Veterans Affairs Canada | Anciens Combattants Canada

Canada

ANNUAL REPORT

on the Administration of the *Privacy Act*

2025-2026

The Honourable Jill McKnight
Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defense

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Introduction

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) is pleased to present its annual report on the administration of the *Privacy Act* for the period from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026.

This report is prepared in accordance with section 72 of the *Privacy Act,* which requires the head of every federal institution to submit an annual report to Parliament on the administration of the Act during each fiscal year.

VAC remains committed to openness, transparency, and accountability. These principles reflect both legislative obligations and the Department's broader commitment to honouring the service and sacrifices of Veterans. In recognizing the significant role Veterans have played in shaping Canada, VAC strives to uphold the values they defended by protecting individuals' privacy rights, safeguarding personal information, and making every reasonable effort to assist individuals seeking access to their personal information.

Purpose of the Privacy Act

The *Privacy Act* grants individuals the right to access and correct personal information about themselves that is under the control of a government institution. The *Privacy Act* governs the collection, retention, use, disclosure, disposition and accuracy of personal information in the administration of programs and activities by government institutions subject to the *Privacy Act*.

Under the *Privacy Act*, personal information is defined as information about an identifiable individual that is recorded in any form.

Examples of personal information include:

- The national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age or marital status of an individual
- The education, medical, criminal, financial or employment history of an individual
- Any identifying number, symbol, or other identifier assigned to an individual.

VAC's Mandate

VAC's mandate is to support the well-being of Veterans and their families, and to promote recognition and remembrance of the achievements and sacrifices of those who served Canada in times of war, military conflict, and peace. To achieve this mandate, the Department focuses on its four main roles:

- Provide leadership as a champion of Veterans, and administer and coordinate needed benefits and services, whether through the Government of Canada or in partnership with provincial and community programs and non-governmental organizations.

- Help Veterans access the supports and services they need, from all levels of government and the community at large, and maintain a leadership role in the care and support of all Veterans and their families.
- Listen to the suggestions of Veterans, their representatives and stakeholders to guide work and research, and strive to design and deliver programs that meet the modern and changing needs of Veterans and their families.
- Engage Canadians of all ages in paying tribute to Veterans and those who died in service, ensuring that the legacy of their tremendous contributions to peace and freedom is preserved for generations to come.

VAC fulfills its mandate and role through the delivery of programs such as disability benefits, financial benefits, rehabilitation, pension advocacy, education, and training supports. The Department also works to commemorate the achievements and sacrifices of Canadians during periods of war, military conflict, and peace.

Non-operational subsidiaries

VAC did not have any non-operational subsidiaries during this reporting period.

Veterans Affairs Organization Structure

The Veterans Affairs Portfolio consists of:

1. the Department of Veterans Affairs, which reports to the Minister of Veterans Affairs;
2. the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, which reports to Parliament through the Minister of Veterans Affairs; and
3. the Office of the Veterans Ombud, which reports directly to and is accountable to the Minister of Veterans Affairs;

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board has its own ATIP Office and prepares a separate annual report on the administration of the Act. The report of the Office of the Veterans Ombud (OVO) on its administration of the Act is included in this report as Annex B.

Administration of the Act

Within VAC, responsibility for administering the Act rests with the Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) Office, which is part of the Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Services Branch within the Privacy and Information Management Directorate.

The ATIP Office:

- Processes requests for personal information
- Provides advice and guidance on the *Privacy Act* and related instruments
- Coordinates compliance with legislative and policy requirements

The ATIP Office

The ATIP Office is responsible for administering both the *Privacy Act and the Access to Information Act*. The Director of Privacy and Information Management serves as the Department's ATIP Coordinator and leads the ATIP Office.

Privacy and Information Management includes four units whose work relates to information management (IM) and access to information and privacy:

1. ATIP Operations
2. Privacy and IM Policy
3. IM Operations
4. IM Projects

The Privacy and IM Policy Unit provides training, guidance, and recommendations on privacy and IM. It is responsible for coordinating privacy impact assessments, investigating privacy breaches, and collaborating with all areas of the Department to ensure privacy and IM considerations are integrated into new programs and initiatives.

