



ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025



OFFICE OF THE
CITIZENS' REPRESENTATIVE
Newfoundland & Labrador



Land Acknowledgement

Our Office is located on the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, whose culture has now been erased forever. We also acknowledge the Island of Ktaqmkuk (Newfoundland) as the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq. And we acknowledge Labrador as the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Innu of Nitassinan, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, and the Inuit of NunatuKavut on whose lands our work extends. We recognize all First Peoples who were here before us, those who live with us now, and the seven generations to come. As First Peoples have done since time immemorial, we strive to be responsible stewards of the land and to respect the cultures, ceremonies, and traditions of all who call it home. We honour the many territorial keepers of the lands and waters where we work.



Office of the Citizens' Representative
Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

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November 2025

The Honourable Paul Lane
Speaker
House of Assembly
Confederation Building
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Mr. Speaker:

It is my privilege to submit to the House of Assembly and the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador the Annual Performance Report of the Citizens' Representative for the period April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025.

This Report was prepared under my direction in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act** for a Category 3 entity. As the Citizens' Representative, I am accountable for the actual results reported in this document.

Respectfully submitted,

Bradley J. Moss
Citizens' Representative



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Seeking fairness...

finding solutions

Message from the Citizens' Representative



It is my privilege to present the Annual Report of the Office of the Citizens' Representative for the fiscal year April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025.

Ombudsman institutions play a vital role in strengthening public trust in government by ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability in the delivery of public services. Our office continues to serve as an independent and impartial avenue for citizens to raise concerns about the administrative actions of government departments, agencies, and commissions. Through investigation, mediation, and education, we strive to resolve complaints and promote improvements in public administration.

This year we received a total of 903 complaints and inquiries, a modest increase from 895 the previous year. These numbers reflect the continued relevance of our work and the public's confidence in our ability to listen, respond, and act. Our team is exceptional in this regard.

Over the last twelve months we have continued to meet monthly with government officials to propel the implementation of the recommendations in our *By A Thread* report forward. I remain committed to seeing improvements made in the lives of caregivers and families of children with complex needs.

In recent years, our office has observed a concerning shift in the tone and temperament of some members of the public. While the vast majority continue to engage respectfully and constructively, there has been a noticeable increase in instances involving outbursts, harassment, profanity, and threats of violence towards this office. These behaviours often stem from heightened frustration, mental health challenges, or a sense of powerlessness when navigating complex bureaucratic systems. Unfortunately, for a small number, it has resulted in the termination of services from our office after a series of warnings. I note that we are not alone here at OCR. In conversation with the heads of other public bodies, this issue is widespread and has migrated towards becoming the preeminent occupational health and safety concern in many government offices. Our staff remain committed to treating all individuals with dignity and compassion, while also taking appropriate security measures to ensure a safe and respectful environment for both citizens and employees.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Members of the House of Assembly for their continued support and for recently reappointing me as Citizens' Representative for another six years. This endorsement by the House reaffirms the importance of our mandate and the trust placed in me to continue to carry it out with diligence, compassion and respect. I do not take this responsibility lightly, and I look forward to spending my second and final term with the great group we have here.

Bradley J. Moss

About Our Office

Vision

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that are confident in a public service that is fair and grounded in integrity, fairness, accountability, transparency and respect.

Mission

Through independent investigation and mediation, the Office of the Citizens' Representative strives to achieve high standards of trust in, and accountability by, the Public Service of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mandate

The Office of the Citizens' Representative (OCR) opened in St. John's, NL, in February 2002. The OCR serves the public in the classical parliamentary ombudsman role. Complaints to our office are confidential and investigations are conducted in private. Our services are free of charge.

Under its primary mandate, the **Citizens' Representative Act**, the OCR provides an ombudsman service to citizens who interact with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Additional responsibilities are mandated under:

- the **Public Interest Disclosure Act** (PIDA);
- Part VI of the **House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act** (HOAAIA);
- *Harassment-Free Workplace Policy for Members of the House of Assembly.*

How We Work

As a non-partisan Statutory Office of the House of Assembly, the OCR investigates public bodies based on complaints received from:



- citizens;
- whistleblowers;
- employees of the legislative and executive branch;
- Members of the House of Assembly; and
- the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council.



Citizens who access, or attempt to access any provincial government services under line departments or agencies, boards or corporations, often reach out to the OCR as they navigate government and various administrative processes.



Under part VI of the **House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act**, we are tasked with the investigation of public interest disclosures of wrongdoing made by members and staff of the House of Assembly.



The OCR is also responsible for the government-wide Public Interest Disclosure Program. Under the **Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act, 2014** (PIDA), government employees have the right to confidentially disclose wrongdoing in their workplace that should be stopped or corrected in the public interest. The PIDA imposes penalties on anyone who commits a reprisal against persons who make disclosures, or who seek advice on the commission of wrongdoing in the public service.



The OCR is also responsible for receiving complaints from employees under the *Harassment-Free Workplace Policy Applicable to Complaints Against Members of the House of Assembly*. Complaints under this policy can be brought forward by another Member of the House of Assembly, or an employee of the legislative, or executive branch of the Provincial Government. It is the role of the OCR in this capacity to provide information and supports to employees to address allegations of harassment and, where appropriate, investigate these allegations and report findings to the House of Assembly.

Who We Can't Investigate

There are a number of statutory restrictions on the OCR's jurisdiction. These are set out in Section 19 of the **Citizens' Representative Act** and include:

- the House of Assembly or a committee thereof;
- the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council;
- Executive Council and its various divisions;¹
- the court, the members of the judiciary, masters of the court, and justices of the peace;
- awards, decisions, recommendations or omissions of arbitrators made pursuant to the **Arbitration Act**;
- matters in respect of which there are existing rights of appeal or objection under another Act until such time as these rights are exhausted or the time to appeal has expired;
- refusals to provide access to information under the **Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015**;
- matters falling within the jurisdiction of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate; and,
- certain matters relating to the administration of the **Personal Health Information Act** or a matter falling within a Commissioner's purview under that Act.

The **Citizens' Representative Act** also does not cover the acts, errors, omissions or decisions of the Government of Canada, or the municipal level of government. Neither does it authorize the investigation of private companies or private citizens.

¹ The Executive Council is exempt from the **Citizens' Representative Act** but is subject to investigation under the **Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act**.

How We Handle Complaints

The case summaries within this Report will demonstrate examples of the following types of services provided to citizens.

We engage with citizens to determine how best to resolve a particular matter of administration.



Inquiry - Early Resolution

Often, citizens' complaints can be resolved through mediation or facilitation when investigation is not required to resolve, at best, or provide reasons why a matter cannot be resolved to citizens' satisfaction, at least. Public bodies provide the OCR with open lines of communication in the interest of early resolution or settlement of complaints.



Investigation

Citizens' complaints sometimes require formal investigation where there exists a prima facie appearance of unfairness. Formal investigations can, where unfairness is identified, result in recommendations to settle complaints for citizens. Alternately, where it has been found that departments and/or agencies have afforded adequate administrative fairness, the OCR endeavours to provide sound reasoning to citizens for such findings.

The Citizens' Representative is also empowered to launch investigations in his or her own discretion, without a specific named complainant.

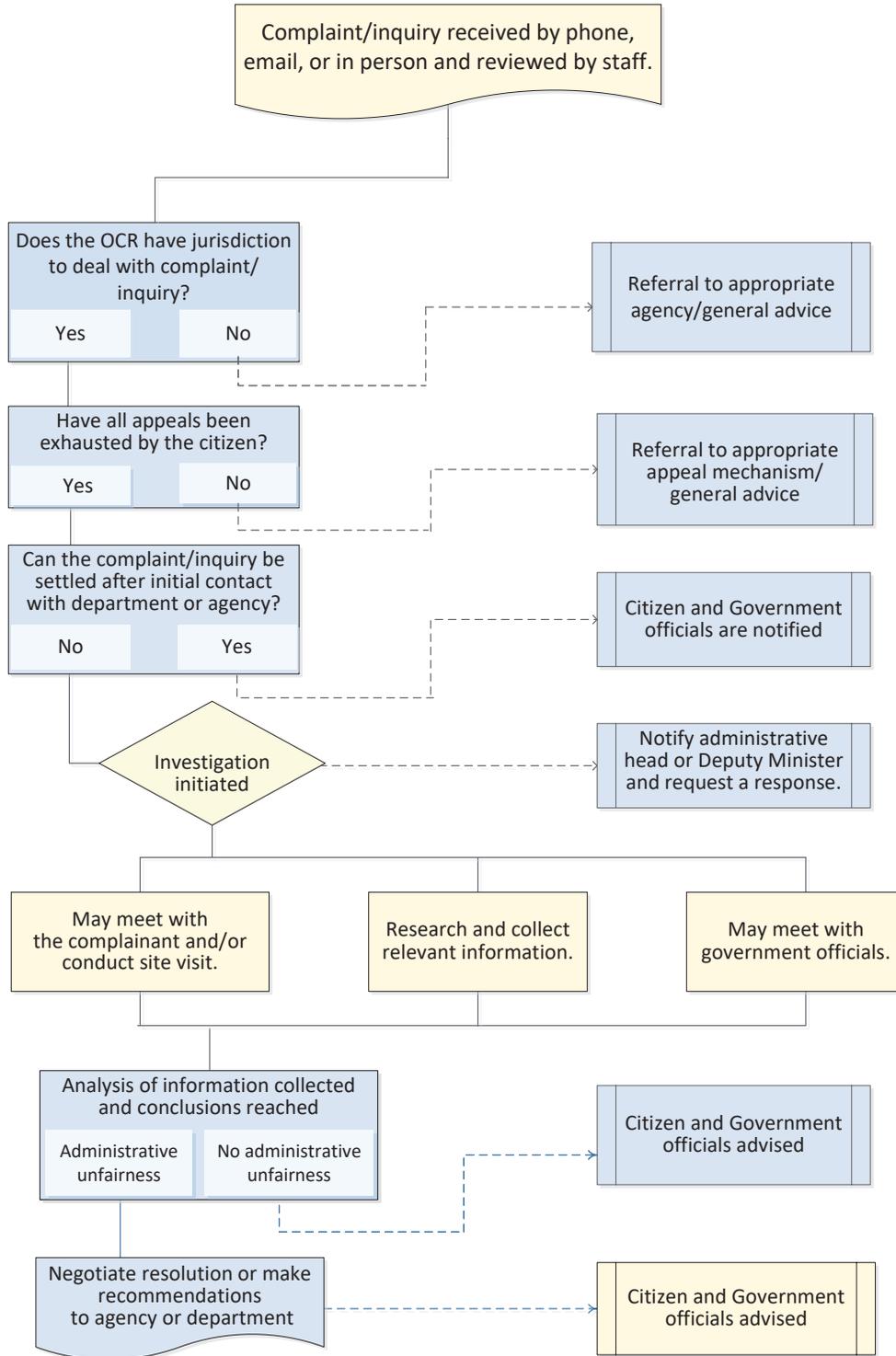


Navigation, Self-Advocacy and Referral

Citizens contact the OCR from all walks of life and with a wide range of interpersonal skills and knowledge. Where appropriate, the OCR will provide support to citizens by referring them to available appeal mechanisms or the appropriate program(s) within government to address their complaints. Sometimes, citizens may prefer to address concerns on their own, but require direction and information to support their self-advocacy. In situations where citizens' complaints are non-jurisdictional, the OCR will refer the complainants to the appropriate agencies to deal with their concerns. In these situations, the OCR can often link the citizens directly with the person(s) they need to speak with or provide forms, telephone numbers, internet links and email addresses to individuals who need alternate avenues of redress.

