



Foster Care Ombuds Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed January 1, 2024 to March 31, 2024

The **Governor's Advocacy Office (GAO)** was created in 1993 as the the Ombuds office for the **Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS)**, and is also the **Office of Children's Advocate** (ORS 417.810). The role of an **Ombudsman** or **Ombuds** is an independent official who has been appointed to investigate complaints that people make against the government or public organizations. The **Foster Care Ombuds** role was created within the GAO in 2014 to fulfill a requirement of the **Foster Children's Bill of Rights**. The law that created the Bill of Rights required ODHS to "have a hotline phone number that is available to the foster child at all times for the purposes of enabling the foster child to make complaints and assert grievances regarding the foster child's care, safety or well-being" (ORS 418.201(7)).

ORS 182.500 requires Ombuds offices to report to the Governor in writing quarterly including a summary of services provided and recommendations about the Department for which the Ombuds provides assistance.

FCO Cases Closed by ODHS Program

Case Program Type	1	2	3	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare	35	40	17	92
ODHS-Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities		3		3
Total	35	43	17	95

Total days from case open to close

Open Range	1	2	3	Total
02 days or less	2	1	2	5
03 to 10 Days		5	3	8
11 to 20 Days	6	6	1	13
21 to 30 Days	1	3	4	8
31 to 60 Days	9	16	6	31
61 to 90 Days	6	7	1	14
90+ Days	11	5		16
Total	35	43	17	95

How FCO heard about concerns

Case Intake SubType	1	2	3	Total
Y.E.S. line	16	12	7	35
Direct to Ombuds	5	21	3	29
FCO.info	8	8	5	21
GAO main line	6	1		7
ODHS Director's Office			1	1
ODHS Info			1	1
Other		1		1
Total	35	43	17	95



Foster Care Ombuds: 1-855-840-6036
fco.info@dhsosha.state.or.us

GAO Administrator: 503-800-1277
gao.info@odhs.oregon.gov

For more questions about this report or for more information about the GAO or FCO, please reach out to us!

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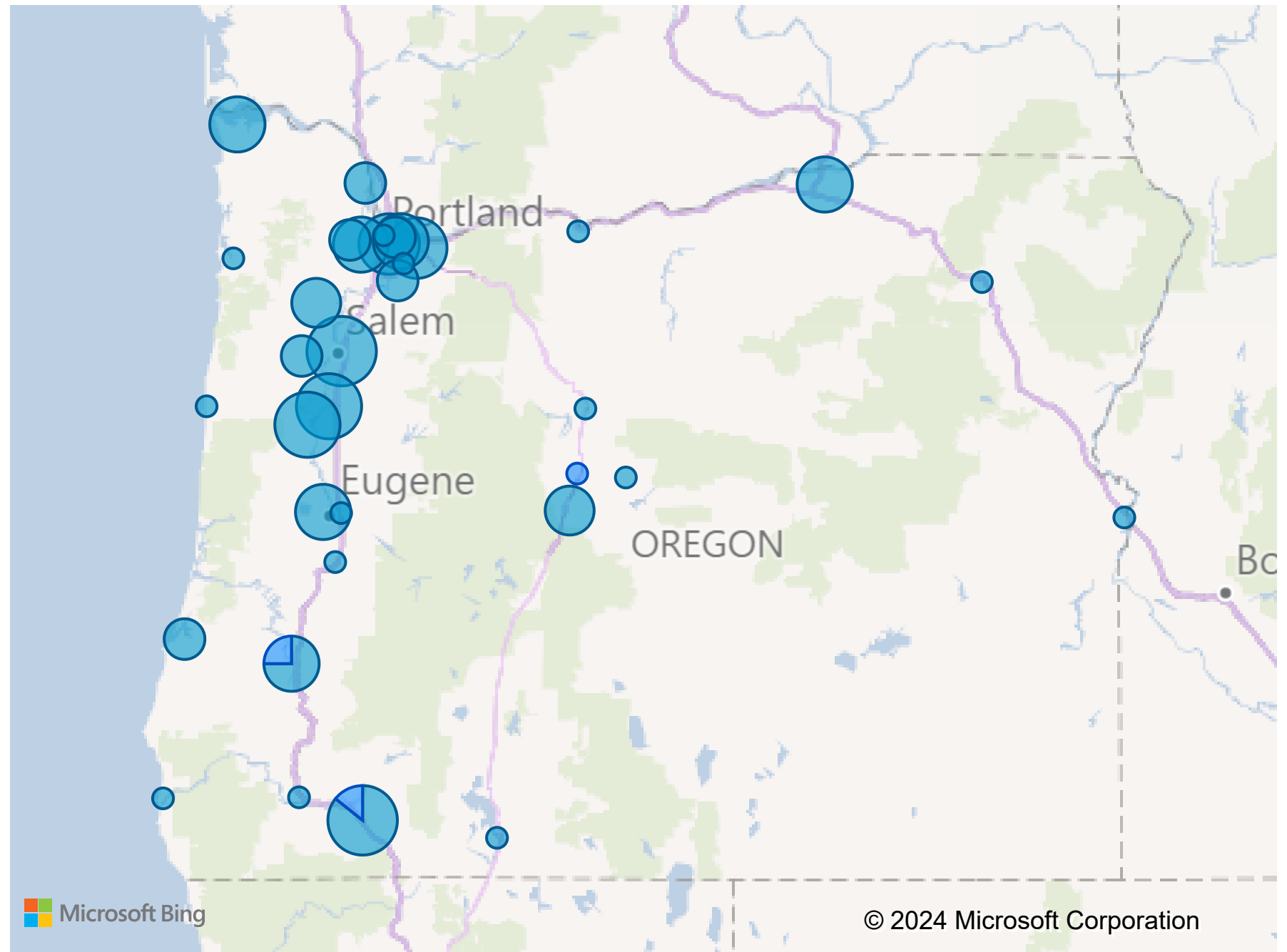
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The GAO tracks cases by branch location of the Foster Youth's case. This information is tracked periodically and annually to see how well it aligns with the number of Foster Youth in the community.

