



## **Fiscal Year 2018**

Issued December 20, 2018

Published March 21, 2019

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Oregon Foster Care Ombudsman**

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## Introduction

In 2013, Oregon's foster youth worked collectively for the passage of Senate Bill 123 which resulted into Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 418.200. As part of this legislation, the creation of the Foster Children's Bill of Rights occurred and became effective January 1, 2014. Subsequently, the Department of Human Services (DHS) amended their Rights of Children and Young Adults rule under Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 413-010-0170 to reflect the Rights entitled to all Oregon foster children in the legal custody of DHS. In March of 2014 Oregon hired their first Foster Care Ombudsman whom was embedded in the Governor's Advocacy Office and dedicated specifically for foster care matters. By May of 2014 the Youth Empowerment and Safety (Y.E.S.) line was activated in concert with Foster Care Awareness month.

The Ombudsman's authority to investigate matters is statutorily detailed in ORS 182.500. Similarly, this same statute details the prompt cooperation of all public bodies and those that contract with public bodies to provide all information requested by the ombudsman. Furthermore, the Governor's Advocacy Office is under the direction of the Children's Advocate as detailed in ORS 417.805 which provides the authority to receive and investigate constituent complaints.

In August of 2014, the Foster Care Ombudsman hosted the first Foster Care Ombudsman advisory group. The group is comprised of current and former foster youth, foster parents, CASA, Judicial, CW caseworkers, Certifiers, Oregon Foster Youth Connection, Central Office Program staff, HealthShare, 211 Info, Juvenile Dept., Kinship House, Lines for Life, HeadStart, Grand Ronde Tribe, and Legislative Staff. The group meets on a quarterly basis and is open to all. The group affords the Ombudsman an opportunity for review of outreach documents, reports, staffing difficult cases, and overall feedback. The support, guidance and passion of this group empowers the ombudsman through difficult terrain.

## 2018 Updates

This report contains information gleaned over the 2018 fiscal year. As the role of the Foster Care Ombudsman continues to evolve, so do the reporting metrics. The reader should note that some metrics have been added in recent quarters at the request of members of the Foster Care Ombudsman Advisory Group as well as achieving high reporting standards of the Governor's Advocacy Office. The comparison data should be viewed with caution as representation of data may reflect other dynamics such as promotional efforts by the Foster Care Ombudsman as well as other community partners.

Oregon's Foster Care Ombudsman investigates all calls of concern or complaint received by his office pertaining to services involved in foster care. The ombudsman advocates for the interests and rights of foster children and youth, and, when contacted, conducts fact-finding inquiries that may span the foster care system. Finding solutions is the aim, but in the search for accountability, areas for potential improvement may surface. Examples of such instances are boxed and highlighted throughout this report.

Please contact the Foster Care Ombudsman at 503-945-5897 if you have any questions or need clarification regarding this report.

## Who reached out to the Foster Care Ombudsman?

When someone contacts the Foster Care Ombudsman, a “case” is opened. This number does not include cases that are re-opened. For example, if the Foster Care Ombudsman receives new concerns from the reporter or other party after a case has been closed, it will be re-opened if it is within 30 days of closure. After a case has been closed 30 days, it will be opened as a new case.

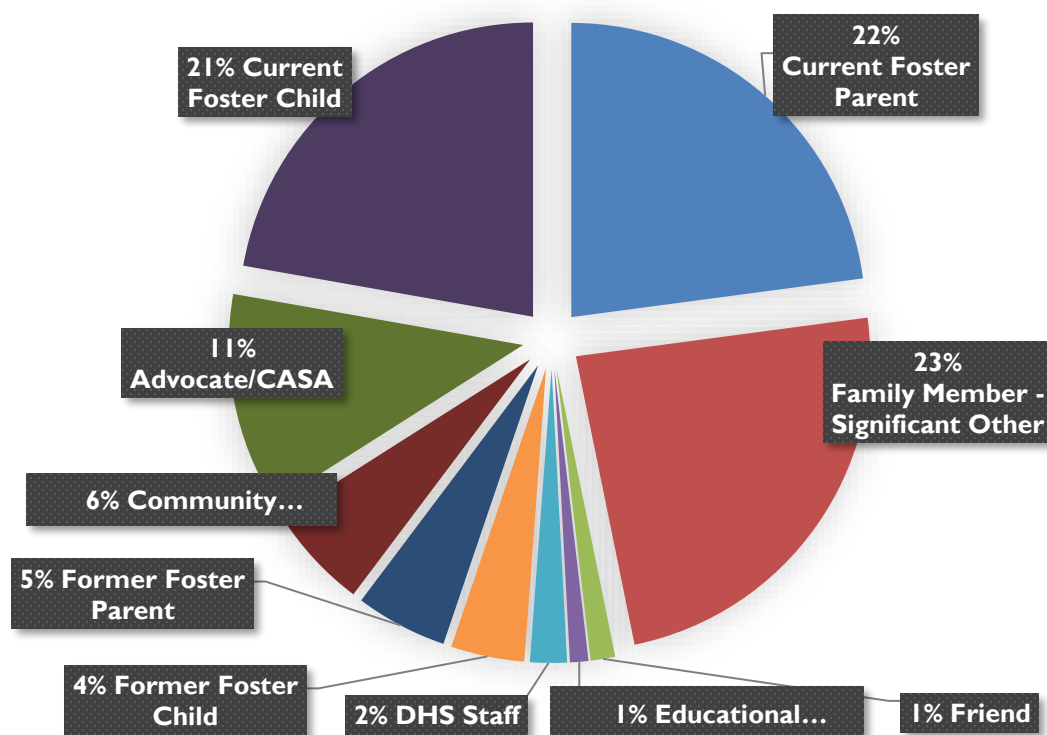
| Overall Case Management | July-Sept | Oct-Dec | Jan-March | April-June | FY 18 Total |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| <b>Cases Opened</b>     | 85        | 80      | 81        | 82         | <b>328</b>  |
| <b>Closed Cases</b>     | 76        | 66      | 68        | 97         | <b>307</b>  |

