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THE IMPORTANCE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS AND TRAINING

The 2024 annual reports for Saskatchewan's Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, Sharon Pratcher, were tabled in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly today.

In the Ombudsman report, Pratchler says her office received 4,064 requests for assistance from the public in 2024 – an 11% increase from 2023. Despite these high numbers, her team was able to complete their files on a timely basis while focusing on people.

Summing up the year, Pratchler said - "Now, more than ever, tools for conflict resolution are key."

She said, "By the time people arrive at our office they can be in distress and experiencing heightened emotions. Part of the role my team has is to try to resolve conflict and de-escalate the situation. Both our physical office and our approach to handling files emphasize a calm and trauma-informed environment and mindset."

In 2024, Pratchler welcomed James (Jim) Pratt as Ombudsman Saskatchewan's first Knowledge Keeper/Elders' Helper. The esteemed position upholds a place of honour within her office; firmly rooted in the guiding principles of truth and reconciliation and supports the office's unwavering commitment to the process of decolonizing and Indigenizing the office.

In addition, the report focuses on tools for decision-making, conflict resolution, and on continuous improvement in the delivery of provincial and local government services.

The office also continued to receive requests for assistance from public sector employees under *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*.

Reports are available at www.ombudsman.sk.ca/resources/annual-reports/. The Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner is a Legislative Officer operating under *The Ombudsman Act, 2012* and *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*.

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