

Standing Committee on
Government Operations



Report on the Review of the 2024-2025 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Office of the Ombud and the 2024-2025 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner

20th Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Chair: Mr. Julian Morse

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT OF
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OMBUD AND THE 2024-2025
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER**

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

On January 10, 2025, the Speaker of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly appointed the Ombud of the Northwest Territories (NWT) as the Acting Languages Commissioner.¹ As a result, Ms. Krista Carnogursky holds dual statutory officer roles. In recognition of the dual roles, the Standing Committee on Government Operations (Committee) has prepared one shared Committee Report for the Ombud and the Languages Commissioner for the annual reporting period of 2024-2025.

Section 33 of the *Ombud Act* requires the Ombud to prepare an annual report.² Committee has reviewed *Speaking up for Fairness: 2024-2025 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud* (Annual Report), released on July 8, 2025.³

The *Official Languages Act* requires the Languages Commissioner to prepare an annual report which is referred by the Legislative Assembly to a committee to report on its review of the annual report.³ Committee reviewed the Languages Commissioner's 2024-2025 Annual Report which was publicly released July 15, 2025.⁴

Committee thanks Ms. Krista Carnogursky, Ombud and Acting Languages Commissioner, for her appearance before Committee on September 10, 2025.⁵

ABOUT THE NWT OMBUD

The NWT Ombud promotes administrative fairness in territorial government administration and services. The powers and duties of the Ombud include:

- Investigating complaints from people who feel territorial authorities have treated them unfairly.
- Own initiative investigations to help improve government services.
- Public education on the principles of administrative fairness.

OBSERVATIONS

The 2024-2025 annual report highlights the Ombud's focus on investigating inquiries and complaints, public education and outreach, and continuing advocacy for administrative fairness in the NWT.

Committee wishes to express its gratitude to the Ombud, Ms. Krista Carnogursky, for her advocacy work to bring the Office of the Ombud to the attention of the general public. Ms. Carnogursky and her team undertook travel to regions in the NWT that historically have limited engagement and inquiries with the Ombud. These educational outreach opportunities have helped to inform the public of the Ombud's role which, in turn, helps to build trust and deliver the role in a more person-centred manner.

Systemic Early Resolution

Committee was pleased to learn that the Office of the Ombud conducted a systemic Early Resolution process with the Department of Finance to address concerns related the use of equivalencies for advertised positions. The resolution arrived at will create more transparency for job seekers and strengthen elements of procedural fairness. Committee believes this case exemplifies the work that the Ombud can do for the public to address concerns, while also highlighting that success requires collaboration with public bodies.

Staffing

The Office of the Ombud is located in Hay River and is made up of the Ombud, Deputy Ombud, and an Early Resolution and Education Officer.

In both the 2024-2025 Annual Report and public hearing with Committee, the Ombud expressed concerns that its office lacks the capacity and resources to carry out its full mandate.⁶ During the 2024-2025 year, the Ombud saw an 11% increase in the number of inquiries. The total of 273 inquiries for the reporting year is a record high since the Office's opening.⁷ Inquiries are becoming more complex in terms of both the issues raised and the complainant's needs, which is a trend that has continued from the previous year's report.

While it is beneficial for the public to turn to the Ombud when seeking help with administrative fairness, Committee believes that the Office of the Ombud requires adequate resources to appropriately respond to the increase in complaints. Additional resources would allow the Office of the Ombud to complete additional “own motion investigations”, investigate all systemic concerns brought to its attention, and provide the Ombud with the capacity to accept referrals from the Legislative Assembly.

Section 16(1) of the *Ombud Act* allows the Legislative Assembly or a Standing Committee to refer a matter to the Ombud for investigation and report. The capacity to accept referrals from the Legislative Assembly is a cost-saving measure for government that can be utilized in situations where there is a need for an independent or external investigation.

As such, Committee provides the following:

Recommendation 1: The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Board of Management, in consultation with the Ombud, identify and address additional funding to be provided to the Ombud for the addition of a new position, Senior Early Resolution and Investigation Officer.

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER

The Languages Commissioner investigates complaints that violate the *Official Languages Act* and promotes the Office of the Languages Commissioner.

The NWT has eleven official languages: Chipewyan (Dëne Sųłíné Yatı́é), Cree (Nēhiyawēwin), English, French, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey (Sahtúq̓t'ı̄ne Yatı́ı̄), South Slavey (Dene Zhatı́é) and Tłı̄chq̓.

Committee wishes to thank the Acting Languages Commissioner, Ms. Krista Carnogursky, for her investigative work to address complaints and her advocacy to ensure the rights, status and privileges of each of the Official Languages are respected by government institutions and ensuring compliance with the *Languages Act*. Committee would also like to express gratitude to the former Languages Commissioner, Ms. Brenda Gauthier, for her dedicated work on behalf of the NWT.

OBSERVATIONS

The 2024-2025 Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories Annual Report highlights the Commissioner's focus on community outreach, investigating complaints and inquiries, and continued advocacy for the NWT's official languages.⁸

Public Education and Outreach

The Acting Languages Commissioner actively worked to build relationships and trust by travelling to communities within the NWT and hearing concerns in person.

In addition to public education and outreach, the Languages Commissioner routinely held meetings with other jurisdictions and international committees. In 2024-2025, the Languages Commissioner met with the Manitoba Indigenous Reconciliation Secretariat to discuss the role of the Languages Commissioner of the NWT, the *Official Languages Act*, and the translation of legislative proceedings into the 11 official languages of the NWT. Committee is proud that our Legislative Assembly can be viewed as a model for language diversity.

SHARED ROLES OF OMBUD AND LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER

Many Statutory Officers throughout Canada hold dual roles, which can streamline operations, enhance administrative efficiency, and leverage existing expertise.

The role of the Language Commissioner and Ombud are similar in that both receive complaints from the public regarding compliance with legislation, policies and regulations. Additionally, both Offices provide oversight to government authorities to ensure they are complying with legislation and policies and can conduct investigations with recommendations for change or improvements. Dual roles allow the Ombud and Languages Commissioner to consider if the complaint can be addressed through the *Ombud Act*, if it falls outside the jurisdiction of the Languages Commissioner. This streamlines operations and enhances efficiency on behalf of the public.

Committee encourages the Speaker to make this shared role permanent given the similarities in investigative and advocacy functions, and the benefits it can provide to the public.

CONCLUSION

This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations' *Report on the Review of the 2024-2025 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud and the 2024-2025 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner*.

Recommendation 2: The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to the recommendations contained in this report within 120 days.

ENDNOTES

¹ News Release: [Ombud Appointed as Acting Official Languages Commissioner](#), December 5, 2025.

² *Ombud Act* available at: <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/legislation/ombud/ombud.a.pdf>

³ Speaking up for Fairness: 2024-2025 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud. Available at: https://nwtombud.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Ombud_Annual_Report_2025_Final.pdf

⁴ Language Commissioner of the Northwest Territories 2024/2025 Annual Report. Available at: <https://www.ntlegislativeassembly.ca/file/olcannualreport2025final>

⁵ Public Briefing on the 2024-2025 NWT Ombud Annual Report. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51etWBFBEMk>

⁶ Public Briefing on the 2024-2025 NWT Ombud Annual Report. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51etWBFBEMk>

⁷ Speaking up for Fairness: 2024-2025 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud. Available at: https://nwtombud.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Ombud_Annual_Report_2025_Final.pdf

⁸ Language Commissioner of the Northwest Territories 2024/2025 Annual Report. Available at: <https://www.ntlegislativeassembly.ca/file/olcannualreport2025final>