

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE BOARD
COMMISSION DE SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA**

27 October 2025 / 27 octobre 2025

Submitted by / Soumis par:

Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police d'Ottawa

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**SUBJECT: SAFE WORKPLACE PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025
(OCTOBER 1, 2024 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2025)**

**OBJET: PROGRAMME SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL- RAPPORT ANNUEL DE 2024
– 2025 (OCTOBRE 1, 2024 À SEPTEMBRE 30, 2025)**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Service Board receive this report for information

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

**Que la Commission de service de police d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du
présent rapport à titre d'information.**

BACKGROUND

As per Ottawa Police Service Board (the Board) Policy CR-1 Positive Workplace, it is the responsibility of the Chief of Police to submit an annual report to the Board that fulfills the requirement to ensure that there are procedures or practices in place that contribute to a positive and respectful workplace. Remaining Policy CR-1 requirements are reported to the Board through separate reporting mechanisms throughout the calendar year in alignment with the Board's annual Calendar of Monitoring Requirements.

The Ottawa Police Service (OPS) is committed to fostering a safe, equitable, healthy and respectful workplace for all members, which has led to the development of the Safe Workplace Program (SWP).

This report provides the Board with updates related to the Service's SWP and outlines usage and outcomes of the program for the period of October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025.

DISCUSSION

Overview: Safe Workplace Program

The Safe Workplace Program encompasses the work of various units who provide transparent and consistent service to members and who work to improve workplace psychological safety, including an internal workplace complaint process.

The Service has maintained the five-pillar approach (Understand, Prevent, Support, Respond, and Restore) that encompasses a holistic approach to improving workplace culture.

Throughout the reporting period, steps have been taken by the Service to balance the prioritization of all five program pillars as well as maintaining the continuum of resolution options available for all members, which includes the recent amalgamation of the Workplace Conflict Resolution Unit (WCRU) and the Safe Workplace Program (SWP) under one branch: the Safe Workplace Branch, reporting to the Chief Human Resources Officer, as of September 15, 2025.

The SWP is undergoing a full review. This review commenced in 2025 in coordination with the Senior Officers Association (SOA) and the Ottawa Police Association (OPA). We expect that recommendations for changes will be delivered in 2026. The review is also being driven by feedback received from a number of interest holders, including OPS membership, the OPA, and the SOA. The review is being undertaken by a third party.

Program Activities 2024-2025

Understand Pillar

The understand pillar focuses on facilitating organizational understanding and managing program effectiveness to identify early opportunities for improvement and integration within all pillars. The following provides a summary of the progress made on the foundational activities in this area:

1) Policies and Procedures

Safe Workplace Program policies and procedures are designed to uphold organization commitments under the Ontario Human Rights Code, the *Occupational Health and*

Safety Act and the *Community Safety and Policing Act* in order to foster a workplace that is protected from all forms of harassment, violence, discrimination, and reprisal.

The SWP policy and procedures are currently under review as part of the program review exercise.

2) Monitoring and Reporting

The Program uses case management systems across each pillar to support a structured and consistent approach to data collection, identification of key themes and strengthened responsiveness to emerging challenges. A breakdown of complaint themes and trends are outlined in later sections of this report.

Monitoring and reporting on program effectiveness is crucial for ensuring continuous improvement. There is a third-party administrative review of the program currently underway that includes an audit of our current process, policy and structure, and a comparative analysis of best practices among other police services running similar programs. The result of this assessment will provide clear recommendations for the future development of the program, including those regarding program structure and resources. This review is expected to be completed by October 7, 2025.

3) Program Awareness

In order to build awareness of the program amongst OPS members, presentations have been delivered at internal events, engaging participants from various ranks and directorates. This has included Champions of Professional Practice (COPP) meetings, Joint Senior Officer Supervisor and Manager meetings, and an Employee Resource Group (ERG) Training Day.

Prevention Pillar

The Program's prevention strategy seeks to provide proactive initiatives to prevent discrimination, violence, reprisals, and harassment from happening in the workplace. It also takes steps to improve and enhance the culture of the organization and create a better work environment. The following provides a summary of the progress made on the foundational activities in this area:

1) Workplace Harassment, Discrimination, Violence Training Program

Within this reporting period, the Program has engaged the support of our internal curriculum designers to develop new training on workplace harassment, discrimination, violence and reprisal, and to clarify all members' duties under legislation. This refreshed training is set to be introduced Service-wide in Q1 2026.

