



ALBERTA OMBUDSMAN
Focused on Fairness

STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN 2005-2008

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INTRODUCTION

When I assumed the position of Ombudsman for the Province of Alberta, I inherited an office and staff that was performing in a satisfactory manner and providing a valued service to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and its citizens. However, I observed the Office needed a strategic focus which reflected a thorough analysis of the key contributors to stakeholder value. Those key contributors are:

- Clarity of roles, organization design and leadership;
- Capability developed through training, development and succession planning; and
- Commitment to priorities developed through performance management and alignment of rewards and recognition with organizational priorities.

Attention to these key factors leads to accountability and a focus on critical success factors which are based on a clear understanding of our Vision, Mission and Values. The end result is enhanced stakeholder value. The vehicle which will take us there is a well developed business strategy as outlined in this Strategic Business Plan.

The process by which the Strategic Business Plan for the Alberta Ombudsman office has been developed has been one which involved the entire staff of the Office in inclusive dialogue, discussion and assessment of environmental factors and key internal factors. In addition, we have benefited from the input of key stakeholders, Ombudsmen in other jurisdictions and recognized experts in organizational design and business planning. This resulted in an agenda to develop our Strategic Business Plan that included:

- A review and update of our Vision, Mission, and Values;
- An analysis of our **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats (SWOT analysis);
- Environmental scanning;
- Stakeholder input;
- Development of Goals, Objectives and Key Initiatives; and
- Evolution of a scorecard and measures.



With a clear understanding of our Mission, clarity of our role and responsibilities, and a commitment to creating value for our stakeholders, this Three-Year Strategic Business Plan will be the compass that guides the Alberta Ombudsman office from 2005 to 2008.

It is my pleasure to offer this Strategic Business Plan on behalf of all staff of the Alberta Ombudsman office for the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

G. B. (Gord) Button
Alberta Ombudsman, Legislative Assembly of Alberta



This Strategic Business Plan provides an overview of the Goals, Objectives and Key Initiatives that will provide future direction for the Office. It will be reported on and updated annually to maintain our focus on continuous improvement.

A. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Alberta Ombudsman office is established by statute under the *Ombudsman Act*, RSA 2000, Chapter 0-8. The Ombudsman is an Officer of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. The Office and position were established in 1967 and this was the first Provincial Ombudsman of general jurisdiction in Canada.

There are three principle factors which define a parliamentary or classical Ombudsman and distinguish this Office from others which use the title of Ombudsman. To be held to be a parliamentary Ombudsman, the Office must:

- be established by Charter, Constitution or Statute;
- be empowered to act independent of the appointing authority; and
- be structurally free from the entities or agencies it is investigating.

These principles are recognized internationally. This Strategic Business Plan will guide the activities of this Office and provide a framework for administrative answerability for the Ombudsman without impinging on the independence of the Ombudsman from the appointing authority.

By virtue of the *Ombudsman Act*, the Ombudsman has authority to investigate allegations of administrative unfairness by government departments, agencies, boards and commissions. In addition, the Ombudsman's jurisdiction extends to the administrative processes of professions governed by the *Regulated Accounting Profession Act*, the *Regulated Forestry Profession Act* and the *Veterinary Profession Act*. The *Health Professions Act* provides a framework to give authority to the Ombudsman to investigate allegations of administrative unfairness against the Health Profession Colleges. The Ombudsman is granted investigative authority over each College as the schedule for each College comes into force. To date, the Ombudsman has been given authority to investigate complaints of seventeen of the twenty eight Colleges. In addition, amendments to the *Ombudsman Act* passed in May of 2003 provide a framework for the Ombudsman's investigative authority to extend to Patient Concerns Resolution Processes in the Regional Health Authorities, the Alberta Cancer Board and the provincial Mental Health Board. The regulation under the *Regional Health Authorities Act*, administered by the Department of Health and Wellness was passed effective September 1, 2006.



The Ombudsman is often described as the “*Watchdog for Administrative Fairness.*” This role is accomplished by pursuing informed objectivity to serve citizens. The Ombudsman is neither an advocate nor an adversary. Rather, he attempts to resolve problems and conflict through impartial, objective and neutral investigations of the facts. This results in a conflict resolution orientation which focuses on solving the problem and improving administrative practices rather than affixing blame. The emphasis is not on the complainant or the entity being investigated, it is on fairness.

