



# 2024 Foster Care Ombuds Quarterly (4) Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed October 1st, 2024 to December 31st, 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	10	11	12	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare	20	23	16	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>59</b>

## How FCO heard about concerns

Case Intake SubType	10	11	12	Total
Y.E.S. line	10	15	6	31
Direct to Ombuds	3	5	4	12
FCO.info	3	1	4	8
GAO Info	3	1		4
GAO main line	1	1	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>59</b>

## Total days from case open to close

Open Range	10	11	12	Total
03 to 10 Days	1	6	2	9
11 to 20 Days	1	1		2
21 to 30 Days	3	1		4
31 to 60 Days	8	9	4	21
61 to 90 Days	6	1	7	14
90+ Days	1	5	3	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>59</b>



Foster Care Ombuds: 1-855-840-6036  
[fco.info@odhs.oregon.gov](mailto:fco.info@odhs.oregon.gov)

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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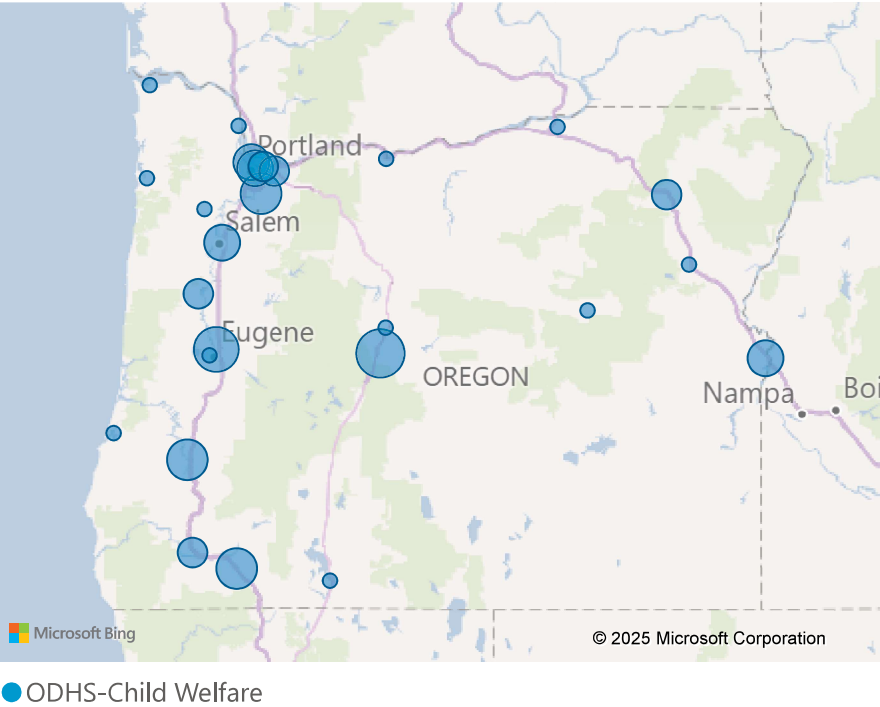
## GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases close October 1st, 2024 to December 31st, 2024

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
MULTNOMAH	2	5	3	10
DESCHUTES	3	4		7
LANE	3	3		6
CLACKAMAS		2	2	4
DOUGLAS	3	1		4
JACKSON	1	2	1	4
MALHUER			3	3
MARION		1	2	3
BENTON	1	1		2
JOSEPHINE		1	1	2
UNION			2	2
BAKER	1			1
CLATSOP	1			1
COLUMBIA			1	1
COOS	1			1
GRANT	1			1
KLAMATH		1		1
TILLAMOOK	1			1
UMATILLA	1			1
WASCO			1	1
YAMHILL	1			1
Total	20	23	16	59

### 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	10	11	12	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Substitute care (FCO Only)</b>	20	23	16	59
Non Relative Foster Care	12	9	6	27
Relative Foster Care	2	5	3	10
Not Applicable		5	3	8
BRS Residential	4			4
Self-Selected Environment	1	1	1	3
Detention/Hospital		2		2
In-Home Plan	1		1	2
Guardianship		1		1
Hotel/Office			1	1
Treatment Foster Care			1	1
Total	20	23	16	59

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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GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed October 1st, 2024 to December 31st, 2024

## 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	1	1	1	3
Black or African American	2	1	2	5
Hispanic/Latino	2	2	2	6
Unknown	2	4		6
White	15	14	13	42
Total	22	22	18	62

### Age

Participant Age Group at Closure	10	11	12	Total
Group 0: Unknown		1		1
Group 1: 0-4	13	11	7	31
Group 2: 5-8	5	7	6	18
Group 3: 9-12	1		2	3
Group 5: 16-21				
Group 6: 22-64				
Total	19	19	15	53