2) Code of Professional Ethics

The OPS is committed to upholding high professional standards that align with the Service's core values. The Code of Professional Ethics, launched in April 2024, is aspirational and instills a sense of unified commitment to guide the conduct of all members, influence workplace culture, and outline an ethical framework that helps each member in delivering services to the community and interacting with colleagues in a professional, ethical, equitable, and inclusive manner. The implementation of the new Community Safety Policing Act (CSPA) Code of Conduct for Police Officers and the new CSPA Code of Conduct for Special Constables, along with training for the Code of Professional Ethics and integration into the OPS performance review cycle, occurred in early 2025.

3) Application of EDI Lens

As supported through the revised Equitable Work Environment Policy, the Service has diligently applied an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Lens to the SWP work at various levels. This has been done to proactively address all forms of potential discrimination in employment opportunity-related practices and decision-making. The Lens supports equitable and inclusive processes that address systemic inequities and provides guidance to advance equity within the OPS.

4) Champions of Professional Practice (COPP)

Through the Spark Strategy initiative, the SWP continues to work with the Champions of Professional Practice (COPP). The COPP is comprised of a group of members both sworn and civilian from all ranks who are ambassadors for the Strategy and who act as force multipliers for positive culture change and engagement. WCRU hosted a workshop with the Champions of Professional Practice working group. The Spark Strategy was invited back to work with the group on organizational culture related to a workforce that is disproportionately male. Later in the year, the COPP provided input on a new sexual violence and harassment training program (as mentioned above).

5) New Member Training

Throughout this reporting period, the OPS has worked diligently to continue training efforts, including the continued offering of Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) training. All new members are provided this training to ensure the entire Service is trained in preventative behaviours against all forms of workplace harassment, violence and discrimination. Bystander Training (ABLE 1.0) is continuing to be offered, and we are currently working on developing and rolling out Bystander Training 2.0, taking into consideration the Abdi Inquest Recommendations.

Additionally, the Program has delivered Ethical Leadership and Conflict Management to new recruits and new supervisors and has provided specialized training to requesting sections.

6) Ethics and Risk Detection

During this reporting period, we have completed the necessary groundwork to implement a risk detection program utilizing a “hearts and minds approach.” Risk is identified based on data available and information received and, in such cases, WCRU team members meet with chains of command to discuss issues of concern from an organizational cultural risk perspective. The primary objective of this pilot is to identify and highlight organizational cultural risks before they negatively impact members and turn into complaint files.

Support Pillar – Health, Safety, and Wellness

The following provides a summary of the progress made on foundational activities supporting Member wellness for OPS members:

1) Wellness Program Evaluation: Strategic Planning and Member Engagement

In 2024, the OPS, in collaboration with the Ottawa Police Association (OPA) and Senior Officers Association (SOA), launched a shared initiative to conduct a Wellness Program Evaluation, with the objective of enhancing understanding of Member wellbeing needs and programming. This included the deployment of evaluation and needs assessment surveys, as well as facilitated focus groups with Members, retirees, and family members. The feedback collected has informed the development of strategic plans for wellness programming across all three organizations that will be implemented over the coming years in a coordinated way (identified as “Development of a Shared Strategic Message – Healthy Living – Thriving Futures” below).

The initiative was grounded in a commitment to:

- Strengthen programming through Member-informed insights;
- Prioritize investment in comprehensive support systems;
- Ensure programming reflects the diverse experiences of all Members.

2) Development of a Shared Strategic Message – Healthy Living – Thriving Futures

Based on the outcomes of Wellness Evaluation noted above, the OPS, OPA, and SOA have co-developed a Strategic Partnership that supports Members across a continuum of care—prevention, intervention, and crisis response. The model is designed to:

- Reduce stigma surrounding mental health;
- Provide clear and accessible pathways to care;
- Empower Members to engage in healthy living and pursue thriving futures.

Each organization maintains its own program mandate and implementation plan, with tiered offerings tailored to its role; however, flexibility for collaboration remains a core principle, ensuring Member needs are prioritized.

3) OPS Wellness Operational Framework

The OPS has formalized its approach through the Wellness Operational Framework, which is structured around four key pillars:

- Holistic Well-being Support
- Early Engagement and Supportive Transitions
- Physical Health and Lifestyle Supports
- Engagement and Continuous Improvement

This framework guides the delivery of wellness programming and supports the Service's legislative responsibilities as an employer, including physical and psychological safety, abilities management and continuous improvement.

Respond Pillar

The Respond pillar includes the formal complaint intake, triage, and investigation processes. The Program Manager, SWP, operates in a centralized role that oversees the intake and triage of all complaints received and manages the third-party investigations when warranted.

The Program continues to receive complaints from members through a "no wrong door" approach, which is supported using a standardized complaint intake form, intake meetings with the Program Manager, and the centralized Triage and Resolution Committee. The File Trends Section of this report provides insight into the nature of the work done in this pillar.