The Ombudsman may commence an investigation upon receipt of a written complaint by any person or on his own motion. Additionally, any Committee of the Legislative Assembly or any Minister may refer a matter to the Ombudsman for investigation.

B. CORE BUSINESS

The core business of the Ombudsman is the investigation of incidents of alleged maladministration leading to problem resolution and improvement of administrative practices of jurisdictional entities.

C. VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Through a series of meetings, brainstorming sessions and facilitated workshops, the staff of the Office reassessed and updated the Vision, Mission and Values that guide us. This assisted in focusing on the clarity, capability and commitment that will lead to accountability and value added outputs for our stakeholders.

VISION

“The Alberta Ombudsman is the recognized leader for independent investigation, promotion and support of administrative fairness.”

MISSION

“The Alberta Ombudsman independently and impartially promotes high standards of administrative fairness through investigations, recommendations for change and education.”



VALUES

“To obtain our Vision and deliver our Mission, our values are fundamental to all our interactions and communications.”

We Value:

- Fairness
- Competency
- Respect
- Integrity
- Equity
- Confidentiality

We also value a working environment that fosters personal and professional growth and development, collaboration and teamwork, and innovation and creativity.

D. SWOT ANALYSIS – Highlights

The SWOT Analysis identified the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the organization. It provides a basis for the identification of Goals, Objectives and Key Initiatives in the Strategic Business Planning process. It should be noted that this analysis reflects a cross section of input from all staff and also incorporates the outcomes of a professionally facilitated workshop arranged to focus on our planning process.

Strengths – Can be leveraged to reach the Vision

- Dedicated, experienced staff
- Flexibility of work environment
- Good reputation and credibility with authorities
- New management and a fresh direction
- Healthy workplace – security, benefits, systems, programs

Weaknesses – Must be improved upon to meet our Vision

- Lack of public awareness of the Alberta Ombudsman
- No proactive investigations in recent years (Ombudsman “*own motion*”/Ministerially ordered investigations)
- Perception of a lack of resources
- Lack of effective business planning, implementation and measurement
- Need for better internal communication and teambuilding
- Turn over of personnel and requirement to orient/train new staff



Opportunities – Help establish priorities to reach our Vision

- Success of recent public awareness initiatives
- Expanded and enhanced services – Alternative Complaint Resolution (ACR)
- Recent changes to the *Ombudsman Act* – new jurisdictions
- Build on internal efficiencies
- Increased use of technology
- New staff – realignment to investigative capacity
- New Management personnel and structure

Threats – The challenges or risks

- Resistance to the change process
- New roles, responsibilities and processes
- Increasing complexity of investigations and new jurisdictions
- No strategic business plan or performance measures
- Low public awareness, confusion about the role of the Ombudsman
- New staff with limited directly related investigative experience

E. GOALS

Goals are defined as the long-term results we want to achieve in fulfilling our mandate.

They are:

- High quality service
- Fair and accountable administration
- Alignment of resources, policies and processes
- Public awareness and education



F. OBJECTIVES

Objectives are defined as the core business objectives we must succeed at to accomplish our goals.

They are:

- Manage the workload in an efficient and effective manner
- Pursue excellence in investigations
- Improve morale, workplace wellness, and competency through communication, new hires, self development, training, performance management and adherence to our values
- Enhance the knowledge and understanding of the role of the Ombudsman

The Goals and Objectives are interrelated as depicted in the Matrix on the following page.



VISION <i>“The Alberta Ombudsman is the recognized leader for independent investigation, promotion and support of administrative fairness.”</i>				
OBJECTIVES	GOALS			
	High Quality Service	Fairness & Accountable Administration	Alignment of Resources, Policies & Processes with Core Business Objectives	Public Awareness & Education
Manage the workload in an efficient and effective manner	X		X	
Pursue excellence in investigations	X	X		
Improve morale, workplace wellness and competency through communication, self-development, training, performance management and adherence to our values	X		X	
Enhance the knowledge and understanding of the role of the Ombudsman		X		X



G. KEY INITIATIVES FOR 2006/07

Several key initiatives will be pursued to ensure we attain each objective and therefore accomplish the goals.

