



Foster Care Ombuds Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed July 1, 2023 to September 30, 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	7	8	9	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare	19	42	35	96
ODHS-Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	1	1	2	4
ODHS-OTIS/Licensing		1		1
Total	20	44	37	101

How FCO heard about concerns

Case Intake SubType	7	8	9	Total
Y.E.S. line	7	20	13	40
GAO main line	4	9	6	19
Direct to Ombuds	5	4	9	18
FCO.info	2	9	5	16
GAO Info	2		2	4
Governor's Office		1	1	2
Direct Mail			1	1
Unknown		1		1
Total	20	44	37	101

Total days from case open to close

Open Range	7	8	9	Total
02 days or less		4	3	7
03 to 10 Days	2	9	9	20
11 to 20 Days	1	4	3	8
21 to 30 Days	2	1	1	4
31 to 60 Days	6	17	13	36
61 to 90 Days	4	4	3	11
90+ Days	5	5	5	15
Total	20	44	37	101



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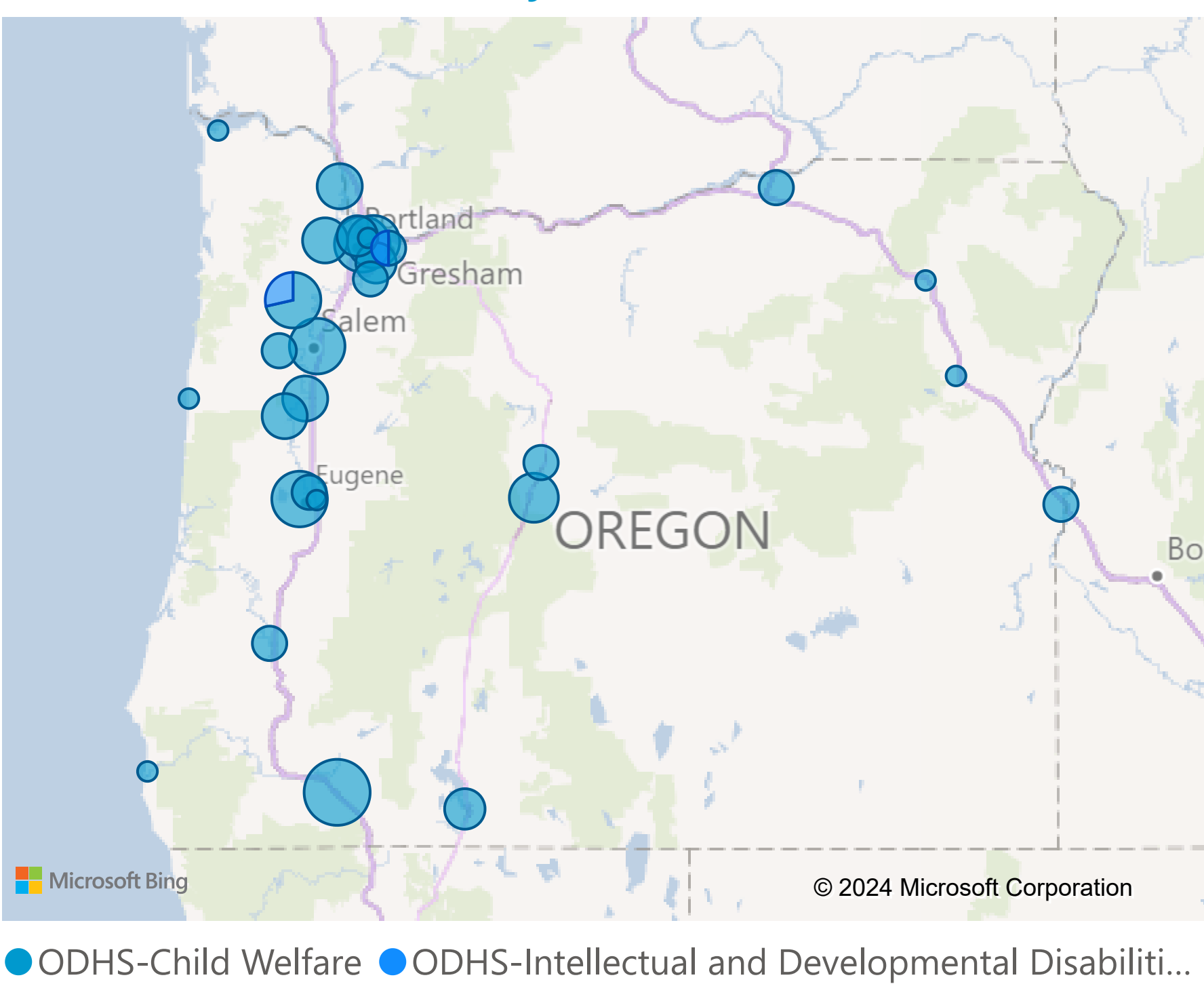
The GAO tracks cases by branch location of the Foster Youth's case. This information is tracked periodically and annually to see how well it aligns with the number of Foster Youth in the community.

