

The Record

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When we understand what to expect, when the service delivery is fair and makes sense, our service experience can be positive.

*Good service not only teaches us how to navigate a system, it helps reduce unrealistic expectations.
Read about what Fiona Crean, Toronto's Ombudsman has to say.*

Your Ombudsman

It's all about service

I just want to say

Toronto has much to be proud of—yet cities can often be dehumanizing places. They are structured to support anonymity and privacy.

Having so many people living in dense areas requires considerable organization – red lights/green lights, pedestrian

When people complain to us and tell us that they felt services were not being delivered fairly, that is when it becomes an ombudsman concern.

City services need to be accessible and fair for all Torontonians.



Good public service = good relationships

crossings, parking meters, line-ups, written and unwritten rules, forms to be filled out, strict dates to be observed... numbers assigned.

But being “just a number” doesn’t support a sense of community. If we want to live in a city among neighbours who care about us, we need to actively work towards it. Treating one another respectfully is part of that equation.

Good public service is a critical ingredient to a healthy, respectful community.

When we understand what to expect, when the service delivery is fair and makes sense, our service experience can be positive.

Good service not only teaches us how to navigate a system, it helps reduce unrealistic expectations.

Our experience is that many public servants are dedicated employees who care deeply and often go the extra mile. They recognize the benefits of fixing a small problem before it becomes a big one.

And then there are those who

...recognize the benefits of fixing a small problem before it becomes a big one.

need a reminder that their job is to serve the residents and citizens of this city.

At our office we try to walk the talk. You will find our service standards on our website. We want to know if we are not meeting the mark so that we can improve.

We try to get things right the first time but if we haven’t done our best, we want your feedback. We have our own complaint

handling in place to respond quickly and thoroughly.

We are interested in improving how we deliver services, so hearing only the good can’t tell us how to make things better.

When we all work to improve the way we treat one another

(or deliver service to one another), we can create positive attitudes,

reduce confusion, provide good service and meet reasonable expectations.

Fiona Crean,
Ombudsman



Complaints can tell you a lot

It may seem counter-intuitive to promote complaints, however the act of receiving and analyzing complaints is one way to evaluate your work.

Complaints can tell you about parts of your service or program that are not working.

You can use this information to re-allocate resources or support the need for more or less in this area or that.

Small misunderstandings left unaddressed can result in

a lot of time wasted by staff and management trying to fix things.

Addressing complaints quickly and thoroughly is an indicator of quality service. It is just good service to receive and listen to complaints.

Handling complaints well will foster good relations with the people Toronto Public Service helps. Torontonians, when listened to, can spread the word and become supporters of your program.

Tips on good complaint systems

1. **Try to resolve complaints at the frontline**
2. **Create a system to make sure complaints are dealt with**
3. **Give clear delegation to staff that defines their responsibility, scope of decision-making and limits to the remedies they can authorize**
4. **Provide training for staff regarding the complaint handling system**
5. **Provide training on listening, problem-solving and conflict resolution**
6. **Establish procedures for mediating and investigating complaints**
7. **Have time frames for complaint handling (turnaround times)**
8. **Have tools to capture complaints**
9. **Monitor effectiveness**

This fall our office will publish *Guide to an Effective Complaint Handling System*.

what's getting people hot

Census importance

Across the country people are debating the importance of collecting data through the census. The census began in 1867 and the census long form was collected from every third household beginning in 1971.

The importance of the census, especially the long form, is in the use of its information. It informs decisions about everything from services, city planning, business targets, funding, workforce planning to health care and much more. Without that detailed information, it is difficult to plan for the equitable distribution of services. Without solid data on disability, for example, City planning for everything from curb cuts to accessible modes of public transportation would be challenging.

Statistics Canada is internationally respected for the breadth, depth and accuracy of its data collection, analysis and application for the purpose of understanding Canada's richly diverse communities.

what's new



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Our website

In our efforts to be more accessible, we have been working on our website. We are using a program to analyze how many times people visit our site, the number of visits, how long people are on our site and what they are looking at.

We want to make sure our website visitors are able to quickly and easily find what they are looking for. In order to get information so we can improve our service, we are asking for feedback. If you visit our site, please let us know about your experience.

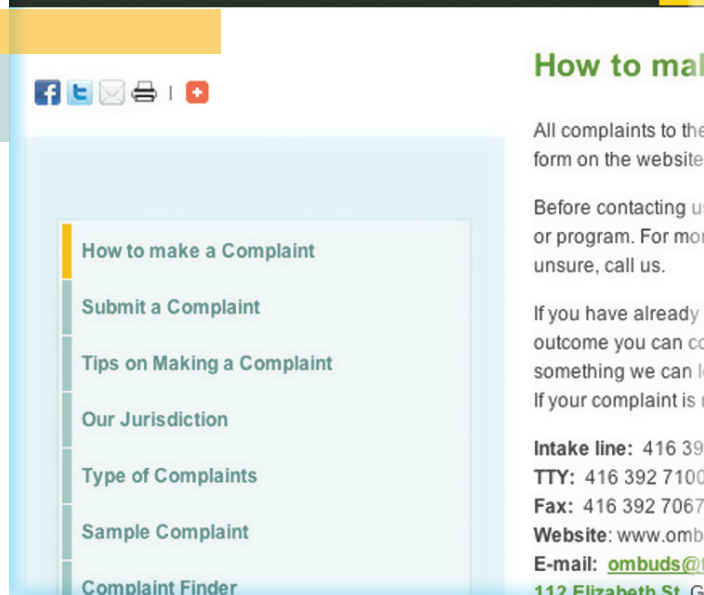
We have also added new features to make it easier for you to share our information by adding a “share” feature. Now you can “tweet” about us, post our information on your Facebook, comment about us on your blog and any number of other ways you would like to talk or write about our Office.

Look for our presence on social media in September!

Booking the Ombudsman

You can contact us with a request to have the Ombudsman speak at your event by clicking the “book the Ombudsman” button. Your request will be sent to us and we will do our best to arrange for the Ombudsman to be there.

“tweet” about us



If you would like the Ombudsman to speak, it is a good idea to send your request as far in advance as possible. If you simply would like to invite her to your event, send us an e-mail with the details to ombuds@toronto.ca.

talk to us

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The Office treats all communication in confidence.

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about Toronto's Ombudsman

Fiona Crean is the City of Toronto's first Ombudsman and the Office opened in April 2009.

Her years as Ombudsperson for York University and Executive Director of the Ontario Ombudsman's Office have given her significant experience in conflict resolution, good governance and promoting accountability in the public sector.

Prior to taking on her post, Fiona worked for a number of years at the Ontario Human Rights Commission and was the Assistant Deputy Minister in the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, responsible for addressing systemic racism and sexism.