



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Legislative Assembly	Early Resolution and Education Officer	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
12-15631	Hay River	Office of the Ombud

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Early Resolution and Education Officer is responsible for complaints intake and facilitating informal resolutions to complaints from the public relating to matters of fairness in public administration. The Officer also provides guidance, assistance and education to government and the public on principles of administrative fairness and the role of the Ombud and supports the Ombud's public education activities by delivering training, drafting and proofreading content for publication, arranging for advertisements, and promoting the office at public events.

The position also performs various administrative and financial duties.

## SCOPE

The Ombud is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly responsible under the Ombud Act for resolving and/or investigating complaints about fairness of public administration and providing public education about the role of the Ombud and principles of administrative fairness. The Ombud produces public reports about these activities. The role of the Office of the Ombud is to be an impartial advocate for administrative fairness; the Office does not advocate for either complainants or public bodies. The incumbent's work contributes directly to the protection of the right to administrative fairness in the NWT.

Located in Hay River, and serving the population of the entire NWT, the Early Resolution and Education Officer is one of two staff reporting to the Ombud. The incumbent must have sound judgment, excellent verbal and written communication skills, be detail-oriented, organized and self-motivated to manage a caseload of complaints and to coordinate various public education projects and activities related to the administration of the Act.

The Officer uses active listening and interview skills to gather information from complainants and authority staff, and researches and analyzes information to confirm jurisdiction and to identify issues for further assessment. The incumbent exercises independent judgment under the *Ombud Act* and in accordance with internationally recognized principles of administrative fairness and office policy and procedures to determine whether a complaint should be referred to an external process or resource or opened for further follow-up.

Where the Officer identifies an opportunity to resolve less complex issues within a short time frame through immediate action by a territorial public body, the Officer may conduct early resolution processes. Through a principled approach operating independently of either party, the Officer independently engages collaboratively with public service employees and complainants using expert communication and conflict resolution skills, to develop solutions through facilitated contact, information exchange, negotiation, internal review by public agencies, and other informal and non-adversarial approaches. Where early resolution is not appropriate or cannot resolve issues within reasonable timelines, the Officer recommends alternative actions to the Ombud, including moving to a formal investigation.

The Officer supports the Ombud's public education mandate through delivering training, providing advice to government and the public, drafting and proofreading content for publication, arranging for advertisements, and promoting the office at public events. The Officer also carries out some administrative and financial duties such as processing invoices and Visa statements, coordinating health and safety matters, troubleshooting IT and equipment problems, and purchasing supplies and services.

The Officer has daily contact with the general public and senior officials in public bodies, and frequent contact with other independent legislative offices in the NWT and elsewhere in Canada, as well as officials from other levels of government, and non-governmental organizations in coordinating public education activities. The incumbent must have the ability to maintain impartiality and to handle sensitive information with strict confidentiality. Improper handling of complaints, wrong information or confidentiality breaches could have legal consequences and/or lead to loss of public trust in the office, and damage to the interests of members of the public. Poor communication and/or presentation skills could detract from the office's public education efforts and compromise the office's credibility with the public and authorities and overall effectiveness.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. Facilitates Early Resolution of Complaints**

- Analyzes incoming complaints by interpreting legislation and principles of administrative fairness, reviewing documents, and interviewing complainants to confirm the Ombud's jurisdiction, to determine whether there are grounds for accepting a formal complaint, to determine whether a complaint should be referred to an alternate resource, and to determine whether an early resolution process is appropriate.
- Contacts deputy ministers, CEOs or designates to advise them of new complaints, and requests information from appropriate officials either verbally or in writing.

- Where appropriate, facilitates communication between authorities and complainants and/or negotiates informal resolutions.
- Makes recommendations to the Ombud for the disposition of complaints and administrative suggestions to public bodies.
- Ensures complete and accurate information is recorded and documented in the case management system.

## **2. Complaint Intake and Follow-Up**

- Receives incoming general enquiries and complaints from the public by email, phone or in person.
- Explains the Office's mandate and processes; advises clients on options, including other complaint processes; helps clients complete intake forms; takes complete and detailed information, communicates clearly and empathically.
- Makes referrals to other services or agencies where appropriate.
- Follows up with clients regarding progress on complaints.
- Provides active offer for official language services and coordinates interpreter/translator services when needed.

## **3. Supports the Ombud's public information and education activities**

- Promotes the Office of the Ombud at events such as tradeshow and conferences.
- Delivers training on principles of administrative fairness.
- Proofreads annual and special reports and contributes to content of reports.
- Coordinates training and promotional events through contact with event organizers, participant registration, advertising, preparation of materials, booking travel arrangements, finding and booking meeting space and other logistical arrangements.
- Arranges for advertising of the office's services and events.
- Coordinates design and publication of promotional materials, and contributes to content.
- Procures and keeps an inventory of promotional items.
- Prepares written project plans including budgets, timelines, and options or courses of action and associated decision points.

