



Office of the Citizens' Representative

- federal government programs, for example, CPP or EI;
- the courts;
- a decision of cabinet;
- private companies;
- banks;
- lawyers; or
- doctors.

10. What can I expect from the Citizens' Representative Office?

You can expect a fair assessment of your complaint.

If your complaint is not investigated, we will provide you in writing with the reasons why, and when possible, suggest alternative ways to resolve your complaint.

Should we investigate your complaint, our investigation will be conducted in a thorough, independent, impartial and timely manner.

Office of the Citizens' Representative

4th Floor, Beothuck Building
20 Crosbie Place
P.O. Box 8400
St. John's, NL A1B 3N7

Phone: (709) 729-7647
Toll Free: 1-800-559-0079
Fax: (709) 729-7696

Email: citrep@gov.nl.ca
www.citizensrep.nl.ca

Are *you*
having a
problem
with
provincial
government
services and
programs?



Frequently Asked Questions



Seeking fairness...
finding solutions

1. Will the Citizens' Representative advocate on my behalf?

- The Citizens' Representative investigates complaints about provincial government services. The Citizens' Representative does not have the legal authority to act on behalf of citizens at administrative hearings or quasi judicial proceedings (eg. CPP appeals, workers' compensation appeals, income support appeals).
- Once a complaint is filed, the Citizens' Representative has to conduct an unbiased and impartial investigation. He is not permitted to favour the citizen filing the complaint or the government agency named as a respondent until the investigation is completed.
- The Citizens' Representative will try to mediate all complaints.
- If a complaint cannot be mediated and the Citizens' Representative is of the opinion that the citizen has been treated unfairly, he can advocate for the citizen by making recommendations to the government agency in question and reporting these recommendations to the House of Assembly.

2. How do I file a complaint?

Complaints can be made in writing, or by visiting or contacting the office:

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3. Will the information I provide be kept confidential?

Complaints filed with the Citizens' Representative are confidential. The details of the complaint will be discussed only with the complainant and the government body involved.

4. Does it cost anything to file a complaint?

There is no fee for the services of the Citizens' Representative.

5. How long does an investigation take?

Your complaint will be dealt with as quickly as possible. Some complaints can be dealt with in a matter of days. Complex complaints require interviewing a number of witnesses and reviewing a large number of documents. Complex complaints can take several months to complete.

6. Who can file a complaint?

Any person or group with a complaint against a provincial government department, agency, board or commission can contact the Citizens' Representative Office.

7. What are the roles in the complaint process?

The complainant's role:

- The complainant's role is to provide the Citizens' Representative Office with details about the complaint and copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should be available to assist the Citizens' Representative with information throughout the investigation, if necessary.

The department's role:

- The department's role is to respond to a complaint in a thorough and timely manner and to seek clarification of any issues that are not clearly understood.

- The role of the Citizens' Representative:

The role of the Office of the Citizens' Representative is to ensure complaints are addressed in an unbiased and objective manner. This is done by ensuring that both the complainant and the government body are given the opportunity to provide the Office with information and feedback concerning the complaint.

8. Can the Citizens' Representative refuse to investigate my complaint?

Yes, the Citizens' Representative in his discretion, may refuse to investigate or stop an investigation where:

- the person has had knowledge of the decision, recommendation, act or omission for more than one year;
- in his opinion it is frivolous or vexatious, not made in good faith, or concerns a trivial matter;
- the complainant does not have a sufficient personal interest in the subject matter of the complaint;
- in his opinion it should not be investigated or the investigation should not be continued because the public interest outweighs the interest of the person aggrieved;
- in his opinion the circumstances of the case do not require investigation; or
- the law, or existing administrative procedure provides an adequate remedy in the circumstances for the person aggrieved and, where the person aggrieved has not availed himself or herself of the remedy, there is no reasonable justification for his or her failure to do so.

9. Does the Citizens' Representative accept complaints against private companies?

No, the Citizens' Representative does not have jurisdiction to investigate complaints against private individuals or companies. As well, he cannot investigate: