



Foster Care Ombuds Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed October 1, 2023 to December 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	10	11	12	Total
ODHS - SSP - SNAP			1	1
ODHS-Child Welfare	24	25	34	83
ODHS-Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	1		1	2
ODHS-OTIS/Licensing			1	1
Total	25	25	37	87

Total days from case open to close

Open Range	10	11	12	Total
03 to 10 Days	1	4	1	6
11 to 20 Days	4	6	4	14
21 to 30 Days	5	1	3	9
31 to 60 Days	8	12	19	39
61 to 90 Days	5	2	5	12
90+ Days	2		5	7
Total	25	25	37	87

How FCO heard about concerns

Case Intake SubType	10	11	12	Total
Y.E.S. line	11	8	16	35
Direct to Ombuds	5	6	10	21
FCO.info	3	5	4	12
GAO main line	3	3	4	10
GAO Info	2	2	1	5
Governor's Office		1	1	2
GAO.CR			1	1
ODHS Director's Office	1			1
Total	25	25	37	87



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

GAO Administrator: 503-800-1277
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For more questions about this report or for more information about the GAO or FCO, please reach out to us!

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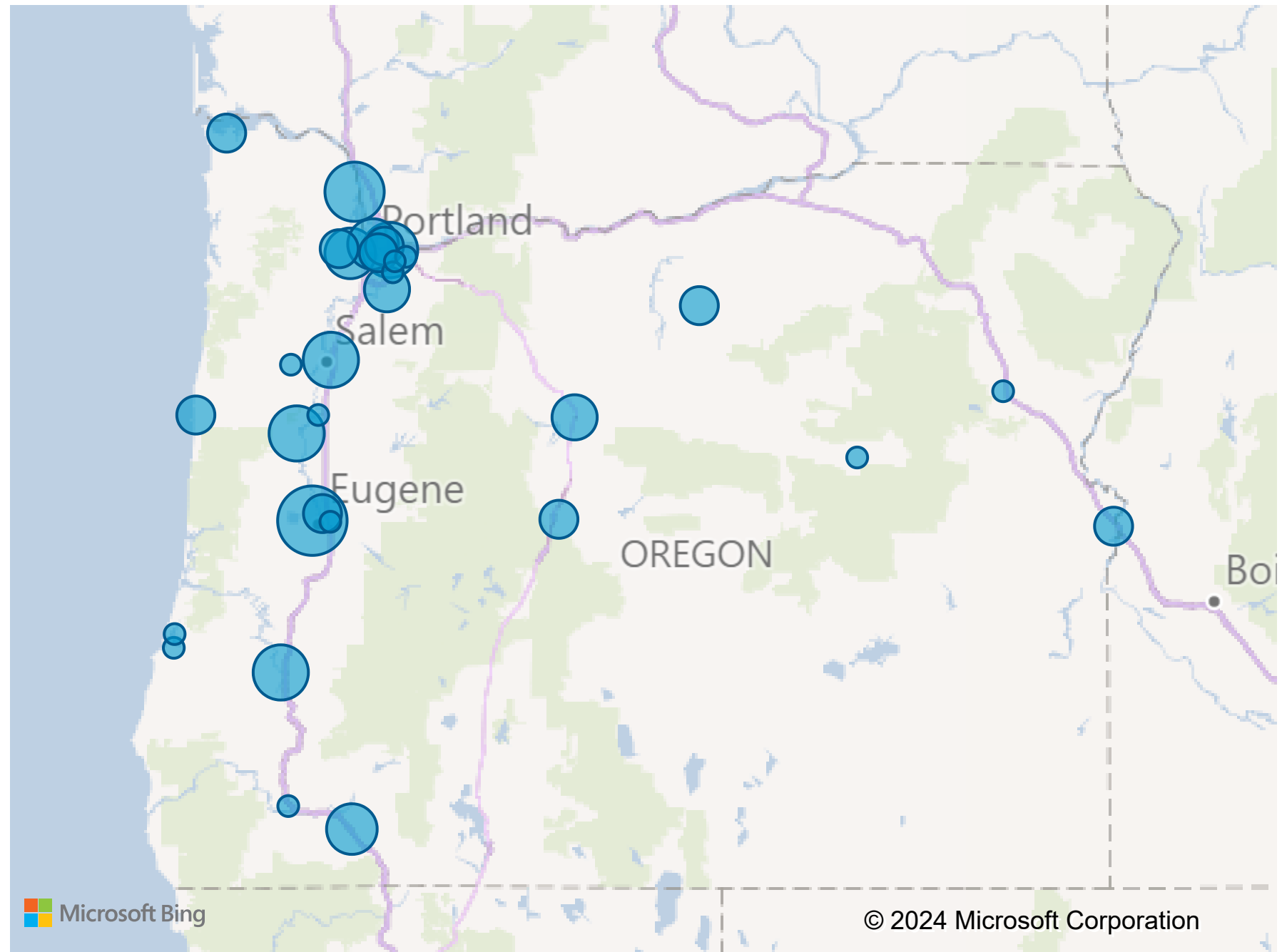
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The GAO tracks cases by branch location of the Foster Youth's case. This information is tracked periodically and annually to see how well it aligns with the number of Foster Youth in the community.