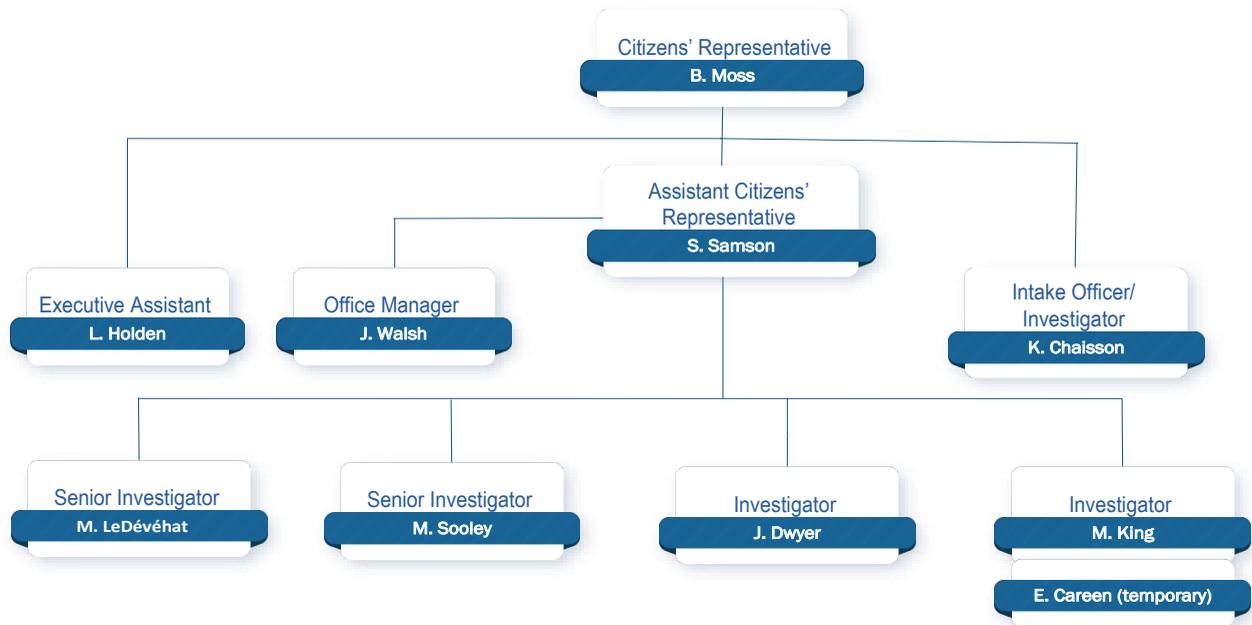
Our Complaint Process

It is important for citizens to know what to expect with respect to the complaint process used by our Office. The following chart helps to illustrate how complaints and inquiries are processed.



Who We Are

OCR Organizational Chart



Highlights and Partnerships

A Month in Review

Intake is an extremely important function in any complaint handling organization. It covers a wide array of topics each month. To inform readers of the nature and volume of complaints at our intake stage, we select one month from the fiscal year to furnish examples of what we hear. The following is a cross section of allegations and issues raised by citizens in February 2024.

ALLEGATION	DEPARTMENT
Access to canteen. (3) *	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Unfair application process.	Families and Affordability – Income Support Division
Inadequate access to medical supplies.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Lack of redress by the Law Society.	Out of jurisdiction
Inappropriate placement in institution.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Miscalculation of benefits. (2) *	WorkplaceNL
Delay in treatment of medical condition.	NL Health Services – Correctional Health Services
Unfair employment termination.	Memorial University of Newfoundland
Lack of response to request for a second mattress.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Delay of receipt of criminal record and vulnerable sector check. (2) *	Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC)
Destruction of religious items.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Filing of false reports.	Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC)
Damage to property creating safety concern.	Transportation and Infrastructure.
Access to medical unit and medication. (5) *	NL Health Services – Correctional Health Services
Unfair complaint process.	Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
Access to Opioid Dependence Treatment (ODT). (3) *	NL Health Services – Correctional Health Services
Unfair garnishment of income due to overpayment.	Families and Affordability – Income Support Division
Lack of human resources to facilitate a lawyer visit.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Denial of immigration status.	Out of jurisdiction – referred to Federal Government
Incorrect release date.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Rodent infestation, lack of recreation, unclean cells.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections

* This number represents the number of times this issue was raised.

A Month in Review (cont'd)

ALLEGATION	DEPARTMENT
Actions of the Burin Peninsula Energy Board.	Out of jurisdiction – referred to Municipal Affairs and Community Engagement
Unfair placement of transgender individual.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Denied access and follow-up to health care.	NL Health Services - Western
Advocacy for mental health of inmate.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Conflicting medical opinions.	WorkplaceNL
Access to medically required diet. (2) *	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Advocacy regarding alleged drug crisis.	Out of jurisdiction
Missing personal belongings.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Unreliable garbage pick-up.	Eastern Regional Service Board
Access to medical unit for diagnostic test results.	NL Health Services – Correctional Health Services
Unclear process with Small Claims Division of Provincial Court.	Justice and Public Safety
Access to support for special needs child.	NLSchools
Access to programming and visitation.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Triple bunking (overcrowding), inadequate human resources and inadequate treatment of complex inmates. (3) *	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Denied emergency housing, leak in current unit.	NL Housing
Overflowing toilets.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Delay in processing application through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Farm Credit Canada.	Out of jurisdiction – referred to the federal government.
Request to document proper name.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Harassment in the workplace.	Out of jurisdiction – referred to union and Human Resources.
Injury due to use of force.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Unfair dismissal from employment. (2) *	Out of jurisdiction – referred to Public Legal Information Association of NL
Removal of kettle and microwave from unit.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Lack of response.	Human Rights Commission
Institutional placement.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Complaint about a lawyer. (2) *	Non-jurisdictional – referred to the Law Society.
Cleanliness of cells, access to showers and classification, presence of rodents.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections

A Month in Review (cont'd)

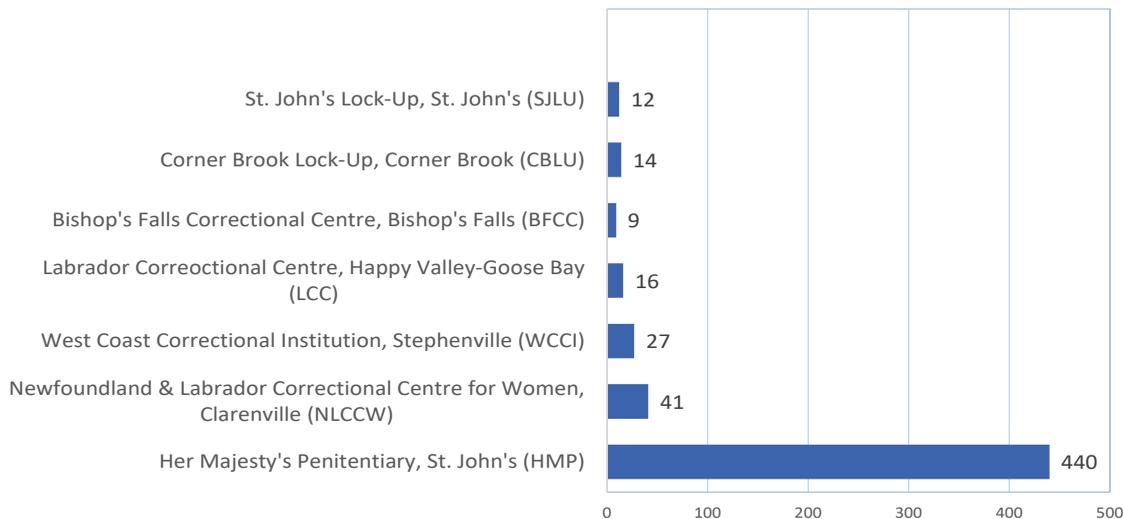
ALLEGATION	DEPARTMENT
Access to medical records.	NL Health Services - Eastern
Denied call to lawyer.	Justice and Public Safety – Adult Corrections
Inappropriate risk assessment, complaint against social worker.	Families and Affordability – Child Protection and Youth Services
Lack of enforcement of child support order.	Justice and Public Safety – Support Enforcement
Failure of business to obtain municipal permits.	Non-jurisdictional – referred to Municipal Affairs and Community Engagement
Access to peaceful enjoyment of home.	NL Housing
Access to housing in a seniors/retirement home.	NL Health Services – Eastern
Discrepancy in hourly wage paid to private home care and agency-based home care workers.	NL Health Services – Eastern
Concern with investigation.	RNC Public Complaints Commission

A Closer Look...

Statistically, the OCR receives a high percentage of complaints from incarcerated individuals regarding their experience accessing provincial government services. The majority of the complaints received involve, but are not limited to, the Department of Justice and Public Safety, Adult Corrections Division (Adult Corrections) and NL Health Services. The total number of complaints arising from incarcerated individuals involving these two public bodies from April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025, is 559 (62% of the total number of complaints received by our Office).

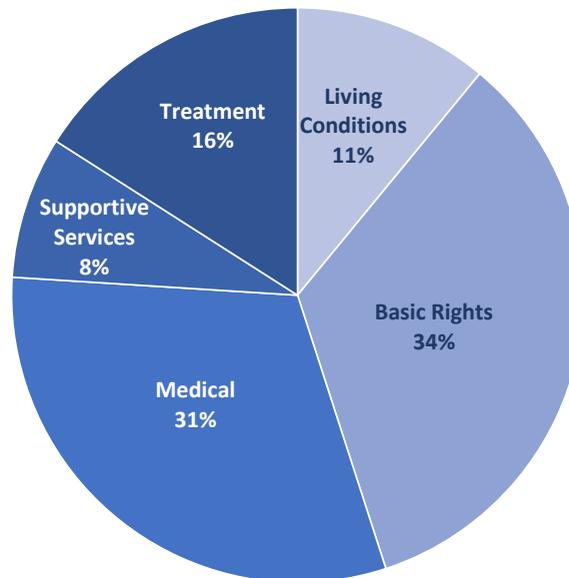
The information in this section is intended to provide an overview of issues identified in our daily work that draw attention to concerns experienced by incarcerated individuals. Each complaint brought forward is explored by staff for jurisdiction, accuracy, resolution, and investigation, as required. Our staff work closely with staff of both Adult Corrections and NL Health Services to resolve issues arising from these complaints. Where complaints have been determined to be contrary to the principles of administrative unfairness, formal investigations will be initiated. It is important to acknowledge that the public bodies involved are often found to be adhering to relevant legislation, policies, and best practice, often within a challenging environment. Therefore, not every complaint received has resulted in an adverse finding against the public bodies. Both Adult Corrections and NL Health Services have often demonstrated a willingness to address issues of administrative fairness as they arise.

Of the 559 complaints received for this fiscal year, the following indicate the number received from each provincial correctional facility:



Often, when a citizen makes a complaint to our Office, there are several issues identified that pose concern for the citizen within the one complaint. This is the situation with complaints received from inmates. Of the 559 complaints received by our Office, the identification of multiple concerns within the complaint resulted in 649 issues reported to the OCR. The following categories provide a breakdown of the 649 issues reported to the OCR during this fiscal year. The issues presented reflect allegations related to infrastructure, access to services and treatment.

At a Glance...



A Detailed View...

(1) INFRASTRUCTURE	
Living Conditions - Infrastructure: 74 Complaints (11%)	
Excessive heat	16
Inhumane living conditions	12
Rodents	10
Toilet	10
Temperature of shower	7
Double-bunking	6
Running water	6
Mold	4
Air quality	2
Physical structure	1

A Detailed View...(cont'd)

(2) ACCESS TO SERVICES	
Basic Rights: 219 Complaints (34%)	
Account/canteen	33
Laundry	25
Recreation	25
Institutional clothing	20
Medically required diet	18
Personal belongings	17
Telephone system	12
Portion size/quality of food	10
Visits	9
Shower	8
Drinking water	7
Light in cell	7
Mail	6
Special diet (religious, preference)	4
Recreation activities (TV, books, games)	3
Coffee/tea	3
Institutional employment	3
Cleaning supplies	3
Haircuts	2
Attend funeral	1
Razors	1
Hobby shop	1
Preservation of video footage	1

Medical: 199 Complaints (31%)	
Medication	62
Medical Unit	61
Dental	15
Medical equipment (orthotics, shower aid, etc.)	14
Psychiatry/psychology	13
Opioid Dependence Treatment (ODT)	13
Outside medical appointments missed due to lack of staff	12
Diagnostic testing	9
Supportive Services: 52 Complaints (8%)	
Classification	26
Lawyer	9
Rehabilitative programming	8
Office of the Citizens' Representative	6
Release planning	2
Pastoral care	1

(3) TREATMENT	
105 Complaints (16%)	
Conduct of correctional officers	23
Institutional placement	17
Institutional discipline (charge, process, appeal)	11
Institutional/federal transfer	11
Lockdowns	9
Conditions of segregation	8
Use of force	8
Overcrowding	6
Treatment by medical unit	4
Concerns for safety and security	4
Delay of statutory release	3
Positive treatment	1

Report on Investigations - Recommendations 2024-2025

The **Citizens' Representative Act** requires our Office to report the findings resulting from formal investigations. Formal investigations are typically undertaken following complaints received from citizens where the presenting issue cannot be resolved through informal communication with the relevant public body.

