



Foster Care Ombuds Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed April 1, 2024 to June 30, 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	4	5	6	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare	32	23	35	90
ODHS-OTIS/Licensing			1	1
Total	32	23	36	91

Total days from case open to close

Open Range	4	5	6	Total
02 days or less	1	1	2	4
03 to 10 Days	4	6	3	13
11 to 20 Days	2	1	4	7
21 to 30 Days	5	1	6	12
31 to 60 Days	13	10	12	35
61 to 90 Days	2	2	2	6
90+ Days	5	2	7	14
Total	32	23	36	91

How FCO heard about concerns

Case Intake SubType	4	5	6	Total
Y.E.S. line	15	7	12	34
FCO.info	6	7	9	22
Direct to Ombuds	4	5	10	19
GAO main line	5	2	2	9
Governor's Office	1	1		2
ODHS/OHA Program	1		1	2
Community Partner/Program			1	1
GAO Info		1		1
GAO CB			1	1
Total	32	23	36	91



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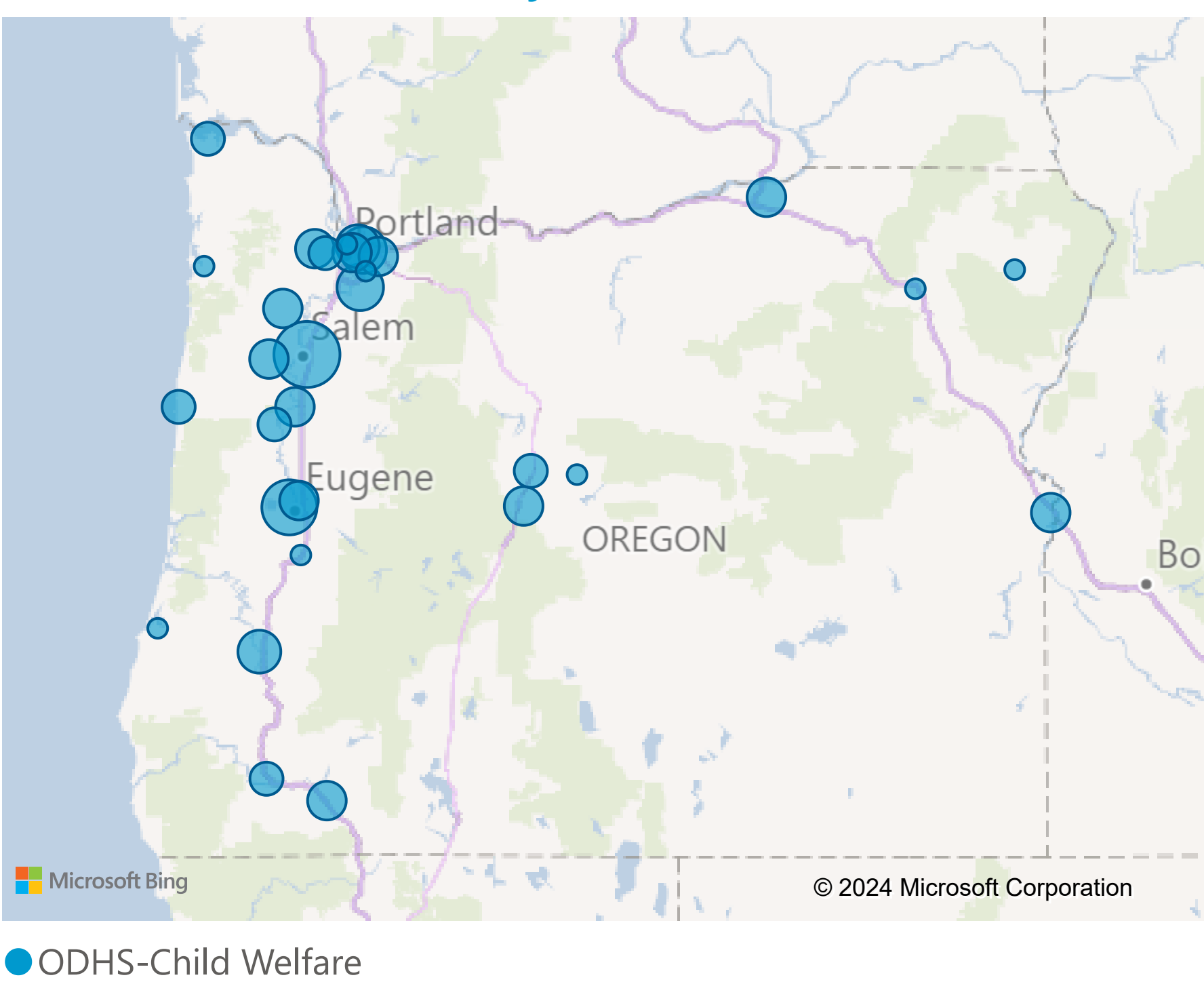
The GAO tracks cases by branch location of the Foster Youth's case. This information is tracked periodically and annually to see how well it aligns with the number of Foster Youth in the community.