The person that contacts the Foster Care Ombudsman is identified as the “reporter.” For FY 2018 the population with most contacts to the Foster Care Ombudsman was foster parents, specifically “Current/Former Foster Parent to child.”

| Role of Reporter                             | July-Sept | Oct-Dec | Jan-March | April-June | Total     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| <b>Current/Former Foster Parent to child</b> | 25        | 14      | 20        | 24         | <b>83</b> |
| <b>Family Member/Significant Other</b>       | 16        | 23      | 11        | 21         | <b>71</b> |
| <b>Current Foster Child</b>                  | 13        | 13      | 17        | 23         | <b>66</b> |
| <b>Advocate/CASA</b>                         | 10        | 8       | 8         | 9          | <b>35</b> |
| <b>Community Partner</b>                     | 3         | 3       | 5         | 6          | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Former Foster Child</b>                   | 3         | 2       | 3         | 4          | <b>12</b> |
| <b>DHS Staff/Agency Business</b>             | 0         | 0       | 1         | 5          | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Friend</b>                                | 2         | 0       | 1         | 1          | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Educational Personnel</b>                 | 0         | 1       | 0         | 2          | <b>3</b>  |

|                                                             |           |           |           |           |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Biological Parent</b>                                    | 0         | 0         | 2         | 0         | <b>2</b>   |
| <b>Neighbor</b>                                             | 0         | 2         | 0         | 0         | <b>2</b>   |
| <b>Medical Staff/Professional</b>                           | 2         | 0         | 0         | 0         | <b>2</b>   |
| <b>Therapist/Counselor/Social Services Provider/Client*</b> | 1         | 0         | 0         | 1         | <b>2</b>   |
| <b>Attorney</b>                                             | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1         | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Legislator</b>                                           | 1         | 0         | 0         | 0         | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Contractor</b>                                           | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | <b>0</b>   |
| <b>Guardian</b>                                             | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | <b>0</b>   |
| <b>Anonymous</b>                                            | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | <b>0</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>                                                | <b>76</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>97</b> | <b>307</b> |

**Figure 1: Role of reporter  
(cases with > 2 contacts)**



## Demographic information

The Foster Care Ombudsman tracks certain demographic information in order to observe trends and understand the populations served. This information is taken directly from Child Welfare's case management system OR-Kids. When the case with the Foster Care Ombudsman is about more than one child, such as a sibling group, the information for the oldest child is reported.

**SIBLING VISITS** *The biologic mother of a son in foster care contacted the Foster Care Ombudsman with concerns that her child was not seeing his siblings regularly. Under the Foster Children's Sibling Bill of Rights, which was passed by the legislature in 2017, foster children must be able to maintain contact with siblings while in substitute care placements, including being able to have transportation to those visits. After the caseworker and foster parents were made aware of the need to establish this routine, regular visits among the siblings were scheduled.*

| Age of Foster Child | July-Sept | Oct-Dec   | Jan-March | April-June | Total      |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 0 - 4               | 16        | 12        | 11        | 14         | 53         |
| 5 - 8               | 10        | 8         | 9         | 12         | 39         |
| 9 - 12              | 10        | 13        | 10        | 13         | 46         |
| 13 - 15             | 19        | 15        | 17        | 23         | 74         |
| 16 - 21             | 18        | 14        | 12        | 31         | 75         |
| 22 +                | 3         | 2         | 4         | 1          | 10         |
| Unknown             | 0         | 2         | 2         | 0          | 4          |
| Not applicable*     | 0         | 0         | 3         | 3          | 6          |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>76</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>97</b>  | <b>307</b> |

*\*Not applicable might pertain to a case that does not involve a specific child or former foster child who contacted the FCO with historic or other concerns not specific to their age.*

| Gender of Foster Child | July-Sept | Oct-Dec   | Jan-March | April-June | Total      |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Female                 | 42        | 33        | 47        | 43         | 165        |
| Male                   | 34        | 33        | 18        | 52         | 137        |
| Unknown                | 0         | 0         | 2         | 1          | 3          |
| Transgender            | 0         | 0         | 1         | 1          | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>76</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>97</b>  | <b>307</b> |

| Race of Foster Child             | July-Sept | Oct-Dec   | Jan-March | April-June | Total      |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| White                            | 60        | 52        | 51        | 81         | 246        |
| Unknown                          | 5         | 4         | 2         | 7          | 16         |
| American Indian                  | 5         | 2         | 7         | 3          | 16         |
| Black/African American           | 4         | 8         | 7         | 4          | 23         |
| Hispanic                         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 2          | 2          |
| Asian                            | 1         | 0         | 0         | 0          | 1          |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 1         | 0         | 1         | 0          | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>76</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>97</b>  | <b>307</b> |

*\*Unknown pertains to a case where the specific data is not listed in the Child Welfare case management system ORKIDS.*

## How are complainants contacting the Foster Care Ombudsman?

Most complainants reach the Foster Care Ombudsman through the YES line, which stands for Youth, Empowerment and Safety, a direct phone line to the ombudsman (1-855-840-6036). This line is published on

**IMMUNIZATION NEED** The Foster Care Ombudsman was contacted by an out-of-state relative who was providing foster care for a child from Oregon. She was prevented from enrolling the child at a day-care facility due to the child's missing immunization history. As a result, the foster parent wasn't able to go to her job. The Ombudsman was able to assist the caseworker, helping to expedite transfer of the immunization records, which allowed the child to qualify for admission to day care.

the Foster Children's Bill of Rights poster that is provided to all DHS foster children.

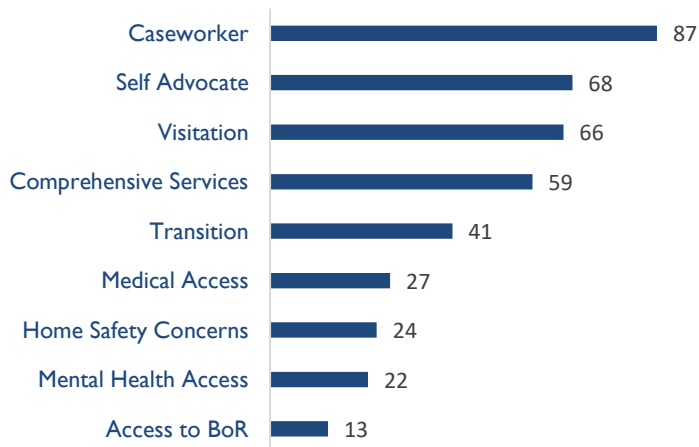
### What are contacts to the Foster Care Ombudsman about?

The Foster Care Ombudsman tracks the overall concerns reported by the reporter, which are divided into subcategories. Cases can have more than one concern.

| Services                        | July-Sept | Oct-Dec   | Jan-March | April-June | Total      |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| <b>Self- Advocate</b>           | 13        | 16        | 18        | 21         | <b>68</b>  |
| <b>Comprehensive</b>            | 19        | 11        | 8         | 21         | <b>59</b>  |
| <b>Transportation</b>           | 0         | 0         | 5         | 0          | <b>5</b>   |
| <b>Involved</b>                 | 0         | 3         | 1         | 0          | <b>4</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>32</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>42</b>  | <b>136</b> |
|                                 |           |           |           |            |            |
| Separation/Unification          | July-Sept | Oct-Dec   | Jan-March | April-June | Total      |
| <b>Visitation</b>               | 17        | 14        | 13        | 22         | <b>66</b>  |
| <b>Transition</b>               | 13        | 4         | 12        | 12         | <b>41</b>  |
| <b>Belongings</b>               | 1         | 4         | 0         | 3          | <b>8</b>   |
| <b>Continuation of Services</b> | 0         | 0         | 1         | 6          | <b>7</b>   |
| <b>Notification of Change</b>   | 2         | 0         | 1         | 1          | <b>4</b>   |
| <b>Current Caretaker Status</b> | 0         | 0         | 1         | 0          | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Separation/Unification</b>   | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          | <b>0</b>   |
| <b>Adoption</b>                 | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          | <b>0</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>33</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>28</b> | <b>44</b>  | <b>127</b> |
|                                 |           |           |           |            |            |
| Child Welfare                   | July-Sept | Oct-Dec   | Jan-March | April-June | Total      |
| <b>Caseworker</b>               | 19        | 20        | 20        | 28         | <b>87</b>  |

|                            |                  |                |                  |                   |              |
|----------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| <b>Certifier</b>           | 0                | 1              | 1                | 1                 | <b>3</b>     |
| <b>Supervisor</b>          | 0                | 0              | 2                | 0                 | <b>2</b>     |
| <b>ICWA</b>                | 0                | 0              | 1                | 0                 | <b>1</b>     |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>19</b>        | <b>21</b>      | <b>24</b>        | <b>29</b>         | <b>93</b>    |
|                            |                  |                |                  |                   |              |
| <b>Abuse/Neglect</b>       | <b>July-Sept</b> | <b>Oct-Dec</b> | <b>Jan-March</b> | <b>April-June</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>Home Safety Concern</b> | 10               | 7              | 3                | 4                 | <b>24</b>    |
| <b>Neglect</b>             | 2                | 2              | 2                | 3                 | <b>9</b>     |
| <b>Physical</b>            | 2                | 1              | 2                | 2                 | <b>7</b>     |
| <b>Emotional</b>           | 2                | 1              | 2                | 1                 | <b>6</b>     |
| <b>Sexual</b>              | 0                | 1              | 3                | 1                 | <b>5</b>     |
| <b>Allegation</b>          | 0                | 0              | 1                | 0                 | <b>1</b>     |
| <b>Closed at Screening</b> | 0                | 0              | 0                | 1                 | <b>1</b>     |
| <b>Exploitation</b>        | 0                | 0              | 0                | 1                 | <b>1</b>     |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>16</b>        | <b>12</b>      | <b>13</b>        | <b>13</b>         | <b>54</b>    |
|                            |                  |                |                  |                   |              |
| <b>Medical/Dental</b>      | <b>July-Sept</b> | <b>Oct-Dec</b> | <b>Jan-March</b> | <b>April-June</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>Medical Access</b>      | 8                | 8              | 4                | 7                 | <b>27</b>    |
| <b>Dental Access</b>       | 2                | 1              | 3                | 3                 | <b>9</b>     |
| <b>Medical Refusal</b>     | 0                | 1              | 0                | 0                 | <b>1</b>     |
| <b>Dental Refusal</b>      | 0                | 0              | 0                | 0                 | <b>0</b>     |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>10</b>        | <b>10</b>      | <b>7</b>         | <b>10</b>         | <b>37</b>    |
|                            |                  |                |                  |                   |              |
| <b>Mental Health</b>       | <b>July-Sept</b> | <b>Oct-Dec</b> | <b>Jan-March</b> | <b>April-June</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>Access</b>              | 5                | 2              | 4                | 11                | <b>22</b>    |
| <b>Crisis</b>              | 1                | 2              | 0                | 1                 | <b>4</b>     |
| <b>Refusal</b>             | 1                | 0              | 0                | 2                 | <b>3</b>     |
| <b>Other</b>               | 0                | 0              | 0                | 1                 | <b>1</b>     |
| <b>Suicidal</b>            | 0                | 0              | 0                | 1                 | <b>1</b>     |
| <b>Alcohol/Drug</b>        | 0                | 0              | 0                | 0                 | <b>0</b>     |
| <b>Self- Harm</b>          | 0                | 0              | 0                | 0                 | <b>0</b>     |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>7</b>         | <b>4</b>       | <b>4</b>         | <b>16</b>         | <b>31</b>    |

