



<b>Classification:</b>	Band 1	<b>Position:</b>	Multiple
<b>Reports to:</b>	Manager of Intake and Early Resolution	<b>Location:</b>	Victoria
<b>Organization:</b>	Office of the Ombudsperson		

### Context:

The Office of the Ombudsperson's Intake and Early Resolution Team provides quality first-line service for the approximately 8,000 enquiries and complaints received by the office each year about the administration of programs and services by provincial and local government agencies. Under the delegated authority of the *Ombudsperson Act*, and in accordance with office policies and procedures, the team is responsible for assessing complaint jurisdiction, referring complainants to available review and appeal mechanisms, identifying matters of administrative fairness for potential investigation, conducting early resolution investigations, and providing assistance and information to members of the public.

### Job Overview:

Reporting to the Manager of Intake and Early Resolution, the Early Resolution Officer (ERO) is the first point of contact and analysis for all enquiries and complaints received by the Office of the Ombudsperson. The ERO works independently within a collaborative team environment to determine an appropriate course of action for the office in responding to diverse members of the public who contact the office by phone, in person, or in writing with concerns about government services and agencies. The ERO uses active listening, conflict resolution and interview skills to gather information and conducts preliminary analysis to assess jurisdiction and identify issues for further assessment. The ERO exercises discretion under the *Ombudsperson Act* and according to office policy to determine whether a complaint should be referred to an external process or resource, or opened for further follow-up.

Where an opportunity is identified to resolve less complex issues within a short time frame through immediate action by a provincial or local government authority, the ERO may conduct Early Resolution investigations. Through a principled approach operating independently of either party, the ERO engages collaboratively with public service employees and complainants to develop solutions through facilitated contact, information exchange, and internal review by public agencies. Where Early Resolution is not appropriate or cannot resolve issues within prescribed timelines, the ERO escalates complaints to investigative staff for further assessment.

### Accountabilities:

- Provides front-line service to members of the public by explaining the Ombudsperson's role, collecting relevant information and addressing concerns regarding government services and programs.
- Conducts initial complaint analysis by interviewing complainants by telephone or in person, reviewing correspondence, determining whether or not a complaint is jurisdictional, and identifying potential issues relating to the administration of government services and programs for further assessment.

- Determines whether new complaints should be referred to alternate resources, internal government complaint processes, or appeal or review mechanisms.
- Assesses suitability of complaints for Early Resolution by identifying contact challenges, informational needs, or opportunities for resolution through immediate review or follow-up by public service employees.
- Conducts Early Resolution investigations by communicating in writing and by telephone with appropriate public service employees, obtaining information from complainants and public authorities, and negotiating commitments from public service employees to actions to resolve identified issues.
- Escalates suitable complaints to investigative staff for further assessment.
- Researches relevant policies, procedures and applicable legislation to analyze complaints and identify suitable complaint referrals.
- Identifies emerging issues, jurisdictional questions, and complaint trends and escalates potential systemic concerns, jurisdictional issues, and new referral opportunities to the manager for further assessment.
- Summarizes and documents complaints and communications in the case tracking database system.
- Writes correspondence to members of the public and public service employees.
- Shares responsibility for coverage of the office's Intake telephone call centre system.
- Provides back-up to the Manager of Intake and Early Resolution as required.
- Participates in Ombudsperson tours and community outreach activities.
- Assists in training and mentoring new staff and identifies opportunities for improvements to internal policy and practice.
- Other duties as required by the Manager.

## Qualifications and Competencies:

### Education and Experience:

- Completion of a relevant post-secondary degree or diploma in a minimum two-year post-secondary program.
- Minimum two years of relevant experience.
- Preference may be given to applicants who demonstrate experience responding to, or assisting with complaints about government services or programs.

### Willingness statement:

- Some travel is required.

### Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- Knowledge of the *Ombudsperson Act* and role of the Ombudsperson.
- Understanding of the concepts and principles of administrative fairness and natural justice.
- Broad understanding of government programs, legislation and public policy, and the administration of public services in British Columbia.
- General knowledge of community resources.
- Demonstrated ability to conduct research and analysis of complaints by applying legal rules or policies to diverse fact pattern and determining an appropriate course of action.

- Ability to exercise discretion and delegated authority within a statutory framework in an unbiased, objective and impartial manner.
- Effective oral interviewing and negotiation skills.
- Ability to communicate in writing in an effective and clear manner to varying audiences.
- Demonstrated ability to set and adjust workload priorities and tasks in response to changing demands and emerging issues.
- Ability to learn and effectively work with case management database systems and call centre administration software.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively with individuals with diverse abilities and challenges, including mental illness, physical or cognitive impairment, and personal crisis.
- Demonstrated ability for self-control when serving members of the public who demonstrate challenging behaviours, including opposition or hostility.
- Ability to work flexibly and supportively with a small team in a collaborative high-volume environment.

### **Competencies:**

- **Analytical Thinking** – the ability to comprehend a situation by breaking it down into its components and identifying underlying complex issues. This is based on verification of the validity or accuracy of all information.
- **Organizational Commitment** – the ability and willingness to align one’s own behavior with the needs, priorities and goals of the organization, and to promote organizational goals to meet organizational needs.
- **Problem Solving** –the ability to analyze problems systematically, organize information, identify key factors, identify underlying causes and generate solutions.
- **Information Seeking** – is driven by a desire to know more about things, people or issues. It implies going beyond the questions that are routine or required in the job. It may include "digging" or pressing for exact information; resolution of discrepancies by asking a series of questions; or less-focused environmental "scanning" for potential opportunities or miscellaneous information that may be of future use.
- **Service Orientation** – implies a desire to identify and serve customers/clients, who may include the public, co-workers, other branches/divisions, other ministries/agencies, other government organizations, and non-government organizations. It means focusing one’s efforts on discovering and meeting the needs of the customer/client.
- **Self-Control** – the ability to keep one’s emotions under control and restrain negative actions when provoked, faced with opposition or hostility from others, or when working under stress. It also includes the ability to maintain stamina under continuing stress.
- **Teamwork and Co-operation** – the ability to work co-operatively within diverse teams, work groups and across the organization to achieve group and organizational goals.
- **Listening Understanding and Responding** – the desire and ability to understand and respond effectively to other people from diverse backgrounds.

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