



Annual Report 2024-2025 Facts and highlights

By the numbers – cases (complaints and inquiries) received

Total cases received between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025: **30,675**
(up 13% from fiscal 2023-2024)

42% of all cases were closed within one week, **53%** within two weeks

Total cases received in 50 years (total from every Annual Report since 1975): **1,080,824**

Cases by topic

- Correctional facilities: A record **6,870** (p. 24)
- Municipalities: General issues – a record **3,908** (p. 32). Complaints about closed municipal meetings (the Ombudsman is now the closed meeting investigator for a record 286 of Ontario's 444 municipalities) – **99** (p. 39)
- School boards: **1,261** (p. 51); Reports/letters on closed school board meetings – **3** (p. 53)
- Post-secondary: Universities – **271**; colleges – a record **434** (p. 54); Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) – **187** (p. 55)
- Social services: Family Responsibility Office (FRO) – **423** (p. 44); Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) – a 10-year high of **1,038** (p. 43); Ontario Works – **412** (p. 43)
- Children's aid societies and residential licensees: 1,636; Youth justice centres: A record 423, up 109% (p. 59)
- Most complained-about organization: Tribunals Ontario – **1,237** cases, including **971** about the Landlord and Tenant Board (p. 66)
- French language services: **281** (p. 81)
- See *also*: Top 10 case topics (p. 22) and Top 10 provincial government organizations and Top 10 correctional facilities by case volume (p. 95)

Complaint trends and proactive work

- Ombudsman Ontario is co-developing an Indigenous Services Plan with Indigenous partners to guide its service delivery, collaboration and engagement with Indigenous communities and organizations (p. 8).
- The Ombudsman and staff flagged a 55% increase in complaints about correctional facilities to the Ministry of the Solicitor General, visited 12 correctional facilities, and launched a new investigation regarding Maplehurst Correctional Complex (pp. 24-26).
- The Ombudsman raised concerns about the potential conflict of interest of local accountability officers who hold multiple roles (e.g., the same individual serving as legal

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counsel and integrity commissioner for a municipality) and strongly encouraged municipalities to make the roles separate (p. 34).

- Ombudsman staff worked with agencies and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to address 15 cases of families surrendering custody of children with complex special needs to children's aid societies (CASs) in order to get them the care they needed. This issue was raised by the Ombudsman's Office in an investigation in 2005 and followed up on regularly (p. 48); the Ombudsman's latest investigation into the practice of CASs placing children and youth – often with complex special needs – into unlicensed settings, is examining similar systemic issues of available funding and supports (p. 61).
- Several of the Ombudsman's proposals for improving school board codes of conduct were incorporated into law (p. 51).
- Several of the Ombudsman's proposals to enhance children's rights were incorporated into amendments to the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)*, such as a new requirement that service providers inform children and youth in care or custody about their right to contact the Ombudsman (p. 58).
- Ombudsman staff met in person with 125 young people in custody and detention at youth justice centres (p. 60), and the Ombudsman followed up on concerns about the use of strip searches on youth.
- The Ombudsman's first Award for Good Governance was presented to the Ontario Provincial Police for its efforts to improve its provision of services in French. Awards in the provincial and municipal sectors will be announced later this year (p. 82).
- The Ontario Fire Code was translated into French and posted on June 4 – to come into effect officially on January 1, 2026 – completing a commitment made by the Office of the Fire Marshal in light of a 2021 complaint to the Ombudsman's French Language Services Unit. (This matter is not included in the Ombudsman's report, but the translated code can be found [here](#) and the original case summary [here](#)).
- Ombudsman staff are reviewing how the Ministry of Natural Resources recognizes and respects established Indigenous treaty rights on Crown land across Ontario in light of a complaint about hunting in a provincial park that encompasses traditional Haudenosaunee lands. (pp. 86-87)

Reports on investigations and reviews published in 2024-2025

Rights Unrecognized: Mia's Story (April 2024): The York Region Children's Aid Society accepted all 20 recommendations aimed at improving staff training in the use of Voluntary Youth Services Agreements (VYSAs) after 16-year-old "Mia" was refused a foster care placement despite repeated requests. Ombudsman staff also flagged 90 cases that raised similar issues to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. It has since clarified expectations for the use of VYSAs provincewide (p. 62).