ODHS branch location (county)

County	7	8	9	Total
MULTNOMAH	5	9	3	17
JACKSON	2	4	5	11
LANE		3	7	10
MARION	2	6	1	9
DESCHUTES	2	4	1	7
YAMHILL	3	2	2	7
CLACKAMAS	3		2	5
BENTON		2	2	4
COLUMBIA	1	2	1	4
LINN		1	3	4
WASHINGTON	1	2	1	4
KLAMATH		3		3
DOUGLAS	1		1	2
MALHUER		1	1	2
POLK		1	1	2
UMATILLA		1	1	2
BAKER			1	1
CLATSOP		1		1
CURRY		1		1
HARNEY		1		1
LINCOLN			1	1
UNION			1	1
Total	20	44	37	101

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.

Child Welfare Branch by ZIP code



**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	7	8	9	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substitute care (FCO Only)	20	44	37	101
Non Relative Foster Care	9	20	15	44
Relative Foster Care	6	6	7	19
Not Applicable	1	6	6	13
I/DD Foster Home	1	2	3	6
BRS Residential		4		4
Self-Selected Environment	1	1	2	4
Treatment Foster Care		1	2	3
Detention/Hospital	1	1		2
Guardianship			2	2
Hotel/Office	1	1		2
In-Home Plan		2		2
Total	20	44	37	101

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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	7	8	9	Total
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	6	6	14
Black or African American	2	8	4	14
Hispanic/Latino	4	5	10	19
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		2		2
Unknown	3	3	1	7
White	16	42	44	102
Total	27	66	65	158

Age

Participant Age Group at Closure	7	8	9	Total
Group 0: Unknown				
Group 1: 0-4	12	38	40	90
Group 2: 5-8	7	8	12	27
Group 3: 9-12	4	8	3	15
Group 4: 13-15			1	1
Group 5: 16-21				
Group 6: 22-64				
Total	23	54	56	133

Gender

Foster Youth Gender	7	8	9	Total
Female	10	26	29	65
Male	12	28	25	65
Non-binary				
Transgender	1		2	3
Unknown				
Total	23	54	56	133

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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	7	8	9	Total
<div><div></div> Attorney</div>			1	1
<div><div></div> Community Partner</div>	2	3	5	10
Citizen Review Board		2		2
Medical Professional	1			1
Social Service Provider		1	3	4
Therapist	1		2	3
<div><div></div> Current Foster Child</div>	1	3	2	6
<div><div></div> Current Foster Parent</div>	8	11	9	28
Foster Care Provider	1	1		2
Foster Parent	7	10	9	26
<div><div></div> Family Member</div>	7	21	12	40
Adoptive Parent	1	1	1	3
Biological Parent	4	6	2	12
Grandparent	2	8	6	16
Other Family Member		5	2	7
Sibling			1	1
Step Parent		1		1
<div><div></div> Former Foster Child</div>		1	1	2
<div><div></div> Former Foster Parent</div>		4	3	7
Adoptive Parent			2	2
Foster Parent		3	1	4
Grandparent		1		1
<div><div></div> Friend</div>	1	1	1	3
<div><div></div> Guardian</div>			1	1
<div><div></div> Legislator</div>		1	1	2
<div><div></div> Neighbor</div>			1	1
<div><div></div> Unknown</div>	1			1
Total	20	44	37	101