The Act further provides the OCR with authority to make recommendations to provincial public bodies following formal investigations. Recommendations will flow from investigations where there has been a finding that a citizen has not been afforded administrative fairness. Any recommendations offered to public bodies will either suggest individual remedies to affected citizens or systemic change to improve the public service for the benefit of all citizens of the province. Generally, our recommendations are accepted. It is our goal to provide reasonable and responsible recommendations, but mostly, recommendations that are achievable. We appreciate the willingness of all public bodies to give respectful consideration to all recommendations and provide available updates on the implementation of the recommendations that have been accepted.

For the fiscal year 2024-2025, 40 recommendations were offered to two provincial public bodies following completion of three formal investigations:

1. Respondent Public Body: Department of Justice and Public Safety

Complaint

The OCR received complaints from four inmates at Her Majesty's Penitentiary (HMP) with allegations that correctional staff used excessive and unreasonable force during an October 11, 2023 incident on living unit 3B. The complaints also related to an alleged denial of adequate medical care after the incident. This aspect of the investigation was addressed with Correctional Health Services, a Division of Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services, as part of this investigation.

The issues identified for this investigation were:

1. To determine whether the use of force was necessary, reasonable and proportionate in the operational context and specific circumstances of the October 11, 2023 incident on unit 3B.
2. To determine whether HMP's response to the incident was in accordance with policy and applicable legislation.
3. To examine the manner in which post-medical assessment was provided at HMP following this incident and whether appropriate policy was in place to govern these assessments.

The Department's position was that appropriate force was used in accordance with policy, based on their documentation. The Department did acknowledge some shortcomings in relation to:

- Deficient documentation of reasons why certain inmates were extracted from their cells over others.
- The lack of video recording of cell extractions.
- Delay in taking photographs of inmates indicating the presence or absence of visible injuries.
- The lack of negotiation strategies utilized during the incident.

The Department also refuted the allegations that inmates were denied showers and calls to lawyers. The Department indicated that according to their records, inmates did access medical care.

Findings

The investigation resulted in a breach of the **Citizens' Representative Act**. The following outcomes were found to be unreasonable:

- There was unjust cause for the damage to government property, as well as a PlayStation and TV.
- Use of Force documentation did not explain the reasonableness of actions taken against specific inmates.
- There were no properly explained reasons why policy provisions were not followed with respect to the requirement to video record the cell extractions.
- There was no documented use of negotiation strategies as required by Use of Force policy.
- Communication and collaboration between healthcare staff and correctional staff at the time of the incident was uncoordinated and lacked a reasonable process.
- The 2011 **Correctional Services Act** was not proclaimed.

Recommendations Offered

1. **Within six (6) months of this report provide the OCR with the complete policy framework that sets out the requirements and information on the management of inmates' property (including but not limited to guidance on recording and storing property, approved/authorized property while incarcerated, searching of property, cell clearance (when transferred to segregation or to another unit), property disposal, lost or damaged property, property complaints and compensation etc.).**
2. **As part of the current policy review, carry out a comprehensive assessment of the overall inmate complaint management process so it is clear, responsive and consistently applied.**

3. **Within one (1) year of this report the Department provide verification that training has been provided to staff (as stated) related to report writing and recording keeping/documentation.**
4. **Ensure that the necessary resources required to support this ongoing training are procured.**
5. **Provide the OCR with a copy of the training module for the communication and report writing training once complete.**
6. **Ensure that senior management oversight is in place to monitor compliance to the Use of Force policies that already exist.**
7. **Provide training for senior management related to their quality assurance role in Use of Force report writing, policy and video compliance.**
8. **Provide the OCR with the data it has agreed to track and collect for Emergency Response Team (ERT) callouts and cell extractions on their Incident Tracking spreadsheet on an annual basis (this should include whether or not video was collected, and if no video collected, the reason why it was not).**
9. **Review and revise the Use of Force Report (or create a separate Use of Force Evaluation Report, if necessary) to include a more detailed analysis of the review process to better document the reviewer's findings.**
10. **Ensure that review of Use of Force incidents involving the ERT Commander are reviewed by a separate independent manager or staff member (e.g. Training Officer in the event that the ERT Commander is the Captain of Security).**
11. **Review and revise the Use of Force training material to include a Crisis Intervention De-Escalation (CID) module.**
12. **Ensure that the necessary resources required to support this ongoing training are procured.**
13. **Within (1) year of this report provide the OCR with verification that CID training has been provided to staff.**
14. **Work collaboratively with Correctional Health Services (CHS) to establish a clear communication pathway when the potential for use of force exists. When ERT is required, the medical unit should be notified.**

15. If a Standing Order (re: recommendation #10) is not already in place, it should be developed.
16. Reference recommendation #10, a joint policy for health and corrections should be developed.
17. In collaboration with CHS, review Standing Order #29.01 Altercation – Cell Extraction to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear and/or amend, if necessary.
18. Provide training for health staff and corrections staff regarding process/policy and team member roles, and simulation exercises of same. E.g. in a hospital setting these are called ‘mock codes’. This allows for a run through or practice on how the entire team responds, and then debrief after to identify what went well and what needs improvement.
19. In collaboration with CHS review policy 7.35.07 Security and Control: Force Options – OC Spray to better delineate the roles of healthcare and custodial staff in this process.
20. Ensure and document that consultation takes place with healthcare staff prior to using OC Spray (unless the circumstances require an immediate response) to determine what would prohibit an inmate from being sprayed because of possible negative consequences.
21. The Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration and Logistics, and Command and Signal (SMEAC) Action Plan identifies via a check box (yes or no) whether a nurse was consulted. In collaboration with CHS, review the SMEAC and determine what the ‘consultation’ process should involve.
22. Enhance Standing Order 29.01 and 29.02 (Reference Policy 7.35.10) to include timelines for photographing staff and inmate injuries.
23. To ensure adherence to policies around properly documenting key actions and decisions, in particular as they relate to access to medical, showers and lawyers, provide the OCR with an update on the actions taken with staff to address this shortcoming.
24. Within (6) months of this Report provide the OCR with an update on the status of the recommendations put forth by the Manager of Institutional Programs in the February 2024 Review of the October 11, 2023 incident.
25. Complete the work necessary for the government to enact the 2011 Correctional Services Act.

26. Provide an update to the OCR on its current policy review in terms of the type of review being undertaken and timelines for completion.

Outcome

Following release of the final report, the Department of Justice and Public Safety (the Department) accepted all 26 recommendations. Since accepting these recommendations, the Department has demonstrated complete implementation of 20 of these recommendations with partial implementation of two recommendations. While four recommendations are not implemented, there has been indication of the intention to plan for full implementation in the future.

Most notably, the new **Correctional Services Act and Regulations** were proclaimed in January 2025, which has supported the review and revision of existing adult correction processes and policies, inclusive of the recommendations above. The OCR commends the Department for its efforts to update the operational processes to meet an optimal benchmark of administrative fairness.

The recommendations above that remain a work in progress are:

- Training for staff related to report writing and documentation.
- Training for senior management related to their quality assurance role in UOF report writing, policy and video compliance.
- Verification that CID training has been provided to all staff.
- Adult Custody and Correctional Health Services (CHS) are working together to strengthen processes related to notification and involvement of CHS in the event of incidents involving UOF and ERT.
- Planning for a table exercise of mock code with CHS in response to events involving UOP and ERT.
- An update on the status of recommendations of the Manager of Institutional Programs of the February 2024 review of the October 11, 2023 incident.

The OCR will continue to monitor the complete implementation of these 6 outstanding and accepted recommendations.

2. Respondent Public Body: Department of Justice and Public Safety

Complaint

The OCR received a complaint from an inmate at Her Majesty's Penitentiary (HMP) with allegations that correctional staff denied access to medical attention following an incident resulting in a burn to the inmate. It was alleged that 18 hours later when a nurse assessed the injury, it was determined that further medical attention was required at the hospital. It was further alleged that the inmate was denied access to a scheduled appointment at the Burn Unit four days later.

Findings

The investigation resulted in a breach of the **Citizens' Representative Act** as the evidence provided supported the allegation that staff at HMP failed to provide the inmate with the required medical treatment needed immediately following the incident.

Recommendations Offered

- 1. The Department issue a letter of apology to the citizen under Section 2(a) of the Apology Act, acknowledging that he did not receive the timely medical treatment for his injury.**

Outcome

Following receipt of the OCR investigative report, the Department accepted the recommendation and later provided a copy of the letter of apology that was issued to the inmate. This recommendation is considered to be implemented.

3. Respondent Public Body: Department of Justice and Public Safety

Complaint

An inmate filed a complaint related to the alleged use of force used against them, specifically, that O.C. Spray was administered prior to other use of force tactics being considered. It was further alleged that the decontamination process administered following the use of O.C. Spray was improper and insufficient to effectively remove the O.C. Spray and resolve the pain that persisted.

Findings

The primary concern noted during the investigation was the failure of Correctional Staff to sufficiently record, document and review this incident in accordance with relevant policy, in addition to the failure to follow policy for O.C. decontamination. The incident was reviewed by the Security Captain who was also the authorizing officer for the use of O.C. Spray in this incident. The conclusion was that there was no excessive use of force, however, there was no rationale or reason as to how this use of force was justified. An explanation was not provided to explain how reviews are conducted to ensure they are free from bias, given that the authorizing officer was also the reviewer. Additionally, the review was not completed within policy timelines. It was also found that the incident was not adequately documented, as Use of Force Reports required by policy were not completed by all Correctional Staff involved in the incident. None of those completed checked the box to indicate that O.C. Spray was deployed. Additional reports were not completed, such as that required by the authorizing officer and the team lead in this situation of cell extraction, as required by policy.

This lack of documentation evidence and audio recording capacity hindered our ability to determine whether the force used was necessary and proportionate based on policy guidelines. The evidence from the decontamination process that followed the deployment of O.C. Spray was not aligned with policy and best practice, concluding that the inmate was treated unfairly and unreasonably throughout the decontamination process, therefore breaching the **Citizens' Representative Act**.

Recommendations Offered

- 1. The Department act on their own previous commitment to amend Policy 7.35.12: Security and Control – Force Options – Review of an Incident to include a requirement for the reviewer to record reasons why a decision is made. This will help to ensure reviews are unbiased and consistent.**
- 2. The Department act on the previous recommendation to implement a requirement for Correctional Officers to video record use of force incidents, with audio capabilities included. We further recommend that this include a directive for Correctional Officers to video record the decontamination process following the use of O.C. Spray, consistent with the Correctional Service of Canada. This directive should be followed with consent of the inmate while respecting their privacy and dignity.**
- 3. The Department amend current Use of Force Policy to include an opportunity for inmates to provide a verbal or written statement describing the force used against them following an incident, as practiced by the Correctional Service of Canada.**

4. The Department review current reporting requirements under Use of Force Policy to determine what, if any, forms are repetitive or redundant and amend the corresponding policy to reflect this. The Department should also provide additional education to correctional Staff, inclusive of management, on what reporting forms and statements are required, and by who, following use of force.