Missed Messages (July 2024): The French Language Services Commissioner's investigation reviewed 17 of the province's out-of-home advertising campaigns regarding health services between 2020 and 2023 and found none met the rules for communications in French. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Francophone affairs accepted five of the Commissioner's recommendations while two others remain under review (p. 84).

Municipal closed meeting investigations: The Ombudsman issued 45 reports and letters on reviews of 66 meetings in 32 municipalities and local boards. He found 21 illegal meetings and 28 procedural issues, and made 14 best practice recommendations (p. 39).

School board closed meeting investigations: The Ombudsman issued 3 reports and letters on reviews of closed school board meetings. (p. 53)

Ongoing investigations

Maplehurst Correctional Complex December 2023 incident: The Ombudsman launched this investigation to examine the Ministry of the Solicitor General's response to an incident spanning two days in which nearly 200 inmates were stripped to their underwear, had their wrists zip-tied and were forced to sit on the floor facing the wall (p. 26).

Frontline service in French at ServiceOntario: The French Language Services Commissioner is investigating ServiceOntario's frontline service delivery in French in its locations in areas designated under the *French Language Services Act* (p. 83).

Child welfare agencies placing youth in hotels, motels, offices and trailers: Investigators are speaking with children and youth who are directly affected, interviewing Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services officials and organizations across the children's services, and reviewing relevant documents (p. 61).

Ministry of Education direct payment programs for parents and students: Investigators have completed the field work and findings are being drafted. Problems with successive payment programs since 2020 sparked hundreds of complaints to the Ombudsman (p. 54).

Adults with developmental disabilities who are inappropriately housed in hospitals: The Ombudsman's findings and recommendations have been drafted. Once they have been shared with the relevant Ministries for their input, the report will be finalized and published. Meanwhile, Ombudsman staff helped several individuals move out of hospital to appropriate homes (p. 47).

Updates on completed investigations

Lessons for the Long Term (September 2023): The Ministry of Long-Term Care continues to make progress on the Ombudsman's 76 recommendations, including hiring staff with expertise to inspect infection prevention and control measures in long-term care homes, and developing a strategy to ensure there are sufficient inspectors (p. 76).

Administrative Justice Delayed, Fairness Denied (May 2023): As it works to implement the 61 recommendations in this report, the Landlord and Tenant Board is now resolving more cases than it receives, helping to reduce the backlog which spurred the investigation. Improvements include hiring more staff and allowing more flexibility to expedite or reassign files to ensure they are processed within a reasonable time (pp. 67-68).

Missing In Inaction: Misty's Story (April 2023): The foster care agency that lost track of a 13-year-old Indigenous girl in its care in a southern Ontario city is no longer licensed. The Indigenous child care agency which placed her in that agency's care for lack of resources closer to home continues to make progress in implementing the Ombudsman's recommendations, including a policy review (p. 62).

Lost Opportunities (April 2022): The Ministry has implemented most of the Ombudsman's recommendations to improve its process for closing youth justice programs and facilities. It expects to finalize a new best practices manual later this year (p. 64).

Counter Encounter (May 2017): Seven years after declining to address the Ombudsman's recommendations to improve its trespass policy, and in light of a new complaint from a resident about the same issue, the Township of Red Rock agreed to implement a combined policy covering trespass notices and respectful conduct (p. 38).

Out of Oversight, Out of Mind (April 2017): Most of the Ombudsman's 32 recommendations to improve the tracking of inmates in segregation (solitary confinement) have been implemented, but people with mental health issues are still frequently placed in segregation, even though this is supposed to be prohibited (pp. 27-28).

A Matter of Life and Death (June 2016): The Ministry of the Solicitor General has made progress on the Ombudsman's recommendations to improve police de-escalation training, but has decided not to mandate de-escalation by regulation (p. 29).

Submissions to government

all available online at <https://www.ombudsman.on.ca/en/our-work/submissions-government>

Municipal codes of conduct and integrity commissioners (February 2025): The Ombudsman made 22 proposals to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for its standardized code of conduct for municipalities and the integrity commissioner framework (p. 34).

