained to us that the interim funding amount was not sufficient and that those who registered after March 31, 2021 were ineligible. In March 2021, the OAP began to offer 600 children registered with the OAP access to core clinical services. These included applied behaviour analysis, speech language pathology, occupational therapy and mental health services.

Our intervention in several individual cases helped families get their interim one-time funding after several months of waiting for the OAP to respond. Program officials acknowledged the delays and in some cases rectified administrative errors. The Ministry has also acknowledged the need for clear and consistent communication, and has employed new staff and technologies to assist with this.

Services for adults with developmental disabilities

We received **26** complaints in 2021-2022 about the Ministry's Passport program, which provides funding to support adults with developmental disabilities to live in and engage with their communities. Most complaints focused on delays. Ministry officials told us that COVID-19

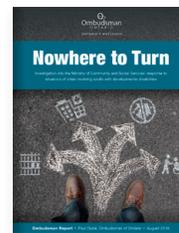
had affected processing times, but that staff were taking steps to address the backlog. We raised several individual cases with the Ministry to help families who could no longer care for loved ones.

For example:

- A 51-year-old man who has autism and a severe developmental disability was stuck in hospital while awaiting a suitable placement. His aging parents could not care for him, and his sister sought our help. We spoke with the Ministry and the local community agency handling the placement search to ensure they were considering all available options, and a residential placement was found within five months.
- A 23-year-old woman with a developmental disability and complex medical needs needed to move because her mother could not provide the necessary care and services, but options were limited because of her remote location. After we raised this case with Ministry officials, they arranged for more respite support for the mother immediately and then found a suitable residential placement within three months.

Investigations

Services for adults with developmental disabilities in crisis



Report: *Nowhere to Turn*, released August 2016

Investigation update: This investigation focused on the response by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to situations where adults with developmental disabilities are in hospital, long-term care homes, shelters or even jail

because their families are in crisis and cannot find suitable places for them to live.

The report reviewed more than 1,400 complaints from families in such situations. In the six years since its release, we have received hundreds of new cases.

All but a few of the Ombudsman’s 60 recommendations have since been implemented. We continue to meet regularly with the Ministry to monitor its progress on these, and to address new cases of the same nature.

In response to our recommendations, the Ministry developed a long-term plan to make it easier to help adults with developmental disabilities access services, which it expects to implement in phases over the next 8-10 years. Part of the reform includes new funding to help connect people with community-based housing options and to fund the Adult Protective Service Worker program. It is expected to help more than 1,200 adults with developmental disabilities.

Nevertheless, we continue to hear from families in crisis – some **130** cases this past year. The Ministry has acknowledged that staffing issues due to COVID-19 partly explained delays in some placements, but provides us with regular updates.

Care and custody of children with complex special needs



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

Investigation update: It has been 17 years since our Office reported on the systemic challenges that exist for parents when they have children with complex special needs. This report

revealed cases where families gave up custody of their children to children’s aid societies (CASs) when local

community agencies could not provide the residential services and supports they needed.

We report regularly on cases we receive that raise similar issues, and in last year’s Annual Report, we noted that the Ministry’s “early alert” process was often not used to flag these urgent situations. There are also few resources to help families on an urgent basis if existing supports in the community have been exhausted.

The Ministry committed to reviewing its processes to ensure consistency in the alert system, and issued guidance to agencies to ensure they work together so that parents need not relinquish custody of their children to get help. This past year, the Ministry reviewed its processes with agencies and service providers – including CASs, child and youth mental health agencies, and special needs agencies – to find ways to better support children with serious complex special needs.

We continue to monitor the Ministry’s progress and any new developments, and to bring individual cases to the attention of senior Ministry officials to find solutions.

For example:

- A woman who has custody of her 11-year-old grandson sought our help in securing a residential placement for him. He was in hospital and could not return home because his behaviour put other family members at risk. The local CAS provided interim funding for a residential placement while funding approval was pending from the Ministry.
- The mother of a 13-year-old girl with complex needs told us her daughter’s residential provider could no longer support her needs and she had nowhere to go. The girl was in hospital and then temporarily discharged to a CAS-funded hotel with supports. We raised the case with senior Ministry staff, who confirmed they were treating it with priority and kept us updated until the girl was transferred to an appropriate residential placement.

Case summaries

Power arrangers

A woman who was behind on her hydro bills asked Ontario Works (OW) for help to avoid getting disconnected. The agency granted the request, but accidentally transferred an extra \$1,600 to the utility, which added it to the woman's account. She assumed it was additional COVID-19 support, as OW had never told her exactly how much assistance she could expect. When OW realized the error weeks later, it arranged for a refund from the hydro company, but failed to tell the woman, who continued to rely on the credit and soon found herself in debt to the utility again. We raised her case with OW staff, who acknowledged their communication with the woman was lacking, and agreed to cover her outstanding hydro payments.

Found money

A mother had been waiting for months to access support funding to assist with her nine-year-old son's developmental mental health conditions. She was concerned that his behaviour was escalating and putting himself and others at risk. After we contacted officials at the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, they reviewed the file and discovered that the boy had in fact been approved for funding for the year, but due to a database error, the payment had not been released. They committed to sending the payment within two weeks.

Breaking the bank

A woman who was owed more than **\$10,000** in support payments from her ex-husband complained to us that she had provided documents to the Family Responsibility Office (FRO) proving that he had the money in a bank account, but the FRO would not take action. Our inquiries determined that the man's money was held in a tax-free

savings account, which the FRO could not garnish without the account holder's authorization. After we escalated the matter to senior FRO officials, they issued a new garnishment order and worked with the bank to obtain legal consent to release the funds that were owed to the woman.

Voicemail jail

An Ontario Works (OW) recipient urgently needed help when her benefits were suspended because she submitted some paperwork late. She had been in and out of hospital, and needed drug coverage to continue her medical treatments, but could not reach her OW caseworker. When we contacted OW staff, we discovered that the woman's caseworker had left the office indefinitely and no one had access to his voicemail, so her messages had not been retrieved. OW staff immediately contacted her to explain and arranged for temporary coverage so she could receive treatment.

Post-mortem refund

A man who had continued to make regular family support payments to his former mother-in-law, who had cared for his now-adult daughter, complained to us after he learned the older woman had been dead for more than a year. He alerted the Family Responsibility Office (FRO) – which had administered the support payments – and asked to be refunded all payments that it took after her death. We discovered that FRO officials had never been informed of the woman's death and were about to transfer the funds to the Ministry of Finance because she could not be located. Once they confirmed that she had died, they refunded the man more than **\$2,800**.

“Thank you again for your time and kindness in my time of need.”

– Complainant



MONEY & PROPERTY

Overview and trends in cases

Cases in this category relate to provincial ministries, agencies and corporations that deal with financial and property matters, including the Ministry of Finance, the Ontario Cannabis Store, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), and the Landlord and Tenant Board. It also includes the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT), which handles money and property matters for people who are unable to do so themselves.

Complaints about the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB), part of Tribunals Ontario, reached a new peak, with **964** cases in 2021-2022. We resolved many individual cases and new issues with the LTB as our ongoing systemic investigation into delays and backlogs neared completion (see more under **Investigations**).

For other organizations in this category, cases remained relatively low. As MPAC's provincewide property assessment continued to be postponed due to the pandemic, cases declined to **16** from 30 in 2020-2021. We received **31** cases about the Ontario Cannabis Store (most about customer service) – up from 20 the previous year, but far below the 2,411 we received in 2018-2019, its first year of operation.

Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee

We received **167** cases about the OPGT in 2021-2022, up from 116 the previous year. We frequently hear from OPGT clients who have difficulty reaching their caseworkers. Our staff help by escalating these concerns within the OPGT and making inquiries.

In one disturbing case:

- A woman contacted us on behalf of her friend, an OPGT client who has dementia and had been hospitalized to recover from an injury. She told us she had gone to her friend's apartment to fetch some personal items for her, and was shocked – it looked like a burglary had taken place. She discovered that OPGT staff had searched the apartment earlier to find some documents. We spoke with senior staff at the OPGT, who acknowledged they should have given the client advance notice of their search. They committed to educating investigators about the need for proactive communication to avoid similar situations in future.

Investigations

Landlord and Tenant Board delays

Launched: January 2020

Investigation update: The Ombudsman launched this investigation after receiving **110** complaints from landlords, tenants, advocacy groups, MPPs and other stakeholders about lengthy delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB). Since then, we have received **1,700** complaints, many related to new issues that emerged with the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, once the LTB shifted to virtual hearings, there was an influx of complaints from people who did not have the technology to participate in them. Public access terminals were set up in four cities, but they were not easily accessible outside of these areas. As a result, there continue to be requests for in-person hearings.

The LTB continued to hear all types of applications throughout 2021, but a moratorium on residential evictions

“After two months of weekly attempts to contact [an official] and getting nowhere, I called the Ombudsman. Two hours later [the official] called me back to apologize and told me all my outstanding paperwork was processed... now I tell everyone, do not hesitate to contact the Ombudsman.”

– Complainant

during lockdowns in 2021 resulted in hundreds of additional complaints from landlords about delays.

In late 2021, the Tribunals Ontario Portal was launched, which allows applicants and their representatives to file applications online. We received more than **20** complaints about technical and customer service issues related to this new system, which led to resolutions affecting hundreds of people.

For example:

- A landlord told us she spent hours on her Tribunals Ontario Portal submission, only to see that it appeared blank in the system. Within days, we received similar complaints from other users. We alerted LTB officials, who confirmed there was a technical error affecting more than 600 applications. They resolved the glitch and asked those affected to refile their applications.
- A landlord who couldn't access his online LTB account complained that he had twice asked for a Personal Identification Number (PIN), and received one that did not work. We discovered that because he had retained a paralegal to submit his application, the LTB had already sent the PIN to the paralegal, and it would not work for two people. Our inquiry revealed

that some 800 other applications were affected this way, prompting the LTB to change its process so that applicants whose files are submitted by a legal representative also receive a PIN automatically.

In March 2022, the province announced a \$19-million investment in Tribunals Ontario and the LTB to address delays and resolve disputes faster by, for example, appointing more adjudicators. The Ombudsman is encouraged by this commitment, and by the willingness of Tribunals Ontario and LTB officials and staff to engage with our Office. We meet monthly with senior LTB staff to proactively address issues and resolve individual cases, while our work on the systemic investigation nears completion.

