

Job Description: Deputy Ombudsman (Housing)

Position Purpose

Reporting to the Ombudsman, the Deputy Ombudsman (Housing) will provide strategic leadership and operational oversight of systemic investigations and systems reviews about housing discrimination and structural hurdles in the City of Toronto's planning and service delivery of adequate housing as a human right.

The mandate is to independently address substantive, procedural and equitable fairness issues as they pertain to access and treatment of people who are unhoused or living in housing precarity, along with the entire housing continuum from shelter access to affordable housing. The Deputy Ombudsman (Housing) will monitor the implementation of the City's housing policy, its progress against human rights outcomes in meeting the goals, timelines, and outcomes as set out in its ten-year plan and Housing Charter, conducting research, engaging with affected groups, and assessing systemic and structural housing issues.

The role will oversee and direct all operations within the housing unit of Ombudsman Toronto including investigations, systems reviews, budget, human resources, legal issues, policy, research and data, engagement, and dialogue.

Major Responsibilities

- Determine and provide oversight of systemic investigations into the City's development and delivery of the housing continuum, ensuring its policies of working towards a progressive realization of human rights in housing are followed.
- Oversee systems reviews in areas such the City's progress in providing access to shelters and supportive housing with a human rights lens.
- Examine and support the senior public service in delivering policy from a human rights perspective in all housing and homelessness areas such as multi-tenant housing.
- Review, analyze, and monitor baseline data against established metrics.
- Develop and maintain (using ombuds lens that integrates a human rights lens) community engagement strategies and dialogue to ensure appropriate housing focus.



- Build relationships across the City's housing system, including but not limited to establishing working relationships with areas responsible for housing and homelessness, committees of City Council and other bodies.
- Engage and consult with external housing bodies to learn from and share best practices.
- Recommend policy and procedural improvements grounded in human rights principles and administrative fairness to align with legislation, regulations, policies, and procedures.
- Provide economic and social rights, housing, and related strategic advice to the Ombudsman.
- Serve as a resource for City officials formulating policy or procedures, raising issues because of a gap between stated goals and current practice, particularly as they impact on a human rights framework for housing.
- Develops, designs, and implements functional policies and programs that make major changes in overall business performance based on long-term needs. Contributes to the continuous improvement of the unit's performance through analysis and the development and implementation of sound management practices and procedures, provides staff with direction and guidance, processes, and tools to increase efficiencies and improve effectiveness of the services provided.
- Manages the day-to-day operation of all assigned staff including the scheduling, assigning, and reviewing of work. Authorizes and controls vacation and overtime requests. Monitors and evaluates staff performance, approves salary increments and recommends disciplinary action when necessary.
- Leads and motivates a diverse workforce, ensures effective teamwork, provides resolution to controversial employment issues, ensures high standards of work quality and organizational performance, continuous learning and encourages innovation in others.
- Develops, recommends, and administers the annual budget for the office, and ensures that the unit's expenditures are controlled and maintained within approved budget limitations.
- Provides leadership, direction, and management to assigned staff.
- Acts as subject matter expert on administrative fairness and human rights in housing.
- Facilitates, mediates, and conciliates resolution of systemic complaints. Uses diplomacy and negotiation skills to facilitate communication among parties in conflict.
- Manages computerized case management system and hard copy case files as they pertain to the Housing Unit



- Acts as a conduit for anticipating and identifying potential issues and trends as they arise.
- Oversees complement management and staffing activities including, hiring, training, performance evaluation and support of staff.
- Provide oversight and guidance to the housing unit staff on the development and application of fairness and human rights standards and guidelines.
- Ensure advice and programming are embedded in human rights principles and substantive, procedural and equitable fairness.
- Ensure that the unit's mandate and standards are followed and that the principles of natural justice, fairness and equitable service delivery are at the core of the work.
- Manages the office's relationship with the City of Toronto, from which it operates at arm's length, but has many points of intersection (e.g., Budget, Human Resources, Information Technology, Procurement).
- Provide strategic advice to support the day-to-day operational activities in the unit.
- Model and contribute to an environment which supports and values equity, inclusion, and organizational change.
- Foster and maintain cooperative working relationships with elected officials, public servants and broader community stakeholders including Ombuds colleagues and external organizations dealing with housing.

Qualifications

- Completion of post-secondary/university education and/or equivalent experience.
- Progressive experience, usually demonstrated through senior roles in the field of Ombuds, human rights and/or administrative law.
- Considerable knowledge of and experience in housing with specific emphasis on an economic and social human rights framework
- Proven understanding of housing as a human right.
- Proven experience in conducting administrative investigations and systems reviews and demonstrated experience in managing same.
- Experienced manager who knows how to lead, motivate, and coach with compassion, drive, and results.
- Demonstrated experience in thinking strategically and acting pragmatically to deliver results.
- Proven political acuity and demonstrated ability to be a trusted advisor and give sound advice to senior public servants in advancing fairness and the progressive realization of human rights in housing.



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- Excellent negotiating skills with sound judgement and excellent decision-making.
- Acts with integrity and maintains high ethical standards.
- Excellent interpersonal and management skills, including ability to lead staff.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience in applying substantive, procedural and equitable fairness principles.
- Exceptional communication skills with demonstrable experience in investigative report writing.
- Proven experience and skill in influencing others and being diplomatic with excellent skills of persuasion.
- Highly developed problem solving and analytical skills.
- Highly developed and demonstrable skills in conflict resolution.
- Ability to work and make decisions independently.
- Ability to work with sensitive information with complete confidentiality.