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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	7	8	9	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Allegation				
Physical	1	2		3
Emotional		1		1
Exploitation	1			1
Involuntary seclusion		1		1
Neglect	1			1
Wrongful use of a physical or chemical restraint		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotline/Screening				
Screening decision	1	1		2
Outcome not shared with reporter		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Investigative practice				
Not enough collateral contacts		2		2
Protective Services response to assignment		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Disposition				
Founded		1		1
Unfounded			1	1
Total	1	8	7	16

Case Management

Concern SubCategory Type	7	8	9	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing case work				
Safety planning	1	4	6	11
Services	1		4	5
Permanency planning		2		2
Face to face contact		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanency / Adoption				
Adoption assistance	1			1
Adoptions and Safe Families Act (ASFA)		1		1
Adoptive placement			1	1
Disruption			1	1
Sibling planning			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children				
Timeliness		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Notification	1			1
Total	4	9	13	26

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Case Concerns (continued)

Confidentiality / Privacy

Concern SubCategory Type	7	8	9	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal information				
Agency made inappropriate request			1	1
Agency shared information inappropriately		1		1
Provider shared information inappropriately	1			1
Total	1	1	1	3

Customer Service

Concern SubCategory Type	7	8	9	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication				
Lack of response	6	3	2	11
Accuracy	2	1		3
Clarity		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Behavior				
Retaliation		1	1	2
Expertise / training			1	1
Not helpful		1		1
Total	8	7	5	20

Discrimination

Concern SubCategory Type	7	8	9	Total
Total				

Eligibility

Concern SubCategory Type	7	8	9	Total
Total				

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Case Concerns (continued)

Foster Care

Concern SubCategory Type	7	8	9	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Separation/Reunification				
Visitation	4	6	3	13
Transition	1	2	1	4
Continuation of svcs		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Certification / licensing				
Safety concerns		1	3	4
Foster placement concerns (not related to safety)		3		3
Exceptions requests			1	1
Home study process		1		1
Out-of-Home Care assessments			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Placement				
Appropriateness of placement	1	6	3	10
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical/Dental				
Medical Access		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal needs				
Access to hygiene products		1		1
Clothing needs		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Education				
Support		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Finances				
Maintain		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health				
Access	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation/Activities/Employment				
Access			1	1
Total	7	25	14	46

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Case Concerns (continued)

Legal / Due Process

Concern SubCategory Type	7	8	9	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Disposition or findings review		2		2
Did not receive disposition letter		2		2
<input type="checkbox"/> Termination of parental rights		1	1	2
Legal process		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship			1	1
Guardianship assistance			1	1
Total	3	2		5

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

Concern SubCategory Type	7	8	9	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Children Siblings 418.608		5	3	8
Maintain contact through visits and other comm		4	1	5
Placed together when safe and appropriate		1	1	2
Provided with transportation to maintain contact			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Grandparents 419B.875 / Relatives	1	4	1	6
Notification of Court hearings		3		3
Relative visitation	1	1	1	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parents ORS	2	1	2	5
Treated with dignity / respect	2	1	1	4
Included as a valued member of a team			1	1
Total	3	10	6	19

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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	7	8	9	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care	4	1		5
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal needs	2			2
Access to hygiene products	1			1
Clothing needs	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	1			1
Support	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Placement	1			1
Appropriateness of placement	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation/Activities/Employment			1	1
Access			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Management	1		2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing case work	1		2	3
Services	1	2		3
<input type="checkbox"/> Rights of...		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Children Siblings 418.608		1		1
Maintain contact through visits and other comm		1		1
Total	1	5	3	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	7	8	9	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care Ombuds	24	65	48	137
Consultation	11	23	21	55
Not Valid	4	22	17	43
Valid/Resolved	8	17	9	34
Valid/Not Resolved	1	2	1	4
Forwarded to Program Office		1		1
Total	24	65	48	137

Recommendations

Case Program Type	7	8	9	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare	1	2		3
Total	1	2		3

Ombuds Action

Concern Category Type	7	8	9	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> GAO action	4	1		5
<input type="checkbox"/> Other agency referrals	3			3
Office of Public Defense Services (OPDS)		2		2
Human Resources		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory reporting	1	1		2
Child abuse report made			1	1
Child Caring Agency report (ORS 418.260)		1		1
Total	4	1		5

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.