## **4. Various Finance and Administrative Duties**

- Maintains and ensures adequate supply of office equipment and supplies.
- Requests and evaluates quotes for and purchases supplies and services.
- Resolves problems with equipment including telephones, copier/printer, videoconferencing system and wifi, and acts as contact person for IT and communications support.
- Acts as office coordinator for health and safety, including communicating information, maintaining records, monitoring health and safety performance, and orienting new staff and visitors to safety protocols, and acting as contact person for landlord regarding building and maintenance issues.
- Maintains and updates formal letter templates; proofreads, prepares and formats Ombud correspondence for signature and distribution; and tracks responses.

- Files electronic documents, undertakes annual update of electronic filing system, and ensures security of confidential information.
- Maintains designation as a Commissioner for Oaths.
- Verifies, codes and processes invoices in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and the GNWT's Financial Administration Manual.
- Reconciles monthly credit card statements.
- Organizes and compiles financial information for the Ombud and assists with annual budget and variance report preparation.
- Acts as contact for Legislative Assembly Corporate Services staff on finance and administration matters.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

### **Physical Demands**

The incumbent works at a desk and may sit for extended periods of time but has frequent opportunity to stand or move about.

### **Environmental Conditions**

Work is performed in a typical office environment. May work in the office alone on occasion. Occasional travel within the NWT may be required for training and promotional events.

### **Sensory Demands**

The incumbent will be required to exercise focused concentration to simultaneously actively listen to and record information from complainants.

The incumbent works with members of the public who may be distraught or upset. The incumbent must be aware of their surroundings, and able to recognize high risk volatile situations to quickly determine a course of action to ensure their own safety and the safety of the office.

### **Mental Demands**

The incumbent will frequently be subjected to task interruptions and the need to coordinate multiple activities and adjust priorities in order to meet deadlines.

The incumbent will be exposed to sensitive information which will require the utmost confidentiality.

The incumbent will be intermittently exposed to angry or distressed clients and/or upsetting information about clients' circumstances which may lead to emotional stress.

The incumbent will need to exercise empathy, active listening, tact and diplomacy with clients in a wide range of circumstances and with a wide range of communication abilities, which can be mentally and emotionally taxing.

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Advanced writing and proofreading skills, including the ability to translate policy and legal information into plain language.
- Specialized knowledge of the *Ombud Act*, the role of the Ombud, and administrative fairness principles.
- Proven research and analytical skills to gather necessary information and interpret and apply policy, legislation and principles to specific circumstances.
- Proficient interpersonal and communication skills, both written and oral, including active listening, in order to convey information concisely and accurately, communicate difficult information and decisions to members of the public who may be distraught or upset, and to assist members of the public to provide all relevant information with respect to complaints.
- Proven conflict resolution skills to facilitate informal complaints resolutions.
- Cultural sensitivity, and ability to communicate courteously and effectively with and provide services to people with diverse abilities, experiences and challenges, including mental illness, physical or cognitive impairment, and personal crisis.
- Proven ability to deliver presentations to large and small groups and to manage group dynamics.
- Proven organizational and time and project management skills, and ability to manage competing priorities and projects.
- Ability to maintain neutrality and confidentiality and handle sensitive information.
- General knowledge of community resources and government programs.
- Strong computer literacy, including word processing, spreadsheet, email, planning, presentation, and database software applications, and internet research. Experience with graphic design software would be an asset.
- Demonstrated ability for self-control when serving members of the public who demonstrate challenging behaviours, including opposition or hostility, and ability to quickly assess and respond appropriately to abusive and/or threatening communication and behaviour.
- Ability to work flexibly and supportively with a small team in a collaborative high-volume environment, including self-awareness to recognize when to seek help, advice or other support from colleagues.
- Knowledge of and demonstrated skill in office administration practices and procedures including reception, records management, using and maintaining office equipment and supplies, office workplace safety, and interacting with service providers.
- Attention to detail in taking down information, and preparing and processing financial documents and correspondence.

### **Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:**

The completion of a bachelor's degree in a relevant discipline with significant writing and critical thinking components (e.g., humanities, social sciences, law); 2 years progressive experience in a role requiring interpretation of policy and legislation and communicating about policy, legal or other complex issues in plain language; and 2 years experience in a complaints resolution or similar role requiring conflict resolution skills.

These qualifications can also be met through a combination of education and relevant experience.

## **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **Position Security** (check one)

- ☐ No criminal records check required
- ☒ Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- ☐ Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

### **French Language** (check one if applicable)

- ☐ French required (must identify required level below)
  - Level required for this Designated Position is:
    - ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION
      - Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
    - READING COMPREHENSION:
      - Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
    - WRITING SKILLS:
      - Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
- ☒ French preferred

### **Indigenous Language:** Indigenous Language - Not Specified

- ☐ Required
- ☒ Preferred