| <b>Rights</b>                     | <b>July-Sept</b> | <b>Oct-Dec</b> | <b>Jan-March</b> | <b>April-June</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| <b>Access to</b>                  | 5                | 4              | 0                | 4                 | 13           |
| <b>Receipt of</b>                 | 0                | 1              | 0                | 2                 | 3            |
| <b>Notice of Court/CRB</b>        | 1                | 0              | 0                | 0                 | 1            |
| <b>Retaliation for issuing</b>    | 1                | 0              | 0                | 0                 | 1            |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>7</b>         | <b>5</b>       | <b>0</b>         | <b>6</b>          | <b>18</b>    |
|                                   |                  |                |                  |                   |              |
| <b>Education</b>                  | <b>July-Sept</b> | <b>Oct-Dec</b> | <b>Jan-March</b> | <b>April-June</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>Support</b>                    | 0                | 2              | 3                | 3                 | 8            |
| <b>Placement</b>                  | 2                | 0              | 3                | 2                 | 7            |
| <b>Information</b>                | 1                | 0              | 0                | 0                 | 1            |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>3</b>         | <b>2</b>       | <b>6</b>         | <b>5</b>          | <b>16</b>    |
|                                   |                  |                |                  |                   |              |
| <b>Finance</b>                    | <b>July-Sept</b> | <b>Oct-Dec</b> | <b>Jan-March</b> | <b>April-June</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>Opportunities</b>              | 0                | 0              | 2                | 1                 | 3            |
| <b>Support</b>                    | 2                | 0              | 0                | 1                 | 3            |
| <b>Maintain</b>                   | 0                | 0              | 0                | 2                 | 2            |
| <b>Credit</b>                     | 1                | 0              | 0                | 0                 | 1            |
| <b>Support/Bank</b>               | 1                | 0              | 0                | 0                 | 1            |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>4</b>         | <b>0</b>       | <b>2</b>         | <b>4</b>          | <b>10</b>    |
|                                   |                  |                |                  |                   |              |
| <b>Rec./Activities/Employment</b> | <b>July-Sept</b> | <b>Oct-Dec</b> | <b>Jan-March</b> | <b>April-June</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>Support</b>                    | 1                | 0              | 2                | 0                 | 3            |
| <b>Access</b>                     | 0                | 0              | 1                | 1                 | 2            |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>1</b>         | <b>0</b>       | <b>3</b>         | <b>1</b>          | <b>5</b>     |

**Figure 2: Frequency of top 9 concerns, FY 2018****MEDICAID COVERAGE**

The Foster Care Ombudsman was contacted by a former foster youth who reported her social security payments had been reduced due to a sudden deduction for Medicaid coverage. Under the Affordable Care Act, states must provide young adults under the age of 26 with free health care if they were in foster care at age 18 or older.

Previously, this former foster youth had coverage with Medicaid that included payment for medication. The Ombudsman was able to facilitate reimbursement for this lost medical benefit.

**Where is the foster child residing?**

| Current Placement Status                  | July-Sept | Oct-Dec   | Jan-March | April-June | Total      |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| <b>Non-Relative Foster Care</b>           | 31        | 23        | 30        | 37         | <b>121</b> |
| <b>Behavioral Rehabilitative Services</b> | 13        | 11        | 12        | 20         | <b>56</b>  |
| <b>Relative Foster Care</b>               | 14        | 11        | 8         | 17         | <b>50</b>  |
| <b>Not Applicable</b>                     | 8         | 11        | 10        | 17         | <b>46</b>  |
| <b>Detention/Hospital*</b>                | 3         | 3         | 4         | 3          | <b>13</b>  |
| <b>Treatment Foster Care</b>              | 3         | 3         | 2         | 2          | <b>10</b>  |
| <b>Hotel/Office*</b>                      | 3         | 2         | 1         | 0          | <b>6</b>   |
| <b>IDD Foster Care</b>                    | 1         | 1         | 1         | 1          | <b>4</b>   |
| <b>Guardianship</b>                       | 0         | 1         | 0         | 0          | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Homeless</b>                           | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          | <b>0</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>76</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>97</b>  | <b>307</b> |