Outcome

Following receipt of the OCR investigative report, the Department accepted these recommendations and has demonstrated that the first recommendation has been implemented with an amendment to the policy. It has also been demonstrated that there is work being completed towards implementation of the final three recommendations.

The OCR will continue to monitor the complete implementation of these three outstanding and accepted recommendations.

4. Respondent Public Body: Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services

Complaint

The OCR received complaints from four inmates at Her Majesty's Penitentiary (HMP) with allegations that correctional staff used excessive and unreasonable force during an October 11, 2023 incident on living unit 3B. The complaints also related to an alleged denial of adequate medical care after the incident. This aspect of the investigation was addressed with Correctional Health Services, a Division of NL Health Services, as part of this investigation.

As part of the investigative scope, the OCR proceeded to examine the manner in which medical assessment was provided at HMP following this incident and whether appropriate policy was in place to govern these assessments.

NL Health Services provided a comprehensive response to set a context for how it operates in a correctional facility, generally and specifically, how it responded to the allegations raised in this investigation. Overall, it was the position of NL Health Services that inmates were not denied access to medical assessment and care following this incident of use of force.

Findings

The investigation resulted in a breach of the **Citizens' Representative Act**. The following outcomes were found to be unreasonable:

- Subsequent to the use of force incident, despite inmates refusing initial medical assessments, more thorough assessments were not arranged in a timely manner, when inmates were more agreeable.
- There is no current process to verify a self-report of an inmate being pepper sprayed.
- Communication and collaboration between healthcare staff and correctional staff at the time of the incident was uncoordinated and lacked a reasonable process.
- There is no current policy or process to address the mental health needs of all inmates impacted by an Emergency Response Team (ERT) response (those confined to segregation and those remaining locked down on the Unit).

Recommendations

- 1. Work collaboratively with the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS) to establish a clear communication pathway when the potential for use of force exists. When ERT is required, the medical unit should be notified.**
- 2. If a Standing Order (re: recommendation #1) is not already in place, it should be developed.**
- 3. Reference recommendation #1, a joint policy for health and corrections should be developed.**
- 4. In collaboration with JPS, review Standing Order #29.01 Altercation – Cell Extraction to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear and/or amend if necessary.**
- 5. Provide training for healthcare staff and corrections staff regarding process/policy and team member roles, and simulation exercises of same.**
- 6. In collaboration with JPS, review policy 7.35.07 Security and Control: Force Options – OC Spray to better delineate the roles of healthcare and custodial staff in this process.**
- 7. Ensure and document that consultation takes place with correctional staff prior to using OC Spray (unless the circumstances require an immediate response) to determine what would prohibit an inmate from being sprayed because of possible negative consequences.**
- 8. The Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration and Logistics, and Command and Signal (SMEAC) Action Plan identifies via a check box (yes or no) whether a Nurse was consulted. In collaboration with JPS, review the SMEAC and determine what the 'consultation' process should involve.**

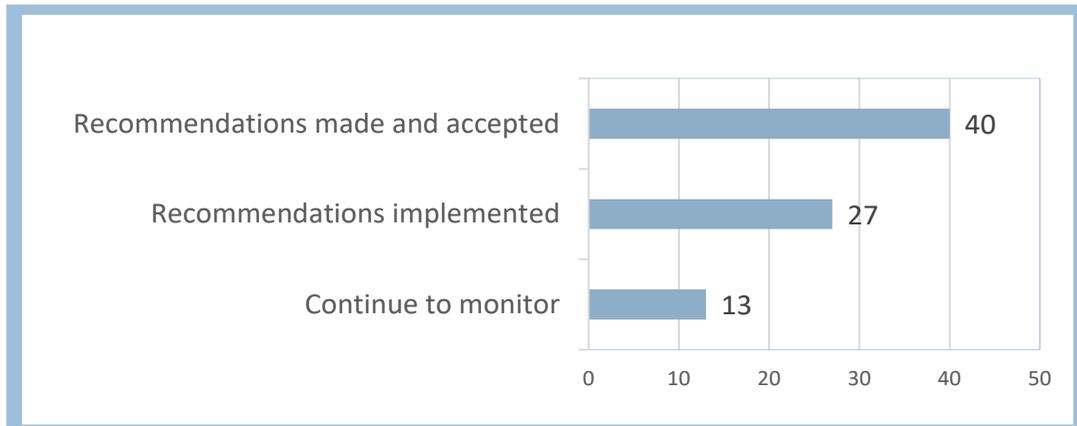
9. Within six (6) months of this Report, provide the OCR with an update on the status of the recommendations put forth by the Manager of Institutional Programs in her February 2024 Review of the October 11, 2023 use of force incident.

Outcome

Following release of the final report, NL Health Services accepted all nine recommendations and has been able to demonstrate complete implementation of five these recommendations (#s 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8). All policies and forms have been appropriately updated to be responsive to the intent of each recommendation. NL Health Services has also demonstrated the remaining four recommendations have received consideration towards complete implementation with specific timelines in place to achieve this goal. The OCR commends NL Health Services for its commitment to improving its processes in response to events involving use of force where medical attention is to be available.

The OCR will continue to monitor the complete implementation of these four outstanding and accepted recommendations.

Recommendations 2024-2025



Update on Recommendations from Previous Reports

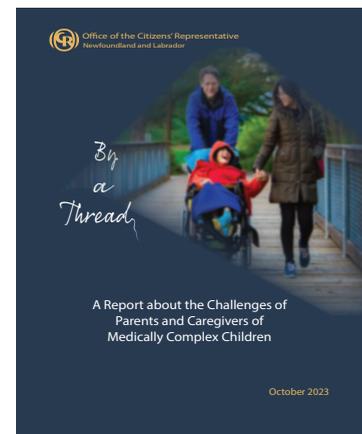
Commencing in the fiscal year 2020-2021, the OCR began a process of actively monitoring the implementation of accepted recommendations. Once we determine public bodies have satisfactorily demonstrated implementation of recommendations made, the OCR will no longer formally monitor their implementation. The OCR will continue to monitor on an informal basis via ongoing inquiries with citizens who share their concerns with our Office.

In light of our commitment to monitor recommendations yet to be implemented, we continue to request updates from public bodies that have occurred since the previous reporting period.

For the fiscal year 2023-2024, the OCR made 12 recommendations in *By a Thread: A Report about the Challenges of Parents and Caregivers of Medically Complex Children*; 11 involved the Department of Health and Community Services (HCS) and two involved the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), for a total of 12 recommendations (one was made jointly between HCS and EECD).

HCS states that significant work continues to transform the way community support health services are delivered to children, youth and their families through a more integrated, responsive system of care. The Department reiterates its commitment to addressing all recommendations and will continue with monthly meetings with the OCR to provide updates as appropriate.

In our previous annual report, the OCR reported that the Department had demonstrated implementation of one recommendation, the introduction of home support workers into acute care settings in very specific situations where need could be demonstrated to support families and caregivers of medically complex children (including adult children). Through our ongoing monthly meetings, it became evident that this recommendation had not reached complete implementation. The Department identified additional efforts to complete implementation by developing a provincial policy to ensure a consistent approach across the province. As an interim measure, it has provided guidance to NL Health Services in support of measures towards complete implementation. In light of this, the OCR has changed the status of this recommendation from implemented to not fully implemented. It is accepted by the OCR that all recommendations are in progress and take time for full implementation. The OCR is appreciative of the Department's actions and continued work on these important issues for caregivers of medically complex children.

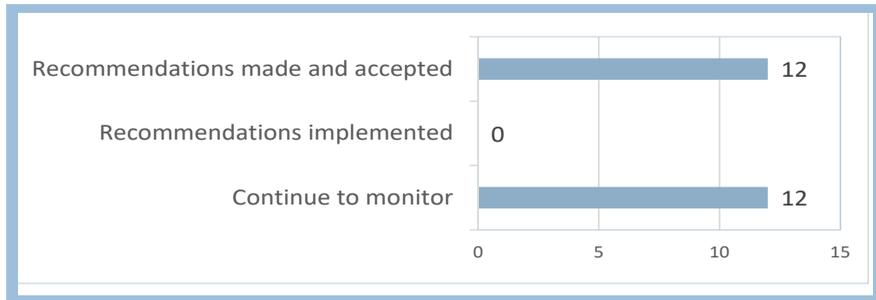


"What a fantastic job you and your team did on a report that will likely have a profound impact for families, including making them feel heard, which is so huge for families with children with significant medical needs.

Please pass on to your team my praise for their exceptional work!"

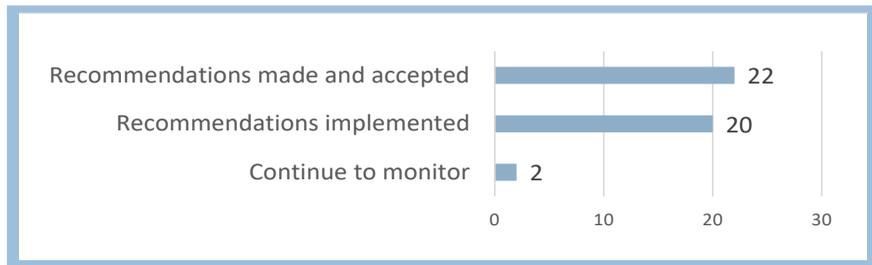
EECD stated it supports the report on challenges of parents and caregivers of medically complex children. It committed that as Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic identify priorities for future programming, EECD will emphasize the recommendations of the OCR for their consideration.

Recommendations 2023-2024



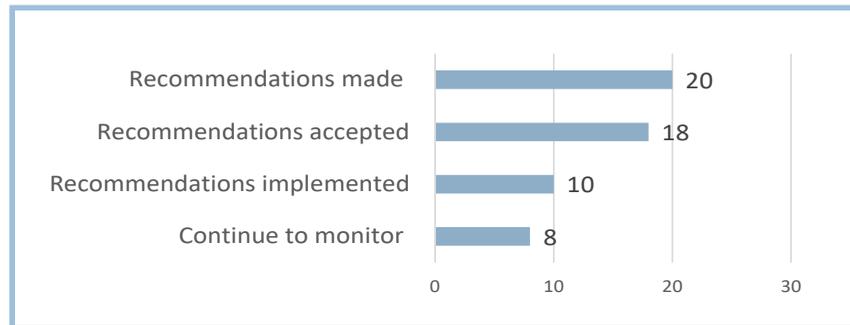
The OCR will continue to monitor the complete implementation of these 11 recommendations involving HCS and two recommendations involving EECD. Details of these recommendations can be found on pages 14 through 18 of our 2023-2024 Annual Report at <https://www.citizensrep.nl.ca/pdfs/OCRAnnualDigest2022-2023.pdf>

Recommendations 2022-2023



For the fiscal year 2022-2023, Justice and Public Safety has demonstrated that it has taken steps towards implementation of two outstanding and accepted recommendations. The OCR will continue to monitor the complete implementation of these recommendations. Details of these recommendations can be found on pages 10 through 16 of our 2022-2023 Annual Digest at <https://www.citizensrep.nl.ca/pdfs/OCRAnnualDigest2022-2023.pdf>

Recommendations 2021-2022

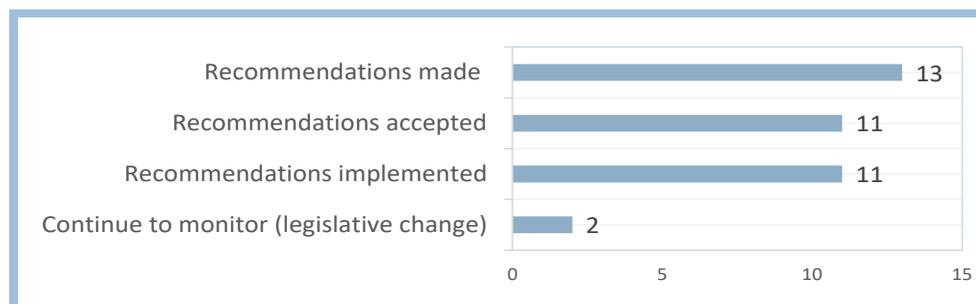


For the fiscal year 2021-2022, the OCR has received updates from the Department of Justice and Public Safety that it continues to work towards implementation of six accepted recommendations. It notes that responsibility for one of the accepted recommendations is most appropriately addressed with NL Health Services with the transfer of Correctional Health Services from the Department to the provincial health authority. The OCR will defer to NL Health Services for continued monitoring of this recommendation. The Department of Environment and Climate Change also advises that it continues analysis of one outstanding recommendation. The OCR will continue to monitor the complete implementation of 8 outstanding accepted recommendations with the following public bodies:

- Department of Justice and Public Safety (7 recommendations);
- NL Health Services, Correctional Health Services (1 recommendation);
- Environment and Climate Change (1 recommendation).