ODHS branch location (county)

County	4	5	6	Total
MARION	6	5	4	15
LANE	6	3	3	12
MULTNOMAH	3	7	2	12
CLACKAMAS	2		4	6
DESCHUTES		2	3	5
DOUGLAS	2	1	1	4
JACKSON	1		2	3
LINCOLN		2	1	3
LINN			3	3
MALHUER	1	1	1	3
POLK	2	1		3
UMATILLA	3			3
WASHINGTON	1	1	1	3
YAMHILL	3			3
			2	2
BENTON	1		1	2
CLATSOP			2	2
JOSEPHINE	1		1	2
COOS			1	1
CROOK			1	1
TILLAMOOK			1	1
UNION			1	1
WALLOWA			1	1
Total	32	23	36	91

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	4	5	6	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substitute care (FCO Only)	31	23	35	89
Non Relative Foster Care	8	13	18	39
Relative Foster Care	8	2	6	16
In-Home Plan	6	4	1	11
Not Applicable		3	3	6
Treatment Foster Care	3		3	6
BRS Residential	1		2	3
I/DD Foster Home	2		1	3
Guardianship	1		1	2
Detention/Hospital	1			1
Hotel/Office		1		1
Self-Selected Environment	1			1
Total	31	23	35	89

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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	4	5	6	Total
American Indian/Alaska Native	3	3	1	7
Black or African American	1	2	4	7
Did Not Answer		1		1
Hispanic/Latino	7	3	4	14
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	2		3
Unknown	2	1	3	6
White	19	16	23	58
Total	33	28	35	96

Age

Participant Age Group at Closure	4	5	6	Total
Group 0: Unknown				
Group 1: 0-4	17	16	20	53
Group 2: 5-8	5	4	8	17
Group 3: 9-12	4		4	8
Group 4: 13-15		1		1
Group 5: 16-21				
Group 6: 22-64			1	1
Total	26	21	33	80

Gender

Foster Youth Gender	4	5	6	Total
Female	14	9	22	45
Male	10	12	11	33
Transgender	2			2
Unknown				
Total	26	21	33	80

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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	4	5	6	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Advocate	2		1	3
CASA	2		1	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency Business	1			1
Social Service Provider	1			1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attorney	1	1		2
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Partner	2		5	7
Citizen Review Board			1	1
Self	1			1
Social Service Provider			4	4
Therapist	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Current Foster Child	3	2	1	6
Foster Child	2	2	1	5
Self	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Current Foster Parent	8	5	12	25
Foster Care Provider		1		1
Foster Parent	8	4	11	23
Self			1	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational Personnel	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Member	10	11	11	32
Adoptive Parent	1	1		2
Biological Parent	3	8	6	17
Grandparent	3	1	3	7
Other Family Member	3	1	1	5
Self			1	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Former Foster Child		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Former Foster Parent	2		1	3
Foster Parent	1		1	2
Grandparent	1			1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Friend	1	1		2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guardian	1			1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legislator		1		1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neighbor			1	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regulatory Agency			2	2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown			1	1
Total	32	22	36	90