\*Placements added to case management system beginning January 2017

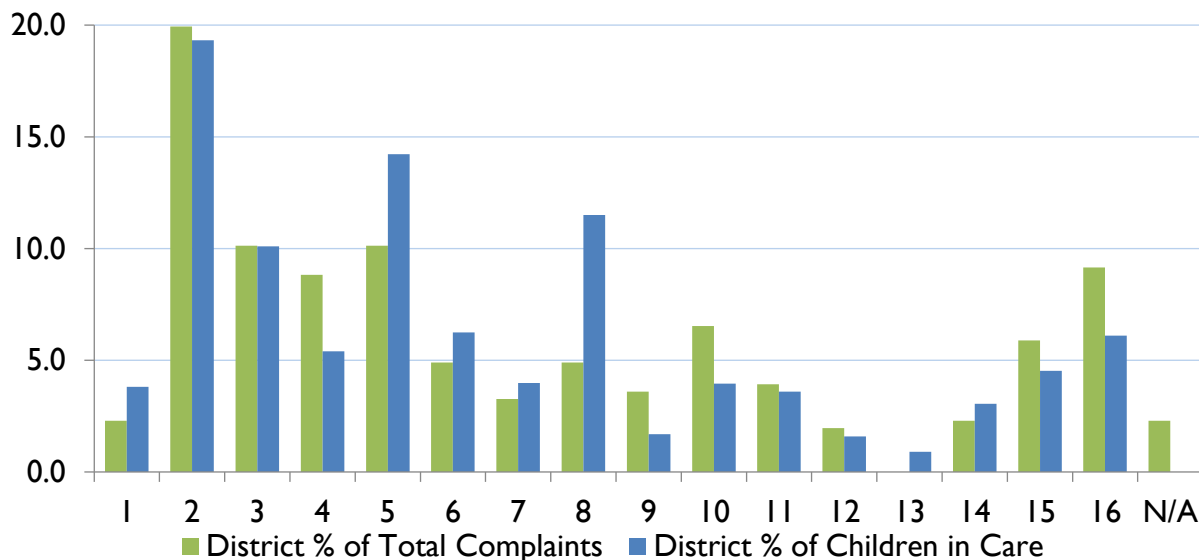
## DHS Child Welfare Branch Location

| DHS District / Counties                        | FCO Cases  | District % of Total FCO Cases | Children in Care on 9/30/17* | District % of Children in Care |
|------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook                 | 7          | 2.3                           | 303                          | 3.8                            |
| 2 Multnomah                                    | 61         | 19.9                          | 1537                         | 19.3                           |
| 3 Marion, Polk, Yamhill                        | 31         | 10.1                          | 803                          | 10.1                           |
| 4 Linn, Benton, Lincoln                        | 27         | 8.8                           | 430                          | 5.4                            |
| 5 Lane                                         | 31         | 10.1                          | 1132                         | 14.2                           |
| 6 Douglas                                      | 15         | 4.9                           | 497                          | 6.2                            |
| 7 Coos, Curry                                  | 10         | 3.3                           | 317                          | 4.0                            |
| 8 Jackson, Josephine                           | 15         | 4.9                           | 915                          | 11.5                           |
| 9 Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Wheeler | 11         | 3.6                           | 135                          | 1.7                            |
| 10 Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson                 | 20         | 6.5                           | 314                          | 3.9                            |
| 11 Klamath, Lake                               | 12         | 3.9                           | 286                          | 3.6                            |
| 12 Morrow, Umatilla                            | 6          | 2.0                           | 127                          | 1.6                            |
| 13 Baker, Union, Wallowa                       | 0          | 0.0                           | 72                           | 0.9                            |
| 14 Grant, Harney, Malheur                      | 7          | 2.3                           | 243                          | 3.1                            |
| 15 Clackamas                                   | 18         | 5.9                           | 360                          | 4.5                            |
| 16 Washington                                  | 28         | 9.2                           | 485                          | 6.1                            |
| N/A                                            | 7          | 2.3                           |                              |                                |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>306</b> |                               | <b>7956</b>                  |                                |

\*Data courtesy the [Child Welfare Data Book](#).

Figure 3 compares the number of Foster Care Ombudsman cases for FY 2018 to the number of youth in care as of September 30, 2017. While this is not an apples-to-apples comparison, we use this data to assess the representation of the foster youth population in the Foster Care Ombudsman's work. As you can see, the number of cases has a close relationship to the number of foster youth in each county.

**Figure 3: Comparison of % of complaints per district to % of children in care, FY 2018**



### What happened next?

Once the Foster Care Ombudsman opens a case, there are many different courses of action taken, which will reflect the unique nature of each concern. Generally speaking, the ombudsman will listen, educate, research and review concerns shared with this office. Once this review has concluded, the ombudsman will follow up with appropriate agency staff and management to better understand and resolve specific and global concerns.

When the Foster Care Ombudsman closes a case, the ombudsman writes up a findings narrative and chooses a closing resolution.

**OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES** The CASA volunteer contacted the Foster Care Ombudsman with concerns that a boy in foster care wasn't engaged in extracurricular physical activities – a basic entitlement under the Oregon Foster Children's Bill of Rights. Under HB 2890, which was passed by the Oregon legislature in 2015, foster children and youth by law are allowed to participate in at least one ongoing extracurricular activity, based on the availability and the interest of the child. The ombudsman reached out to the caseworker, who confirmed the boy wasn't engaged in an outside activity. After the ombudsman's explanation and encouragement, the boy was enrolled in a martial arts program.

| Resolution                  | July-Sept | Oct-Dec   | Jan-March | April-June | Total       |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Consultation                | 29        | 23        | 26        | 35         | 113         |
| Valid/Resolved              | 24        | 22        | 27        | 31         | 104         |
| Not Valid                   | 19        | 15        | 9         | 21         | 64          |
| Valid/Not Resolved          | 3         | 3         | 3         | 5          | 14          |
| Unable to Contact           | 1         | 0         | 2         | 4          | 7           |
| Inquiry                     | 0         | 3         | 0         | 1          | 4           |
| Forwarded to Program Office | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1          | 1           |
| No Action Taken             | 0         | 0         | 1         | 0          | 1           |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>76</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>98</b>  | <b>308*</b> |

\*a case in June 2018 had two resolutions

Findings may fit in two categories, educating the public or resolutions that follow an investigation:

### Educating the Public Findings

Categories that do not result in an investigation.