Restore Pillar

The Restore pillar focuses on promoting a healthy, respectful, equitable and productive workplace, utilizing clinical staff, chartered mediators, and conflict coaches to provide a variety of restoration services. Restoration is crucial to the SWP Program, helping members and the organization heal after a workplace conflict or investigation. The pillar also creates a supportive place for members to debrief and unpack the outcomes of more formal processes.

1) Individual Restoration

Restoring members who have been involved in a complaint process can take many forms and may not be a linear process. Processes are being streamlined to glean more accurate and consistent statistics and metrics in future reporting cycles. To garner a better understanding of the restoration activities most utilized within the program for this reporting period, a breakdown of each activity has been explained below.

Individual files related to interpersonal conflict are often resolved through mediation or facilitated dialogue. Sometimes conflict coaching, behavioral interviewing, and / or remedial training on Respectful Workplace and/or Ethics is utilized as well.

2) Organizational Restoration

Within this reporting period, the main organizational restoration activities included the following:

- The adoption of the Mental Health Commission of Canada 13 Factors to Promote Psychologically Safe Workplaces. This is often used during Workplace Assessments, to create a standard baseline. These assessments are conducted using a format where the issues identified are not attributed to any individual and there is no complaint. It involves participants rendering an overview of the workplace, identifying possible causes of the conflict, and developing ways to address/resolve issues.
- As part of the WCRU Speaker Series, WCRU and the OPA hosted Dr. Adam Shoalts, who spoke to our members on Adversity and Resilience.
- WCRU members were trained and certified on different intervention tools such as: Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, EQi 2.0 and Workplace Conflict Assessments.
- WCRU teamed up with Wellness for Trauma Resilience presentations given to different teams and units.
- Creation of Conflict Conversations Training, which is in its final stages of completion, will be used for groups/teams and managers, and trains participants in techniques helpful when dealing with difficult conversations of the conflict variety.
- Large scale group intervention for a full directorate. This is currently being facilitated by an external consultant and WCRU. WCRU was involved in multiple group interventions during this reporting period, and they were resolved successfully.

File Trends

As previously noted, the OPS uses a “no wrong door” approach for members seeking to engage with the Safe Workplace Branch. Two primary avenues through which members can access the SWP are the Safe Workplace Program and the Workplace Conflict Resolution Unit:

Safe Workplace Program:

Between October 1, 2024, and September 30, 2025, the Safe Workplace Program received a total of 64 files through its intake mechanisms. Of these 64 files, 29 were received as formal complaint submissions through the standardized intake form. This compares to 27 formal complaint submissions being received in the previous reporting period (October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024).

Of the 29 formal complaints submitted to the Safe Workplace Program in this reporting period, five files are not included in the referral stats. Three of these five files reflect files that involved ongoing gathering of information due to members going on leave and two were withdrawn due to the member deciding to use another available process.

Of the 24 formal complaints that were triaged, 25% were referred to chain of command for action and follow-up, 21% were referred to the Professional Standards Unit, 17% were referred to the Workplace Conflict Resolution Unit, and 17% were referred to a third-party for investigation. The adoption of workplace harassment, discrimination and violence into the CSPA Code of Conduct for police officers, and workplace discrimination into the CSPA Code of Conduct for special constables, created an opportunity for our Professional Standards Unit (PSU) to conduct workplace investigations under their mandate. This has resulted in a higher rate of investigations being assigned to PSU and diverted from third-party investigators relative to previous reporting periods.

The most commonly alleged conduct noted in the 24 files processed through triage included workplace harassment (29%), workplace conflict (20%), discrimination (20%) and sexual harassment (16%).

Investigation File Status Overview

In the four (17%) cases where formal complaint submissions were processed through triage and determined to require a third-party investigation, three investigations were completed within 35-69 business days.

A breakdown of the open investigations is as follows:

- One investigation ongoing, initiated in September 2024 and expected to close October 2025. Delay due to multiple medical leaves.
- Two investigations are held in abeyance (one from previous reporting period, one from current reporting period) due to the principal party's long-term leave.

Of the investigations that have been completed in this reporting period, no substantiated claims were found to have met the definition of workplace harassment, violence, discrimination or reprisal.

It is important to mention that the completion of an investigation does not automatically signal the closure of a complaint. This can often be a difficult time for all involved members and the OPS is strengthening processes to ensure that all members continue to receive support and resources post-investigation to aid in their individual restoration process and to engage in efforts to repair the impacted unit at the conclusion of an investigation, no matter the findings.

Workplace Conflict Resolution Unit:

WCRU acts as an intake hub for complaints that do not meet the threshold required to go to the Safe Workplace Program. The WCRU team is well versed in conflict management, as well as the legislative requirements of reporting harassment, discrimination and violence and the associated thresholds. This allows for a large savings of money as we utilize the internal alternative dispute resolution resources that are available within the OPS.