Case summaries

Finally heard

A couple with disabilities contacted us after trying for months to get an expedited hearing with the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) to address unsafe conditions in their apartment. Their landlord had failed to fix serious problems, including an unstable toilet, a broken intercom, and pest infestations, and the conditions made it difficult for their personal support workers to complete their care tasks. The couple's caseworkers had asked the LTB repeatedly to treat their case as urgent, only to get caught up in a convoluted and unclear process. Our staff were able to ensure the couple received a hearing date and followed up with them to make sure they received the notice. This case also prompted LTB officials to create a dedicated team of adjudicators and staff to process hearing requests from people in similar situations.

Up in smoke

A woman sought our help after trying for several weeks to get a refund from the Ontario Cannabis Store (OCS) for a package that Canada Post never delivered. She was told – and we confirmed – that her cannabis order had been destroyed when a truck carrying mail and parcels caught fire in the parking lot at a Canada Post facility. However, neither agency would assist her, with one saying she was too late and the other citing a data entry problem. We escalated the case to a senior manager at the OCS, who agreed to refund the woman's purchase.

Pardon the delay

A former client of the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT) contacted our Office after she was told she would have to pay an outstanding restitution order to receive a pardon for a past criminal offence. She told us she had paid the order through automatic deductions from her Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits, and we connected with her ODSP caseworker to provide a letter confirming this. We then determined that in fact, the OPGT should have made the payment on her behalf – but it had neglected to do so. As a result, OPGT officials agreed to cover the cost of the interest that had accrued on the order.



TRANSPORTATION

Overview and trends in cases

Cases in this chapter relate to programs and agencies within the Ministry of Transportation, including those that deal with driving, vehicles and highways, and public transit (Metrolinx and GO Transit).

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, delays in driver testing have been the most common complaint to our Office in this category, although progress has been made to reduce enormous backlogs. In early 2022, the province resumed renewing driver's licences and eliminated the fee for vehicle licence plate renewals. We helped many people with issues related to these services, as well as with licence suspensions, medical review of licences – and expediting licences for a particular group of newcomers.

Licences for new arrivals from Ukraine

In the spring of 2022, as many people fled Ukraine in the wake of Russia's invasion and settled in Ontario, some contacted us for help in obtaining driver's licences. One man from a city that had been evacuated told us the Ministry of Transportation would not validate his Ukrainian licence and driving experience without a letter from the Ukrainian government – something he felt would not be feasible due to the war. He was told the letter was required so he could bypass Ontario's graduated licensing system and obtain a licence immediately.

We spoke with Ministry officials, who explained that newly arrived Ukrainians had been excluded from a policy that allows refugees to skip such requirements – but they were working on amending the policy. In the interim, we facilitated communication between individuals, the Ministry and DriveTest. The policy change was made in early May, and by mid-May, the man had passed his driving test, obtained a licence and was preparing to buy a used car.

DriveTest

Although DriveTest made significant efforts to reduce a huge backlog due to COVID-19 shutdowns and staff shortages, the volume of complaints remained at the same level (we received **272** in 2021-2022, and 283 the previous year – more than quadruple the number received in 2019-2020). We continued to meet regularly with Ministry officials for updates, and as of April 2022, the Ministry confirmed the backlog for G tests had been cleared.

Deteriorating vehicle plates

Our Office has been tracking this issue since 2015 and we continue to raise concerns about it with the Ministry. Thanks to our efforts, the Ministry agreed to publicly communicate its policy of offering free replacements for peeling, cracked, or bubbling licence plates that are less than five years old on its website. However, we continue to hear complaints from drivers with older licence plates who maintain they should also be eligible for free replacements, and the Ombudsman has not ruled out an investigation. We resolve these cases wherever possible.

For example:

- A driver complained to us that ServiceOntario had required him to pay to replace his deteriorating licence plates because they were the French version – with the slogan, “Tant à découvrir.” He was told he would not have to pay if he took replacement plates with the English slogan, “Yours to discover,” instead. We raised this case with Ministry officials, who acknowledged the fee was charged in error. They refunded the **\$59** fee immediately and made sure the staff at the man’s ServiceOntario location were aware of the correct procedure for handling such requests.

Investigations

Driver’s licence suspensions and reinstatements



Report: *Suspended State*, released September 2018

Investigation update: In the years since the Ombudsman’s investigation revealed serious problems in the Ministry’s processes for notifying drivers about licence suspensions

due to unpaid fines, the Ministry has advised us that it has implemented **27** of the 42 recommendations he made in this report.

At the outset of this investigation, the Ministry required drivers whose licences were suspended due to unpaid fines to settle the fines at the same time they renewed their licence plate registrations. Ministry statistics indicated that this process served as an incentive to drivers to pay outstanding fines. In February 2022, licence plate renewal fees were eliminated. We are monitoring the impact of this change – if any – on the issues highlighted by this investigation.

The Ministry has noted that despite the lack of a fee, drivers whose licences are suspended for defaulted driver fines or who have defaulted vehicle fines will not be able to renew their licence plates until those fines are paid.

“It’s amazing it took one call to your Office to get this situation figured out.”

– Complainant

Case summaries

Slow-speed cheque

A man contacted our Office after waiting almost two years for the Ministry of Transportation to return a \$5,000 security deposit. He had arranged a special permit from the Ministry to build a fence along a section of provincial highway near his property. The deposit was a Ministry requirement – once the fence was completed and inspected by the Ministry, it would be returned. The fence had since been built and inspected, but the man had not heard back about retrieving his security deposit. We raised his case with Ministry officials who conceded the delay was related to the pandemic and staff working remotely. They made special arrangements for staff to go to the office and process the man's cheque.

Clean record

A woman who needed to drive to visit her husband in hospital sought our help after ServiceOntario told her she could not renew her licence. The issue was an old driving offence on her record, which required that she complete three tests before her licence would be valid. She told us she had successfully appealed the charge years ago and the testing requirement had been lifted. We raised the case with Ministry of Transportation officials, who confirmed the woman's story and acknowledged their records had not been updated. They fixed the error and the woman was able to renew her licence, to her great relief.

Fax confirmed

A woman complained to us that the Ministry of Transportation had suspended her licence even though she had faxed in her eye test results a month earlier for special review. We provided the Ministry's Medical Review Section with a copy of the fax confirmation, which

showed the submission date. Staff at the Ministry retrieved and reviewed the woman's documents that same day. The suspension was cancelled and her licence was reinstated.

Address unknown

A woman sought our help when she found out her driver's licence had been suspended for medical reasons five years earlier, without her knowledge. Because of the delay, she would have to repeat the graduated licensing process to get her licence reinstated. Our inquiries revealed that the Ministry had mailed her medical review forms five years earlier to the wrong address, thanks to a glitch in its system at that time that created multiple files for drivers who had both a mailing address and a street address. Ministry officials explained that they could not waive the testing requirement, but agreed to reimburse the woman for the fees.





HEALTH

Overview and trends in cases

The Ombudsman oversees the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Long-Term Care, along with the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) and programs that assist with funding drugs and medical devices. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to be the dominant concern in this area throughout 2021-2022, and we continued to resolve a wide range of cases related to its impact on health services.

In particular, we drew attention to complaints from people with disabilities who couldn't renew their OHIP cards online because they didn't have driver's licences. The result was a much fairer online renewal system.

Our systemic investigation into the government's oversight of long-term care homes during the pandemic also approached completion in 2021-2022.

Our Office does not directly oversee several key areas of the health care system, but we receive many complaints and inquiries about them – particularly hospitals (**532** cases) and long-term care homes (**102** cases). These are within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health's Patient Ombudsman, and we refer patients to them accordingly. As we noted last year, the pandemic has also prompted many complaints about local public health units, but they are not subject to the oversight of the Ombudsman, the Patient Ombudsman, or the French Language Services Commissioner.

OHIP access and renewals

We received **70** complaints about the Ontario Health Insurance Plan in 2021-2022, primarily regarding eligibility or health card renewals. Several of these were from Ontarians with disabilities who use Ontario photo ID

cards instead of driver's licences as official identification, because they don't or cannot drive. They complained that ServiceOntario's OHIP card online renewal system would only accept a driver's licence as a valid form of provincial ID, forcing them to make in-person appointments at ServiceOntario centres instead (an option that was not always available during the pandemic, due to public health restrictions). We brought these complaints to the attention of officials at the relevant ministries, who confirmed they were updating the online process to accept Ontario photo ID cards, allowing people without driver's licences to renew their OHIP cards online. The update came into effect in May 2022.

Vaccine rollout

We received numerous complaints regarding the province's online booking and record-keeping systems for COVID-19 vaccines. Our staff were often able to help by making inquiries with the Ministry of Health to make sure people's vaccination records were updated and accurate.

For example:

- A woman sought our help after she was unable to book second doses for herself and her mother-in-law. Because they both have the same first and last name, the online reservation system misread their bookings as duplicates and cancelled their appointments. We raised the issue with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, which modified the online booking system to request additional identifiers (such as date of birth) to differentiate between users with the same name.
- We helped a man clarify his vaccine status so he could download his certificate from the Ministry's website. Our inquiries revealed the man's vaccination record was incomplete because he failed to check out after receiving his second dose at a local pop-up clinic.

Once Ministry officials verified with the local public health unit that he had received the shot, his record was fixed and he could download his certificate.

Public health units

We received **137** cases about public health units in 2021-2022, up from 87 the previous year. Many of these were about local COVID-19 directives issued by local public health units or concerns related to vaccine availability or service at vaccine clinics.

After calling on the province to implement independent oversight of public health units in last year's Annual Report, the Ombudsman met with the Association of Local Public Health Agencies in the fall of 2021. The association noted that some public health orders can be appealed to the Health Services Appeal and Review Board. However, the Ombudsman noted that in most provinces and territories, public health units are subject to broader independent oversight by the provincial or territorial ombudsman.

“Public health units have been central to Ontarians' experience of the pandemic, responsible for everything from playground closures to mask mandates to vaccination operations. Their work is crucially important and their decisions collectively affect millions. And yet they operate without oversight: They are exempt from the jurisdiction of my Office, and that of the Ministry of Health's Patient Ombudsman. [...] I encourage the government to establish independent oversight of public health units as soon as is practicable.”