OBJECTIVE #1:

To Manage the Workload in an Efficient and Effective Manner

KEY INITIATIVES: Measures and Targets

1. **Establish and implement a system for regular reviews of the Policy and Procedure Manual - by March 2007**
2. **Annually review and revise file management guidelines and templates**
3. **Equitable assignment of workload – target: 20-30 files per investigator**
4. **Oral and email inquiries are responded to appropriately and promptly**
(Benchmark established)
 - a. Email inquiries responded to within 24 hours 90 % of the time
 - b. Telephone inquiries responded to within 4 hours 90 % of the time
5. **Enhancement of Case Tracking System (CTS) capabilities**
 - a. Review contractual arrangements of the British Columbia Ombudsman CTS contract – by January 2007
 - b. Accuracy and consistency in statistical reporting benchmarked – by March 2007
 - c. Targets set for accuracy and consistency in CTS statistics – by April 2007
6. **Budget management system established**
 - a. Expenditure reviews and forecasts available to Senior Management Team quarterly – by the 20th of July, October and January; and monthly for the 4th Quarter
7. **Evaluate responsibilities of investigators and complaint analysts to determine impact on ability to manage core responsibilities in an effective manner**
 - a. Review responsibilities and investigate alternate methods of delivering core business – November 2006
 - b. Determine requirements/alternatives and affect on budget submission – December 2006



8. Review staffing levels

- a. Review potential staff impact to effectively manage the increase in jurisdiction and delivery of own motion investigations – Dec. 2006
- b. Develop the business case required to secure additional funding / FTEs.

OBJECTIVE #2:

To Excel in Investigations

KEY INITIATIVES: Measures and Targets

1. Investigations of written complaints are completed within an acceptable time frame

- a. Benchmark current statistics – assess annually
- b. Targets established for 2006/07 written complaints to ensure complaints are completed in an acceptable time frame
Two measures: One based on all written complaints received; the second based on the subset of written complaints closed as ACR files and formal investigations.

	Written Files	Complaints Resolved
Completed within 90 days	75%	32%
Completed within 180 days	80%	50%
Completed in 1 year	90%	75%
Completed within 2 years	100%	100%

- c. Establish targets for 2007/08 - by March 2007
- d. Timely completion of ACRs – 90% completion within 30 days

2. File management systems in place

- a. Suitability for ACR examined at opening of all files
- b. Progress of all investigations reviewed by the Deputy Ombudsman on a monthly basis

3. Complainants are contacted by investigators and progress reported early and often

- a. Complainants to be responded to within 14 days of receipt of complaint – Target 90% within 14 days; 100% within 30 days
- b. Complainants contacted within 10 days of receipt of file – Target 85%
- c. Complainants updated on status of investigation at least every 30 days – Target 80% in 2005/2006



OBJECTIVE #3:

To Improve Morale, Workplace Wellness and Competency Through Communication, Self Development, Training, Performance Management and Adherence to our Values

KEY INITIATIVES: Measures and Targets

2. **Sufficient qualified/competent investigative staff are in place to meet the responsibilities of the Office**
 - a. Two new positions approved and staffed – by April 2007
 - b. Create entry level investigator positions in Edmonton and Calgary; additional administrative support in Edmonton – by April 2008
 - c. All employees participate in annual performance review – by March 2007
 - i. Performance measures communicated and consistently applied
 1. Individual performance objectives set
 2. Learning plans in place
 - ii. Appropriate performance management system in place linked to performance evaluation and rewards systems
 - d. Office-wide training requirements defined – identify needs at November 2006 retreat. Target Alternate Dispute Resolution training in 2007
 - e. Staff participating in development opportunities – Establish target for training/learning days per year – by December 2006
 - f. Develop retention strategy / succession planning – by September 2007
3. **Recruitment strategy developed to address capacity for Ombudsman’s “own-motion” investigations**
 - a. Needs to be identified – by September 2007
 - b. Qualified staff available to pursue “own motion” investigations without impacting daily workload – by April 2008
4. **Demonstrated improvements in communication**

(Benchmark – by January 2005 and March 2006; assess annually)

 - a. Increase in % of staff that feel internal office communication is effective – Target 85%

OBJECTIVE #4:

To Enhance Knowledge and Understanding of the Role of the Ombudsman

KEY INITIATIVES: Measures and targets

1. **Develop communication strategy for new jurisdictions and name recognition of Alberta Ombudsman – by March 2007**



2. **Implement communication strategy** – annually
 - a. Promote awareness through participation in
 - i. Ministry and jurisdictional authority consultations
 - ii. MLAs
 - iii. Employee Expo
 - iv. School-At-The-Legislature Program
 - v. Community group presentations
3. **Annually review and update website to ensure it is user friendly and instructive** – by October 2007
4. **Educate jurisdictional entities on principles of Administrative Fairness**
 - a. Delivery to four jurisdictional entities per year
5. **Assess satisfaction of complainants and organizations with investigational outcomes**
 - a. Develop survey instrument for complainants and departments – by June 2007
 - b. Satisfaction benchmark established – by June 2007
 - c. Performance measures for % of future improvements determined – by October 2007
6. **Develop Strategic Business Plan for the Alberta Ombudsman office (annually update)**

H. SCORECARD (KEY INITIATIVES)

Appendix “A” is a compilation of the Key Initiatives placed in a “scorecard” format for easy reference.