Details of these recommendations can be found on pages 9 through 16 of our 2021-2022 Annual Digest at <https://www.citizensrep.nl.ca/pdfs/OCRAAnnualDigest2021-2022.pdf>

Recommendations 2020-2021



Two remaining recommendations will continue to be monitored from 2020-2021 that involve amendments to the **Citizens' Representative Act** through the House of Assembly. Details of these recommendations can be found on page 12 of our 2020-2021 Annual Digest at <https://www.citizensrep.nl.ca/pdfs/OCRAAnnualDigest2020-2021.pdf>

Public Interest Disclosure

PIDA - 2024-2025

The OCR is responsible for investigating allegations of wrongdoing under the following two pieces of public interest disclosure legislation:

1. Part VI of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act (“HOAAIA”).

Part VI serves as a portal for employees and Members of the House of Assembly to disclose potential wrongdoing at the House of Assembly that they believe should be investigated in the public interest.

2. The Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act (“PIDA”):

A report to the House of Assembly under Section 20 of the PIDA is required annually. The report covering the period April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025, was tabled on July 7, 2025. This report can be accessed electronically at <https://www.citizensrep.nl.ca/pdfs/PIDAReport2024-2025.pdf>



During 2024-25, the OCR received zero (0) disclosures under HOAAIA.

During 2024-2025, the OCR received zero (0) inquiries under PIDA.

Individual Case Summaries

Case summaries allow us to expand on the specific course certain complaint files have taken through our complaint-handling system. In this section, we highlight examples of connecting citizens to public bodies and their policies, in addition to examples where ensuring understanding of the rules and circumstances are paramount for both citizens and the public body. The cases in this section are representative of our daily work. Some complaints are easily resolved with the provision of information to the citizen or with contact with a public body to share missing information, or a request to consider a flexible approach to unique circumstances. Many cases involve a level of complexity that requires a more intensive, while still informal approach, and some cases will require formal investigation. We acknowledge the dedication, commitment and professionalism of our staff and the people we contact in the public service, who try to help those who reach out to us.

The following cases, selected by staff, outline a cross-section of the complaints referred, mediated, and investigated during 2024-25. Please refer to the section on recommendations for investigations during this fiscal year that resulted in recommendations being made to public bodies.

Provincial Government Departments

Families and Affordability

In Care and Adoption Division

Connection is Everything



Adoption is the legal process whereby a person or persons become a child's legal parent or parents. The Adoption Services Program (the Program) finds permanent homes for children available for adoption. It provides supports to families who have adopted children in continuous custody, including an adoption subsidy for those who are assessed as having medical, physical, developmental, emotional, cultural or placement needs.

A citizen contacted the OCR and advised they were in receipt of an adoption subsidy for their adopted child. To maintain the subsidy, it was required that the Program complete an annual assessment to determine the evolving needs of the child. The citizen alleged the assessment had not been completed for the year resulting in the subsidy payments having ceased. It was further alleged that their attempts to connect with the assigned social worker were unsuccessful.

By request of the citizen, the OCR contacted the In Care and Adoptions Division and were able to connect the citizen with the Clinical Program Supervisor. The issue was swiftly resolved, and payments were reinstated.

The Income Support Division (the Division) provides financial benefits and other services to eligible low-income individuals and families to assist in meeting daily living expenses.

Our Office received an inquiry from a community organization on behalf of a citizen concerning a considerable income support overpayment. The overpayment was for a period of several years and was a significant amount. The citizen who had immigrated to Canada several years previous, did not understand how their circumstances could result in ineligibility for income support and therefore, an overpayment of benefits received for which there was no eligibility. This overpayment resulted in confusion, stress, and financial hardship.

The **Income and Employment Support Act** outlines how overpayments of income support benefits are managed. In this situation, the overpayment decision had escalated to both the internal and external review processes. While the final decision on the overpayment remained unchanged, OCR review found the decision was in keeping with policy and legislation.

Despite this outcome, there was some concern about whether an appropriate cultural lens had been applied to the situation. This is important to ensure the citizen was supported in their understanding and navigation of the complex situation and the rules that applied in the family's circumstances. In light of this concern, a Regional Manager with the Division reviewed the file and met with the citizen to ensure all information considered and decisions made were viewed through a cultural lens with consideration to how cultural values, beliefs and norms influence our individual perspectives.

The Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (FFA) aligns the province's natural renewable resources of fisheries, aquaculture, forestry, agriculture and agrifoods and is responsible for supporting the advancement and development of these industries.

A citizen contacted our Office as a licenced beaver trapper approved under the Wildlife Division of FFA. The OCR was advised that a representative of the Wildlife Division requested the citizen trap a nuisance beaver in the licence area. The request was made

Income Support Division

Awareness of Diversity



Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture

Wildlife Division

The Value of Clarifying the Circumstances



The Value of Clarifying the Circumstances (cont'd)

outside the permissible season for trapping, which meant the citizen would not be able to sell the pelt as a market was not readily available. The citizen requested compensation from FFA to cover his time and supplies to complete the trapping. This request was denied. The citizen felt the decision not to compensate was unfair and indicated the impression that their licence may be revoked if the request to trap the beaver was declined.

With the citizen's consent, our Office contacted FFA to explore the circumstances and flexibility to respond to the citizen's request for compensation. FFA advised policy and legislation lack provisions to allow compensation to deal with nuisance beavers. The OCR was also advised the citizen was under no obligation to fulfill the request to trap the beaver. The practice of reaching out to trappers in the first instance was clarified as a courtesy. If a trapper was not interested in responding to such a request, the matter would be handled by staff of FFA.

The citizen was advised that as there is not any policy or legislation that provides for compensation in this instance, and there is no obligation to complete the request to trap the nuisance beaver, the position of FFA was not unreasonable or unfair.

Health and Community Services

Newfoundland Medical Care Plan

Wrap Around Support



The Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Care Plan (MCP) is a publicly administered comprehensive plan of public medical care insurance. MCP covers the costs of insured physician services and offers coverage of insured medical services received in a hospital for residents of the province who have met eligibility criteria to register as MCP beneficiaries.

A citizen was referred to the OCR by a community organization who was supporting the citizen with their attempt to gain MCP coverage. The citizen was homeless and did not have any identification as all documents, including citizenship documentation, had been lost in previous moves. The circumstances were more complex as the citizen was born outside Canada and immigrated as a youth. While a Canadian citizen, they had resided in a different province before moving to NL several years previous and had not applied for MCP upon their return. The citizen was

supported by a Housing Support Worker with Connections for Seniors to complete an application for MCP which was accompanied by documentation to demonstrate how long they had been a resident of NL. MCP further advised a birth certificate or passport would complete the application. In the absence of this documentation being provided by the citizen, the file at MCP became inactive.

Wrap Around Support (cont'd)

In many instances, our Office can find mutually acceptable solutions through shuttle diplomacy. Upon inquiry, MCP agreed to issue temporary MCP coverage if the citizen could submit documentation that they had applied to receive a replacement citizenship document. It was required that they provide a receipt to show the application was paid for and submitted. The Housing Support Worker updated the OCR that the documentation was submitted on behalf of the citizen and an MCP card would be mailed to the citizen.

Unexpectedly, the citizen had moved again to a temporary transitional supportive living facility and was concerned that their MCP card would get lost. Our Office contacted MCP and picked up the citizen's MCP card and dropped it off to them at the housing facility. As well, the citizen completed a change of address form as required by MCP.

Successfully, MCP was able to backdate three months from the citizen's application, giving them one year of coverage based on the demonstration they had applied to get a copy of the citizenship documentation. Once the citizen received their Canadian citizenship documentation, they could submit it to MCP and the coverage would be updated accordingly. If at the time of renewal, the citizen did not have the updated document, they could fill out the renewal form and attach a copy of the receipt. MCP could then consider granting an additional six months of coverage until the document was received.

Jobs, Immigration and Growth

Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division

When a Public Body Advocates for Fairness



The Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division (ATCD) is responsible for apprenticeship training and certification programs in Newfoundland and Labrador for individuals pursuing a career in the skilled trades.

The OCR was contacted by an employee of the Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division. The concerns raised were in relation to punitive action taken against a student who had alerted the program that there was a copy of the certification exam being circulated to students. Inappropriate distribution of the certification exam would contravene the Misconduct Policy of the ATCD. It was presented that it was unfair to enforce punitive measures on one student, when the appropriate action would be to work together to establish the evidence that would confirm the exam had been circulated. The view presented was a need to remove the current exam as the issue of students having access to the exam could not be mitigated without doing so, and thereby replace it with a new exam.

The student's attempts to request the punitive action taken towards them be reversed by accessing the available appeals process were not successful. Staff of the ATCD and the educational program advocated to the Independent Appeals Committee (IAC) following their decision and presented the facts and their position. The IAC considered the unique circumstances and the reasonable approach to mitigate future risk and subsequently reversed the decision.

Justice and Public Safety

Adult Corrections

Compensation for Services Rendered



Two individuals incarcerated at a correctional facility contacted the OCR concerning their canteen account. Both individuals worked at institutional jobs, duties which entitled them to canteen account credit in lieu of pay. Upon transfer from one provincial correctional institution to another, their canteen account credit was no longer available.

Canteen is important for inmate well-being and can serve as a tool for positive change for individuals and the prison environment as a whole. It enables inmates to access basic necessities such as hygiene items, provides interaction opportunities, and a means to supplement meals provided by the institution. Essentially, access to canteen plays a role in shaping inmate morale. These incentives can improve life in prison and provide life and job skills to support inmates following release from prison.

The OCR made several inquiries to Adult Corrections about the situation and the fairness of both inmates not receiving the account credit to their canteen. From a fairness perspective, when an inmate is transferred from one institution to another, their canteen account should be transferred such that the inmate does not lose access to the credit resulting from working at an institutional job. There was no evidence to demonstrate that either inmate received their canteen credit prior to leaving one institution, despite the agreement that both worked in laundry and garbage collection prior to their transfer. By advocating for fairness, the inmates were eventually credited with a four-day work credit to resolve the issue.

Compensation for Services Rendered (cont'd)

Typically, on their statutory release date, inmates are released in the morning from their correctional facility as soon as release preparations are completed. This allows adequate time to meet transportation schedules for those who are required to travel throughout the province to return to their secured accommodations.

Oversight Delays Release



An inmate contacted the OCR late one afternoon alleging they should have been released that day, according to their statutory release date. The inmate had become emotionally distraught and discussed self-harm as they believed they would not get released due to an oversight on behalf of administration at the correctional facility.

Upon contact with the correctional facility, the OCR was advised there had been a mix-up in the morning which prevented the timely release of the inmate. It was reported that the inmate would be released in the next hour or two. To resolve concerns about transportation to their secured accommodations, arrangements had been made for alternate accommodations for the night until public transportation could be accessed the following day to travel across the province.

The Public Trustee is the person appointed by the Provincial Government under the **Public Trustee Act** to protect the financial assets and well-being of clients of the Office of the Public Trustee. Though appointed by the Provincial Government, the Office of the Public Trustee is a Crown corporation created by legislation and operates fully independent of Government.