### Gender

Foster Youth Gender	10	11	12	Total
Female	11	11	8	30
Male	8	8	6	22
Transgender			1	1
Unknown				
Total	19	19	15	53

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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	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Advocate</b>	7	3	3	13
CASA	1	1	1	3
Law Enforcement		1		1
Medical Professional			1	1
Residential Treatment Program	3			3
Social Service Provider	2	1		3
Therapist	1			1
Witness			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Attorney</b>		1		1
Attorney		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Counselor</b>		1		1
Social Service Provider		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Current Foster Child</b>	1	2	3	6
Foster Child	1	2	3	6
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Current Foster Parent</b>	4	6	2	12
Foster Parent	4	6	2	12
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Family Member</b>	7	6	5	18
Adoptive Parent			1	1
Biological Parent	3	1	3	7
Grandparent	4	1		5
Incarcerated Parent			1	1
Other Family Member		2		2
Sibling		1		1
Step Parent		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Former Foster Child</b>		1	1	2
Foster Child		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Former Foster Parent</b>	1	3	1	5
Foster Parent	1	3	1	5
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Legislator</b>			1	1
Legislator			1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>59</b>

# 2024 Foster Care Ombuds Quarterly Report (4)

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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"/> <b>Investigative practice</b>				
Protective Services response to assignment	1	3	2	6
Outside of timelines			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Disposition</b>				
Unfounded	1		1	2
Founded		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Allegation</b>				
Physical		1		1
<b>Total</b>	2	5	4	11

### Case Management

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Ongoing case work</b>				
Visits	3	2	1	6
Services	3	2		5
Safety planning		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Permanency / Adoption</b>				
Adoptions and Safe Families Act (ASFA)			1	1
Adoptive placement		1		1
Current caretaker preference	1			1
Relative preference		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Administrative coordination / communication</b>				
Between ODHS and other agencies / programs			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Payment or service denial</b>				
Payment / benefit		1		1
<b>Total</b>	7	8	3	18

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## Case Concerns (continued)

### Confidentiality / Privacy

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
Total				

### Customer Service

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Behavior				
Professionalism	3	2	1	6
Expertise / training	1			1
Not helpful			1	1
Unfair / Unequal treatment			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication				
Lack of response			1	1
Timeliness			1	1
Total	4	2	5	11

### Discrimination

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
Total				

### Eligibility

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
Total				

NOTE: No Discrimination or Eligibility for 2024 Quarter #4

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## Case Concerns (continued)

### Foster Care

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Separation/Reunification</b>				
Visitation	2		1	3
Belongings	1		1	2
Transition	1	1		2
Continuation of svcs	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Placement</b>				
Appropriateness of placement	2	1	1	4
Removal from current caretaker	2	1		3
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Certification / licensing</b>				
Foster placement concerns (not related to safety)		1	1	2
Safety concerns	1			1
Timeliness		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Medical/Dental</b>				
Medical Access	1		2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Finances</b>				
Support/Bank		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mental Health</b>				
Access	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Personal needs</b>				
Access to hygiene products			1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>

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## Case Concerns (continued)

### Legal / Due Process

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Federal / state law or admin rule</b>		2		2
Advocacy for change		2		2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Custody</b>		1		1
Agency involvement		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Guardianship</b>		1		1
CW involvement		1		1
<b>Total</b>		4		4

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

Concern SubCategory Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Grandparents 419B.875 / Relatives</b>	2			2
Relative contact	2			2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>x-Foster Child / Children ORS 418.201</b>		2		2
Notification of Court/CRB		1		1
Transportation to Court/CRB		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Foster Parents ORS</b>		1		1
Treated with dignity / respect		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>x-Foster Children Siblings 418.608</b>			1	1
Private, less restrictive contact as appropriate			1	1
<b>Total</b>	2	3	1	6



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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"/> Case Management	1	2		3
<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing case work	1	2		3
Visits	1	1		2
Services		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service			2	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Behavior			2	2
Not helpful			1	1
Professionalism			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care			2	2
<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"/> Legal / due process		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal / state law or admin rule		1		1
Advocacy for change		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Rights of...			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> x-Foster Children Siblings 418.608			1	1
Private, less restrictive contact as appropriate			1	1
Total	1	3	5	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	10	11	12	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Foster Care Ombuds</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>75</b>
Not Valid	19	12	4	35
Valid/Not Resolved	3	6	8	17
Valid/Resolved	5	4	5	14
Consultation		6	3	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>75</b>

### Ombuds Action

Concern Category Type	10	11	12	Total
<b>Total</b>				

## Recommendations

Case Program Type	10	11	12	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare			2	2
<b>Total</b>			2	2

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.