French Language Services Act (January 2025): The French Language Services Commissioner made four proposals to the Ministry of Francophone Affairs to ensure information about designated areas under the *French Language Services Act* is up to date and accessible.

Amendments to data collection and reporting requirements for children's aid societies (June 2024), and Supporting Children's Futures Act (May 2024): The Ombudsman made a number of proposals to extend his office's oversight of child welfare services that apply to young people aged 18-22 who are participating in programs to help them transition out of care.

School board governance (April 2024): The Ombudsman's proposals to the Ministry of Education included allowing school board integrity commissioners to take complaints from the public, and permitting boards to meet virtually when safety is a concern (p. 53).

Individual case highlights – how Ombudsman intervention helped

- A man who received a parking ticket from a city he had not visited in 45 years had it thrown out after Ombudsman staff confirmed with the city that it was issued by mistake (p. 35).
- A woman was offered an alternative subsidized housing unit so she did not have to accept one in the same building as relatives of her abusive ex-husband (p. 37).
- A man got extra time to pay back his property tax arrears, avoiding a tax sale and the loss of his home (p. 41).
- A municipality refunded a property owner \$6,000 that it charged him for service to a nonexistent second water line (p. 41).
- A woman had her Ontario Disability Support Plan (ODSP) benefits reinstated just in time to make her rent payment (p. 43).
- A man received more than \$11,000 in ODSP back payments (p. 43).
- A mother staying in an emergency shelter with her baby received \$500 in Ontario Works emergency funding immediately to buy formula and necessities (p. 44).

- A father's child support arrears were reduced by \$55,000 and garnishment of his pension was stopped after it was revealed that the Family Responsibility Office never received the paperwork ending his child support obligations in 1995 (p. 44).
- A mother was reimbursed \$6,700 for expenses she incurred to care for her child with developmental disabilities (p. 44).
- The family of a child with autism was reassessed for an additional \$30,000 in funding to access supports (p. 45).
- Parents of a 26-year-old with a developmental disability, seizures and other medical issues received funding for overnight help so they could continue to care for him at home (p. 46).
- A 59-year-old woman with complex special needs moved to a suitable community placement after spending nearly three years in hospital due to a lack of available supports (p. 47).
- Families received refunds ranging from \$7,000 to \$15,000 from the Ministry of Education after Ombudsman staff helped confirm they were exempt from tuition (p. 52).
- The Ontario Student Assistance Program acknowledged it had not properly reviewed a student's documents after it asked them to pay back a \$19,000 loan (p. 55).
- After submitting three transfer requests and getting no response, a young person was transferred to a youth justice facility closer to his family (p. 61).
- A teen who fled to a shelter to escape an abusive parent was approved for a Voluntary Youth Services Agreement and received financial support to move into stable housing (p. 63).
- A young woman received continued support from her children's aid society after she turned 18, including help with tuition for her first semester at college (p. 65).
- The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee found a cheaper cellphone and Internet plan for its client, saving him \$100 per month that he could put towards groceries (p. 67).
- A landlord who had waited close to two years to reschedule a hearing at the Landlord and Tenant Board received the first available timeslot. (p. 68)
- A man was refunded more than \$1,800 for licence plate stickers for his heavy commercial vehicle, since he only used them seasonally instead of the entire year (p. 72).
- A new health card for a transgender youth with health issues was expedited instead of taking 10 weeks (p. 76).
- A grandmother was able to enroll her granddaughter in school after errors on the child's birth registration were corrected (p. 79).
- A lottery winner was able to claim his six-figure prize after Ombudsman staff helped him get the identity documents the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation required (p. 79).
- A mother was able to keep the lights on through the night for her daughter with special needs, after Ontario Works covered her overdue hydro payments (p. 89).
- An inmate who uses a wheelchair was transferred back to a unit that was accessible (p. 26).
- An inmate was provided with a prayer mat after making repeated requests for one and resorting to using a towel for his daily prayers instead (p. 27).
- An inmate was referred for surgery to repair the bone around his eye socket after healthcare staff at his facility dismissed his concerns about serious swelling (p. 31)