The ATIP Operations unit is responsible for the processing of access to information and privacy request programs and providing relevant guidance to departmental branches. The unit consists of five teams, led by the ATIP Operations Manager, as follows:

1. The Client Service Team
2. The Access Request Processing Team
3. The Privacy Request Processing Team
4. ATIP Operations Special Projects Team
5. The Strategic Analyst

For the 2025-26 reporting period, the administration of the *Privacy Act* was supported by the equivalent of 13.4375 full-time indeterminate employees (FTEs), while the administration of the *Access to Information Act* was supported by 4.018 full-time indeterminate FTEs.

The ATIP Office did not employ any consultants or contractors during the reporting period, nor were there any ATIP employees working in VAC's regional offices.

VAC was not party to any agreements under section 73.1 of the *Privacy Act* during this reporting period.

Delegation Orders

In accordance with subsection 73(1) of the *Privacy Act*, the Minister of Veterans Affairs has delegated the power, duties and functions for the administration of the *Privacy Act* to VAC positions through a delegation order.

These delegation orders ensure that appropriate administrative authorities have been delegated to positions within the ATIP Office which are responsible for effectively and efficiently administering the Act. The delegation order was signed March 25, 2021 and is included as Annex A of this report.

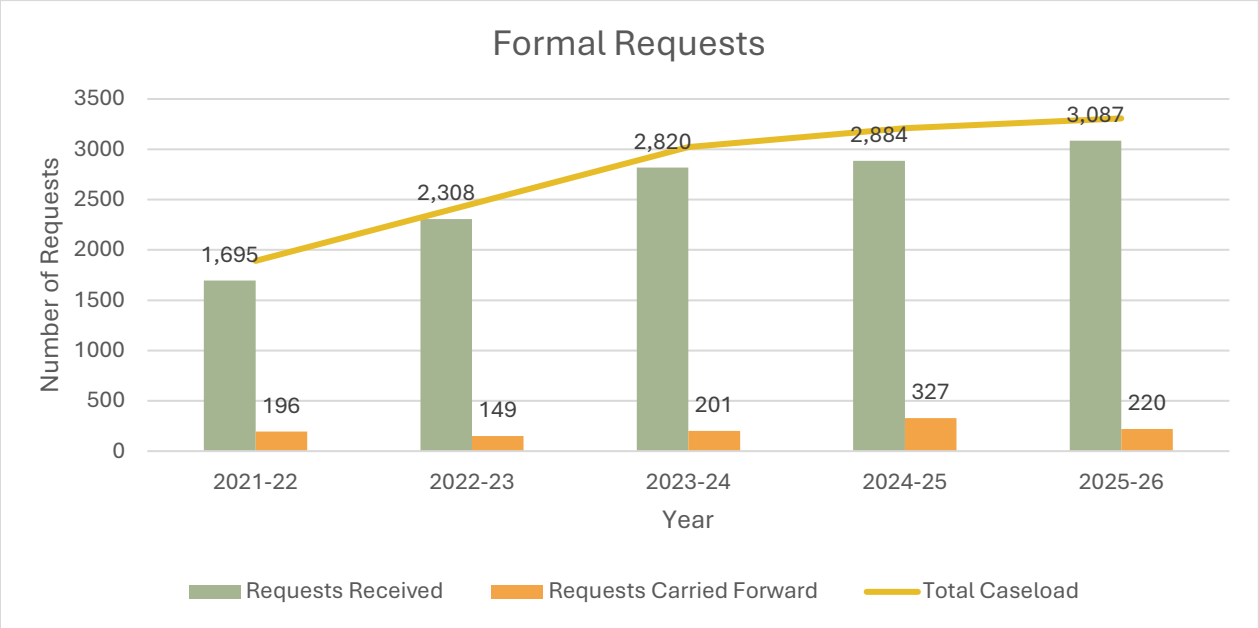
Performance

Overall, VAC's performance reflects strong timeliness and continued progress in managing growing request volumes while not only maintaining, but improving, service standards.

