



Presentation by the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario to the City of Toronto's Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs

Summary of the presentation

Ontario's *French Language Services Act* has been in force since 1989. Although it doesn't make French an official language in Ontario, it offers a broad array of rights to provincial government services in French.

It guarantees the right to obtain services in French from the institutions of the Legislature, ministries, boards, commissions and corporations of the provincial government and their third parties, as well as public sector bodies designated under regulations, including hospitals, daycares, universities and district social services administration boards. In Toronto, there are 21 designated agencies that are subject to the *French Language Services Act* and the Commissioner's jurisdiction. Central offices of government agencies must offer services in French across Ontario. Regional offices must offer services in French in 27 designated regions in Ontario (as of November 1st, 2024).

The Commissioner's role is to monitor the implementation of, and promote compliance with, the *French Language Services Act*, to investigate public complaints, to investigate systemic issues, to report publicly and to make recommendations to the provincial government for improving French-language services in Ontario.

In his presentation, the French Language Services Commissioner explains that, although municipalities are not subject to his jurisdiction under the *FLSA*, they may be required to comply with the Act when they act as a third party to the provincial government. This is the case, for example, where municipalities have an agreement with the Ministry of the Attorney General to administer matters relating to the *Provincial Offences Act*. This applies to the City of Toronto which, in this context, acts as a third party to the Ministry of the Attorney General of Ontario. The ministry is therefore responsible for ensuring that the City of Toronto offers services related to provincial offences in French.

The French Language Services Unit of the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario has received complaints about the City of Toronto regarding this issue. The Ombudsman's Office also handles thousands of complaints from the public about services provided by municipalities, school boards and post-secondary institutions across the province. Matters that fall within the jurisdiction of the City of Toronto Ombudsman must be referred to that office.