– Ombudsman Paul Dubé, Annual Report 2020-2021

Home care and long-term care

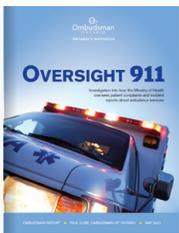
In 2021-2022, we received **41** complaints about the Ministry of Long-Term Care and **89** complaints about Home and Community Care Support Services organizations, which help arrange in-home care and long-term care placements. Although we do not oversee long-term care homes directly, we can and do resolve complaints about the Ministry's oversight of these facilities.

For example:

- A woman contacted us about the Ministry's response to her complaint about conditions in her mother's long-term care home. She had learned that an inspection was done, but could not get anyone from the Ministry to discuss it with her. We arranged for a Ministry official to let her know how she could obtain a copy of the report and to provide her with more information about an upcoming second inspection, which would address some of the additional concerns she had about the facility.

Investigations

Oversight of complaints about ambulance services



Report: Oversight 911, released May 2021

Investigation update: This investigation, launched in May 2018, looked into 72 complaints about how the Ministry of Health reviews and investigates patient complaints and incident reports about

land and air ambulance services.

“I can't find words to thank you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

– Complainant

The Ombudsman's report revealed that many complaints about ambulance services were not investigated because the Ministry viewed its role as limited – and even when it did investigate, it had no clear process. He also identified problems in the Ministry's review of incident reports (some 250,000 of which are submitted each year), and obstacles to public complaints.

The Ministry accepted all 53 of the Ombudsman's recommendations, and has implemented **14** of them since May 2021. These include improving public communication, complaint handling and investigator training, as well as updating some policies to strengthen its investigation process.

Ombudsman staff meet regularly with the Ministry to receive updates on its progress on the outstanding recommendations, and the Ministry has been proactive by including our Office in its planning. We received **4** new complaints about ambulance services, dispatch delays and the Ministry's investigations unit in 2021-2022.

Oversight of long-term care homes during COVID-19

Launched: June 2020

Investigation update: The Ombudsman launched this investigation on his own initiative, in the wake of a report by Canadian Armed Forces personnel which detailed shocking conditions in five long-term care homes. The investigation is focused on whether the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Long-Term Care took adequate action

to ensure the safety of residents and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our Office has since received more than 200 complaints and submissions from long-term care residents, their family members, advocacy groups, associations, other interested parties and whistleblowers. Our investigations team has received more than 1 million documents and conducted almost 100 interviews with Ministry officials, complainants, long-term care administrators and staff, residents and stakeholders. The Ombudsman's report is now being drafted, for an anticipated release later this year.

Case summaries

Form fix

We heard from a man who was still waiting for his semi-annual grant for ostomy supplies from the Ministry's Assistive Devices Program. We spoke with Ministry staff and learned that they were waiting on a form from him. We arranged with staff from his doctor's office to send the form to the Ministry on his behalf. He received the grant of **\$975**.

Deductible decision

A man contacted our Office after trying unsuccessfully to have his Trillium Drug Program deductible increased. He had requested a reassessment, but the amount was still inconsistent with the program guide's formula. He was also having trouble getting reimbursed for his wife's kidney transplant medication. Thanks to our inquiries at the Ministry, the man's file was reviewed, his deductible was retroactively adjusted to match his income, and he was reimbursed for his wife's medication.

Tell us more

A man contacted us on behalf of his father, who was immunocompromised and receiving cancer treatments. He had applied to the Exceptional Access Program for funding for a drug necessary for managing the elder man's conditions – which the EAP had approved for him before. He complained that EAP staff were now asking him to provide additional information. We made inquiries with EAP officials, confirmed why the additional information was required, and facilitated communication between them and the family. The man's application was approved, and the funding was backdated to the time of his initial application.





FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES

Overview and trends in cases

Our Office has seen a steady increase in cases in this area over the past two fiscal years, as French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke and our dedicated French Language Services Unit helped hundreds of Francophones access services in their language and promoted the importance of Ontario’s Francophonie.

Not only did the French Language Services Unit receive **361** complaints and inquiries between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022 (up **35%** from the same period last year), Commissioner Burke also released her second Annual Report, as well as her first investigation report (see more under **Investigations**). She continued outreach in the community, speaking to dozens of stakeholders as well as deputy ministers, ministers and other senior government officials – and also appeared in person at the Franco-Ontarian Day flag-raising event in Toronto in September 2021.

The bulk of the complaints we receive in this area are related to government service delivery and communications. Among the most common concerns are a lack of bilingual staff, the quality of French provided, and a lack of enforcement of policies to ensure services in French are available.

“When we evaluate French language services, we look at both the legal obligations under the *French Language Services Act* and the moral obligations we all have to protect our Francophone cultural heritage for future generations.”

– French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke, at the release of her Annual Report, December 7, 2021

Many groups in the community helped raise awareness of our work in 2021-2022 by sharing our French language services brochure, which we distributed digitally and by mail.

The Commissioner continued to represent our Office in the International Association of Language Commissioners and on the board of the Association des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs de la Francophonie (the international Francophone ombudsman association).

Annual Report of the French Language Services Commissioner, 2020-2021



Commissioner Burke released her second Annual Report in December 2021. She reported a 15% increase in cases over her previous reporting period. (The Commissioner reports cases on an October–September year; her next report will cover cases received from October 1, 2021 to

September 30, 2022.)

To assist government in fulfilling her 2020-2021 recommendation for more robust planning of French language services, the Commissioner's latest report included a new tool devised by our French Language Services Unit, called the French Language Services Commissioner's Compass (FLSC Compass). The Compass helps officials evaluate services in French in four categories: **F**airness, **L**ogistics, **S**atisfaction and **C**ommunication. Along with recommending that government bodies use this tool, the Commissioner released a series of videos explaining it in action, based on real cases we resolved.

All of the Commissioner's recommendations to date have been well received by the government. In December 2021, the province also moved to modernize the *French Language Services Act*, which will address several issues she has highlighted.



December 7, 2021 • French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke at Queen's Park, with the "FLSC Compass" image on the cover of her 2020-2021 Annual Report.

Investigations

Cuts to French-language programs at Laurentian University



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

Investigation update: French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke launched this investigation in June 2021 after receiving **60** complaints about

Laurentian University's cuts to French-language programs during its financial restructuring in April 2021. Many were from students who were left with no way to pursue or complete their chosen program of study in French.

The investigation looked into whether the university, as well as the ministries of Francophone Affairs and Colleges and Universities, had complied with their obligations under the *French Language Services Act*, in light of the university's designation under the Act.

Good to know



We publish a separate *Annual Report of the French Language Services Commissioner*, which includes detailed case breakdowns and the Commissioner's recommendations to government to improve services in French. Watch for the next one in late 2022.

It revealed a lack of leadership by all three bodies and made **19** recommendations to prevent similar situations in the future. All of these were accepted, and all parties agreed to report to our Office on their progress in implementing them. The Commissioner will provide a further update on this case in her Annual Report later this year.

“Thank you so much for your help. I truly appreciate it. You and your team are awesome!”

– Complainant

Case summaries

French connections

A Francophone man contacted us after noticing that Cancer Care Ontario's promotional messages on LinkedIn about virtual access to health care appeared in English only. We raised the issue with Ontario Health, the agency responsible for Cancer Care Ontario (CCO), which acknowledged that CCO's promotional messages

on LinkedIn were only available in English. As a result of this complaint and discussions with our Office, Cancer Care Ontario has begun creating and publishing bilingual messages on LinkedIn.

For follow-up in French, press 2

A man contacted the provincial COVID-19 vaccine system by phone and chose the “French” option to request his proof of vaccination by mail. He contacted us to point out that the follow-up call from the Ministry of Health to verify that he had received his proof of immunization was in English. As a result of our intervention, the Ministry of Health added a question to the initial call to ask whether people wanted to be called back in French.

Transit news, now bilingual

A resident who wanted to subscribe to a Durham Region newsletter from Metrolinx was disappointed to learn that it wasn't available in French. After we informed Metrolinx officials about this complaint, they confirmed that all regional newsletters published by Metrolinx would be translated going forward, including that of Durham Region, which became available in French in March 2022.

In French, please, Your Honour

We were contacted by a person who requested a bilingual hearing at a courthouse in Northern Ontario. However, at the time of the hearing, the judge present could only speak English and no other means of providing services in French were available. The self-represented person could not follow the hearing adequately or participate in it in French, so the judge decided to suspend the hearing. We raised the case with the Ministry of the Attorney General, and were told this was a scheduling error. As a result of our intervention, the Ministry reminded courthouse staff of the procedure for scheduling bilingual hearings, to ensure services are available and equivalent at all times.



EMPLOYMENT

Overview and trends in cases

The Ombudsman oversees the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development and its programs, agencies and tribunals, including the Employment Practices Branch, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) and its internal ombudsman, the Fair Practices Commissioner.

We received **341** complaints about the Ministry and its programs in 2021-2022 – a slight increase in complaints compared to the previous year.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect employment across the province, as public health restrictions were modified or re-introduced, and various relief and support programs were phased out.

COVID-19 business relief grants

The Ombudsman also oversees the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, which administered the Small Business Support Grant and the Small Business Relief Grant to help eligible businesses that were required to close during pandemic lockdowns.

This ministry's programs were the subject of **154** cases, many of which centred on poor communication and delays. We also heard from frustrated business owners whose applications for funding were rejected without clear reasons. We raised these issues with the Ministry, and helped many business owners access relief funds.

For example:

- A small business owner contacted us for answers when he did not qualify for the second payment of the Small Business Support Grant. Our inquiries prompted a review of his application by a program manager, who

“Until your Office got involved, I had no idea what we could do to fix this. You have really helped us avoid a lot of hardship.”

– Complainant

determined that the business did qualify, because it was inside a mall that had been closed to in-person shopping.

- After realizing that her accountant had made an error on her Small Business Relief Grant application, a business owner sought our help in reaching staff at the Ministry. We connected with a program manager, who said an attestation from the accountant was enough to have the application reviewed. Once she provided the attestation, her application was reassessed and she received **\$20,000** in grants.

Mandatory vaccination policies

As many workplaces in both the private and public sectors implemented policies requiring staff to be vaccinated against COVID-19, our Office fielded a range of complaints and inquiries from affected individuals. For example, we heard from workers who had lost their jobs or were placed on leave, or who worried they would face discrimination and eventually lose their positions because of their vaccination status. Wherever possible, our staff provided information and referrals to assist people in raising their concerns through available complaint mechanisms in the relevant organizations.

