



# Foster Care Ombuds Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed January 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023

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	28	37	33	98
ODHS-Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	1	1	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>101</b>

## Total days from case open to close

Open Range	1	2	3	Total
02 days or less	2	1	3	6
03 to 10 Days	5	8	2	15
11 to 20 Days	2	6	5	13
21 to 30 Days	2	2	1	5
31 to 60 Days	5	6	11	22
61 to 90 Days	10	11	7	28
90+ Days	3	4	5	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>101</b>

## How FCO heard about concerns

Case Intake SubType	1	2	3	Total
Y.E.S. line	6	20	14	40
Direct to Ombuds	6	5	8	19
GAO main line	3	6	9	18
FCO.info	13	3	1	17
ODHS Info		3		3
Direct Mail			1	1
ODHS Director's Office		1		1
ODHS/OHA Program			1	1
Other	1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>101</b>



Foster Care Ombuds: 1-855-840-6036  
[fco.info@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:fco.info@dhsosha.state.or.us)

GAO Administrator: 503-800-1277  
[gao.info@odhs.oregon.gov](mailto: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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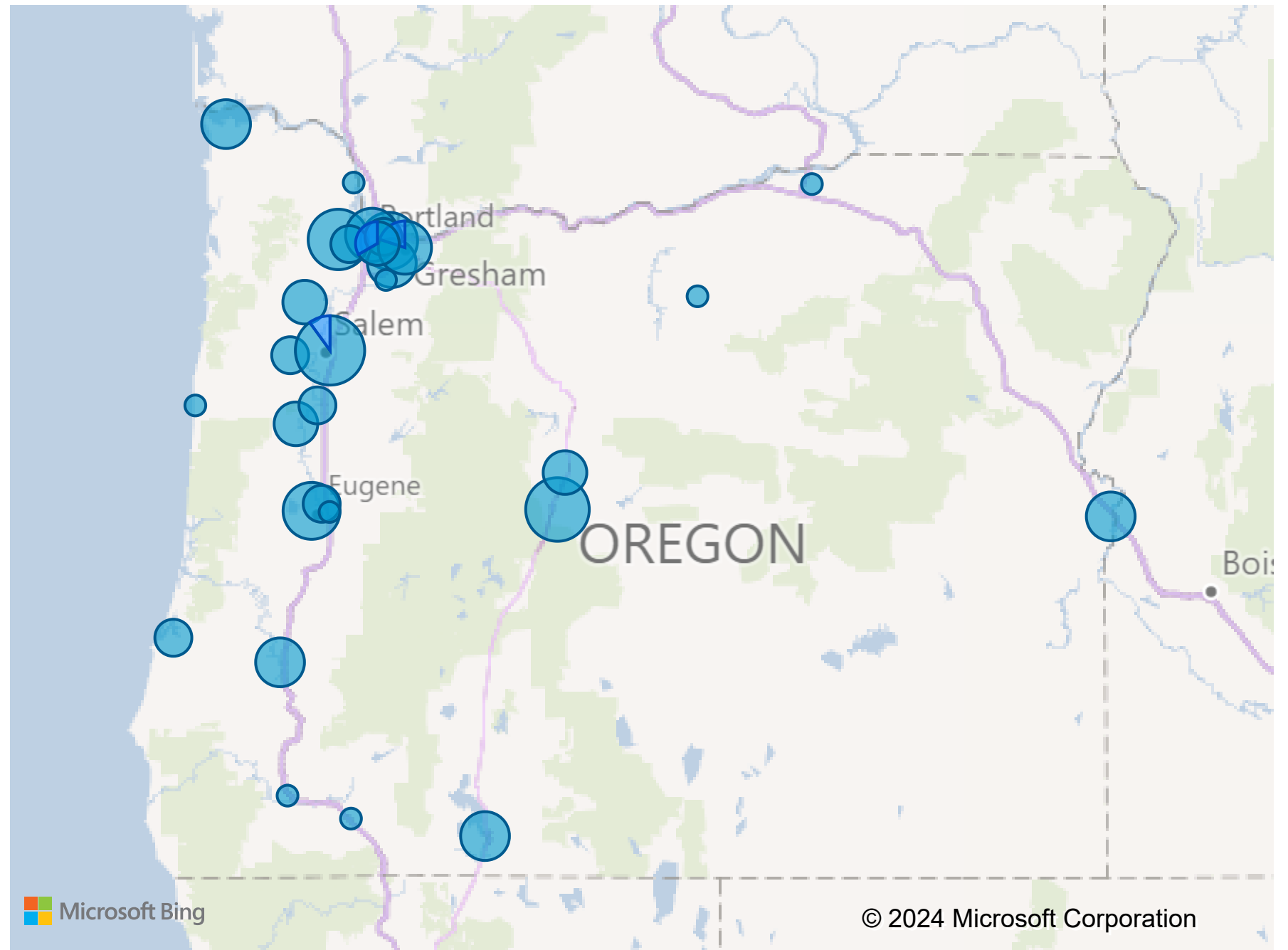
## GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed January 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023

