



Mayor Rebecca Alty
President
Northwest Territories Association of Communities

Dear Mayor Alty:

As you may be aware, the Northwest Territories Ombud was established in 2019. The Ombud is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly with a mandate to resolve complaints about administrative fairness in GNWT Departments and agencies.

I am writing to make you aware of section 16 of the Northwest Territories *Ombud Act*, which came into force on January 28, 2022. Section 16 creates a new option for municipal and indigenous governments to refer administrative matters to the Office of the Ombud for investigation. This is an entirely voluntary process. Section 16 does not give the Ombud any new authority to take complaints directly from citizens about community governments. Any reports made by the Ombud under this provision would remain confidential and would only be provided to the community government. The Ombud's role in these cases is essentially that of a consultant on administrative fairness.

The Act requires that any costs and expenses for an investigation and report be paid by the referring government. However, depending on the scope of the investigation, costs may well be minimal or none, and this provision should not discourage community governments from approaching the Office for an initial discussion.

The Ombud has a public education mandate as well as a complaints resolution mandate, and my hope is that section 16 will contribute to our outreach work by opening a door for conversations about administrative fairness with community governments. Please do not hesitate to refer your members to our Office, or to contact me should you wish to receive any more information.

Sincerely,

Colette Langlois
Ombud

c: Sara Brown, Executive Director, NWTAC