Case summaries

Extension explained

A woman whose husband was killed in a workplace accident complained to us that she had heard nothing about the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development’s investigation of the incident for more than a year. She was concerned that it was already too late for any charges to be laid under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. We arranged for Ministry officials to contact her directly, and they explained that due to the pandemic, the legislation now included a six-month extension of the window for potential charges.

Second chance

After receiving the first of two Small Business Support Grant payments, a business owner was told he was no longer eligible for the second. He sought our help after discovering that an error in his banking information had caused his bank to reject the second payment to his account. When he tried to correct the information, he was told he no longer qualified. Ombudsman staff intervened with program officials to request that they reconsider his application. Once they did, his second payment was authorized and he received a total of **\$31,494**. He thanked our staff for working quickly to resolve the problem.



ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Overview and trends in cases

Concerns about public sector administration of electricity, fuel, natural resources, rural affairs and the environment fall into this category. In 2021-2022, we fielded numerous complaints and inquiries about Ontario's provincial parks, sewage management policies, the overall preservation of natural resources – and municipal hydro corporations.

Similar to last year, we continued to hear concerns about communication gaps and delays relating to the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks, and the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry. Our staff helped put people in contact with the relevant ministry officials, followed up to make sure they heard back, and encouraged the ministries to improve communication for greater transparency.

Municipal hydro

As part of our jurisdiction over municipalities, the Ombudsman oversees municipally-controlled corporations, which include hydro companies that are majority-owned or controlled by one or more municipalities. In 2021-2022, we received **79** complaints about a wide range of concerns, from billing to matters affecting people's property. We resolved the bulk of these by helping hydro customers connect with appropriate officials.

For example:

- A homeowner complained that his claim for compensation was denied after a contractor for the local hydro company damaged his gardens. After we spoke with hydro officials, they reviewed how their insurer handled the file and instructed the insurer to send the homeowner a settlement for the full amount of his claim – along with an apology.

“Bless you for helping me with this. I was at my wit’s end and thought I had nowhere to turn.”

– Complainant

- A woman who missed a payment on her hydro arrears told us she feared her electricity would be cut off. We helped her connect directly with the hydro company, which agreed to work with her to ensure she could keep her lights on.
- We spoke with hydro officials about a couple’s concerns about noise and lights from the company’s operations in a field beside their home. The company offered to have senior staff meet with the couple to address their concerns and work on a resolution.

Parks, conservation and environment issues

In 2021-2022, we received **28** complaints about provincial parks, including concerns about the Ontario Parks online reservation system for campsites. These included technical issues with the booking system, as well as concerns about the reselling of reservations – a practice the province cracked down on in the spring of 2021, announcing that anyone seeking to resell a reservation on social media could be fined and have their reservation cancelled.

In all, we received **67** complaints and inquiries about the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and **45** about the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry.

Some case examples:

- In a case first raised in last year’s Annual Report, our intervention in complaints by Indigenous groups

as well as other affected individuals resulted in an apology from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry. The complaints focused on the ministries’ decision to cancel, without notice, a class environmental assessment (EA) related to the impacts of a local dam on native fish populations. Those engaged in the EA process complained they had not heard from the ministries in the three years leading up to the termination of the EA. After our initial inquiries, the ministries provided complainants with a written acknowledgement of the lack of communication and delay, as well as a detailed explanation for their decision. However, Indigenous groups had outstanding concerns and questions about consultation, and several groups had concerns about the lack of fisheries management planning in the area. Once our Office escalated these issues to senior officials, they acknowledged the seriousness of these concerns and agreed to provide an apology to affected Indigenous groups. The Ministries reaffirmed their commitment to working with the Indigenous groups and others, and will be in the process of developing a fisheries management plan for the area.

- When a man complained that the road leading to his usual boat launch in a provincial park was blocked without public consultation or notice, we made inquiries with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. We discovered the site was not an official boat launch as defined by legislation – and that it was blocked as part of a local First Nation’s request to the Ministry to restore the beach. The Ministry offered to add the man to its mailing list so he could participate in its process to develop the park management plan.

- A group of cottagers complained to us after communication between them and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks broke down. They had been told that new park protection legislation would result in changes to the terms of their longstanding access to a boat launch within a provincial park. Our review of the file found that the formal and legalistic language used by Ministry employees in communicating with cottage residents likely caused some misunderstanding. We encouraged the Ministry to use plain language to avoid further confusion, and continue to monitor its efforts to resolve the matter.
- A frustrated landowner sought our help after failing to get a clear answer from the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry about when and why a portion of his property was designated as provincially significant wetland. Ministry staff told us that because of COVID-19 work-from-home measures, they could not access the original file to respond to the landowner's questions. We put the landowner in touch with the right person at the Ministry who committed to responding to him once the file was accessible and to providing information about how the designation could be challenged.

We also continue to receive complaints about how the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks controls the spreading of untreated sewage, and we are monitoring its review of its policies regarding this practice. We first reported on this issue in our 2016-2017 Annual Report after hearing from Ontarians concerned about the resulting odour and other effects on surrounding land, wildlife and waterways. In January 2022, the Ministry posted a discussion paper to collect public input on the management of hauled sewage, among other topics.

Case summaries

Septic solution

A homeowner sought our help with servicing his septic tank – which was located on the property of a neighbour who would not allow access. We helped him reach the right people at the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, who arranged to visit both properties and speak with both the homeowner and the neighbour. They mutually agreed to have the tank serviced, and the Ministry subsequently provided the homeowner with information about how to relocate the septic tank to his own property if he chose.

Debris debacle

A group of residents near a construction site complained that the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks was not acting on their complaints about debris. After Ombudsman staff spoke with Ministry officials, they explained the enforcement action they took to address the problem, which included issuing tickets to the responsible parties and referring the file for investigation and potential charges. The Ministry agreed to follow up with the concerned parties and ensure the site was cleaned up.

Errant pass

A woman sought our help after she purchased an annual Ontario Parks pass by mistake – she had meant to buy a Parks Canada pass (for national parks) instead. Her request for a refund was initially turned down but after we put her in touch with a more senior official at the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, she was able to explain the situation and was reimbursed **\$112** for the pass.





CERTIFICATES & PERMITS

Overview and trends in cases

Every year, we hear from Ontarians who have difficulty obtaining birth certificates, death certificates and similar government-issued documents. The Registrar General issues these types of documents through ServiceOntario, and we regularly receive complaints about both organizations. In 2021-2022, we received **288** cases about ServiceOntario – a decline from the previous year's 305 – and **37** about the Registrar General (consistent with 35 in 2020-2021).

Document delays

People often come to our Office for help with long delays in processing their applications. In many cases, our intervention clears up confusion and resolves the issue.

For example:

- A woman who needed copies of her children's birth certificates after moving to another province sought our help when she could not find a guarantor in Ontario to sign her application. After our staff confirmed with the Registrar General's office that the guarantor could be located anywhere in Canada, she was able to complete the form.
- A man seeking a name change complained that the delay in processing his application was making it difficult for him to renew his registration with his professional college. Our staff confirmed the cause of the delay, and facilitated a call from the department responsible for processing the application to clarify what additional details were needed.

Unusual circumstances

We also help many people who aren't able to use ServiceOntario's process to obtain identification, because they don't have the standard required documentation. In these situations, we connect directly with officials in the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services to highlight the person's exceptional circumstances and resolve the issue.

For example:

- A group home worker contacted us on behalf of an adult resident with developmental disabilities. The woman needed a photo ID to use with her COVID-19 vaccine certificate for entry to certain businesses and facilities. She did not have the required documents to obtain a photo card via ServiceOntario, which typically requires an original birth certificate. Our staff explained the woman's unique situation to Ministry officials, who arranged for the woman to receive a photo health card rather than a photo ID card. We helped the woman make an appointment at the nearest ServiceOntario location to obtain this card.

Case summaries

Delay of name

A mother complained to us about delays in obtaining long-form birth certificates for her two university-aged children, who needed the documents to apply for post-secondary education funding. Our inquiries with the Registrar General's office revealed that the documents were stalled in its system because the mother had mistakenly listed her child instead of herself as the applicant on one of the two request forms. Once this error was corrected, we confirmed that both long-form birth certificates were sent.

“There are no words to describe how happy I am! Thank you for your excellent service... the whole process was so nice, such a pleasure dealing with your Office.”

– Complainant

Apply, return, repeat

A mother contacted us in frustration after waiting several months for her son's name change to be processed. She had already submitted a notarized application on his behalf twice, seeking to change the name on his birth certificate to reflect his gender identity. When the second submission was returned to her, the reason given was that it did not include her child's original birth certificate – which she had already sent in with the first application. Ombudsman staff made inquiries with the Registrar General's office, and they confirmed they still had the birth certificate, but failed to communicate that to the mother. The Registrar General's office apologized to the family for the miscommunication, and the son's name change application was allowed to proceed.