Office of the Public Trustee

The Impact of Staffing Challenges on Providing Timely Service



**The Impact of
Staffing Challenges
on Providing
Timely Service
(cont'd)**

In the case of the estate of a deceased person, the Public Trustee will secure and gather all the property and assets of the deceased person, determine what debts are owed to and by the estate. If there are funds available in the estate, all debts are paid and the balance of the estate is distributed to the persons entitled, as determined by the Will or by legislation.

A citizen attempting to have the estate of a family member resolved contacted our Office. It was alleged they had been waiting months to get a response from the Office of the Public Trustee with an update on the status of the estate. Attempts to call the Office resulted in no answer and the voicemail was full; therefore, the citizen was unable to leave a message. It was stated it had been two years since the courts appointed the Public Trustee.

The Office of the Public Trustee advised they were experiencing challenges due to a lack of estate officers and the ability to assign and work through existing files. Further, it was indicated that a job competition was being conducted to fill the vacant positions. In the meantime, citizens were encouraged to contact the Office by the general email indicated on their website as the best mode of communication during this challenging time. The Public Trustee committed to follow-up on these emails. The OCR kept this file open until such time that it was confirmed that estates officers were hired and files were being re-assigned to allow for the conclusion of affected estates.

**Royal Newfoundland
Constabulary (RNC)**

**When a Delay
Becomes Time
Sensitive**



The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) is Newfoundland and Labrador's Provincial Police Service. Working across three regions; the Northeast Avalon, Corner Brook Region, and Labrador West, the RNC works under a community policing model to build safe, secure, and healthy communities. The RNC maintains responsibility for completing Criminal Records Screening Certificates and Vulnerable Sector Checks for applicants residing within RNC jurisdiction.

A citizen contacted the OCR with a time-sensitive matter involving the processing of Criminal Records Screening Certificates and Vulnerable Sector Checks. The citizen was scheduled to commence a post-secondary educational program in the coming days which required submission of these documents before being permitted to attend classes. It was alleged that despite the RNC website indicating an average processing time of fifteen business days, their application had been submitted six months previous. Repeated telephone calls to RNC Headquarters resulted in the consistent message that the documents had not been processed.

It was recommended the citizen contact the RNC Public Complaints Commission (RNCPC) which has a mandate to provide members of the public with an independent forum for complaints related to the RNC. After speaking with the RNCPC, a call was received on the same day from RNC Headquarters advising the citizen the documents were completed and available for pick-up.

When a Delay Becomes Time Sensitive (cont'd)

The Department of Labrador Affairs administers two programs that provide financial help to Medical Care Plan (MCP) beneficiaries who incur out-of-pocket travel costs to access eligible insured medical services unavailable in their community. The Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP) is one of these programs. It is a non-income tested program that offers medical transportation financial assistance to individuals, including options for partial prepayment of economy airfare.

Labrador Affairs

Medical Transportation Assistance

Understanding Policy Provisions

A citizen contacted the OCR advising that their partner had been taken to the Health Sciences Centre from rural NL via air ambulance (Medivac). The citizen indicated they had to travel to St. John's to accompany their partner. Upon application to MTAP, the citizen was not approved for expenses related to mileage, accommodations, or meals during the extended stay.



Upon inquiry, MTAP advised that mileage was initially approved for the citizen, albeit in error, as the escort had not been approved in accordance with policy. MTAP policy would not support escort expenses during an extended inpatient stay where the patient had been airlifted to hospital. Furthermore, upon release from hospital, there was no medical documentation to support the need for an escort to support travel home. MTAP policy provides that when an individual is an inpatient, it is expected that hospital staff are providing care to the individual. As such, a medical escort would not be required for the duration of the stay. Policy further provides that an escort can be approved for travel expenses only for one day prior to discharge with medical documentation to state the non-medical escort was appropriate.

The OCR was advised that under MTAP policy medical documentation for a non-medical escort is required to be provided with the application which must meet the provisions of the escort policy. In this instance, medical documentation to support the need for a non-medical escort was not provided with the application; therefore, escort expenses could not be considered. MTAP advised that if a medical letter was provided that complied with MTAP policy in this circumstance, as the patient was air-lifted to St. John's, MTAP would only consider expenses (accommodations and meals) the day prior to discharge, not for the whole of the inpatient stay.

Understanding Policy Provisions (cont'd)

The OCR facilitated the provision of the medical note from the citizen to MTAP. The medical note was accepted and MTAP committed to issuing an adjustment to reimburse expenses for the day prior to discharge as per policy.

Memorial University

Memorial University (Memorial) is Newfoundland and Labrador's only university. It offers certificate, diploma, undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programs across five campuses and online.

Improving the Response for All



A student of Memorial contacted the OCR with a complaint about the process of receiving a tuition refund. The student was eligible for a refund; however, was advised by the cashier's office that the payment could only be refunded to the account from which it was initially made. As an international student, the original payment came from an account in another country which had been closed once the student moved to Canada and became a permanent resident. As the account was no longer active, it was not possible to have the payment refunded to this account. It was alleged that the request to have the money refunded to a current Canadian bank account was denied due to Canadian laws and guidelines.

Our Office contacted Memorial to get clarification on the alleged denial of the student's request. It was indicated that the request was initially denied under anti-money laundering rules that require international funds to be sent back to the source. Since the original account was closed and the student was now a permanent resident with a Canadian bank account, approval was granted to refund the amount to the current Canadian account.

Boards and Agencies

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services (NL Health Services) is responsible for providing health care across Newfoundland and Labrador. It offers a comprehensive range of health-care programs and services through a wide network of facilities, clinics, and community services across five zones. While each zone is responsible for delivering certain services locally, all zones operate within the framework set by NL Health Services.

Eastern-Urban

Opportunity to Allow for an Internal Review



A citizen contacted the OCR in relation to a bill paid to NL Health Services for a hospital stay for a family member who had passed away. The bill was paid during the settling of the family member's estate. The citizen believed the amount determined by NLHS was unfair as the family

member was medically assessed to be palliative during their stay in acute care. Additionally, the family member was advised multiple times that they would not be billed for this period due to the level of classification for an individual in these circumstances.

Opportunity to Allow for an Internal Review (cont'd)

The OCR referred the citizen to NL Health Services' Patient Relations Office (formerly Client Relations Office) which provides a formal avenue to receive feedback about the care or services received, including compliments, concerns, or suggestions. The citizen was encouraged to share their concerns with the office and allow for an opportunity for an internal review of the circumstances and possible resolution.

Following contact with the Patient Relations Office, the citizen advised the matter was reviewed internally by NL Health Services and the estate would be reimbursed the amount previously paid to satisfy the bill.

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing (NLH) is a Crown corporation whose mandate is to develop and administer housing assistance policy and programs for the benefit of low to moderate income households throughout the province.

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing

The OCR received a call from a citizen in a stressful situation following a change in their family circumstances. Due to an unforeseen situation, the citizen had agreed to care for two grandchildren. The one-bedroom apartment the citizen was living in was no longer adequate for this family unit. The citizen found themselves with an eviction notice from the private landlord as a result of the change in circumstances.

Documentation Supports Good Decision-Making



The citizen explained that they had completed an application with NLH prior to this change in circumstances and had been waitlisted for a one-bedroom unit. Upon contact with NLH, the OCR was advised NLH was aware of the change in circumstances. It required documentation to support the current situation prior to making any changes to the application status, and to ensure that an appropriate response was available to address the situation. Specifically, NLH requested confirmation of the eviction notice and confirmation from the Child Protection Division of the Department of Families and Affordability that the two children were in their care. All public bodies are responsible for the fair allocation of resources, as needed. Supporting documentation as requested by NLH ensures fair decision-making, particularly when limited resources are in high demand, such as the public housing portfolio.

Documentation Supports Good Decision-Making (cont'd)

The citizen worked with NLH to provide the requested documentation and upon receipt of same, the citizen was offered a housing unit that would accommodate them and the grandchildren.

Providing a Safe and Responsive Service for all



A citizen residing in an NLH building contacted the OCR to complain about the length of time it was taking for NLH to address an issue of bullying and unwanted behaviours by a tenant in the same building towards the citizen and other tenants. The unwanted behaviours had been reported to NLH by the citizen and other tenants. Through the tenant's Member of the House of Assembly (MHA), the citizen was advised that NLH were in the process of taking action to address the issue. It was the opinion of the citizen that this action was taking too long and asked the OCR to intervene.

Efforts to resolve these types of scenarios can start with mediation between tenants and escalate to evictions. NLH also has responsibility for responding to situations where citizens may present needing emergency housing for any number of reasons, including eviction. While an eviction is provided for under the **Residential Tenancies Act** in certain circumstances, it can create a more challenging situation for both the tenant and NLH in relation to homelessness. Creativity and diligence are required to balance the right of all tenants to safe and secure housing and the responsibility of NLH to provide same.

NLH confirmed it was aware of the situation in the building and the behaviours that were reported to be disruptive to other tenants. It committed to finding a resolution for all involved. At that specific point in time, NLH was engaged with the tenant against whom complaints had been received in an attempt to provide alternate housing. In the interim, NLH invited any tenant to contact their housing officer directly to report any further concerns.

The OCR advised the citizen that NLH was aware and managing the situation to achieve the best outcome for all involved. The citizen was grateful and relieved with this outcome. The citizen also reported that the issues of concern had diminished over the previous weeks, and they remained hopeful for continued resolve.

Navigation, Self-Advocacy and Referral

There are occasions when citizens reach out to our Office seeking support when they do not know where else to turn to resolve an issue they are experiencing in relation to how the rules of government affect them personally. Likewise, community organizations or those within government will reach out with the hope that our Office can assist in problem solution.

Less Intrusive Means to Find Resolve



A Member of the House of Assembly contacted our Office on behalf of a constituent of theirs who was facing challenges with obtaining court-ordered access to their grandchild. Upon contact with the citizen, it was alleged that non-compliance by the child's guardian with the court order was a long-standing issue. It resulted in a complaint about the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) being accused of refusing to enforce the court order to enable visitation. The citizen indicated that the RCMP explained their policy does not support physically removing a child from one caregiver to another, a position which appears to be based on a child's best interests.

The citizen understood that our Office lacked jurisdiction of the RCMP, a federal policing agency. The citizen remained focused on continuing to seek access to the grandchild. They were open to receiving guidance on communication skills to be used with the guardian of the child to optimally work towards resolving the issue and obtaining access as per the court order.

The OCR also connected with the Public Legal Information Association of NL (PLIAN) to discuss potential legal recourse in this situation. The appropriate process to apply to the Family Court, Supreme Court Division, to commence an application for a contempt order was shared with the citizen to be considered as an option of last resort.

The citizen evaluated their options and later reported improvement in the relationship with the child's guardian and that regular visitation was now occurring with their grandchild.

NLSchools is an entity of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador tasked with the education of all English-speaking students and K to 12 public schools in the province.

Effective Internal Process



A parent of a child with complex needs contacted the OCR with concern about how the child was being treated by staff in the classroom. The parent attempted to speak with the teacher and the

Effective Internal Process (cont'd)

principal but had not been able to find the answers to resolve the concern.

When determining an appropriate role for our Office, it is common practice to explore efforts to resolve complaints internally between the citizen and the public body. In this situation, the parent did not know how to adequately escalate their concern. In exploration with NLSchools, the OCR was advised of an internal process for filing such complaints. Following our contact, NLSchools committed to contact the parent to discuss the concern presented.

NLSchools advised a few days later that a staff member had a lengthy conversation with the citizen to hear the issues of concern with the intention to work through them. At that time, some issues had already been resolved and the administrative team at the school reported that the relationship had improved with the citizen since this intervention. This position was confirmed by the citizen who was appreciative of having made this connection to resolve the concern internally and efficiently.

Most Accurate Information Directly from the Source



There are situations where citizens contact the OCR to inquire about the rules or the policy which set guidelines for the delivery of programs and services. We appreciate that citizens may need support learning about and accessing policy provisions and may wish to verify interpretation of a policy from an independent third party. Our staff will always facilitate the provision of information to ensure citizens are able to make the most informed decisions; however, it is imperative that citizens have their request for services assessed by the public body prior to the OCR commencing an active investigatory role in response to the inquiry.