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ALBERTA OMBUDSMAN

Appendix “B” provides an overview of activities and accomplishments of the Alberta Ombudsman since the appointment of the new Ombudsman in September 2003. The accomplishments are categorized according to the objectives set out in the Strategic Business Plan for 2005 – 2008.



Appendix “A” Key Initiatives Scorecard Update (2005-2008)

NOTE: Future Targets are noted in **green**.

Targets which have not been/will not be met are noted in **red**.

✓ = Met; X = Not Met; O = Met Late; * = Exceeded

ACTIONS	REVIEW DATE(S)	TARGET MET	COMMENTS
Objective #1: To Manage the Workload in an Efficient and Effective Manner			
(1) Update the Policy and Procedure Manual	July 2005	✓	The policy and procedure manual has been updated to provide additional information for the new investigators. Policies all need to be reviewed for content and consistency in format as well as whether they reflect current Ombudsman positions. All form letters are being reconsidered for content and plain language - revisions will be complete by fall /06 .
Establish and implement a system for regular reviews a. Review content to determine criteria for inclusion b. Define: policy, directive & guideline	March 2007		
(2) File management guidelines and templates updated and placed in Policy and Procedure Manual			
a. File structure guidelines	April 2005	O	Established 09/05
b. Investigation Plan template developed	April 2005	✓	
c. Investigation Report template updated	January 2005	✓	In place 04/05
d. Alternative Complaint Resolution (ACR) policy developed	January 2005	✓	Developed 01/05
e. ACR Process Pilot	April 2005	✓	ACR is a successful alternative to formal investigations. 220% increase in ACR files in 2005/06. Successful completion of ACRs has increased from 60 to 63%.
f. Annually review and revise templates	March 2007		
Equitable assignment of workload			
a. Investigator average caseload	March 2007		Target: 20-30 files



✓ = Met; X = Not Met; O = Met Late; * = Exceeded

ACTIONS	REVIEW DATE(S)	TARGET MET	COMMENTS
Objective #1: To Manage the Workload in an Efficient and Effective Manner (cont'd)			
(3) Oral and email inquiries are responded to appropriately and promptly (benchmark established and % improvements)			
a. Email inquiries responded to within 24 hours 90% of the time (review annually)	March 2006 March 2007	*	Within 24 hours = 95% Within 2 days = 100%
b. Telephone inquiries responded to within 4 hours 90% of the time (review annually)	March 2006 March 2007	*	Responded to within 2 hours = 90% Responded to within 4 hrs = 99% Responded to within 8 hrs = 100%
c. Intake resource information correlated and available online	April 2006	✓	Intake resource available online – rather than developing an in-house resource which would require frequent updates, investigative staff have elected to use government websites and have other resources bookmarked on their computers.
(4) Enhancement of CTS capabilities			
a. Assess opportunity to link into the British Columbia Ombudsman CTS server as a licensee	March 2005 January 2007	✓	Link to BC server – 04/05 Review contractual arrangements – Target 01/07
b. Expanded reporting structures in place	September 2005	✓	Expanded reporting structures - 04/05
c. Accuracy and consistency in statistical reporting benchmarked	March 2006 March 2007	X	In progress - Target 03/07 Reporting needs to be accurate, consistent and reflect performance measurements
d. Targets set for accuracy and consistency in CTS statistics	January 2006 May 2007	X	In progress - Target 04/07
(5) Policy Project reinstated			
a. Process for current updates established and functional	April 2005	O	09/05
b. Backlog of entries completed	April 2006	X	Action discontinued; CTS enhancements replace the need
(6) Budget management system established			
a. Quarterly expenditure reviews and forecasts available to SMT	January 2005 20 th of July, Oct & Jan (monthly for 4 th Qtr)	✓ ✓	Quarterly forecasts to SMT - 07/06, 11/06, 1/07 weekly 03/07