Good to know



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

APPENDIX

Case Statistics

DISPOSITION OF CASES, 2021-2022



25,161

CASES RECEIVED IN FISCAL 2021-2022



164 consultations or questions

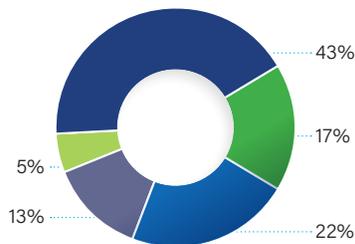


679 information submissions

CASES CLOSED - 2021-2022

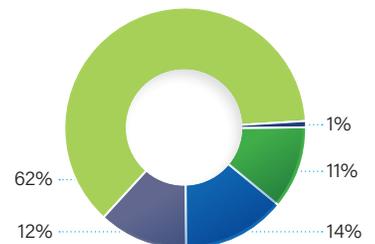
16,717

cases within the Ombudsman's authority



7,659

cases outside the Ombudsman's authority



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

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

% OF CASES CLOSED IN A WEEK / 2 WEEKS



40% closed in 1 week

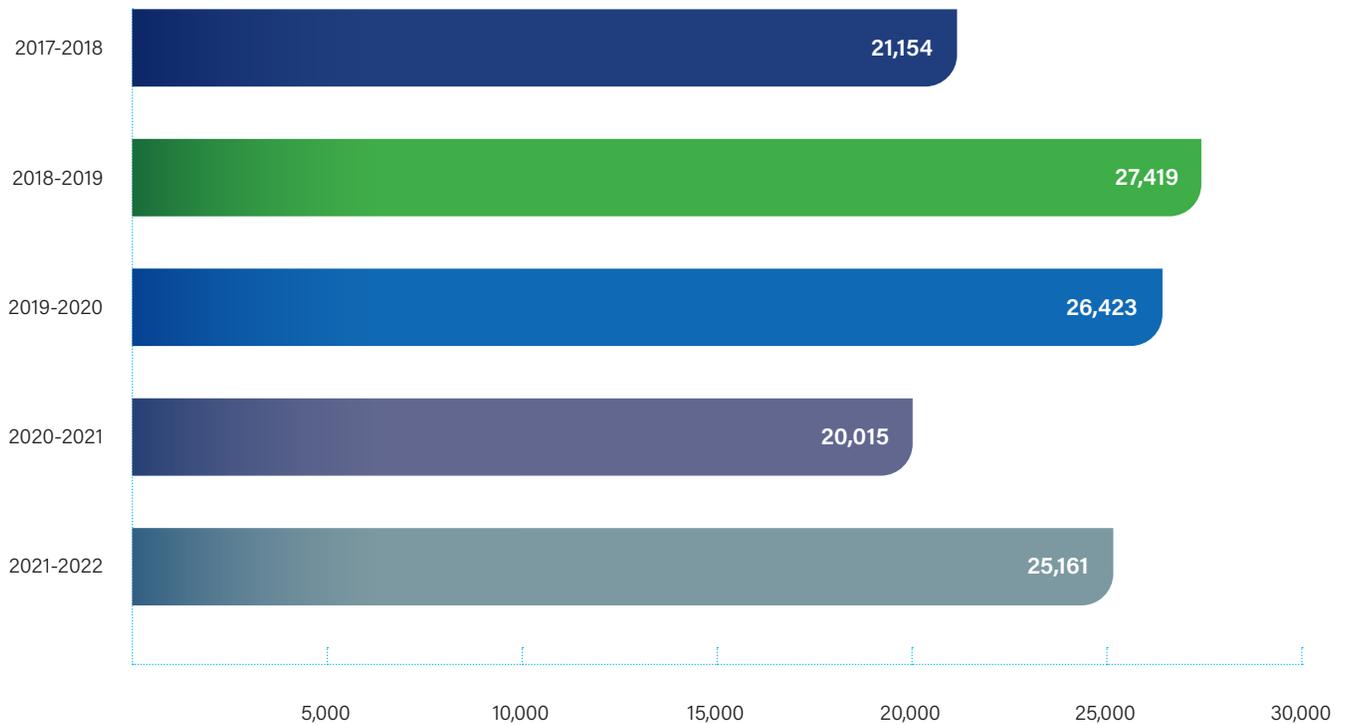


52% closed in 2 weeks

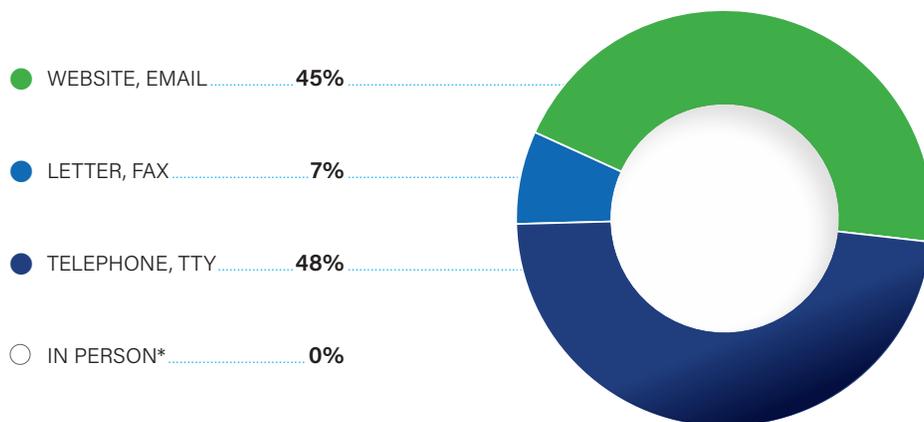
*E.g., complaints about officials and bodies outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction

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

TOTAL CASES RECEIVED, FISCAL YEARS 2017-2018 - 2021-2022



HOW CASES WERE RECEIVED, 2021-2022



*We were not able to receive complaints in person, due to COVID-19 protocols.

CASES BY PROVINCIAL RIDING, 2021-2022

AJAX	123
ALGOMA—MANITOULIN	174
AURORA—OAK RIDGES—RICHMOND HILL	87
BARRIE—INNISFIL	121
BARRIE—SPRINGWATER—ORO-MEDONTE	171
BAY OF QUINTE	138
BEACHES—EAST YORK	154
BRAMPTON CENTRE	87
BRAMPTON EAST	70
BRAMPTON NORTH	71
BRAMPTON SOUTH	111
BRAMPTON WEST	87
BRANTFORD—BRANT	144
BRUCE—GREY—OWEN SOUND	145
BURLINGTON	105
CAMBRIDGE	140
CARLETON	79
CHATHAM-KENT—LEAMINGTON	126
DAVENPORT	134
DON VALLEY EAST	77
DON VALLEY NORTH	78
DON VALLEY WEST	94
DUFFERIN—CALEDON	132
DURHAM	131
EGLINTON—LAWRENCE	122
ELGIN—MIDDLESEX—LONDON	152
ESSEX	144
ETOBICOKE CENTRE	112
ETOBICOKE NORTH	74
ETOBICOKE—LAKESHORE	167
FLAMBOROUGH—GLANBROOK	104

GLENGARRY—PRESCOTT—RUSSELL	176
GUELPH	147
HALDIMAND—NORFOLK	130
HALIBURTON—KAWARTHA LAKES—BROCK	124
HAMILTON CENTRE	193
HAMILTON EAST—STONE CREEK	110
HAMILTON MOUNTAIN	105
HAMILTON WEST—ANCASTER—DUNDAS	113
HASTINGS—LENNOX AND ADDINGTON	143
HUMBER RIVER—BLACK CREEK	125
HURON—BRUCE	106
KANATA—CARLETON	73
KENORA—RAINY RIVER	81
KIIWETINOONG	16
KINGSTON AND THE ISLANDS	162
KING—VAUGHAN	96
KITCHENER CENTRE	124
KITCHENER SOUTH—HESPELER	77
KITCHENER—CONESTOGA	92
LAMBTON—KENT—MIDDLESEX	119
LANARK—FRONTENAC—KINGSTON	149
LEEDS—GRENVILLE—THOUSAND ISLANDS AND RIDEAU LAKES	98
LONDON NORTH CENTRE	177
LONDON WEST	124
LONDON—FANSHAWE	148
MARKHAM—STOUFFVILLE	120
MARKHAM—THORNHILL	45
MARKHAM—UNIONVILLE	73
MILTON	88
MISSISSAUGA CENTRE	91
MISSISSAUGA EAST—COOKSVILLE	112

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

CASES BY PROVINCIAL RIDING, 2021-2022

MISSISSAUGA—ERIN MILLS	85
MISSISSAUGA—LAKESHORE	115
MISSISSAUGA—MALTON	89
MISSISSAUGA—STREETSVILLE	94
MUSHKEGOWUK—JAMES BAY	34
NEPEAN	102
NEWMARKET—AURORA	126
NIAGARA CENTRE	225
NIAGARA FALLS	200
NIAGARA WEST	124
NICKEL BELT	138
NIPISSING	136
NORTHUMBERLAND—PETERBOROUGH SOUTH	116
OAKVILLE	122
OAKVILLE NORTH—BURLINGTON	85
ORLÉANS	108
OSHAWA	150
OTTAWA CENTRE	173
OTTAWA SOUTH	104
OTTAWA WEST—NEPEAN	100
OTTAWA—VANIER	185
OXFORD	121
PARKDALE—HIGH PARK	136
PARRY SOUND—MUSKOKA	172
PERTH—WELLINGTON	95
PETERBOROUGH—KAWARTHA	167
PICKERING—UXBRIDGE	132
RENFREW—NIPISSING—PEMBROKE	103
RICHMOND HILL	93
SARNIA—LAMBTON	111
SAULT STE. MARIE	166

SCARBOROUGH CENTRE	83
SCARBOROUGH NORTH	26
SCARBOROUGH SOUTHWEST	124
SCARBOROUGH—AGINCOURT	69
SCARBOROUGH—GUILDWOOD	97
SCARBOROUGH—ROUGE PARK	88
SIMCOE NORTH	183
SIMCOE—GREY	187
SPADINA—FORT YORK	135
ST. CATHARINES	166
STORMONT—DUNDAS—SOUTH GLENGARRY	138
SUDBURY	190
THORNHILL	88
THUNDER BAY—ATIKOKAN	112
THUNDER BAY—SUPERIOR NORTH	126
TIMISKAMING—COCHRANE	157
TIMMINS	37
TORONTO CENTRE	177
TORONTO—DANFORTH	155
TORONTO—ST. PAUL'S	99
UNIVERSITY—ROSEDALE	153
VAUGHAN—WOODBIDGE	93
WATERLOO	119
WELLINGTON—HALTON HILLS	100
WHITBY	112
WILLOWDALE	72
WINDSOR WEST	197
WINDSOR—TECUMSEH	129
YORK CENTRE	102
YORK SOUTH—WESTON	99
YORK—SIMCOE	118

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

TOP 10 PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS BY CASE VOLUME, 2021-2022*

		NUMBER OF CASES
1	TRIBUNALS ONTARIO	1,110
2	ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM	755
3	FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE	350
4	COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY	344
5	SERVICEONTARIO	288
6	WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD	200
7	ONTARIO STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	180
8	DRIVER LICENSING	169
9	OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN AND TRUSTEE	167
10	ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE	128

*Excluding correctional facilities.