- *Inquiries*- Not about a DHS program, non-jurisdiction issues and child custody matters.
- *Consultation*- Provide policy education, assist complainant in problem solving solutions to their concerns.

### DAY CARE SUBSIDY

The Foster Care Ombudsman was contacted by foster parents who wished to use a state-provided subsidy to help pay day-care costs. However, the foster parents were unable to use the subsidy at the child-care center of their choice. Such subsidies are restricted to child-care providers approved by the Department of Human Services. The ombudsman was able to assist the foster parents and the caseworker navigate the procedures necessary to obtain state help to pay for day care.

### Case Resolution Findings

- *Valid/Resolved*- complaints are those that the Ombudsman has determined have merit, and changes have been or are being made by the Department.
- *Valid/Not Resolved*- complaints that the Ombudsman has determined have merit, but have not been resolved for the following reasons:

- Action cannot be undone-The issue could not be resolved because it involved an event that had already occurred.
- Dept. disagrees with Ombudsman-The Department disagreed with the Ombudsman's recommendation and would not make changes.
- 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.
- Lack of Resources- the Department agreed with the Ombudsman's recommendation but could not make a change because no resource was available.
- *Not Valid*-Complaints are those that the Ombudsman has reviewed and has determined that the Department was or is following policies and procedures.
- *Ongoing*- Investigation and resolution is pending at the time of data collection.

## Recommendations

The Foster Care Ombudsman may also make recommendations to agency administration or staff based on the findings of the office. Though this is already happening on an informal basis, the Foster Care Ombudsman and Governor's Advocacy Office are working to improve our methodology for recommendations and will publish recommendations in future reports.

### Appendix A: Comparison to prior years' reports

| <b>Foster Care Comparison</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Cases Opened                  | 237              | 289              | 328              |
| Closed Cases                  | 125              | 289              | 307              |

| <b>Current Placement Status</b>    | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Behavioral Rehabilitative Services | 45               | 32               | 56               |
| Detention/Hospital                 | 3                | 5                | 13               |
| Guardianship                       | 0                | 1                | 1                |
| Homeless                           | 0                | 1                | 0                |
| Hotel/Office                       | 0                | 2                | 6                |
| IDD Foster Care                    | 8                | 4                | 4                |
| Non-Relative Foster Care           | 98               | 147              | 121              |
| Not Applicable                     | 6                | 41               | 0                |
| Relative Foster Care               | 47               | 47               | 50               |
| Treatment Foster Care              | 7                | 9                | 10               |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>225</b>       | <b>289</b>       | <b>307</b>       |

| <b>Role of Reporter</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Advocate/CASA           | 20               | 28               | 35               |
| Anonymous               | 0                | 1                | 0                |
| Attorney                | 2                | 3                | 1                |
| Biological Parent       | 14               | 6                | 2                |
| Community Partner       | 2                | 2                | 17               |

|                                 |            |            |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Contractor                      | 1          | 1          | 1          |
| Current Foster Child            | 71         | 108        | 66         |
| Current Foster Parent           | 48         | 48         |            |
| DHS Staff                       | 2          | 3          | 6          |
| Educational Personnel           | 5          | 1          | 3          |
| Family Member/Significant Other | 38         | 48         | 71         |
| Former Foster Child             | 10         | 19         | 12         |
| Former Foster Parent            | 16         | 16         |            |
| Friend                          | 4          | 4          | 4          |
| Guardian                        | 0          | 1          | 0          |
| Legislator                      | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| Medical Staff                   | 2          | 0          | 2          |
| Neighbor                        | 2          | 1          | 2          |
| Therapist/Counselor             | 0          | 1          | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>237</b> | <b>289</b> | <b>307</b> |

| <b>Gender of Foster Child</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Female                        | 54               | 173              | 165              |
| Male                          | 58               | 103              | 137              |
| Transgender                   | 1                | 5                | 3                |
| Unknown                       | 1                | 8                | 2                |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>114</b>       | <b>289</b>       | <b>307</b>       |

| <b>Abuse/Neglect</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Emotional            | 4                | 4                | 6                |
| Exploitation         | 0                | 1                | 1                |
| Home Safety Concern  | 16               | 36               | 24               |
| Neglect              | 1                | 11               | 9                |
| Physical             | 0                | 11               | 7                |
| Sexual               | 0                | 5                | 5                |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>21</b>        | <b>68</b>        | <b>54</b>        |