ODHS branch location (county)

County	1	2	3	Total
MULTNOMAH	5	7	3	15
MARION	4	3	2	9
JACKSON	4	3		7
BENTON	3	3		6
LANE	3	3		6
LINN	1	3	2	6
	2		2	4
CLATSOP	1	2	1	4
DESCHUTES	1	3		4
DOUGLAS	2	1	1	4
UMATILLA		2	2	4
CLACKAMAS	1	2		3
YAMHILL	1	2		3
COLUMBIA			2	2
COOS		1	1	2
POLK	2			2
WASHINGTON		2		2
CROOK		1		1
CURRY	1			1
JEFFERSON	1			1
JOSEPHINE	1			1
KLAMATH		1		1
LINCOLN		1		1
MALHUER			1	1
TILLAMOOK		1		1
Total	35	43	17	95

Child Welfare Branch by ZIP code



● ODHS-Child Welfare ● ODHS-Intellectual and Developmental Disabili...

*the county appearing blank represents a branch in Washington County. This is a known bug in our reporting system and we have requested a fix.

Foster Youth Placement Setting

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substitute care (FCO Only)	35	43	17	95
Non Relative Foster Care	21	18	8	47
Relative Foster Care	4	8	4	16
In-Home Plan	4	6	1	11
Not Applicable	1	3	3	7
I/DD Foster Home		4		4
BRS Residential	3			3
Detention/Hospital		3		3
Guardianship	1			1
Out of state		1		1
Self-Selected Environment			1	1
Treatment Foster Care	1			1
Total	35	43	17	95

The Foster Care Ombuds also tracks the placement setting of the foster youth at the time of the case. This may be "Not Applicable" when the case is not about a specific foster youth or when it is about a former foster youth who has not been in care for a number of years.

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Foster Youth Information and Demographics

The Foster Care Ombuds tracks demographic information about the Foster Youth who are the subject of our cases. At the recommendation of the Foster Care Ombuds advisory group, *this report now includes **all** foster children associated with the complaint.* This includes siblings or other foster children whom were a part of the specific complaint. This information is collected from the Child Welfare case management system OR-Kids so that the Foster Care Ombuds can track trends affecting Foster Youth overall and plan outreach efforts accordingly.

Race / Ethnicity

Foster Youth Race / Ethnicity	1	2	3	Total
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	5		7
Black or African American	5	8		13
Did Not Answer	8			8
Hispanic/Latino	8	4	5	17
Unknown	2	2	1	5
White	36	39	20	95
Total	61	58	26	145

Age

Participant Age Group at Closure	1	2	3	Total
Group 0: Unknown				
Group 1: 0-4	38	39	17	94
Group 2: 5-8	9	10	4	23
Group 3: 9-12	5	1		6
Group 5: 16-21		1		1
Group 6: 22-64		1	1	2
Group 7: 65+	1			1
Total	53	52	22	127

Gender

Foster Youth Gender	1	2	3	Total
Female	33	20	12	65
Male	19	31	10	60
Non-binary		1		1
Transgender	1			1
Unknown				
Total	53	52	22	127

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Role of the 'Reporter'

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds

Role of the 'Reporter'

The person that contacts the Foster Care Ombuds is identified as our **Reporter**. If a current or former foster youth is the Reporter, they will also be counted under total foster youth on the previous page. Some rows have been expanded to show more specific detail.

Role / Relationship to Foster Youth	1	2	3	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocate	3	3		6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attorney	1	1		2
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Partner	1	4		5
Law Enforcement		1		1
Social Service Provider		3		3
Therapist	1			1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Current Foster Child	4			4
<input type="checkbox"/> Current Foster Parent	8	8	3	19
Foster Parent	7	8	3	18
Self	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Member	13	13	10	36
Adoptive Parent	1			1
Biological Parent	6	4	5	15
Grandparent	3	5	3	11
Incarcerated Parent		1		1
Other Family Member	3	3	2	8
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Former Foster Child	1	2	1	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Former Foster Parent	2	6	1	9
Foster Parent	2	4	1	7
Other Family Member		2		2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Friend	1	1	1	3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guardian		2		2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regulatory Agency		3		3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown	1		1	2
Total	35	43	17	95

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Case Concerns

The Foster Care Ombuds records the overall concern expressed by the case reporter or a concern identified during the case. The GAO case management system has a three-level concern tracking system with 11 overall categories. The overall categories will be the chart titles for pages 5-9. Each chart will show the subcategories and additional detail that was tracked. Cases will often have more than one concern recorded.

Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Allegation				
Emotional		1		1
Neglect		1		1
Physical		1		1
Sexual		1		1
Wrongful use of a physical or chemical restraint		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Investigative practice				
Not enough collateral contacts		3		3
Protective Services response to assignment	1			1
Unwarranted/unreasonable investigation		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotline/Screening				
Screening decision	1	1		2
Outcome not shared with reporter		1		1
Total	2	11		13

Case Management

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing case work				
Safety planning	4	3	3	10
Services	2	3		5
Visits	2			2
Documentation	1			1
Protective action plan	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Payment or service denial				
Payment / benefit issue			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanency / Adoption				
Adoption committee review	1			1
Total	11	6	4	21

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Case Concerns (continued)

Confidentiality / Privacy

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal information				
Provider shared information inappropriately		1		1
Total	1			1

Customer Service

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication				
Lack of response	4	3	1	8
Clarity		2		2
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Behavior				
Professionalism	1	2		3
Conflict of interest	1	1		2
Not helpful	1			1
Retaliation		1		1
Unfair / Unequal treatment	1			1
Total	8	9	1	18

Discrimination

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
Total				

Eligibility

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
Total				

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Case Concerns (continued)

Foster Care

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Certification / licensing				
Foster placement concerns (not related to safety)	1	2	2	5
Out-of-Home Care assessments	1	1	1	3
Home study process	1		1	2
Safety concerns		2		2
Emergency certification		1		1
Revocation		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Placement				
Appropriateness of placement	5	6	2	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Separation/Reunification				
Visitation	2	4	3	9
Transition		3		3
Belongings			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical/Dental				
Medical Access	2	4		6
Dental Access	1	1		2
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health				
Access	2	1		3
CANS level	1	1		2
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal needs				
Clothing needs		2		2
Dietary needs	1	1		2
<input type="checkbox"/> Finances				
Support/Bank		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Education				
Placement		1		1
Total	17	32	11	60

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Case Concerns (continued)

Legal / Due Process

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Disposition or findings review	1		1	2
Central office review	1			1
Not eligible for review-timelines			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal / state law or admin rule	2			2
Advocacy against	1			1
Advocacy for change	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Release of records / records requests		1		1
Request not granted		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Termination of parental rights			1	1
Legal process			1	1
Total	3	1	2	6

Rights of... (items outlined in various Bills of Rights)

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Grandparents 419B.875 / Relatives	2	2	3	7
Notification of Court hearings	1	2		3
Relative visitation	1		2	3
Consideration for placement / relative search			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Children Siblings 418.608	2	2	2	6
Placed together when safe and appropriate	2	2	1	5
Have a sibling contact plan			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parents ORS		1	1	2
Treated with dignity / respect		1	1	2
Total	4	5	6	15

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Case Concerns (continued)

Finally, the FCO tracks the concerns brought to the GAO directly by current or former foster youth. The results are included in pages 5-8, but highlighted here.