✓ = Met; X = Not Met; O = Met Late; * = Exceeded

ACTIONS	REVIEW DATE(S)	TARGET MET	COMMENTS
Objective #1: To Manage the Workload in an Efficient and Effective Manner (cont'd)			
(7) Evaluate responsibilities of investigators and complaint analysts to determine impact on ability to manage core responsibilities in an effective manner			
a. Review responsibilities and investigate alternate methods of delivering core business	November 2006		Determine how timely completion of investigations is impacted by intake, correspondence, meetings, projects - Target November staff retreat
b. Determine requirements/implications/affect on budget submission	December 2006		
(8) Review staffing levels			
a. Determine potential staff impact to effectively manage the increase in jurisdiction and own motion investigations	December 2006		Patient Concerns Resolution Process (Regional Health Authorities) and the Professional Colleges
b. Develop the business case required to secure additional funding / FTEs	December 2006		



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ACTIONS	REVIEW DATE(S)	TARGET MET	COMMENTS																																
Objective #2: To Excel in Investigations (refer to Footnote 1)																																			
(1) Investigations of written complaints are completed within an acceptable time frame																																			
a. Benchmark current statistics (2004/05 and 2005/06 statistics are based on formal investigations only. 2006/07 targets have been adjusted to benchmark all written complaints and complaints resolved (formal investigations and ACRs))	April 2005 March 2006	✓ X	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">04/05</th> <th style="text-align: center;">05/06</th> <th style="text-align: center;">05/06</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>i. Files closed</td> <td style="text-align: center;">208</td> <td style="text-align: center;">202</td> <td style="text-align: center;">target</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ii. Issues closed</td> <td style="text-align: center;">n/a</td> <td style="text-align: center;">484</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>iii. completed within 90 days</td> <td style="text-align: center;">22%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">32%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>iv. completed within 180 days</td> <td style="text-align: center;">55%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">23%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">65%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>v. completed within 1 yr</td> <td style="text-align: center;">89%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">61%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">94%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>vi. completed within 2 years</td> <td style="text-align: center;">99%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">99%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">2005/2006: focus on closing older files</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		04/05	05/06	05/06	i. Files closed	208	202	target	ii. Issues closed	n/a	484		iii. completed within 90 days	22%	8%	32%	iv. completed within 180 days	55%	23%	65%	v. completed within 1 yr	89%	61%	94%	vi. completed within 2 years	99%	99%	100%	2005/2006: focus on closing older files			
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c. Timely completion of ACRs	April 2007		Target: 90% completion within 30 days																																
(2) File management systems in place																																			
(Benchmark established with % improvements for following years)	April 2006	✓	Deputy Ombudsman audits are completed on a monthly basis																																
a. Consistent file structure		✓	10/05																																
b. Each investigation follows Investigation Plan	April 2005	✓	Beginning 04/05																																
c. Consistent Investigation Report format	April 2005	✓	Beginning 04/05																																
d. All supported complaints reviewed by SMT	April 2005	✓	Target 100%																																
e. Suitability for ACR examined at opening of all files	January 2005	✓	01/05																																
Benchmark application of ACR	April 2005	✓	80 ACRs attempted; 45 were concluded successfully																																
Establish annual targets / monitor trends	April 2006	✓	Each file is considered for suitability as an ACR																																
f. Progress of all investigations reviewed by the Deputy Ombudsman on a monthly basis		✓	Benchmarks and consistent processes established 05 – all closed files to be audited for compliance 01/06 (audit tool for closed files has been developed)																																



✓ = Met; X = Not Met; O = Met Late; * = Exceeded

ACTIONS	REVIEW DATE(S)	TARGET MET	COMMENTS
Objective #2: To Excel in Investigations (cont'd)			
(3) Complainants are contacted by investigators and progress reported early and often			
(Policy developed)	June 2004	✓	
a. Complainant to be responded to within 14 days of receipt of complaint	March 2007		Within 14 days = 90% Within 30 days = 100%
b. Complainants contacted within 10 days of investigator accepting a written complaint for investigation (target: 80% for 2005/06; 85% for 2006/07)	March 2006 March 2007	*	Within 10 days = 85% Within 20 days = 93%
c. Complainants updated on status of investigation at least every 30 days (target 80%)	March 2006 March 2007	X	The CTS Reports continue to be inaccurate but is a work-in-progress.
(4) Compliance audit of investigator open files			
a. Investigator files randomly reviewed to ensure they adhere to established file management system	March 2007		
b. Develop a checklist to aid in file reviews	December 2006		