ODHS branch location (county)

County	10	11	12	Total
LANE	6	1	5	12
MULTNOMAH	3	5	4	12
MARION	1	2	6	9
COLUMBIA	1	1	4	6
BENTON	2	1	2	5
DOUGLAS	1	1	3	5
	1	1	2	4
CLACKAMAS	1	2	1	4
JACKSON		1	3	4
JEFFERSON	2		1	3
CLATSOP		2		2
COOS			2	2
DESCHUTES	1	1		2
LINCOLN	1	1		2
MALHUER		1	1	2
WASHINGTON	1		1	2
WHEELER	1	1		2
BAKER		1		1
GRANT		1		1
HARNEY	1			1
JOSEPHINE		1		1
LINN			1	1
POLK		1		1
Total	25	25	37	87

Child Welfare Branch by ZIP code



● ODHS-Child Welfare

*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	10	11	12	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substitute care (FCO Only)	25	25	37	87
Non Relative Foster Care	14	11	18	43
Relative Foster Care	5	5	4	14
In-Home Plan		6	4	10
Not Applicable	1	1	5	7
BRS Residential	1		2	3
Detention/Hospital	1	1	1	3
I/DD Foster Home	2		1	3
Guardianship			1	1
Hotel/Office			1	1
Self-Selected Environment		1		1
Treatment Foster Care	1			1
Total	25	25	37	87

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	10	11	12	Total
American Indian/Alaska Native	6	1	6	13
Black or African American	2	1	4	7
Did Not Answer			1	1
Hispanic/Latino	5	5	4	14
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander			1	1
Unknown	2	4	4	10
White	26	25	30	81
Total	41	36	50	127

Age

Participant Age Group at Closure	10	11	12	Total
Group 0: Unknown				
Group 1: 0-4	21	23	32	76
Group 2: 5-8	6	7	9	22
Group 3: 9-12	4	1	4	9
Group 5: 16-21				
Group 6: 22-64	1		1	2
Group 7: 65+				
Total	32	31	46	109

Gender

Foster Youth Gender	10	11	12	Total
Female	20	14	24	58
Male	12	16	19	47
Non-binary			2	2
Transgender		1	1	2
Unknown				
Total	32	31	46	109

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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	10	11	12	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocate	1	4	5	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attorney	1	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Partner	1	2	3	
Medical Professional		1	1	
Social Service Provider	1	1	2	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Current Foster Child	2		2	
<input type="checkbox"/> Current Foster Parent	4	9	12	25
Foster Parent	4	7	12	23
Self		2	2	
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Member	11	12	11	34
Adoptive Parent	1		1	
Biological Child			1	1
Biological Parent	3	4	5	12
Grandparent	5	4	2	11
Incarcerated Parent	1		1	
Other Family Member	1	3	3	7
Self		1	1	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Former Foster Child			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Former Foster Parent	3	4	2	9
Adoptive Parent		1	1	2
Biological Parent	1		1	
Foster Parent	2	2		4
Grandparent			1	1
Self		1	1	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Friend	1		1	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legislator			1	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neighbor	1		1	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown	1		1	
Total	25	25	37	87

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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	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Investigative practice				
Outside of timelines		1	2	3
Appropriate person was not interviewed	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotline/Screening				
Screening decision			3	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Disposition				
Unfounded			1	1
Total	1	1	6	8

Case Management

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing case work				
Permanency planning	2	2	2	6
Safety planning	2	3	1	6
Services		2	2	4
Visits			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Payment or service denial				
Payment / benefit issue			2	2
K-Plan			1	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notification			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanency / Adoption				
Relative preference	1			1
Total	5	7	10	22

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Case Concerns (continued)

Confidentiality / Privacy

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal information				
Agency shared information inappropriately		1	1	2
Total		1	1	2

Customer Service

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication				
Lack of response	2	4	3	9
Accuracy		1		1
Clarity	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Behavior				
Professionalism	4	1	3	8
Bias		1	1	2
Total	7	7	7	21

Discrimination

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
Total				

Eligibility

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Denial				
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)			1	1
Total			1	1

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Case Concerns (continued)

Foster Care

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Certification / licensing				
Safety concerns	1	1	3	5
Emergency certification		2		2
Foster placement concerns (not related to safety)		1	1	2
Home study process	1		1	2
Out-of-Home Care assessments	1	1		2
Applicant counseled to withdraw			1	1
Exceptions requests	1			1
Revocation	1			1
Timeliness			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Separation/Reunification				
Transition	1	3	2	6
Visitation	1	2	2	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Placement				
Appropriateness of placement	2	2	2	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical/Dental				
Dental Access		2		2
Medical Access	1		1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Education				
Information			1	1
Support	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Finances				
Maintain	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation/Activities/Employment				
Access			1	1
Total	12	14	16	42

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Case Concerns (continued)

Legal / Due Process

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Disposition or findings review	1	2		3
Did not receive disposition letter	1	2		3
<input type="checkbox"/> Custody		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal / state law or admin rule			1	1
Advocacy for change			1	1
Total	1	3	1	5

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

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Grandparents 419B.875 / Relatives	1		1	2
Notification of Court hearings	1		1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parents ORS	1			1
Treated with dignity / respect	1			1
Total	2	1	1	3

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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	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Behavior	1			1
Professionalism	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Education			1	1
Information			1	1
Total	1		1	2

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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	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care Ombuds	30	33	43	106
Consultation	19	15	21	55
Not Valid	7	9	7	23
Valid/Resolved	3	8	12	23
Valid/Not Resolved	1	1	2	4
No Action Taken			1	1
Total	30	33	43	106

Ombuds Action

Concern Category Type	10	11	12	Total
Total				

Recommendations

Case Program Type	10	11	12	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare			2	2
Total			2	2

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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.