VAC received 3,087 new requests under the *Privacy Act* during the reporting period. In addition, there were 217 requests outstanding from the previous reporting period, and 3 outstanding from earlier years, bringing the total number of active requests to 3,307.

VAC closed 2,996 requests during the reporting period, of which 2,853 (95.2%) were completed within legislated timelines. This represents a 5.3% improvement compared to the previous reporting period (89.9%). This improvement was achieved despite a 7% increase in the number of incoming requests (203 additional requests), reflecting enhanced processing efficiency and operational capacity.

The following table provides an overview of the formal requests received from 2020-21 to 2025-26.



The increase in pages processed and pages released further demonstrates the increased efficiency and operational capacity with an increase of 84,790 (+14.5%) pages processed and 68,243 (+12.4%) pages released. The following chart provides an overview of the number of pages processed and released under the *Privacy Act* over the last five years.

Completion times

The following table outlines the number of completed formal requests broken down by completion time for the 2025-26 reporting period:

Completion time	Number of requests
0 to 15 days	356
16 to 30 days	1990
31-60 days	493
61 to 120 days	110
121 to 180 days	33
181 to 365 days	8
More than 365 days	6

The majority of requests (78.3%) were completed within 30 days, demonstrating timely processing for most files, with only a small proportion requiring extended timelines due to complexity or volume.

Active Requests

Of the 3,307 requests active during the reporting period, VAC closed 2,996 and carried forward 311 requests to the next reporting period.

Of the requests carried forward:

- 291 remained within legislated timelines
- 20 were beyond legislated timelines

Of these 20 late files:

- 18 were received in 2025-26
- 2 were received in 2024-25

Active Complaints

There were 7 active complaints with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner (OPC) at the end of the reporting period:

- 4 received in 2025-26
- 2 received in 2024-25
- 1 received in 2019-20

In July 2025, VAC conducted a review of older outstanding complaints recorded in its case management system. As a result, three complaints were identified for which the OPC had no record, three complaints had previously been closed by the OPC but remained open

internally, and two complaints remained active. These corrections improved the accuracy of complaint tracking records.

Extensions

VAC took extensions of 16 to 30 days on 449 (14.5%) requests. The reasons for extension were:

- 244 due to a large volume of pages
- 204 due to a large volume of requests
- 1 due to difficulty in obtaining records

Consultations

VAC did not receive any consultations requests from other government departments or organizations during the reporting period.

Informal Requests

During the reporting period, VAC received 47 informal requests for personal information and carried forward 15 requests from the previous reporting period, for a total workload of 62 informal requests. All 62 requests were completed during the reporting period, resulting in the informal release of 5,444 pages.

Training and Awareness

During the 2025–26 fiscal year, the Privacy and Information Management Directorate delivered virtual and in-person training sessions to approximately 3,400 participants. Training focused on legislative requirements, employee responsibilities, and effective information management practices that support timely access to information.

The Directorate also promoted awareness through departmental communications, including weekly learning messages and articles recognizing Right to Know Week, Data Privacy Week, and Information Management Week. These activities contributed to a stronger understanding of access, privacy, and information management requirements across the Department.

Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures

To support awareness and compliance with privacy obligations across VAC, the Privacy and IM Policy Unit developed a series of guidance and information sheets reflecting its core functions. These materials were published on our updated intranet site to assist employees in understanding their responsibilities when handling personal information, how to protect privacy, and promote early engagement with our senior privacy analysts when new or substantially modified programs or initiatives involving personal information arise.

Key topics included but are not limited to:

- Protecting Personal Information
- Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs)
- Personal Information Banks (PIBs)
- Understanding Consent
- Privacy Breaches

Initiatives and Projects to Improve Privacy

Supporting internal clients

ATIP Operations supported internal clients by reviewing records for release to ensure compliance with the Act *Privacy Act*. During the reporting period, the team completed 29 internal privacy consultations involving the review of 439 pages.

Advancing Technologies

In May 2025, ATIP Operations completed the transition to the ATIPXpress platform. The Special Projects Team developed guidance materials and delivered training to support staff in adapting to and effectively utilizing the new system.