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	4	5	9	18
MARION	3	4	5	12
DESCHUTES	5	5	1	11
LANE		6	3	9
WASHINGTON	1	3	3	7
CLACKAMAS	1	2	2	5
CLATSOP	3	1		4
DOUGLAS	1	2	1	4
KLAMATH	1	2	1	4
MALHUER	2	1	1	4
BENTON	1		2	3
YAMHILL	1	1	1	3
	1		1	2
COOS	1	1		2
LINN	1		1	2
POLK		1	1	2
COLUMBIA		1		1
HARNEY		1		1
JACKSON			1	1
JOSEPHINE		1		1
LINCOLN	1			1
UMATILLA	1			1
WHEELER			1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>101</b>

### 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"/> <b>Substitute care (FCO Only)</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>101</b>
Non Relative Foster Care	13	14	12	39
Not Applicable	6	6	3	15
In-Home Plan	5	5	4	14
Relative Foster Care	2	7	4	13
Self-Selected Environment		1	5	6
Treatment Foster Care		2	2	4
I/DD Foster Home	1	1	1	3
BRS Residential		1	1	2
Detention/Hospital	1		1	2
Guardianship			1	1
Hotel/Office		1		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>101</b>

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	1	3	1	5
Asian			1	1
Black or African American	2	5	4	11
Hispanic/Latino	7	11	9	27
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	1	1	3
Unknown	3		1	4
White	33	36	26	95
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>146</b>

### Age

Participant Age Group at Closure	1	2	3	Total
Group 0: Unknown		1		1
Group 1: 0-4	30	31	18	79
Group 2: 5-8	8	6	9	23
Group 3: 9-12		3	7	10
Group 4: 13-15	2	1		3
Group 5: 16-21	1			1
Group 6: 22-64	1	1	1	3
Group 7: 65+				
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>120</b>

### Gender

Foster Youth Gender	1	2	3	Total
Female	25	18	21	64
Male	16	25	12	53
Transgender	1		2	3
Unknown				
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>120</b>



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## 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 roles have been expanded to show more specific detail.

## Role of the 'Reporter'

Role / Relationship to Foster Youth	1	2	3	Total
<b>⊕ Attorney</b>		2	1	3
<b>⊖ Community Partner</b>	5	6	7	18
Foster Care Provider		1		1
Medical Professional	1		1	2
None	4	2		6
Social Service Provider		3	5	8
Therapist			1	1
<b>⊕ Current Foster Child</b>		3	1	4
<b>⊖ Current Foster Parent</b>	5	5	7	17
Adoptive Parent			1	1
Foster Parent	4	5	6	15
Grandparent	1			1
<b>⊕ Educational Personnel</b>	1		2	3
<b>⊖ Family Member</b>	12	16	10	38
Adoptive Parent		1		1
Biological Parent	7	6	6	19
Grandparent	3	4	2	9
Incarcerated Parent	1		1	2
Other Family Member	1	4	1	6
Step Parent		1		1
<b>⊕ Former Foster Child</b>	3	2	1	6
<b>⊖ Former Foster Parent</b>	2	2	3	7
Adoptive Parent	1		1	2
Foster Parent	1		2	3
Grandparent		1		1
Other Family Member		1		1
<b>⊕ Friend</b>		1	3	4
<b>⊕ Legislator</b>		1		1
<b>⊕ Regulatory Agency</b>		1		1
<b>⊕ Unknown</b>	1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>101</b>