| <b>Child Welfare</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Caseworker</b>    | 21               | 40               | 87               |
| <b>Certifier</b>     | 1                | 5                | 3                |
| <b>ICWA</b>          | 0                | 0                | 1                |
| <b>Supervisor</b>    | 1                | 1                | 2                |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>23</b>        | <b>46</b>        | <b>93</b>        |

| <b>Education</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Information      | 3                | 7                | 1                |
| Placement        | 3                | 1                | 7                |
| Support          | 3                | 2                | 8                |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>9</b>         | <b>10</b>        | <b>16</b>        |

| <b>Finance</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Credit         | 1                | 0                | 1                |
| Maintain       | 0                | 2                | 2                |
| Opportunities  | 0                | 0                | 3                |
| Support/Bank   | 1                | 0                | 1                |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>2</b>         | <b>2</b>         | <b>10</b>        |

| <b>Medical/Dental</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Dental Access         | 6                | 5                | 9                |
| Dental Refusal        | 0                | 0                | 0                |
| Medical Access        | 11               | 20               | 27               |
| Medical Refusal       | 0                | 0                | 1                |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>17</b>        | <b>25</b>        | <b>37</b>        |

| <b>Mental Health</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Access               | 5                | 4                | 22               |
| Alcohol/Drug         | 0                | 0                | 0                |
| Crisis               | 3                | 0                | 4                |
| Other                | 1                | 2                | 1                |
| Suicidal             | 0                | 0                | 1                |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>10</b>        | <b>6</b>         | <b>37</b>        |

| <b>Recreation/Activities/Employment</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Access                                  | 0                | 3                | 3                |
| Support                                 | 0                | 0                | 2                |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>0</b>         | <b>3</b>         | <b>5</b>         |

| <b>Rights</b>           | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Access to               | 13               | 9                | 13               |
| Notice of Court/CRB     | 0                | 0                | 1                |
| Receipt of              | 1                | 2                | 3                |
| Retaliation for issuing | 0                | 1                | 1                |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>14</b>        | <b>12</b>        | <b>18</b>        |

| <b>Separation/Unification</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Continuation of Services      | 0                | 5                | 7                |
| Separation/Unification        | 1                | 10               | 0                |
| Transition                    | 20               | 33               | 41               |
| Visitation                    | 24               | 30               | 6                |
| Adoption                      | 0                | 3                | 0                |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>45</b>        | <b>81</b>        | <b>114</b>       |

| <b>Services</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Comprehensive   | 28               | 38               | 59               |
| Involved        | 1                | 4                | 4                |
| Self- Advocate  | 22               | 12               | 68               |

|                |           |           |            |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Transportation | 0         | 3         | 5          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>51</b> | <b>57</b> | <b>136</b> |

| <b>Age</b>     | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 0-4            | 41               | 54               | 53               |
| 5-8            | 26               | 47               | 39               |
| 9-12           | 33               | 33               | 46               |
| 13-15          | 49               | 46               | 74               |
| 16-21          | 67               | 80               | 75               |
| 22+            | 11               | 5                | 10               |
| Unknown        | 1                | 14               | 4                |
| Not Applicable | 9                | 10               | 6                |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>237</b>       | <b>289</b>       | <b>307</b>       |

| <b>Race</b>                      | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| American Indian                  | 6                | 17               | 16               |
| Asian                            | 2                | 3                | 1                |
| Black/African American           | 13               | 13               | 23               |
| Hispanic                         | 1                | 11               | 2                |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 0                | 2                | 2                |
| White                            | 82               | 196              | 246              |
| Unknown                          | 10               | 47               | 16               |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>114</b>       | <b>289</b>       | <b>307</b>       |

| <b>Method of Complaint</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| E-Mail                     | 56               | 72               | 75               |
| In Person                  | 3                | 2                | 12               |
| Mail/Fax                   | 4                | 5                | 7                |
| YES Line                   | 174              | 210              | 213              |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>237</b>       | <b>289</b>       | <b>307</b>       |

| <b>Resolution</b>     | <b>2015-2016</b> | <b>2016-2017</b> | <b>2017-2018</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Consultation          | 74               | 117              | 113              |
| Inquiry               | 2                | 3                | 4                |
| Not Valid             | 51               | 75               | 64               |
| No Action Taken*      | -                | -                | 1                |
| Forwarded to Program* | -                | -                | 1                |
| Pending               | 67               | 0                | 0                |
| Unable to Contact     | 3                | 7                | 7                |
| Valid/Not Resolved    | 5                | 14               | 14               |
| Valid/Resolved        | 31               | 73               | 104              |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>233</b>       | <b>289</b>       | <b>308</b>       |

*\*Resolutions not reported in prior years*