ATIP Operations also promoted the electronic delivery through the ATIP Online Request Service and Canada Post Connect, enabling requesters to receive response packages more quickly and securely, particularly those residing in remote or rural areas.

Improving Information Management

VAC continued its transition from the GCdocs platform to SharePoint as its corporate information repository. Throughout this transition, ATIP Operations worked with program areas to support record retrieval and maintain timely responses to access requests.

Summary of Key Issues and Actions Taken on Complaints

During the reporting period, VAC received two complaints related to the processing of personal information requests. Both complaints concerned time limits, one was closed in early resolution and the other was resolved.

During the reporting period, we received 18 complaints related to the use, retention or disclosure of personal information; however, 8 of those were linked to a single incident affecting multiple individuals. At the end of the reporting period, 4 of those complaints remained active and we are working with the OPC to resolve them.

We closed 18 complaints related to use, retention or disclosure of personal information during the reporting period. Of those, 7 were closed in early resolution, 1 was discontinued, 4 resolved, 1 conditionally resolved, 2 well founded and resolved and 3 well founded.

With respect to the 3 well-founded complaints, all were determined to involve unauthorized disclosures of personal information, either to an unauthorized third party or to an employee without a demonstrable need-to-know. In response, VAC implemented mitigation measures, including the application of staff safety notifications to the affected client files, reinforced adherence of the need-to-know Principle, and emphasized the seriousness of unauthorized disclosures through ongoing training and awareness activities.

Material Privacy Breaches

During the 2025-26 reporting period, one material privacy breach was reported to the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) and the OPC. The breach involved an unauthorized disclosure resulting from an uploading error, whereby documents were placed on an incorrect client file within the My VAC Account system.

Upon discovery, the documents were promptly removed from the incorrect file. The affected individual was notified by telephone by a VAC representative and subsequently received a written notification outlining the nature of the breach and the personal information that had been disclosed.

Privacy Impact Assessments

During the reporting period, VAC completed three PIAs for initiatives involving new or substantially modified programs to support service modernization, operational efficiency, and compliance monitoring.

Recruitment and Staffing Activities using Virtual Staffing Tools (VidCruiter) PIA:
VAC implemented the VidCruiter platform to modernize recruitment and staffing processes. The tool enables applicants to complete interviews, assessments, scheduling, and reference checks online, improving efficiency, accessibility, and timeliness. It also supports departmental priorities such as Veteran hiring, employment equity, and accommodation obligations.

Claim Summary Tool (CST) PIA:
VAC introduced the CST, an AI-enabled tool designed to assist decision-makers in reviewing Disability Benefit applications. The CST organizes large volumes of medical and service documentation into structured summaries with source references, improving consistency and processing timelines. The tool does not make decisions and operates under strict human oversight. It functions within secure VAC systems, does not retain or reuse personal information, and adheres to Government of Canada requirements for responsible AI use, including privacy, transparency, and ongoing monitoring.

Onsite Compliance Report for Managers PIA:
VAC developed a reporting tool to support compliance with the Treasury Board

Secretariat's Direction on Prescribed Presence in the Workplace. The report provides managers with information on employees' adherence to their approved work arrangements (myWorkArrangement), enabling monitoring and reporting on onsite presence requirements. The initiative supports organizational accountability while ensuring appropriate handling of employee information.

More information can be found on our website: Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) | Veterans Affairs Canada

Public Interest Disclosures

VAC processed 123 requests related to disclosures under subsection 8(2) of the *Privacy Act*, resulting in the review of 32,978 pages. There were 2 requests for disclosure under subsection 8(2)(e) of the *Privacy Act* during the reporting period.

There were no public interest disclosures of personal information made pursuant to subsection 8(2)(m) of the *Privacy Act* during the reporting period.

Monitoring Compliance

VAC monitors compliance with the *Privacy Act* through regular performance tracking, including monthly reporting on request volumes, timeliness, and backlog levels. Senior management is informed of ATIP performance through established internal reporting mechanisms, enabling timely decision-making and resource adjustments where required.

Closing Remarks

VAC remains committed to protecting the personal information entrusted to it by Veterans and their families while supporting transparency, accountability, and compliance with legislative requirements.

