

**Office of the
Citizens' Representative**

***2007/08
Activity Plan***

Message from the Speaker

I am pleased to present the first Office of the Citizens' Representative Activity Plan for 2007/08. It reflects the Office's values, missions and its goals for the planning cycle. Pursuant to the provision of the Transparency and Accountability Act the office has been characterized as a Category Three entity. The office will comply with the typical three year planning cycle as outlined in the legislation as the expiration of this plan.

This Activity Plan was proposed by the Citizens' Representative. While acknowledging the independence of his office, and recognizing my obligation under the Act, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of the specific goals and objections contained therein.

Honourable Harvey Hodder

Speaker

House of Assembly

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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 compliment of five including:

- one senior investigator
- three investigators, and
- one office administrator

In 2005, the last reporting period, the Office of the Citizens' Representative received 386 complaints/inquiries, completed 257 inquiries/investigations and made 101 recommendations to government.

To accomplish its work, the Office has a budget of \$467,800 for 2006/07.

This Office can be contacted by:

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MANDATE

The Office of the Citizens' Representative derives its mandate from the provisions of the *Citizens' Representative Act*. It includes,

- the receipt and independent investigation of complaints of unfairness from citizens concerning matters of administration by a government department or agency.
- 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.

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. Promoting Good Governance

The Office of the Citizens' Representative identifies systematic issues within the public administration which may have an impact on a large number of citizens and:

- a. concisely articulates a concern which may warrant public comment.
- b. develops and conducts investigations into these concerns, and
- c. reports upon the result of the investigation with an overall goal of alleviating citizens' concerns and improving the delivery of government programs.

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 citizens who allege they have been treated unfairly when pursuing or receiving access to public services.

Secondary clients include:

- a) the Lieutenant Governor in Council
- b) the House of Assembly and
- c) 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' complaints.

1) **Measure:** *By 2011 the OCR will have improved capacity to support fair, timely and effective investigations.*

Indicators:

- Increased human resource expertise in conducting investigations.
- Provided leadership in effective investigative techniques.

GOALS

- 1) By March 31, 2008 the Office of the Citizens' Representative has increased its capacity to inform citizens about its work.

Measure: Increased communication.

Indicator:

- Website has been updated.
- Brochures have been developed and distributed.

- 2) By March 31, 2008 the Office of the Citizens' Representative will have identified bench marks to assess efficient and effective ombuds investigations.

Measure: Identification and Implementation

Indicator:

- Researched average time frame for concluding investigations in other jurisdictions.
- Ascertained the average time frame for the Office of the Citizens' Representative to complete investigations.
- Developed realistic average time frames for the Office of the Citizens' Representative to complete investigations.