✓ = Met; X = Not Met; O = Met Late; * = Exceeded

ACTIONS	REVIEW DATE(S)	TARGET MET	COMMENTS
Objective #3: To Improve Morale, Workplace Wellness and Competency Through Communication, Self Development, Training, Performance Management and Adherence to our Values			
(1) Sufficient qualified/competent investigative staff are in place to meet the responsibilities of the Office			
a. Create entry level investigator positions in Edmonton and Calgary	January 2005	✓	Six Investigator I positions established – 01/05
b. All positions staffed	May 2005	✓	Recruitment and Investigators are in place for all 6 positions 02/05 - 09/05
New positions approved & staffed	April 2007		New jurisdiction; increased workload; own motion
c. All employees participate in annual performance review	February 2006 April 2006 March 2007	O O	Target 100% - 04/06 95% achieved
i. Performance measures communicated and consistently applied			
1. Individual performance objectives set	February 2005	✓	Senior Investigators: Administrative Staff: Investigator I – orientation/learning objective set @ time of orientation
2. Learning plans in place	September 2005	✓	Senior Investigators: Investigator I:
ii. Appropriate performance management system in place linked to performance evaluation and rewards system	April 2006 March 2007		Target 04/06
d. Office-wide training requirements identified	September 2005 March 2007	X	Identify training needs at Nov. 2006 retreat Provide Alternate Dispute Resolution skills training
e. Staff participating in development opportunities – establish target for training/learning days per year	April 2006 December 2006	✓	Training target (\$1500/ 3 days) per employee Set budget for 2007/08 opportunities
f. Develop retention strategy / succession plans	September 2007		



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ACTIONS	REVIEW DATE(S)	TARGET MET	COMMENTS
Objective #3: To Improve Morale, Workplace Wellness and Competency Through Communication, Self Development, Training, Performance Management and Adherence to our Values (cont'd)			
(2) Recruitment strategy developed to address capacity for Ombudsman's "own motion" investigations			
a. Needs to be identified	September 2005		04/05
b. Qualified staff available to pursue "own motion" investigations	April 2006 April 2008	✓	Target 04/06 Qualified staff available; inadequate resources to perform own motion without impacting daily workload
(3) Demonstrated improvements in communication (Benchmark)			
a. Increase in % of staff that feel internal office communication is effective	January 2005, (assess annually) January 2005 March 2006 February 2007	✓ ✓ ✓	01/05 – 45% agree repeated 02/06 – 89% agree Target: Survey 02/07
b. Establish regular meeting structure to effectively communicate to and between staff.		✓	Weekly investigator meetings; monthly all staff meetings; annual staff retreat; staff survey
(4) Staff adhere to Vision, Mission and Values of the Office			
a. New Vision, Mission and Values statements on website	April 2005	O	On new website – 10/05
b. New Vision, Mission and Values statements in Annual Report	December 2005	*	11/05



✓ = Met; X = Not Met; O = Met Late; * = Exceeded

ACTIONS	REVIEW DATE(S)	TARGET MET	COMMENTS
Objective #4: To Enhance Knowledge and Understanding of the Role of the Ombudsman			
(1) Develop communication strategy			
a. Assess consultants and enter into contract	January 2005	✓	Consultant Contract: 01/05
b. Develop target audiences, communication tools, web enhancements, consistent branding for all communications	September 2005	✓	Target audiences determined
		✓	Web enhancements and branding – completed March/05
	March 2007		Strategies to be determined.
			Target: patient concerns (Regional Health Authorities)
c. Explore other communication opportunities	September 2005	X	Other communication opportunities – to be determined
(2) Implement communication strategy	September 2005		
a. Promote awareness through participation in			
i. Ministry and jurisdictional authority consultations		✓	2004/05 = 10
		✓	2005/06 = 10
ii. MLAs			2004/05 = 8
			2005/06 = 6
iii. Employee Expo			Did not occur in 05/06
iv. School-At-The-Legislature Program (SATL)		✓	2004/05 = 9
		✓	2005/06 = 25
			2006/07 = 33 (proposed)
v. Community group presentations		✓	2004/2005 = 2
		✓	2005/2006 = 5
(3) Participate in survey to establish benchmark for			
a. awareness of Ombudsman Office	February 2006	✓	IPSOS-REID survey
b. awareness of role of the Ombudsman	February 2006	✓	IPSOS-REID survey
(4) Annually review and update website to make it user friendly and instructive	September 2005	✓	11/05
	October 2006	✓	Web updated Oct.06; print friendly pages
	October 2007		



