

**Office of the
Citizens' Representative**

***2008-2011
Business Plan***

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OVERVIEW

The Office of the Citizens' Representative provides a province wide Ombuds services for citizens with respect to their dealings with the provincial public service. Barry Fleming is the Citizens' Representative and is responsible for the management of the Office and coordinating its work. The Office has a staff of seven including:

- an Assistant Citizens' Representative
- one Senior Investigator (vacant)
- three Investigators
- one Office Administrator, and
- Executive Secretary (vacant)

In 2006/07, the last reporting period, the Office of the Citizens' Representative received 257 complaints/inquiries. It closed 1,531 complaint/inquiry files. The Citizens' Representative made 39 recommendations to Government.

To accomplish its work, the Office has a budget of \$660,400 for 2007/08.

This Office can be contacted by:

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MANDATE

The Office of the Citizens' Representative derives its mandate from two legislative enactments. The mandate flowing from the *Citizens' Representative Act* includes:

- The receipt and independent investigation of complaints of unfairness from citizens;
- The investigation of matters referred to it by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the House of Assembly or otherwise determined by the Citizens' Representative of requiring investigation;
- By implication, the mediation of citizens' complaints when possible;
- Reporting the results of the investigations and recommending responses when appropriate.

The mandate flowing from the *House of Assembly Accountability Integrity and Administration Act* includes:

- The receipt and independent investigation of complaints relating to public interest disclosures (whistleblowing) from public employees against members and employees of the House of Assembly, its Statutory Officers, Speaker and Clerk.

LINES OF BUSINESS

In fulfilling its mandate, the Office of the Citizens' Representative provides the following lines of business.

1. Investigation and Mediation of complaints

The Office of the Citizens' Representative ensures that citizen's complaints and matters referred to it by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the House of Assembly or on its own motion are:

- a. Investigated and mediated in a timely, thorough, and objective manner;
- b. Mediated to the satisfaction of all stakeholders if possible;
- c. Reported upon in a concise and easily understood format;
- d. When appropriate, are subject to recommendations which would ameliorate the cause of the complaint and/or improve the overall provision of public service by departments and agencies.

2. Investigation of Whistleblower complaints

The Office of the Citizens' Representative accepts complaints of gross mismanagement from employees of Government against members and employees of the House of Assembly, its Statutory Officers, Speaker and Clerk, and ensures that:

- a. Subsequent investigations are carried out as expeditiously and informally as possible;
- b. All parties are treated with procedural fairness;
- c. Investigations and subsequent reports are thorough, unbiased and fair.

VALUES

The following values are fundamental to all interactions and communications between the Office of the Citizens' Representative, citizens and public officials.

| <i>Value</i> | <i>Action Statement</i> |
|--------------|---|
| Fairness | Each individual undertakes to perform his or her duties in an open, unbiased and independent manner. |
| Respect | Each individual considers, weighs and appreciates the circumstances and contributions of others and communicates in a manner that enhances the working environment. |
| Ingenuity | Each individual respects the importance of precedent and corporate history but looks for new ways to enhance the Office's Mandate. All suggestions are respected, considered, analyzed and discussed to ascertain their effectiveness in meeting stakeholders needs. |
| Courage | While appreciating the vulnerability of citizens and the power of various government offices each individual exercises his or her duties emboldened by the principal of truth to power and the recognition that ultimately everyone strives for, and benefits from, excellence in the public service. |

PRIMARY CLIENTS

The primary clients of the Office of the Citizens' Representative are:

1. Citizens who allege they have been treated unfairly when pursuing or receiving access to public services;
2. Employees of Government who complain about gross mismanagement within the House of Assembly (whistleblowers).

Secondary clients include:

1. The House of Assembly and its Members;
2. The Lieutenant Governor in Council;
3. The Public Service.

VISION

A citizenry confident in a public service that is fair and grounded in integrity and good governance.

MISSION

By March 31, 2011 the Office of the Citizens' Representative will have implemented effective procedures to ensure consistent, timely and effective responses to citizens' and employees' complaints.

Measure: By 2011 the Office of the Citizens' Representative will have improved capacity to support fair, timely and effective investigations.

Indicators:

- Increased human resource expertise in conducting investigations.
- Enhanced investigative planning, execution and reporting.

GOALS

The Office of the Citizens' Representative commenced operations in 2002 and, for a variety of reasons, faced a daunting number of complaints and inquiries from citizens. A backlog ensued. By virtue of the appointment of an interim, and subsequently, a new Citizens' Representative and the introduction of sound management practices, that backlog was eliminated. The Citizens' Representative, and his staff, wish to see the Office evolve into a center of investigation leadership and excellence. The goals and objectives that follow facilitate that evolution.

By 2011, the Office of the Citizens' Representative will be the lead agency accountable for the investigation and mediation of complaints by citizens alleging administrative unfairness within the public service or gross mismanagement within the House of Assembly.

Measure: *Leadership and accountability in complaints investigation.*

Indicators:

- Developed flexible, timely and effective investigation techniques;
- Completed a review of governing legislation to ensure it adequately facilitates the investigation processes;
- Continued development and delivery of informative sessions about the Office's mandate and investigation processes.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: By March 31, 2009 the Office of the Citizens' Representative will have increased communication with citizens and government employees about its role and mandate.

Measure: *Increased communication of the role and mandate of the Office of the Citizens' Representative with citizens and government employees.*

Indicators:

- Increased number of targeted presentations to interest groups and opinion leaders;
- Initiated a strategy to disseminate print material to vulnerable groups which need an enhanced communication effort;

Objective 2: By March 31, 2011 the Office of the Citizens' Representative will have consulted with its clients and determined whether its governing legislation facilitates its mandate.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2011 the Office of the Citizens' Representative, will, after explaining its role to citizens (2009) and assessing its legislation (2010) undertake a review of its investigation techniques and professional development undertakings.