The ATIP Operations team had a productive year. However, the continued growth in both request volumes and pages reviewed highlights the need to further streamline processes, leverage technology, and improve operational efficiencies to ensure the Department continues to meet its obligations under the *Privacy Act* and provide timely service to Canadians.

Annex A – Delegation Order

Veterans Affairs Canada | Anciens Combattants Canada

Privacy Act Delegation Order	*Loi sur la protection des renseignements personnels* Ordonnance de délégation
I, Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada, do hereby delegate, Pursuant to section 73 of the *Privacy Act*, the officers or employees of Veterans Affairs Canada who hold the positions set out in the attached Schedule to exercise or perform the powers, duties, or functions that have been given to me as head of a government institution under the provisions of the *Privacy Act* as set out in the Schedule. This designation replaces all previous delegation orders.	Je soussigné, Lawrence MacAulay, ministre d'Anciens Combattants Canada, délègue par la présente, conformément à l'article 73 de la *Loi sur la protection des renseignements personnels*, les dirigeants ou les employés d'Anciens Combattants Canada qui occupent les postes indiqués dans l'annexe ci-jointe pour exercer les pouvoirs et les fonctions qui m'ont été conférés en tant que responsable d'une institution fédérale en vertu des dispositions de la *Loi sur la protection des renseignements personnels*, comme indiqué dans l'annexe. Cette désignation remplace tous les arrêtés de délégation antérieurs.

The Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada
Ministre, Anciens Combattants Canada

Lawrence MacAulay
Minister of Veterans Affairs
Ministère des Anciens Combattants

Signed in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada this 5th day of June, 2023
Signé à Ottawa, Ontario, Canada ce 5e jour de juin 2023

Canada

Delegation Order - *Privacy Act*

The Minister of Veterans Affairs, pursuant to section 73 of the *Privacy Act*, hereby delegates the persons holding the positions set out in the schedule hereto, or the persons occupying on an acting basis those positions, to exercise the powers, duties and functions of the Minister as the head of Veterans Affairs Canada, under the provisions of the *Act* and related regulations set out in the schedule opposite each position. This designation replaces all previous delegation orders.

All powers, duties and functions under the Privacy Act (prior to and following June 21, 2019) and related regulations (prior to and following June 21, 2019)

Description	Section	Delegated Authority
Disclosure for research or statistical purposes	8(2)(j)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Ministers • Directors General • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy • Manager, Safety and Security Services • Manager, Litigation Coordination Unit • Case Manager, Field Operations Division
Disclosure in the public interest or in the interest of the individual	8(2)(m)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management
Retention of a record of requests and disclosed records to investigative bodies under section 8(2)(e) of the *Privacy Act*	8(4)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Notice of disclosure under paragraph 8(2)(m)	8(5)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management

Record of disclosures to be retained	9(1)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Ministers • Directors General • Director, Privacy and Information Management
Notification of the Privacy Commissioner of any new consistent uses of personal information and ensure use is included in next statement of consistent uses set forth in the Index	9(4)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy
Personal information to be included in personal information banks	10	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Notice where access requested	14	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Extension of the 30 day time limit to respond to a privacy request	15	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy • Officer, Access to Information and Privacy

Where access is refused	16	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Decision on whether to translate a response to a privacy request in one of the two official languages	17(2)(b)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy • Officer, Access to Information and Privacy
Decision on whether to convert personal information to an alternate format	17(3)(b)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy
Decision to refuse to disclose personal information contained in an exempt bank	18(2)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy
Exemption - Personal information obtained in confidence	19(1)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy

Exemption – Where authorized to disclose	19(2)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Refuse to disclose personal information that may be injurious to federal-provincial affairs	20	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Refuse to disclose personal information that may be injurious to international affairs or the defence of Canada or one of its allies	21	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Refuse to disclose personal information prepared by an investigative body, information injurious to the enforcement of a law, or information injurious to the security of penal institutions	22	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Refuse to disclose personal information created for the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act*	22.3	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy

Refuse to disclose personal information prepared by an investigative body for security clearance	23	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Refuse to disclose personal information that was collected by the Canadian Penitentiary Service, the National Parole Service or the National Parole Board while the individual was under sentence if the conditions in the section are met	24	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Refuse to disclose personal information which could threaten the safety of individuals	25	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Refuse to disclose personal information about another individual and shall refuse to disclose such information where disclosure is prohibited under section 8	26	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy

Refuse to disclose personal information that is subject to solicitor-client privilege	27	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Refuse to disclose protected information – patents and trade-marks	27.1	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Refuse to disclose personal information relating to the individual's physical or mental health where the disclosure is contrary to the best interests of the individual	28	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Right to make representations to the Privacy Commissioner during an investigation	33(2)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Provision of addition personal information to a complainant after receiving a 35(1)(b) notice	35(4)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy

Request that a court hearing, undertaken with respect to certain sections of the Act, be held in the National Capital Region	51(2)(b)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management
Prepare annual report to Parliament	72(1)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management

Privacy Regulations – Delegated Authorities

Description	Section	Delegated authority
Retention of personal information requested under paragraph 8(2)(e)	7	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Ministers • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management
Allow examination of the documents (Reading Room)	9	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Ministers • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Notification concerning corrections	11(2),(4)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Ministers • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy

Correction refused, notation placed on file	11(4)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Ministers • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management • Manager, Access to Information and Privacy • Team Leader, Access to Information and Privacy
Disclosure to a medical practitioner or psychologist	13(1)	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Ministers • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management
Examination in presence of medical practitioner or psychologist	14	• Deputy Minister • Associate Deputy Minister • Assistant Deputy Ministers • Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration • Director, Privacy and Information Management

Annex B – Office of the Veterans Ombud

Annual Report on the Administration of the Privacy Act

Office of the Veterans Ombud Access to Information and Privacy Unit

***Introduction*:**

The Office of the Veterans Ombud (OVO) takes the responsibility to protect the privacy of Veterans and their families very seriously. Privacy is a fundamental right in Canada. The *Privacy Act* operates to protect Canadians with respect to their personal information held by the Government of Canada.

The *Act* provides Canadian citizens and permanent residents with the general right to access and seek correction of their personal information that is held by the federal government. Under the *Privacy Act*, "personal information" is defined as "information about an identifiable individual that is recorded in any form." Examples include information about national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age or marital status of an individual; education or medical, criminal, financial or employment history of an individual; and any identifying number, symbol or other identifier assigned to an individual.

The *Act* also provides the framework for the collection, accuracy, use, disclosure, retention and disposition of personal information. Personal information may only be used for the purposes allowed by the *Privacy* Act and may only be disclosed in accordance with the legislation.

This annual report on the administration to the *Privacy Act* describes how the Office of the Veterans Ombud fulfilled their responsibilities under the *Privacy Act* during the fiscal year April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026. This report is being prepared to be tabled in Parliament in accordance with section 72 of the *Privacy Act*.

The mandate of the OVO, found in the Order in Council P.C. 2007-530, shall be:

- to review and address complaints by clients [of Veterans Affairs Canada] and their representatives arising from the application of the provisions of the *Veterans Bill of Rights*;
- to identify and review emerging and systemic issues related to programs and services provided or administered by the Department or by third parties on the Department's behalf that impact negatively on clients;
- to review and address complaints by clients [of Veterans Affairs Canada] and their representatives related to programs and services provided or administered by the Department or by third parties on the Department's behalf, including individual decisions related to the programs and services for which there is no right of appeal to the (Veterans Review and Appeal) Board;
- to review systemic issues related to the (Veterans Review and Appeal) Board; and
- to facilitate access by stakeholders to programs and services by providing them with information and referrals.

Organizational Structure:

The Veterans Ombud, the Deputy Ombud, and Director – Veterans Intervention Services have full authority for the OVO to exercise the powers, duties, and functions of the Minister as the Head of Veterans Affairs under the provisions of the *Acts* and related regulations. Although these positions have been delegated full authority, the Director – Veterans Intervention Services is responsible for management of the Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) Unit function within the OVO.