✓ = Met; X = Not Met; O = Met Late; * = Exceeded

ACTIONS	REVIEW DATE(S)	TARGET MET	COMMENTS
Objective #4: To Enhance Knowledge and Understanding of the Role of the Ombudsman (cont'd)			
(5) Educate jurisdictional entities on principles of Administrative Fairness			
a. Develop education strategy	September 2005		Revised Target 04/06. On website 10/05.
b. Delivery to four jurisdictional entities per year	April 2006 (and annually)	✓ *	Target to begin 04/06 6 - 05/06 - 06/07
(6) Assess satisfaction of complainants and organizations with investigational outcomes			
a. Develop survey instrument	July 2005 June 2007	X	Revised Target 06/07 Survey public and departments
b. Satisfaction target established	April 2006 June 2007	X	Revised Target 06/07
c. Performance measures for % of future improvements determined	April 2006 October 2007		Targets established for 2008/09 – 10/07
(7) Develop Strategic Business Plan for the Alberta Ombudsman			
a. SWOT analysis completed by all staff		✓	
b. Environmental Scan		✓	
c. Vision, Mission and Values developed through staff collaboration and input		✓	
d. Workshop developed for all staff to provide actions, plans and metrics for the Strategic Business Plan		✓	11/04 3/06
e. Strategic Business Plan finalized	December 2004	✓	
f. Strategic Business Plan presented to Standing Committee on Legislative Offices	February 2005	✓	02/05 12/05
g. Annually update to ensure its currency	March 2007		Develop new 3 year plan through to year 2009/10

¹ In 2004/2005, the Office experienced significant attrition due to retirements. At the end of 2004/2005, we were in the very early stages of orienting new investigator and were barely managing the workload with 3 investigators. Each had a caseload of 40-50 open files. With the 6 new investigators recruited in 2005, our target for caseload is 20-30 files. The staffing workload during this time is also reflected in the increased length of time required to complete an investigation. In April/05, we began tracking files by issue of administration in addition to number of files. This will enable us to reflect the complexity level of the investigation within files.



APPENDIX “B”

Appendix “B” provides an overview of activities and accomplishments of the Alberta Ombudsman since the appointment of the new Ombudsman in September 2003. The accomplishments are categorized according to the objectives set out in the Strategic Business Plan for 2005 – 2008.

Accomplishments of the Alberta Ombudsman

Objective #1: To manage the workload in an efficient and effective manner.

1. Senior Management Team (SMT) formed in July 2004. Includes Senior Counsel to the Ombudsman, Deputy Ombudsman and Ombudsman for operational matters. Director, Corporate Services is included for administrative, planning and financial issues.
2. Management structure streamlined with the elimination of two Director of Investigative Services positions, and the creation of the Deputy Ombudsman position.
3. Deputy Ombudsman has responsibility for all investigations in Edmonton and Calgary offices.
4. All supported complaints involving recommendations to organizations are reviewed by SMT.
5. Intake function reorganized to provide callers with best possible advice and direction.
6. Budget management system instituted to provide quarterly updates on expenditures and forecasts to the SMT.
7. SMT involved in developing budget projections and request to the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices.
8. Negotiations underway to acquire new office space for the Calgary office to meet space requirements and address deficiencies in current offices.
9. Planning workshop held to finalize elements of the Strategic Business Plan with input from all staff.
10. Cross-functional working group created to pursue Alternative Complaint Resolution process as a form of informal problem solving. Deputy Ministers, administrative heads of agencies and executive heads of professional organizations were advised this process was being trialed. All feedback received to date has been very positive. Full implementation in 2005.
11. Calgary office relocated in September 2005.
12. Policy and Procedure Manual updated.
13. File management guidelines and templates developed and/or updated.
14. Benchmarks established for response times to oral and email inquiries. Targets exceeded.
15. British Columbia Ombudsman Case Tracker System enhanced to serve as our case management and statistical reporting system.
16. Increased jurisdiction : as of November 2006, 19 of 28 health profession colleges under the Health Professions Act had schedules proclaimed allowing investigations of their complaint handling process. Effective September 1, 2006 our Office has the authority to investigate patient complaints with the Patient Concerns Resolution Process within the Regional Health Authorities, including the Alberta Cancer Board and the Alberta Mental Health Board.



APPENDIX “B” Cont’d

Accomplishments of the Alberta Ombudsman:

Objective #2: To excel in investigations.