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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	4	5	6	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Investigative practice				
Outside of timelines	3	1		4
Protective Services response to assignment	2		2	4
Not enough collateral contacts	1	1	1	3
Unwarranted/unreasonable investigation	1		1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Allegation				
Exploitation		1		1
Involuntary seclusion			1	1
Physical			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotline/Screening				
Screening decision	1		1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Disposition				
Founded		1		1
Total	8	4	7	19

Case Management

Concern SubCategory Type	4	5	6	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing case work				
Safety planning	3	3	1	7
Services	1	1	4	6
Permanency planning		2	1	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative coordination / communication				
Among ODHS programs		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Payment or service denial				
Payment / benefit issue	1			1
Total	5	7	7	19

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Case Concerns (continued)

Confidentiality / Privacy

Concern SubCategory Type	4	5	6	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal information				
Agency shared information inappropriately	1		1	2
Total	1		1	2

Customer Service

Concern SubCategory Type	4	5	6	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication				
Lack of response	2		3	5
Clarity	2		1	3
Timeliness		2	1	3
Accuracy		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Behavior				
Expertise / training	2		1	3
Professionalism	1	1		2
Bias	1			1
Retaliation			1	1
Total	8	4	7	19

Discrimination

Concern SubCategory Type	4	5	6	Total
Total				

Eligibility

Concern SubCategory Type	4	5	6	Total
Total				

NOTE: No Discrimination or Eligibility for 2024 Quarter #2

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Case Concerns (continued)

Foster Care

Concern SubCategory Type	4	5	6	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Certification / licensing				
Foster placement concerns (not related to safety)	1	1	3	5
Safety concerns	1	1	3	5
Out-of-Home Care assessments			3	3
Revocation			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Separation/Reunification				
Visitation	4	2	2	8
Transition	4	1	1	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Placement				
Appropriateness of placement	4	1	2	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal needs				
Access to hygiene products			2	2
Clothing needs	1		1	2
Dietary needs	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical/Dental				
Dental Access	1		1	2
Medical Access		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Education				
Support	1	1	1	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Finances				
Maintain			2	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation/Activities/Employment				
Access		1		1
Total	18	9	23	50

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Case Concerns (continued)

Legal / Due Process

Concern SubCategory Type	4	5	6	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship	1		1	2
CW involvement	1		1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Custody		1		1
Agency involvement		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Disposition or findings review		1		1
Did not receive disposition letter		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal / state law or admin rule			1	1
Advocacy for change			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Release of records / records requests		1		1
Timeliness		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Termination of parental rights		1		1
Total	1	4	2	7

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

Concern SubCategory Type	4	5	6	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parents ORS		1	2	3
Treated with dignity / respect		1	1	2
Receive support services			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Children Siblings 418.608	2			2
Maintain contact through visits and other comm	2			2
<input type="checkbox"/> Grandparents 419B.875 / Relatives	1		1	2
Consideration for placement / relative search			1	1
Relative visitation	1			1
Total	3	1	3	7

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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	4	5	6	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care	1	1	2	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Finances			1	1
Maintain			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal needs			1	1
Access to hygiene products			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"/> Customer Service	2	1		3
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Behavior	2	1		3
Bias	1			1
Expertise / training	1			1
Professionalism		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Management		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing case work		1	1	2
Permanency planning		1	1	2
Total	3	3	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	4	5	6	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care Ombuds	44	29	51	124
Consultation	20	12	20	52
Not Valid	11	11	15	37
Valid/Resolved	4	5	11	20
Valid/Not Resolved	8	1	4	13
Complaint Withdrawn			1	1
Unable to contact complainant	1			1
Total	44	29	51	124

Ombuds Action

Concern Category Type	4	5	6	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> GAO action	1	1		2
<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory reporting	1	1		2
Child abuse report made		1	1	2
Total	1	1		2

Recommendations

Case Program Type	4	5	6	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare	4	1	1	6
Total	4	1	1	6

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.