The OVO's Access to Information and Privacy Unit in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island ensures that the Office's responsibilities under both acts are met. Processing of requests is centralized within the unit. The Unit consists of the Director - Veterans Intervention Services, and the Knowledge Management Coordinator. These staff members were assigned to the administration of both acts on a part time (as required) basis during the 2025-2026 reporting period, which represents 0.525 of an FTE.

The main activities of the OVO ATIP Unit include:

- Processing OVO requests for information submitted under the *Access to Information Act* and *The Privacy Act,* including consulting with other federal departments and third parties with respect to ATIP requests received;
- Developing OVO policies, procedures, guidelines and processes in support of Access to Information and Privacy and central agency requirements;
- Monitoring legislative and regulatory changes that impact ATIP;
- Providing awareness and training on ATIP to ensure that OVO employees understand their roles and responsibilities;
- Monitoring OVO compliance with both acts, regulations and central agency requirements;
- Preparing and providing information specific to the OVO to VAC for inclusion in annual reports to Parliament on the administration of the *Acts;*
- Leading the development of Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) for the OVO;
- Working closely with VAC for the resolution of any complaints against OVO which have been submitted to the Information Commissioner of Canada and the Privacy Commissioner of Canada;
- Providing centralized management of privacy breaches within the OVO;
- Providing advice, guidance and training to OVO staff on ATIP issues;
- Analyzing and responding to OVO privacy and access to information policy issues;
- Reviewing new and amended OVO forms and processes that impact the collection of personal information
- Developing appropriate Privacy Notice Statements for the OVO; and,
- Evaluating OVO contracts and Memoranda of Understanding.

Delegation Order:

The responsibilities associated with the administration of the *Privacy Act* are delegated to departmental and OVO officials through a delegation order.

Performance 2025–2026:

Key Performance Measures

- 62% (8 out of 13 requests) were closed within legislated timelines
- Completed Requests by Completion Time:
    - 2 completed within 0–15 days
    - 6 completed within 16–30 days
    - 3 completed within 31–60 days
    - 1 completed within 61–120 days
    - 1 completed within 121–180 days
- As of March 31, 2026, there were no requests carried over to the next reporting period, therefore, no breakdown by fiscal year or timeline status is applicable
- No complaints were received during the reporting period
- Four extensions were taken, due to heavy workload caused by a high volume of records.
- There were no consultations completed for other institutions during the reporting period
- The percentage “All disclosed” was 31% (4 out of 13), “Disclosed in part” was 38% (5 out of 13).

Training and Awareness:

OVO staff took part in Departmental ATIP training and OVO ATIP Refresher training.

Policies, Guidelines, Procedures and Initiatives

The OVO continues to work on an Open Government action plan and will continue the transition to having more information available on the Open Government portal. The OVO is part of ATIP Online Request Services (AORS) where users can submit ATIP requests online and view past ATI requests by subject.

The OVO also maintained and monitored current Access to Information policies, guidelines and procedures during the 2025-2026 reporting period.

Initiatives and Projects to Improve Privacy

The OVO did not undertake any initiatives or projects outside of the training and awareness sessions for the 2025 – 2026 reporting period.

Summary of Key Issues and Actions Taken on Complaints or Audits:

In the 2025-2026 reporting period, OVO received no complaints in relation to privacy requests. No complaints were carried over from 2024-2025. The OVO had no audits or investigations concluded during the reporting period.

Material Privacy Breaches:

There were no material privacy breaches were reported to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner and to the Information and Privacy Policy Division, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat during the 2025-2026 reporting period.

Privacy Impact Assessments (PIA's):

The OVO did not complete any PIAs during the 2025-2026 reporting period.

Public Interest Disclosures:

The OVO had no disclosures made under paragraph 8 (2)(*m*) of the *Privacy Act* during the 2025-2026 reporting period.

Monitoring Compliance:

The OVO uses a tracking spreadsheet to monitor the processing of requests for access to information on a weekly basis when requests are being processed. This tracking spreadsheet is maintained by the Knowledge Management Coordinator. Any anticipated issues with processing are escalated to the Director – Veterans Intervention Services.