1. Policy created to require personal contact with complainants on an early and regular basis.
2. Cross-functional working group established to develop a new Investigation Plan and Investigation Report template.
3. Regular file review process implemented.
4. Complaint and file processing routine changed to eliminate inefficiencies.
5. Process developed to follow up on recommendations to ensure implementation by organizations.
6. All staff involved in a SWOT analysis to determine our current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
7. Benchmarks for completion of formal investigations established to work towards completing investigations within an acceptable time frame.
8. Suitability for ACR examined at opening of all files.
9. Progress of all investigations reviewed by the Deputy Ombudsman on a monthly basis.
10. Complainants are contacted by investigators and progress reported early and often. Benchmarks established to ensure minimum standards are achieved.

Objective #3: To improve morale, workplace wellness and competency through communications, self development, training, performance management and adherence to our values.

1. Staffing action underway to fill three vacant investigator positions to handle increased workload.
2. Additional administrative support part time position staffed in Edmonton office to assist investigators.
3. Weekly investigator meetings hosted by the Ombudsman for all operational staff.
4. Monthly all staff meetings hosted by the Ombudsman.
5. Weekly meetings with investigators in the Edmonton and Calgary offices hosted by the Deputy Ombudsman.
6. Monthly SMT meetings to discuss administrative, planning and financial issues.
7. Vision, Mission and Values updated with input from all staff.
8. Learning and Wellness accounts for each staff member developed to encourage workplace wellness and continuous learning.
9. Staff attended a “best practices” visit to the Saskatchewan Ombudsman offices.
10. Staff member visited British Columbia Ombudsman Office to assess new upgrades to the Case Tracking System.



APPENDIX “B” Cont’d

Accomplishments of the Alberta Ombudsman:

11. Senior staff attended the VIII World Conference of the International Ombudsman Institute, the United States Ombudsman Association annual conference and the Canadian Counsel of Parliamentary Ombudsman conference.
12. New staff attended the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman Investigations Course.
13. Three staff members attended sessions as part of the Development Programs co-sponsored by the Personnel Administration Office and the University of Alberta.
14. Cross-functional teams established to address staff identified priorities of Investigation Report, Investigation Plan, ACR and Communication.
15. Six investigator positions approved and staffed in 2005.
16. All employees participated in annual performance reviews: individual performance objectives set and learning plans in place.
17. Demonstrated improvement in internal office communication. The percent of staff that feel internal office communication is effective increased from 45% in 2005 to 89% in 2006.
18. Investigators participated in the 2006 National Ombudsman Workshop in Victoria: Building Excellence in Investigations

Objective #4: To enhance the knowledge and understanding of the role of the Ombudsman.

1. Advertising campaigns ran in daily newspapers throughout Alberta and on public transit vehicles in Edmonton and Calgary.
2. Cross-functional working group created to pursue a new communications strategy.
3. Communications Consultant hired to assist with the development of a communications strategy.
4. Ombudsman met with Deputy Ministers of departments and administrative heads of organizations most often subject to investigations.
5. Ombudsman staff are participating in the School-At-The-Legislature Program by making presentations to students on a bi-weekly basis; weekly commencing Sept. 2006.
6. Presentations have been made on 29 occasions to various audiences to explain and promote the Alberta Ombudsman in 2004/05. There were 46 in 2005/06.
7. The Annual Report for 2003/2004 was redesigned and new information included to provide a better overview of the work of the Office.
8. The Ombudsman and Senior Counsel to the Ombudsman have worked with officials from the Department of Health and Wellness to develop the required Regulations that will lead to our jurisdiction being expanded to the Patient Concerns Resolution Process within the Regional Health Authorities and to the remaining colleges under the *Health Professions Act*. The Regulation was passed on September 1, 2006 granting our Office the authority to investigate complaints from patients unsatisfied with the patient concerns resolution process.



APPENDIX “B” Cont’d

Accomplishments of the Alberta Ombudsman:

9. The Ombudsman made a presentation to the 2004 Spring Constituency Outreach Seminar for Administrative Constituency Assistants and the 2004 Calgary Administrative Constituency Assistants Workshop, and has visited 8 Constituency Offices. This initiative is ongoing with the goal of visiting all Constituency Offices.
10. Consistent branding of all communications established.
11. Website enhanced to make it user friendly and instructive.
12. Participated in a survey to establish a benchmark for awareness of the Alberta Ombudsman and its role.