TOP 10 CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES BY CASE VOLUME, 2021-2022

		NUMBER OF CASES
1	CENTRAL EAST CORRECTIONAL CENTRE	600
2	CENTRAL NORTH CORRECTIONAL CENTRE	537
3	TORONTO SOUTH DETENTION CENTRE	383
4	NIAGARA DETENTION CENTRE	239
5	OTTAWA-CARLETON DETENTION CENTRE	226
6	MAPLEHURST CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX	198
7	SOUTH WEST DETENTION CENTRE	198
8	HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DETENTION CENTRE	163
9	VANIER CENTRE FOR WOMEN	133
10	QUINTE DETENTION CENTRE	130

TOTAL CASES RECEIVED FOR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND SELECTED PROGRAMS,* 2021-2022

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS		10
MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL		1,567
ALCOHOL AND GAMING COMMISSION OF ONTARIO	24	
CHILDREN'S LAWYER	14	
COURT ADMINISTRATION	60	
HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE	13	
LEGAL AID CLINIC	11	
LEGAL AID ONTARIO	65	
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN AND TRUSTEE	167	
TRIBUNALS ONTARIO	1,110	
MINISTRY OF CHILDREN, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES		1,530
DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES PROGRAMS	34	
DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES - PASSPORT PROGRAM	26	
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE	350	
MINISTRY FUNDED SERVICE PROVIDER - CHILDREN AND YOUTH	16	
MINISTRY FUNDED SERVICE PROVIDER - COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES	69	
ONTARIO AUTISM PROGRAM	88	
ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM	755	
SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAMS - CHILDREN	13	
YOUTH JUSTICE CENTRES - DIRECT OPERATED	87	
YOUTH JUSTICE CENTRES - MINISTRY FUNDED	54	
MINISTRY OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES		543
COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY	344	
ONTARIO STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	180	
PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES BRANCH	11	
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, JOB CREATION AND TRADE		154
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION		126
MINISTRY OF ENERGY		31
ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD	15	
ONTARIO POWER GENERATION	10	
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, CONSERVATION AND PARKS		67
ONTARIO PARKS	28	
MINISTRY OF FINANCE		227
FINANCIAL SERVICES REGULATORY AUTHORITY	26	
LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO	23	
MUNICIPAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENT CORPORATION	16	
ONTARIO CANNABIS STORE	31	
ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING	84	

**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,* 2021-2022

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT AND CONSUMER SERVICES		410
CONSUMER PROTECTION ONTARIO	22	
REGISTRAR GENERAL	37	
SERVICEONTARIO	288	
MINISTRY OF HEALTH		469
ASSISTIVE DEVICES / HOME OXYGEN PROGRAMS	23	
HEALTH CARE CONNECT	11	
HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPEAL AND REVIEW BOARD	13	
HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE SUPPORT SERVICES	89	
MINISTRY FUNDED SERVICE PROVIDER	25	
ONTARIO HEALTH	36	
ONTARIO HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN - OHIP	70	
ONTARIO PUBLIC DRUG PROGRAMS	24	
MINISTRY OF HERITAGE, SPORT, TOURISM AND CULTURE INDUSTRIES		16
MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS		1
MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE		3
MINISTRY OF LABOUR, TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT		341
EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES BRANCH	19	
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY BRANCH	16	
ONTARIO LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD	15	
WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD	200	
WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE APPEAL TRIBUNAL	36	
MINISTRY OF LONG-TERM CARE		41
LONG-TERM CARE INSPECTIONS BRANCH	21	
MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING		21
MINISTRY OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT, MINES, NATURAL RESOURCES AND FORESTRY		45
MINISTRY FOR SENIORS AND ACCESSIBILITY		1
MINISTRY OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL		3,920
CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES	3,691	
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CORONER	21	
ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE	128	
PROBATION AND PAROLE	38	
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION		613
DRIVER LICENSING	169	
METROLINX/GO TRANSIT	34	
DRIVETEST	272	
TRANSPORTATION - MEDICAL REVIEW	44	
VEHICLE LICENSING	30	
TREASURY BOARD SECRETARIAT		4

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES, 2021-2022 • TOTAL: 2,877

ADDINGTON HIGHLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	2
ADELAIDE METCALFE, TOWNSHIP OF	2
ADJALA-TOSORONTIO, TOWNSHIP OF	6
AJAX, TOWN OF	6
ALFRED AND PLANTAGENET, TOWNSHIP OF	4
ALGONQUIN HIGHLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	6
ALNWICK/HALDIMAND, TOWNSHIP OF	6
AMARANTH, TOWNSHIP OF	2
AMHERSTBURG, TOWN OF	13
ARMOUR, TOWNSHIP OF	1
ARNPRIOR, TOWN OF	2
ARRAN-ELDERSLIE, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
ASSIGINACK, TOWNSHIP OF	4
ATHENS, TOWNSHIP OF	2
AURORA, TOWN OF	4
AYLMER, TOWN OF	1
BANCROFT, TOWN OF	1
BARRIE, CITY OF	17
BAYHAM, MUNICIPALITY OF	19
BECKWITH, TOWNSHIP OF	2
BELLEVILLE, CITY OF	10
BILLINGS, TOWNSHIP OF	1
BLACK RIVER-MATHESON, TOWNSHIP OF	5
BLANDFORD-BLENHEIM, TOWNSHIP OF	1
BLIND RIVER, TOWN OF	1
BONFIELD, TOWNSHIP OF	3
BONNECHERE VALLEY, TOWNSHIP OF	1
BRACEBRIDGE, TOWN OF	7
BRADFORD WEST GWILLIMBURY, TOWN OF	1
BRAMPTON, CITY OF	48
BRANT, COUNTY OF	5
BRANTFORD, CITY OF	15
BRIGHTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
BROCKTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
BROCKVILLE, CITY OF	5
BROOKE-ALVINSTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
BRUCE, COUNTY OF	1
BRUDENELL, LYNDON AND RAGLAN, TOWNSHIP OF	1
BURK'S FALLS, VILLAGE OF	1
BURLINGTON, CITY OF	8
BURPEE AND MILLS, TOWNSHIP OF	1
CALEDON, TOWN OF	12
CALLANDER, MUNICIPALITY OF	5
CALVIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
CAMBRIDGE, CITY OF	17
CARLING, TOWNSHIP OF	1

CARLOW/MAYO, TOWNSHIP OF	1
CASSELMAN, MUNICIPALITY OF	15
CAVAN MONAGHAN, TOWNSHIP OF	1
CENTRAL ELGIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	11
CENTRAL FRONTENAC, TOWNSHIP OF	1
CENTRAL HURON, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
CENTRAL MANITOULIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	6
CENTRE HASTINGS, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
CENTRE WELLINGTON, TOWNSHIP OF	3
CHAMPLAIN, TOWNSHIP OF	3
CHAPLEAU, TOWNSHIP OF	1
CHATHAM-KENT, MUNICIPALITY OF	44
CLARENCE-ROCKLAND, CITY OF	2
CLARINGTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	7
CLEARVIEW, TOWNSHIP OF	8
COBALT, TOWN OF	3
COBOURG, TOWN OF	3
COCHRANE, TOWN OF	1
COLEMAN, TOWNSHIP OF	2
COLLINGWOOD, TOWN OF	2
CORNWALL, CITY OF	12
CRAMAHE, TOWNSHIP OF	2
DAWSON, TOWNSHIP OF	1
DOURO-DUMMER, TOWNSHIP OF	4
DUBREUILVILLE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
DUFFERIN, COUNTY OF	5
DURHAM, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	29
DUTTON-DUNWICH, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
DYSART ET AL, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
EAST FERRIS, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
EAST GWILLIMBURY, TOWN OF	1
EAST ZORRA -TAVISTOCK, TOWNSHIP OF	1
ELLIOT LAKE, CITY OF	5
ENGLEHART, TOWN OF	1
ERIN, TOWN OF	8
ESSEX, COUNTY OF	2
ESSEX, TOWN OF	10
FAUQUIER-STICKLAND, TOWNSHIP OF	4
FORT ERIE, TOWN OF	20
FORT FRANCES, TOWN OF	5
FRENCH RIVER, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
FRONT OF YONGE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
FRONTENAC ISLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	2
FRONTENAC, COUNTY OF	1
GANANOQUE, TOWN OF	8
GEORGIAN BAY, TOWNSHIP OF	3

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

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES, 2021-2022

GEORGIAN BLUFFS, TOWNSHIP OF	9
GEORGINA, TOWN OF	3
GILLIES, TOWNSHIP OF	1
GRAND VALLEY, TOWN OF	1
GRAVENHURST, TOWN OF	9
GREATER NAPANEE, TOWN OF	3
GREATER SUDBURY, CITY OF	62
GREENSTONE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
GREY HIGHLANDS, MUNICIPALITY OF	7
GREY, COUNTY OF	5
GRIMSBY, TOWN OF	21
GUELPH, CITY OF	14
HALDIMAND COUNTY	6
HALIBURTON, COUNTY OF	2
HALTON HILLS, TOWN OF	2
HALTON, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	13
HAMILTON, CITY OF	82
HAMILTON, TOWNSHIP OF	3
HANOVER, TOWN OF	3
HASTINGS HIGHLANDS, MUNICIPALITY OF	5
HASTINGS, COUNTY OF	9
HAVELOCK-BELMONT-METHUEN, TOWNSHIP OF	4
HAWKESBURY, TOWN OF	5
HIGHLANDS EAST, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
HOWICK, TOWNSHIP OF	1
HUNTSVILLE, TOWN OF	5
HURON EAST, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
HURON-KINLOSS, TOWNSHIP OF	5
HURON, COUNTY OF	2
IGNACE, TOWNSHIP OF	4
INGERSOLL, TOWN OF	4
INNISFIL, TOWN OF	6
IROQUOIS FALLS, TOWN OF	10
JOHNSON, TOWNSHIP OF	1
JOLY, TOWNSHIP OF	2
KAPUSKASING, TOWN OF	1
KAWARTHA LAKES, CITY OF	28
KEARNEY, TOWN OF	2
KENORA, CITY OF	2
KILLALOE, HAGARTY AND RICHARDS, TOWNSHIP OF	4
KINCARDINE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
KING, TOWNSHIP OF	3
KINGSTON, CITY OF	27
KINGSVILLE, TOWN OF	2
KIRKLAND LAKE, TOWN OF	11
KITCHENER, CITY OF	10