The OCR received an inquiry from a citizen about the hiring practices under the Provincial Home Care Program. This program is guided by Operational Standards set forth by the Department of Health and Community Services, while NL Health Services is responsible for the implementation of the program. The citizen advised they needed home care. Having a family member who was a home care worker, they wondered whether there was an option to hire the family member. The OCR referred the citizen to publicly available information, the Home Support Program Client Handbook, which provided information about the options available for the provision of home support. They were also encouraged to reach out to the Home Support Program and directed them to the contact information in the handbook to ensure they received the most accurate information to satisfy their request from the program directly.

A citizen contacted our Office following the recent passing of their partner. The citizen presented their experience with 911, specifically, the amount of time it took for dispatch and the perceived lack of professionalism and response of the ambulance attendants.

NL Health Services became responsible for the operation of all provincial ambulance services effective June 1, 2024, transitioning to a provincial road and air ambulance service in the province. This provided the integration of private sector ambulance attendants into the public healthcare system.

Complaints such as this highlight specific experiences of patients and their families as they access ambulance services. In order to assess the complaint and determine whether there is room for improvement with any service, it is imperative that experiences are shared with those responsible for the service provision. In this regard, NL Health Services advised the OCR that complaints related to ambulance services could be directed to their Patient Relations Office (formerly Client Relations Office).

The citizen was provided with contact information for the Patient Relations Office and was encouraged to share their experience accordingly.

A citizen contacted the OCR in relation to allegations that a business was operating in a municipality without the proper zoning permit. It was reported that the municipality had issued a “stop work order” instructing the business to cease operations until such time that the proper permits could be obtained.

Our Office advised the citizen that actions of municipalities are not within our jurisdiction. While this lack of oversight was explained to the citizen, additional resource information was provided to support their navigation of having the matter appropriately addressed. These included BizPal (an online service that provides information about business permits, licences and other requirements needed to establish and operate businesses), provisions of the **Urban and Rural Planning Act** (including municipal plans and development regulations) and information about Municipal Affairs and Community Engagement.

Welcoming Feedback to Improve Service

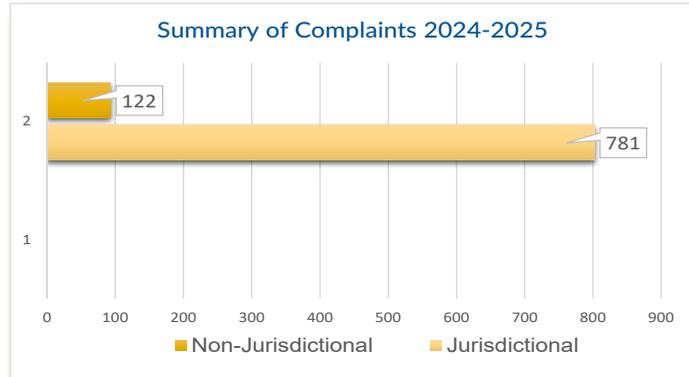


Resources for Support Navigations



Statistics

During 2024-2025, the OCR received 903 complaints and inquiries and closed 833 files.



The following tables illustrate the origin of the complaints we received and which government departments and agencies were concerned.

Complaints and Inquiries by Department April 1, 2024—March 31, 2025			
DEPARTMENTS	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023
Education and Early Childhood Development	2	1	3
Environment and Climate Change	0	0	2
Families and Affordability	15	15	17
Income Support Division	9	15	18
Finance	0	3	1
Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture	8	7	13
Government Modernization and Service Delivery	18	13	9
Health and Community Services	3	9	12
Industry, Energy and Technology	0	0	4
Jobs, Immigration and Growth	2	5	6
Justice and Public Safety	21	19	7
Correctional Facilities	436	454	489
RNC Public Complaints Commission	4	0	1
Labrador Affairs	0	0	10
ISMT (Medical Transportation Benefits for Income Support Clients)	0	2	0
MTAP (Medical Transportation Assistance Program)	3	5	0
Municipal Affairs and Community Engagement	3	3	1
Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation	0	1	0
Transportation and Infrastructure	6	0	9
Total Complaints and Inquiries	530	552	602

Complaints and Inquiries by Agencies, Boards and Commissions			
April 1, 2024—March 31, 2025			
AGENCIES/BOARDS	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023
College of the North Atlantic	0	1	1
Eastern Regional Service Board	3	0	0
Farm Industry Review Board	0	0	1
Human Rights Commission	5	3	2
Labour Relations Board	0	1	0
Memorial University	6	2	1
Municipal Assessment Agency	0	0	1
Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Care Plan - MCP	3	4	1
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation	28	33	23
Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro	0	1	1
Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission	12	14	19
Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation	0	2	0
NL Health Services			
Central Zone	7	5	8
Eastern Zone	28	31	43
Labrador-Grenfell Zone	4	2	3
Western Zone	5	4	7
NL Health Services - Correctional Health			
Central Zone	2	6	0
Eastern - Rural Zone	7	10	44
Eastern - Urban Zone	103	108	129
Labrador-Grenfell Zone	3	0	3
Western Zone	8	6	3
NL Schools	13	5	2
Public Service Commission	2	0	0
The Dairy Farmers of Newfoundland & Labrador	1	0	0
WorkplaceNL	11	12	11
Workers' Compensation Independent Review Board	0	0	1
Total Complaints and Inquiries	251	250	304

Complaints/Inquiries by Electoral District April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025

Electoral Districts	2024-2025
Baie Verte - Green Bay	1
Bonavista	1
Burin - Grand Bank	2
Cape St. Francis	6
Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde	4
Conception Bay East - Bell Island	5
Conception Bay South	6
Corner Brook	18
Exploits *1	10
Fogo Island - Cape Freels	3
Gander	4
Grand Falls - Windsor - Buchans	3
Harbour Grace - Port de Grave	3
Harbour Main	1
Humber - Bay of Islands	1
Humber - Gros Morne	2
Lake Melville *2	20
Lewisporte - Twillingate	1

Electoral Districts	2024-2025
Mount Pearl - North	4
Mount Pearl - Southlands	4
Mount Scio	10
Other Provinces	10
Placentia - St. Mary's	4
St. Barbe - L'Anse Aux Meadows	2
St. George's - Humber	4
St. John's Centre	3
St. John's East - Quidi Vidi *3	465
St. John's West	4
Stephenville - Port au Port *4	30
Terra Nova *5	50
Topsail - Paradise	3
Unknown *6	191
Virginia Waters - Pleasantville	4
Waterford Valley	23
Windsor Lake	1
Total Complaints & Inquiries	903

Note 1: The volume of complaints emanating from the District of Exploits is a result of the location of the Bishop Falls Correctional Centre (BFCC).

Note 2: The volume of complaints emanating from the District of Lake Melville is a result of the location of the Labrador Correctional Centre (LCC).

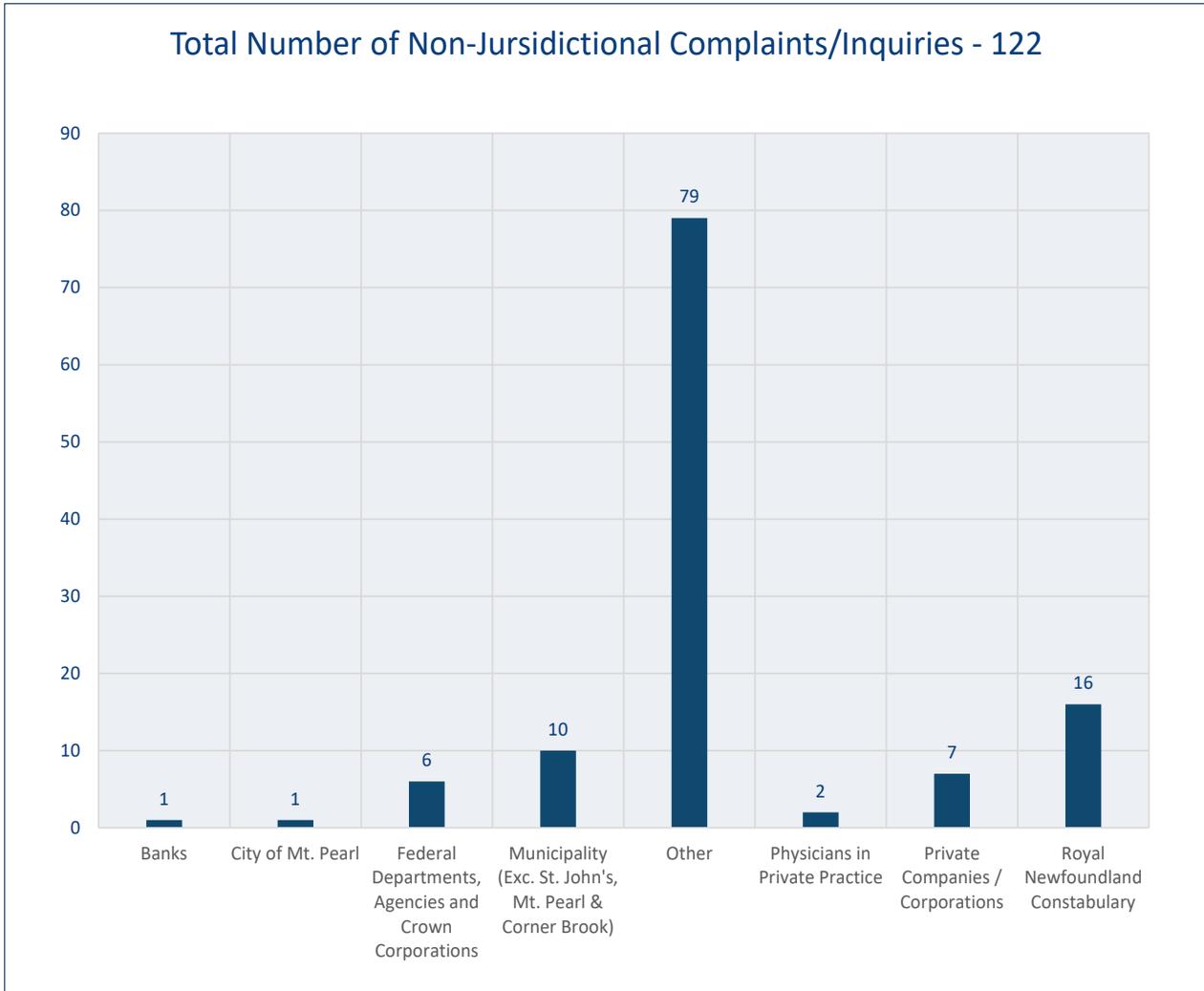
Note 3: The higher volume of complaints emanating from the District of St. John's East - Quidi Vidi is a result of the location of Her Majesty's Penitentiary (HMP).

Note 4: The higher volume of complaints emanating from the District of Stephenville - Port au Port is a result of the location of the West Coast Correctional Institution (WCCI).

Note 5: The volume of complaints emanating from the District of Terra Nova is a result of the location of the Newfoundland and Labrador Correctional Centre for Women (NLCCW).

Note 6: This section includes complaints received from individuals who reside out-of-country or out-of-province who launch complaints about attempts to access services while visiting the province, or on behalf of citizens who currently reside in the province. It would also include systemic complaints involving more than one electoral district and situations whereby a citizen's address is not available.

Complaints/Inquiries Non-Jurisdictional April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025



Accomplishments

In addition to prosecuting its core mandate services of complaint investigation and mediation, during 2024-2025, the OCR actively engaged in opportunities to acquire and share knowledge, learning and experiences with citizens, communities, public bodies and colleagues on a national scale.

Community Outreach

The citizens of the province are the drivers of the work that is completed by our Office. It is always important to connect with citizens and the community to heighten awareness of the services of our office and increase their confidence and understanding of when and how to make contact. The OCR also seeks opportunities for the mutual exchange of information with community organizations. The more knowledge that we have about services provided at a community level, the better equipped our staff are to make appropriate referrals to support citizens. Opportunities for community outreach this year included:

- Presentation of the Citizens' Representative Office mandate and administrative fairness to Social Work Students (Class of 2025), Memorial University;
- Participation in Symposium on the *Right to Decide, Inclusion NL*.