Concerns from Current or Former Foster Youth as 'Reporter'

Concern Category Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care	3	1	1	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Finances		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Certification / licensing	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical/Dental	1			1
Medical Access	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Placement	1			1
Appropriateness of placement	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	3			3
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication	3			3
Lack of Response	3			3
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal / due process		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Release of records / records requests		1		1
Total	6	2	1	9

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Case Resolutions

At the conclusion of a case, the Foster Care Ombuds must record a **Finding**, which documents the result of their review of each concern in pages 5-9. Ombuds may also develop **Recommendations** to the local office or ODHS leadership. Per ORS 182.500, significant recommendations of global importance will be shared with the Governor's Office. **Ombuds or GAO Action** is the way this office documents mandatory reports and other actions outside of normal case management.

FCO Findings

Case Unit	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care Ombuds	47	65	24	136
Consultation	25	21	9	55
Not Valid	7	24	10	41
Valid/Resolved	11	16	4	31
Valid/Not Resolved	3	4	1	8
Unable to contact complainant	1			1
Total	47	65	24	136

Ombuds Action

Concern Category Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> GAO action	4			4
<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory reporting	2			2
Child abuse report made	1			1
Child Caring Agency report (ORS 418.260)	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Other agency referrals	2			2
Human Resources	1			1
Office of Public Defense Services (OPDS)	1			1
Total	4			4

Recommendations

Case Program Type	1	2	3	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare	1	1	1	3
Total	1	1	1	3

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Appendix

Glossary of frequently used terms

Branch - ODHS office most closely associated with the case primary participants. Cases may have more than one associated branch.

Case - GAO's complete record of working with individuals through their ODHS concerns. Cases are finite and concern-specific.

Concern - GAO's system for categorizing and tracking common ODHS concerns.

Finding - the specific outcome of GAO's resolution. These are fully defined on the right of this page.

Information Only - a type of GAO case where GAO recognizes the concerns as outside of ODHS' jurisdiction or it is a concern previously reviewed by GAO. Typically no concerns or findings will be recorded for 'Information Only' cases.

Primary participant - the main individual alleged to have been affected by ODHS action or inaction. GAO tracks all other relevant participants but will designate one as primary.

Program - the ODHS division most associated with the primary participant's concerns.

Recommendation - GAO shares case recommendations with the most appropriate level of management for resolution. Recommendations are often not formal.

Reporter - the individual who brought the concern to GAO's attention.

Resolution - overall outcome of GAO's involvement in assisting a reporter or primary participant.

GAO Findings Defined

Findings may fit in two categories, educating the public or resolutions that follow an investigation:

Educating the Public Findings

The outcome of case concerns that did not result in an investigation.

Inquiries- Not about an ODHS program, non-jurisdiction issues and child custody matters.

Consultation- Provide policy education, assist the individual in problem solving solutions to their concerns.

Case Resolution Findings

The outcome of case concerns that GAO performed further research and review.

Valid/Resolved—complaints are those that the Ombuds has determined have merit, and changes have been or are being made by ODHS.

Valid/Not Resolved—complaints that the Ombuds have determined have merit, but have not been resolved for the following reasons: 1. *Action cannot be undone*—the issue could not be resolved because it involved an event that had already occurred. 2. *Dept. disagrees with Ombuds*—the Department disagreed with the Ombuds' recommendation and would not make changes. 3. *Change not in the client's best interest*—making a change to correct a policy or practice violation is not in the client's best interest. 4. *Lack of Resources*—the Department agreed with the Ombuds' recommendation but could not make a change because no resource was available.

Not Valid—complaints are those that the Ombuds has reviewed and has determined that the Department was or is following policies and procedures.