LAKE OF BAYS, TOWNSHIP OF	1
LAKESHORE, TOWN OF	9
LAMBTON SHORES, MUNICIPALITY OF	8
LAMBTON, COUNTY OF	7
LANARK HIGHLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	3
LANARK, COUNTY OF	4
LASALLE, TOWN OF	9
LEAMINGTON, MUNICIPALITY OF	5
LEEDS AND GRENVILLE, UNITED COUNTIES OF	1
LEEDS AND THE THOUSAND ISLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	5
LENNOX & ADDINGTON, COUNTY OF	2
LINCOLN, TOWN OF	6
LONDON, CITY OF	52
LOYALIST TOWNSHIP	3
LUCAN BIDDULPH, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MACDONALD, MEREDITH & ABERDEEN ADDITIONAL, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MACHAR, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MADAWASKA VALLEY, TOWNSHIP OF	7
MADOC, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MAGNETAWAN, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
MALAHIDE, TOWNSHIP OF	2
MANITOUWADGE, TOWNSHIP OF	3
MARATHON, TOWN OF	2
MARKHAM, CITY OF	16
MARKSTAY-WARREN, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
MARMORA AND LAKE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
MATTAWAN, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
MCDUGALL, MUNICIPALITY OF	5
MCGARRY, TOWNSHIP OF	7
MCKELLAR, TOWNSHIP OF	6
MCMURRICH/MONTEITH, TOWNSHIP OF	3
MCNAB/BRAESIDE, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MEAFORD, MUNICIPALITY OF	5
MELANCTHON, TOWNSHIP OF	1
MERRICKVILLE-WOLFORD, VILLAGE OF	8
MIDDLESEX CENTRE, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
MIDDLESEX, COUNTY OF	1
MIDLAND, TOWN OF	8
MILTON, TOWN OF	9
MINDEN HILLS, TOWNSHIP OF	2
MINTO, TOWN OF	2
MISSISSAUGA, CITY OF	56
MISSISSIPPI MILLS, MUNICIPALITY OF	7
MONO, TOWN OF	6
MONTAGUE, TOWNSHIP OF	2
MUSKOKA LAKES, TOWNSHIP OF	2

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES, 2021-2022

MUSKOKA, DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY OF	4
NAIRN AND HYMAN, TOWNSHIP OF	1
NEEBING, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
NEW TECUMSETH, TOWN OF	13
NEWMARKET, TOWN OF	8
NIAGARA FALLS, CITY OF	15
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, TOWN OF	5
NIAGARA, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	32
NIPIGON, TOWNSHIP OF	1
NORFOLK COUNTY	15
NORTH BAY, CITY OF	3
NORTH DUMFRIES, TOWNSHIP OF	3
NORTH DUNDAS, TOWNSHIP OF	3
NORTH HURON, TOWNSHIP OF	3
NORTH KAWARTHA, TOWNSHIP OF	3
NORTH MIDDLESEX, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
NORTH PERTH, MUNICIPALITY OF	6
NORTH STORMONT, TOWNSHIP OF	3
NORTHEASTERN MANITOULIN AND THE ISLANDS, TOWN OF	1
NORTHERN BRUCE PENINSULA, MUNICIPALITY OF	6
NORTHUMBERLAND, COUNTY OF	6
NORWICH, TOWNSHIP OF	1
OAKVILLE, TOWN OF	26
OLIVER PAIPOONGE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
ORANGEVILLE, TOWN OF	3
ORILLIA, CITY OF	8
ORO-MEDONTE, TOWNSHIP OF	22
OSHAWA, CITY OF	18
OTONABEE-SOUTH MONAGHAN, TOWNSHIP OF	3
OTTAWA, CITY OF	157
OWEN SOUND, CITY OF	6
OXFORD, COUNTY OF	4
PARRY SOUND, TOWN OF	1
PEEL, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	75
PELEE, TOWNSHIP OF	3
PELHAM, TOWN OF	4
PEMBROKE, CITY OF	2
PENETANGUISHENE, TOWN OF	1
PERTH EAST, TOWNSHIP OF	2
PERTH, COUNTY OF	1
PETAWAWA, TOWN OF	1
PETERBOROUGH, CITY OF	17
PETERBOROUGH, COUNTY OF	4
PETROLIA, TOWN OF	1
PICKERING, CITY OF	16
PLUMMER ADDITIONAL, TOWNSHIP OF	1

PORT COLBORNE, CITY OF	66
POWASSAN, MUNICIPALITY OF	5
PRESCOTT AND RUSSELL, UNITED COUNTIES OF	2
PRESCOTT, TOWN OF	1
PRINCE EDWARD, COUNTY OF	7
PUSLINCH, TOWNSHIP OF	3
QUINTE WEST, CITY OF	9
RAMARA, TOWNSHIP OF	8
RENFREW, COUNTY OF	1
RENFREW, TOWN OF	1
RICHMOND HILL, CITY OF	17
RIDEAU LAKES, TOWNSHIP OF	3
RUSSELL, TOWNSHIP OF	2
RYERSON, TOWNSHIP OF	3
SABLES-SPANISH RIVERS, TOWNSHIP OF	1
SARNIA, CITY OF	17
SAUGEEN SHORES, TOWN OF	4
SAULT STE. MARIE, CITY OF	22
SEGUIN, TOWNSHIP OF	1
SELWYN, TOWNSHIP OF	3
SEVERN, TOWNSHIP OF	1
SHUNIAH, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
SIMCOE, COUNTY OF	23
SIoux NARROWS-NESTOR FALLS, TOWNSHIP OF	2
SMITHS FALLS, TOWN OF	1
SOUTH BRUCE PENINSULA, TOWN OF	6
SOUTH BRUCE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
SOUTH DUNDAS, MUNICIPALITY OF	6
SOUTH FRONTENAC, TOWNSHIP OF	2
SOUTH GLENGARRY, TOWNSHIP OF	1
SOUTH RIVER, VILLAGE OF	1
SOUTH STORMONT, TOWNSHIP OF	4
SOUTHGATE, TOWNSHIP OF	6
SOUTHWEST MIDDLESEX, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
SOUTHWOLD, TOWNSHIP OF	2
SPRINGWATER, TOWNSHIP OF	2
ST. CATHARINES, CITY OF	26
ST. JOSEPH, TOWNSHIP OF	3
ST. THOMAS, CITY OF	9
ST.-CHARLES, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
STIRLING-RAWDON, TOWNSHIP OF	1
STORMONT, DUNDAS & GLENGARRY, UNITED COUNTIES OF	1
STRATFORD, CITY OF	10
STRATHROY-CARADOC, MUNICIPALITY OF	8
SUNDRIDGE, VILLAGE OF	1
TARBUTT, TOWNSHIP OF	1

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES, 2021-2022

TAY, TOWNSHIP OF	5
TECUMSEH, TOWN OF	2
TEHKUMMAH, TOWNSHIP OF	2
TEMAGAMI, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
TEMISKAMING SHORES, CITY OF	5
THAMES CENTRE, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
THE ARCHIPELAGO, TOWNSHIP OF	5
THE BLUE MOUNTAINS, TOWN OF	7
THE NATION MUNICIPALITY	2
THE NORTH SHORE, TOWNSHIP OF	3
THOROLD, CITY OF	11
THUNDER BAY, CITY OF	13
TILLSONBURG, TOWN OF	3
TIMMINS, CITY OF	5
TINY, TOWNSHIP OF	3
TORONTO, CITY OF	307
TRENT HILLS, MUNICIPALITY OF	5
TRENT LAKES, MUNICIPALITY OF	3
TUDOR & CASHEL, TOWNSHIP OF	3
TWEED, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
TYENDINAGA, TOWNSHIP OF	4
UXBRIDGE, TOWNSHIP OF	7
VAUGHAN, CITY OF	27
WAINFLEET, TOWNSHIP OF	4
WASAGA BEACH, TOWN OF	17
WATERLOO, CITY OF	3
WATERLOO, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	21
WAWA, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
WELLAND, CITY OF	14
WELLESLEY, TOWNSHIP OF	9
WELLINGTON, COUNTY OF	13
WEST ELGIN, MUNICIPALITY OF	4
WEST GREY, MUNICIPALITY OF	5
WEST LINCOLN, TOWNSHIP OF	3
WEST NIPISSING, MUNICIPALITY OF	13
WEST PERTH, MUNICIPALITY OF	2
WHITBY, TOWN OF	7
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE, TOWN OF	9
WHITESTONE, MUNICIPALITY OF	1
WILMOT, TOWNSHIP OF	5
WINDSOR, CITY OF	58
WOLLASTON, TOWNSHIP OF	2
WOODSTOCK, CITY OF	2
WOOLWICH, TOWNSHIP OF	2
YORK, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	53
CASES WHERE NO MUNICIPALITY WAS SPECIFIED	33

SHARED CORPORATIONS	77
ALECTRA	33
BLUEWATER POWER DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION	1
CENTRAL LAKE ONTARIO CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	4
CONSERVATION HALTON	1
CREDIT VALLEY CONSERVATION	1
CROWE VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	2
ELEXICON ENERGY	3
ENTEGRUS POWERLINES	1
ESSEX REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	1
GRAND RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	3
HAMILTON CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	2
KAWARTHA CONSERVATION	1
KITCHENER-WILMOT HYDRO INC.	2
LOWER THAMES VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	2
LOWER TRENT CONSERVATION	1
NEWMARKET-TAY POWER DISTRIBUTION LTD.	2
NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	1
NIAGARA PENINSULA ENERGY INC.	1
NICKEL DISTRICT CONSERVATION AUTHORITY ("CONSERVATION SUDBURY")	1
ORANGEVILLE HYDRO	1
QUINTE CONSERVATION	2
RIDEAU VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	3
SAUGEEN VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	1
SYNERGY NORTH	1
TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	3
UPPER THAMES RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	2
WESTARIO POWER	1
SHARED LOCAL BOARDS	64
ALGOMA DISTRICT SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	5
DISTRICT OF COCHRANE SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	4
DISTRICT OF NIPISSING SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	7
DISTRICT OF PARRY SOUND SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	5
DISTRICT OF SAULT STE. MARIE SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	9
DISTRICT OF TIMISKAMING SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	2
KENORA DISTRICT SERVICES BOARD	4
KINGSTON AREA TAXI LICENSING COMMISSION	2
MANITOULIN-SUDBURY DISTRICT SERVICES BOARD	7
NIAGARA CENTRAL AIRPORT COMMISSION	1
RAINY RIVER DISTRICT SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	3
SAUGEEN MUNICIPAL AIRPORT COMMISSION	3
THUNDER BAY SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD	12