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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"/> <b>Investigative practice</b>				
Protective Services response to assignment	3	2	2	7
Inappropriate lines of inquiry		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Hotline/Screening</b>				
Screening decision	2	1	1	4
Outcome not shared with reporter	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Disposition</b>				
Unfounded		1	1	2
Founded			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Allegation</b>				
Neglect	1		1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>

### Case Management

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Ongoing case work</b>				
Services		6	4	10
Safety planning	3	5	1	9
Permanency planning		1	2	3
Face to face contact			2	2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Payment or service denial</b>				
Payment / benefit			2	2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Permanency / Adoption</b>				
Adoptions and Safe Families Act (ASFA)	1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>27</b>

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## Case Concerns (continued)

### Confidentiality / Privacy

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<b>Total</b>				

### Customer Service

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Communication</b>				
Lack of response	3	5	4	12
Clarity		2		2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Staff Behavior</b>				
Professionalism		2		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>

### Discrimination

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<b>Total</b>				

### Eligibility

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Denial</b>				
General Assistance (GA)			1	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

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## Case Concerns (continued)

### Foster Care

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Certification / licensing</b>				
Foster placement concerns (not related to safety)	1	3	1	5
Exceptions requests	1		2	3
Safety concerns	2			2
Denial			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Separation/Reunification</b>				
Visitation	3	3	1	7
Transition		2	1	3
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Placement</b>				
Appropriateness of placement		3	3	6
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Medical/Dental</b>				
Medical Access			3	3
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mental Health</b>				
Access	2	1		3
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Education</b>				
Information	1			1
Placement			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Finances</b>				
Maintain			1	1
Support/Bank			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Personal needs</b>				
Dietary needs			2	2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Recreation/Activities/Employment</b>				
Access		1		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>40</b>

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## Case Concerns (continued)

### Legal / Due Process

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Release of records / records requests</b>	4			4
Timeliness	2			2
Not a legal party	1			1
Records	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Federal / state law or admin rule</b>		2		2
Advocacy for change		1		1
Advocacy for new law / rule		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Disposition or findings review</b>			1	1
Not eligible for review-timelines			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Termination of parental rights</b>			1	1
Legal process			1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>

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

Concern SubCategory Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Foster Children Siblings 418.608</b>	7	3	2	12
Maintain contact through visits and other comm	2	3	1	6
Placed together when safe and appropriate	4			4
Have a sibling contact plan			1	1
Private, less restrictive contact as appropriate	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Grandparents 419B.875 / Relatives</b>		1	2	3
Relative visitation			2	2
Notification of Court hearings		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Foster Parents ORS</b>	2			2
Included as a valued member of a team	1			1
Receive support services	1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17</b>



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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"/> <b>Case Management</b>		3		3
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Ongoing case work</b>		3		3
Services		3		3
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Administrative</b>		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Background check</b>		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Foster Care</b>	1		1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Education</b>	1			1
Information	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Finances</b>			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Legal / due process</b>	2			2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Release of records / records requests</b>	2			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>

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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"/> <b>Foster Care Ombuds</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>131</b>
Consultation	9	20	15	44
Not Valid	12	9	17	38
Valid/Resolved	10	15	12	37
Valid/Not Resolved	5	2	2	9
Unable to contact complainant	1	1		2
No Action Taken	1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>131</b>

### Ombuds Action

Concern Category Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>GAO action</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other agency referrals</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>
Human Resources	1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>

### Recommendations

Case Program Type	1	2	3	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare	2	2	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>

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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.