The OCR continues to produce the newsletter *OCR Insights*, a semi-annual update on the OCR activities.



Indigenous Awareness

In the spirit of acquiring education, greater cultural competency and working towards truth and reconciliation, the OCR participates in an *Indigenous Initiative Network* via the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman to share initiatives nation-wide that will reach, include and provide services to our respective indigenous communities. This sharing is intended to build and strengthen our own provincial networks. Our staff has also participated in a webinar by the MacEwan University Feigel Conference Centre entitled *Truth First: Identity Fraud and Cultural Exploitation in the Age of Reconciliation*. Staff have also participated in the training session *Toward Reconciliation: An Overview of Indigenous Histories Across Canada* through PSEAccess, Learning Management System of the provincial government.

Information Sharing with Public Bodies

The OCR has more than one hundred public bodies within its jurisdiction. While carrying out the traditional work of an ombudsman office, it is useful to both OCR staff and that of public bodies to convene and share information about our respective mandates. We discuss how our work can intersect to provide efficiencies to accessing provincial government services and how to increase the provision of services with optimal administrative fairness. During this fiscal year, the OCR met with the following public bodies:

- NL Health Services presentation to Quality Management;
- Department of Health and Community Services monthly meetings;
- NL Health Services quarterly meetings with Correctional Health Services;
- Department of Justice and Public Safety monthly meetings with Adult Corrections;
- Tour of Her Majesty's Penitentiary;
- Transportation and Infrastructure meeting with new designates;
- NL Health Services Community Supports Program.

Professional Development

OCR staff and leadership are committed to building skill sets to enhance our delivery of services to the public. OCR staff participated in the following training opportunities:

- *Mental Health First Aid Basic* – Public Service Commission/Lifewise Mental Health Peer Services.
- *Cyber Security Awareness* – Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security.
- *Power over Pain: Re-Envisioning Chronic Pain to Improve Access and Connection* – Newfoundland and Labrador College of Social Workers.
- *The Intersection of Adult Protection, Guardianship, and Capacity in NL* – Newfoundland and Labrador College of Social Workers.
- *Microsoft – M365 Implementation and Mail Migration*.
- Various PAccess courses including (but not limited to):
 - *Conflict Resolution*
 - *Dealing with Difficult People*
 - *Services with Dignity, Fairness and Respect*
 - *Psychological Health and Safety Awareness*
 - *Reducing Mental Health Stigma in the Workplace*
 - *Fostering a Harassment-Free Workplace*
 - *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy*

The OCR is also committed to providing professional development opportunities to students and during this fiscal year, provided a Bachelor of Social Work field practicum opportunity to a 4th year student in conjunction with Memorial University of Newfoundland, School of Social Work.

Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman

The Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman (CCPO) is a council comprised of provincial and territorial Ombudsman. The CCPO serves as a network for Parliamentary Ombudsman and their offices to facilitate the exchange of best practices; share knowledge through professional development opportunities; foster common public education initiatives; and advance principles of fairness and good administration in the public sector.

As a member of the CCPO, the OCR participates in annual meetings with Provincial and Territorial Ombudsman. It also participates in virtual meetings with Provincial and Territorial Deputy Ombudsman. There has been participation by staff in monthly webinars hosted by its members which highlight unique topics and issues for Parliamentary Ombudsman. During this reporting period, the OCR facilitated its webinar to the CCPO: *How We Use a Designate Network with Public Bodies: Building Relationships and Creating Efficiencies in Ombuds Work.*

Forum of Canadian Ombudsman

The Forum of Canadian Ombudsman (FCO) is comprised of representatives in the ombudsman profession, including representatives working in government, private industry, colleges and universities. It includes members from the classical to the organizational ombudsman. The FCO provides a global network for ombudsman offices from all sectors and all types to meet and exchange information. The OCR has provided instruction on *Ombudsman Under Threat* at *Ombuds Essentials*, a joint offering of the FCO and Osgoode Hall Law School Professional Development Program. The OCR also attended a conference hosted by the FCO in October 2024: *Ombuds on Edge: Tackling Challenges, Evolving Practices, Enduring Principles.*



Public Interest Disclosure

The OCR has the responsibility of Public Interest Disclosure programs under two separate pieces of legislation within the province, the **Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Act** and the **House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act**. The OCR hosted the annual Federal/Provincial/Territorial public interest disclosure conference in September 2024 to share information and discuss best practices in supporting employees of public organizations.



Report on Performance

Fiscal year 2024-2025 is the second year of OCR's 2023-2026 Category 3 Activity Plan, which was tabled in the House of Assembly on June 30, 2023. The issue, goal and objectives of the Activity Plan are reported here.

Strategic Issue: Increasing the awareness, understanding and access of our services for citizens when they are experiencing difficulty accessing provincial government services.

The 2023-2026 Activity Plan identified OCR's intent to place a renewed emphasis to provide information about our office with a wide reach to all areas of the province. Since the global pandemic in March 2020 and its impact on outreach efforts for the OCR, we recognized a need to alter our outreach efforts from the traditional in-person opportunities in urban and rural areas of the province.

The OCR values opportunities to meet with citizens to share information about the services provided by our Office. In doing so, citizens are more informed of the OCR role and mandate, including the process of receiving and responding to complaints. Meeting with citizens to provide information and education sessions, either in person or virtually, assists in increasing citizens understanding and familiarity with our services and reduces barriers that may exist where citizens are less informed.

An outreach plan will enable the OCR to be fully prepared with current educational and promotional material, a consistent approach to being responsive to citizens, and an effective manner in which to promote OCR services. Relying on the data collected from citizen participants of the survey undertaken, the OCR intends to reach as many citizens of the province with reliable and accurate information about the OCR, its services and processes to reduce barriers to access.

The Citizens' Representative set the following goal in 2023:

Goal 1

By March 31, 2026, the Office of the Citizens' Representative will have undertaken measures to accurately reflect its role and mandate and to identify efforts to engage in meaningful outreach activities to increase awareness, understanding and access to our services to citizens of our province.

Objectives Pursuant to Goal 1

Objective 2: By March 31, 2025, the Office of the Citizens' Representative will have undertaken a survey of a representative sample of the citizens of the province to inform the most efficient efforts for outreach and education to ensure equitable access to the services of the Office.

Indicator: Continue to work with the Economic and Statistics Branch of the Department of Finance, specifically, the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency (NLSA) to complete the survey created during the fiscal year 2023-2024 and analyze data retrieved.

Indicator: Meet with OCR staff to review and acquire consensus on current OCR practice and procedures.

Our activities to meet this objective are as follows:

Planned	Actual
<p>1. Continue to work with the NLSA, Department of Finance to complete the survey created during the previous fiscal year and analyze data retrieved to inform a future outreach plan.</p> <p>2. Meet with staff to review and acquire consensus on current OCR practices and procedures.</p>	<p>1. Consultation with the NLSA to refine survey questions to increase quality and relevance of data to be retrieved from survey participants.</p> <p>Consultation included identification of a target population to secure the most accurate data from an appropriate sampling pool to acquire reliable data. This also included the manner of dissemination of the survey to potential participants to ensure an optimal response by mitigating barriers to participation.</p> <p>Ongoing communication with the NLSA as it reaches completion of the survey and compilation of data.</p> <p>2. OCR staff set aside an office development day on November 26, 2024, to review office policies, procedures and practices to ensure consistency of application, need for updates and clarification of best practice.</p>

Discussion of Results

The promotion of the OCR to all citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador is an important aspect of ensuring equitable access to the services of our office. Citizens contacting our Office will often indicate they were not aware of its existence. Outreach in the province's communities remains a priority, which competes with the resource demands of providing a timely and thorough service to those citizens who do make contact. With our limited resources, by partnering with the NLSA, we anticipate the survey will assist in identifying target areas and approaches to sharing information of OCR services. The aim is to learn from a demographic that is aware of the OCR, their understanding of its services, and how to optimally provide education to citizens. Citizens who are not aware of our Office will also inform their desire to learn of OCR services and how best to receive this information. The expertise of the NLSA has assisted this process in the most efficient, representative, and meaningful manner to inform the development of an outreach plan to meet our performance goal by 2026. Due to external (Canada Post strike) and internal (difficulty recruiting staff) challenges, the actual administration of the survey has been extended to the fiscal year 2024-2025. The data analysis will be forthcoming in this fiscal year as well, which will allow the OCR to meet its intention to create an outreach plan by March 31, 2026.

Ensuring a consistent approach to OCR internal policies, procedures and practices supports staff by building professional confidence and supporting autonomy in staff's respective roles. OCR strives to support staff with the promotion of an awareness and openness to allow flexibility

in extenuating circumstances with the application of current policy and practice. A flexible approach is important to ensure concerns are heard, evaluated and provide for best outcomes on issues presented to the OCR. This ensures a consistent, trauma informed approach to complaint management which continues to adhere to the OCR mandate, while serving citizens of the province with minimal barriers.

Outlook

Objective 3: By March 31, 2026, the Office of the Citizens' Representative will have analyzed the results of the survey undertaken and with updated public educational information, develop a more effective plan for outreach with efficient outcomes.

Indicator: Continue to work with the NL Statistics Agency to complete the survey during this fiscal reporting year and analyze data retrieved.

Indicator: Consider the data retrieved to create an outreach plan that prioritizes the most efficient and effective manner to promote awareness and access to OCR services for citizens of the province that is ready to operationalize early 2026.

Indicator: Updated existing promotional material to support OCR outreach with citizens, including promotional material to be available in correctional institutions.

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The opportunities available to, and the challenges confronting OCR for fiscal year 2025-2026 are:

- Strengthening consistent internal practices amongst staff to optimally support the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Learning the reach and limitations of the awareness of the OCR amongst the citizens served by the OCR.
- Documenting best OCR practice and procedure and assessing data collection from the citizen survey while managing efficiencies with OCR core mandate.
- Creating a public engagement outreach program that is effective and remains an integral component of the OCR mandate while balancing the provision of efficient services under the core OCR mandate of responding to citizen complaints and the conducting of investigations.
- Ensuring that the information contained in promotional material is not only reflective of OCR mandate and process, but also considers the internal processes (sometimes unique, such as that within adult corrections) of the numerous public bodies for which OCR jurisdiction reaches.
- To prepare for an uptake in requests for services by citizens as an outcome from an effective outreach initiative.

Financial Statement - 2024-2025

REPORT ON THE PROGRAM EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES OF THE CONSOLIDATED FUND

LEGISLATURE (CONTINUED)

	Actual	Estimates	
		Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
OFFICE OF THE CITIZENS' REPRESENTATIVE			
OFFICE OF THE CITIZENS' REPRESENTATIVE			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
4.1.01. OFFICE OF THE CITIZENS' REPRESENTATIVE			
01. Salaries	845,272	873,100	873,100
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	1,873	7,000	7,000
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	12,263	34,800	34,800
<i>Supplies</i>	3,440	5,000	5,000
<i>Professional Services</i>	11,842	69,600	69,600
<i>Purchased Services</i>	86,169	113,000	113,000
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	215	8,000	8,000
02. Operating Accounts	115,802	237,400	237,400
	961,074	1,110,500	1,110,500
02. Revenue - Provincial	(5,443)	(3,800)	(3,800)
Total: Office of the Citizens' Representative	955,631	1,106,700	1,106,700
TOTAL: OFFICE OF THE CITIZENS' REPRESENTATIVE	955,631	1,106,700	1,106,700
TOTAL: OFFICE OF THE CITIZENS' REPRESENTATIVE	955,631	1,106,700	1,106,700

How to Reach Us

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f Office of the Citizens' Representative – Newfoundland and Labrador

X @NLCitizensrep



Office of the Citizens' Representative
Province of Newfoundland and Labrador