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT CLOSED MUNICIPAL MEETINGS, 2021-2022 • TOTAL: 191

CASES ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES WHERE OMBUDSMAN IS THE INVESTIGATOR*	152
CASES ABOUT MUNICIPALITIES WHERE ANOTHER INVESTIGATOR HAS BEEN APPOINTED**	39

SUMMARY OF COMPLETED INVESTIGATIONS				
MUNICIPALITY	MEETINGS & GATHERINGS REVIEWED	ILLEGAL MEETINGS	PROCEDURAL VIOLATIONS FOUND	BEST PRACTICES SUGGESTED
BONFIELD, TOWNSHIP OF	2	2	1	2
BRUDENELL, LYNDONCH AND RAGLAN, TOWNSHIP OF	1	0	2	5
COLLINGWOOD, TOWN OF	2	0	0	0
ESPANOLA, TOWN OF	1	0	0	0
FORT ERIE, TOWN OF	1	0	0	0
GREATER SUDBURY, CITY OF	1	1	1	0
GREY HIGHLANDS, MUNICIPALITY OF	1	0	0	1
GRIMSBY, TOWN OF	1	0	0	0
HAMILTON, CITY OF	5	1	0	3
HAWKESBURY, TOWN OF	1	0	0	0
KIRKLAND LAKE, TOWN OF	1	0	1	3
LANARK HIGHLANDS, TOWNSHIP OF	2	0	1	1
LOYALIST, TOWNSHIP OF	1	0	0	0
LUCAN BIDDULPH, TOWNSHIP OF	1	1	2	1
MCKELLAR, TOWNSHIP OF	2	0	0	0
MCMURRICH/MONTEITH, TOWNSHIP OF	2	1	0	1
NAIRN AND HYMAN, TOWNSHIP OF	3	2	1	3
NIAGARA FALLS, CITY OF	2	2	3	1
PELEE, TOWNSHIP OF	1	0	0	0
RUSSELL, TOWNSHIP OF	2	0	0	0
SAUGEEN MUNICIPAL AIRPORT COMMISSION	8	8	1	4
SOUTH ALGONQUIN, TOWNSHIP OF	2	0	0	0
SOUTH BRUCE PENINSULA, TOWN OF	1	0	0	0
SOUTH FRONTENAC, TOWNSHIP OF	1	0	0	0
ST.-CHARLES, MUNICIPALITY OF	1	0	0	0
TEMAGAMI, MUNICIPALITY OF	2	2	0	0
THE NORTH SHORE, TOWNSHIP OF	2	0	1	1
WASAGA BEACH, TOWN OF	1	0	0	0
WEST NIPISSING, MUNICIPALITY OF	1	0	0	0

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

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT SCHOOL BOARDS, 2021-2022 • TOTAL: 722

ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS			
ALGOMA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	6	HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	10
AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2	HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1
BLUEWATER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3	HURON-SUPERIOR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA	7	KENORA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ONTARIO NORTH EAST	1	LONDON DISTRICT CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD	4
DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	22	NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3
GRAND ERIE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	6	NIPISSING-PARRY SOUND CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	10	NORTHWEST CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1
HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	17	OTTAWA CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD	8
HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	26	PETERBOROUGH VICTORIA NORTHUMBERLAND AND CLARINGTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3
HASTINGS & PRINCE EDWARD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2	SIMCOE MUSKOKA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	13
KAWARTHA PINE RIDGE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	10	ST CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2
KEEWATIN-PATRICIA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3	SUDBURY CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	4
LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	5	THUNDER BAY CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	4
LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	5	TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	36
LIMESTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	4	WATERLOO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	7
NEAR NORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	13	WELLINGTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1
OTTAWA-CARLETON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	63	WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	7
PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	23	YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	40
RAINBOW DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3		
RAINY RIVER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2	FRENCH CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARDS	
RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	4	CONSEIL DES ÉCOLES CATHOLIQUES DU CENTRE-EST	9
SIMCOE COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	22	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE DE DISTRICT DES GRANDES RIVIÈRES	1
SUPERIOR-GREENSTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE MONAVENIR	2
THAMES VALLEY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	39	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE PROVIDENCE	5
TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	72	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DE DISTRICT CATHOLIQUE DE L'EST ONTARIEN	10
TRILLIUM LAKELANDS DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DE DISTRICT CATHOLIQUE DES AURORES BORÉALES	2
UPPER CANADA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	7		
UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	7	FRENCH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS	
WATERLOO REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	16	CONSEIL DES ÉCOLES PUBLIQUES DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO	6
YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	64	CONSEIL SCOLAIRE PUBLIC DU GRAND NORD DE L'ONTARIO	1
		CONSEIL SCOLAIRE VIAMONDE	5
ENGLISH CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARDS			
ALGONQUIN AND LAKESHORE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	3	SCHOOL AUTHORITIES	
BRANT HALDIMAND NORFOLK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	1	JOHN MCGIVNEY CHILDREN'S CENTRE SCHOOL AUTHORITY	1
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO	6	NIAGARA PENINSULA CHILDREN'S CENTRE SCHOOL AUTHORITY	1
DUFFERIN-PEEL CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	17		
DURHAM CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	12	CASES WHERE NO SCHOOL BOARD WAS SPECIFIED	
			22

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

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY, 2021-2022 • TOTAL: 344

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE	13
CAMBRIAN COLLEGE	5
CANADORE COLLEGE	7
CENTENNIAL COLLEGE	20
COLLÈGE BORÉAL	4
COLLÈGE LA CITÉ	7
CONESTOGA COLLEGE	17
CONFEDERATION COLLEGE	13
DURHAM COLLEGE	18
FANSHAWE COLLEGE	12
FLEMING COLLEGE (SIR SANDFORD FLEMING COLLEGE)	17
GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE	21

GEORGIAN COLLEGE	16
HUMBER COLLEGE	43
LAMBTON COLLEGE	7
LOYALIST COLLEGE	5
MOHAWK COLLEGE	21
NIAGARA COLLEGE CANADA	13
NORTHERN COLLEGE	6
SAULT COLLEGE	8
SENECA COLLEGE	30
SHERIDAN COLLEGE	25
ST. CLAIR COLLEGE	10
ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE	4
CASES WHERE NO COLLEGE WAS SPECIFIED	2

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

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT UNIVERSITIES, 2021-2022 • TOTAL: 361

ALGOMA UNIVERSITY	4
BROCK UNIVERSITY	17
CARLETON UNIVERSITY	14
LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY	6
LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY*	42
MCMASTER UNIVERSITY	27
NIPISSING UNIVERSITY	6
OCAD UNIVERSITY	4
ONTARIO TECH UNIVERSITY	15
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY	23
RYERSON UNIVERSITY**	23

TRENT UNIVERSITY	6
UNIVERSITÉ DE L'ONTARIO FRANÇAIS	2
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH	47
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA	11
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO	40
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO	16
UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR	14
WESTERN UNIVERSITY	6
WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY	5
YORK UNIVERSITY	30
CASES WHERE NO UNIVERSITY WAS SPECIFIED	3

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

*There were an additional 60 complaints related to cuts to French language programs at Laurentian University, which are discussed in the French Language Services section of this report.

**Renamed Toronto Metropolitan University in April 2022.

CASES RECEIVED ABOUT CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES, 2021-2022 • TOTAL: 1,273

ALGOMA, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	29
ANISHINAABE ABINOOJII FAMILY SERVICES	10
BRANT FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES	31
BRUCE GREY CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	20
CHATHAM-KENT CHILDREN'S SERVICES	29
DILICO ANISHINABEK FAMILY CARE	20
DNAAGDAWENMAG BINNOOJIIYAG CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES	24
DUFFERIN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	8
DURHAM CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	35
FRONTENAC, LENNOX AND ADDINGTON, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF	27
GUELPH AND WELLINGTON COUNTY, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF	25
HALDIMAND AND NORFOLK, THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	17
HALTON CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	24
HAMILTON, CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	16
HAMILTON, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	38
HIGHLAND SHORES CHILDREN'S AID	21
HURON-PERTH CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	17
JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILD SERVICES	10
KAWARTHA-HALIBURTON CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	33
KENORA-RAINY RIVER DISTRICTS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	8
KINA GBEZHGOMI CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES	2
KUNUWANIMANO CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES	7
LANARK, LEEDS AND GRENVILLE, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF	17
LONDON AND MIDDLESEX, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	36
NIAGARA, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES	83
NIJJAANSINAANIK CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	3

NIPISSING AND PARRY SOUND, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF	18
NOGDAWINDAMIN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES	22
NORTH EASTERN ONTARIO FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES	25
OGWADENI:DEO	7
OTTAWA, THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	52
OXFORD COUNTY, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	15
PAYUKOTAYNO JAMES AND HUDSON BAY FAMILY SERVICES	2
PEEL CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	44
RENFREW COUNTY, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF	17
SARNIA-LAMBTON CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	27
SIMCOE MUSKOKA FAMILY CONNEXIONS	53
ST. THOMAS AND ELGIN COUNTY, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF	22
STORMONT, DUNDAS AND GLENGARRY, THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF THE UNITED COUNTIES OF	15
SUDBURY AND MANITOULIN, THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICTS OF	29
THUNDER BAY, THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF	10
TIKINAGAN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	15
TORONTO, CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	21
TORONTO, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF	62
TORONTO, NATIVE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF	15
VALORIS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS OF PRESCOTT-RUSSELL	13
WATERLOO REGION, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF THE	35
WEECHI-HIT-TE-WIN FAMILY SERVICES	5
WINDSOR-ESSEX CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	30
YORK REGION CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY	20
CASES WHERE A CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY WAS NOT SPECIFIED	109

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

FINANCIAL SUMMARY, 2021-2022

Our Office's budget for the fiscal year 2021-2022 was **\$30.46 million**. Actual expenditures (unaudited) were **\$20.88 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	12,915
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	3,045
COMMUNICATION & TRANSPORTATION	195
SERVICES	4,129
SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT	595
TOTAL ANNUAL OPERATING EXPENSES	20,879



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