During the reporting period, the Workplace Conflict Resolution Unit received 43 files, however, eight of these files were referred to the Safe Workplace Program based on the information provided.

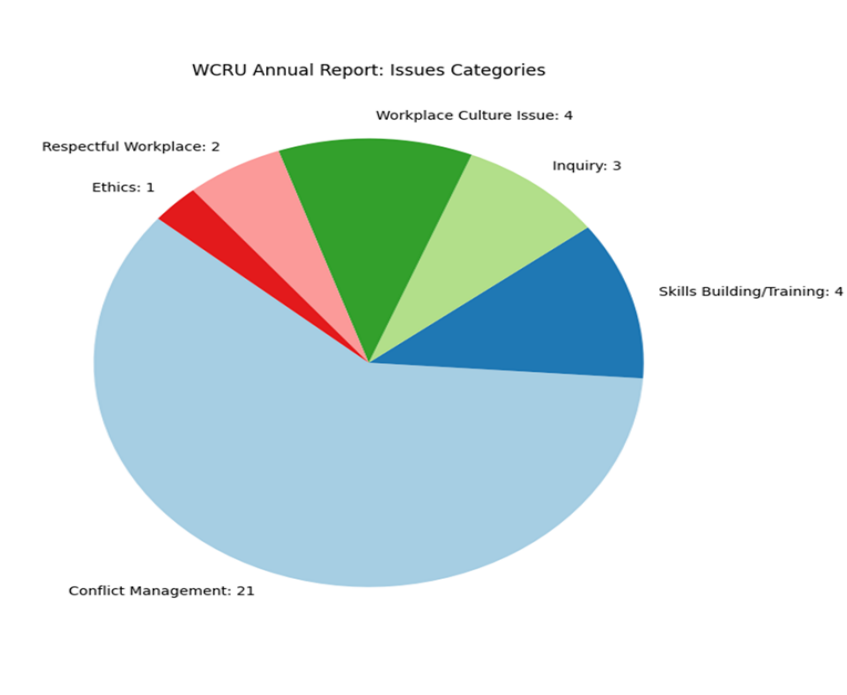
The remaining 35 files were ultimately managed and "owned" by WCRU as they were considered to be files that could be addressed through conflict management work in the areas of prevention and restoration activities.

To track trends and compare progress over time, file data is organized by six categories:

1. Conflict Management
2. Skills Building/Training
3. Ethics
4. Respectful Workplace
5. Workplace Culture
6. Inquiry

The breakdown of the 35 files received by WCRU across these six categories is represented in Chart 1 below, with Conflict Management ranking as the most common theme of all files received. It should be noted that members may have presented their complaint under the theme of Harassment, Violence or Discrimination; however, after fact finding, and as previously noted, those files were either referred to SWP and were triaged accordingly, or they were maintained by the WCRU, but they were renamed based on the reality of the information provided.

Chart One: Issues/ Complaint Themes received by WCRU



CONSULTATION

The Service conducted thorough consultations and worked closely with internal and external advisory groups including community members, OPS members, and Board members at time of program creation.

The Service continues this consultation approach by participating in working groups throughout the province that focus on respectful workplace initiatives in policing, meeting with OPS members and seeking individual feedback on their experience with the Program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Due to the cross-directorate nature of this program and its deliverables, it has required dedicated funding from across Human Resources and the Safe Workplace Branch, with some additional financial support from Legal Services. As the program continues to

mature and gain greater visibility, we are monitoring and tracking investigation and program related expenditures and will budget in future years accordingly.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

N/A

CONCLUSION

The SWP continues to be at the forefront of our commitment to advancing a positive organizational culture. This work cannot be done in isolation, and success has been achieved by working alongside Wellness, Labour Relations, Professional Standards Unit and the Chain of Command, and through initiatives like the DRIVE² Strategy and the Mental Health Change Initiative. Together, we aim to eliminate barriers and address incidents of violence, discrimination, harassment, and reprisal in a coordinated manner that prioritizes the well-being of all our members, which is achieved through trust. The Program is undergoing a full review. This review commenced in 2025 in coordination with the SOA and OPA. We expect that recommendations for changes will be delivered in 2026.

We uphold high professional standards for our members that align with the Board's strategic priorities of the Service. Together, we are driving remarkable progress and cultivating an environment where members can thrive at work and beyond. In the next reporting period, the Program will be making progress in rolling out new harassment and discrimination training, implementing applicable Wellness Evaluation recommendations, and working to expand restoration services and data usage. We also welcome the conclusion of the SWP review to better inform our efforts to enhance and strengthen the overall functioning of the program. The Service's commitment to evolving this program in response to the growing needs of our members remains unwavering. An update on all of these activities will be provided to the Board in March 2027.