



Foster Care Ombuds Annual Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed comparison 2022

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)).

FCO Cases Closed by ODHS Program

Case Program Type	2022
ODHS-Child Welfare	348
ODHS-Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	4
ODHS-OTIS/Licensing	1
OHA-Mental Health	2
OYA-Oregon Youth Authority	1
Total	356

Total days from case open to close

Open Range	2022
02 days or less	14
03 to 10 Days	51
11 to 20 Days	62
21 to 30 Days	44
31 to 60 Days	94
61 to 90 Days	61
90+ Days	30
Total	356

How FCO heard about concerns

Case Intake SubType	2022
Y.E.S. line	136
Direct to Ombuds	77
FCO.info	58
GAO main line	57
ODHS Info	12
Governor's Office	5
GAO.CR	2
ODHS Director's Office	2
ODHS/OHA Program	2
Other	2
Community Partner/Program	1
DHS.info	1
Director's Office	1
Total	356



Foster Care Ombuds: 1-855-840-6036
fco.info@odhsoha.oregon.gov

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!

Foster Care Ombuds Annual Report

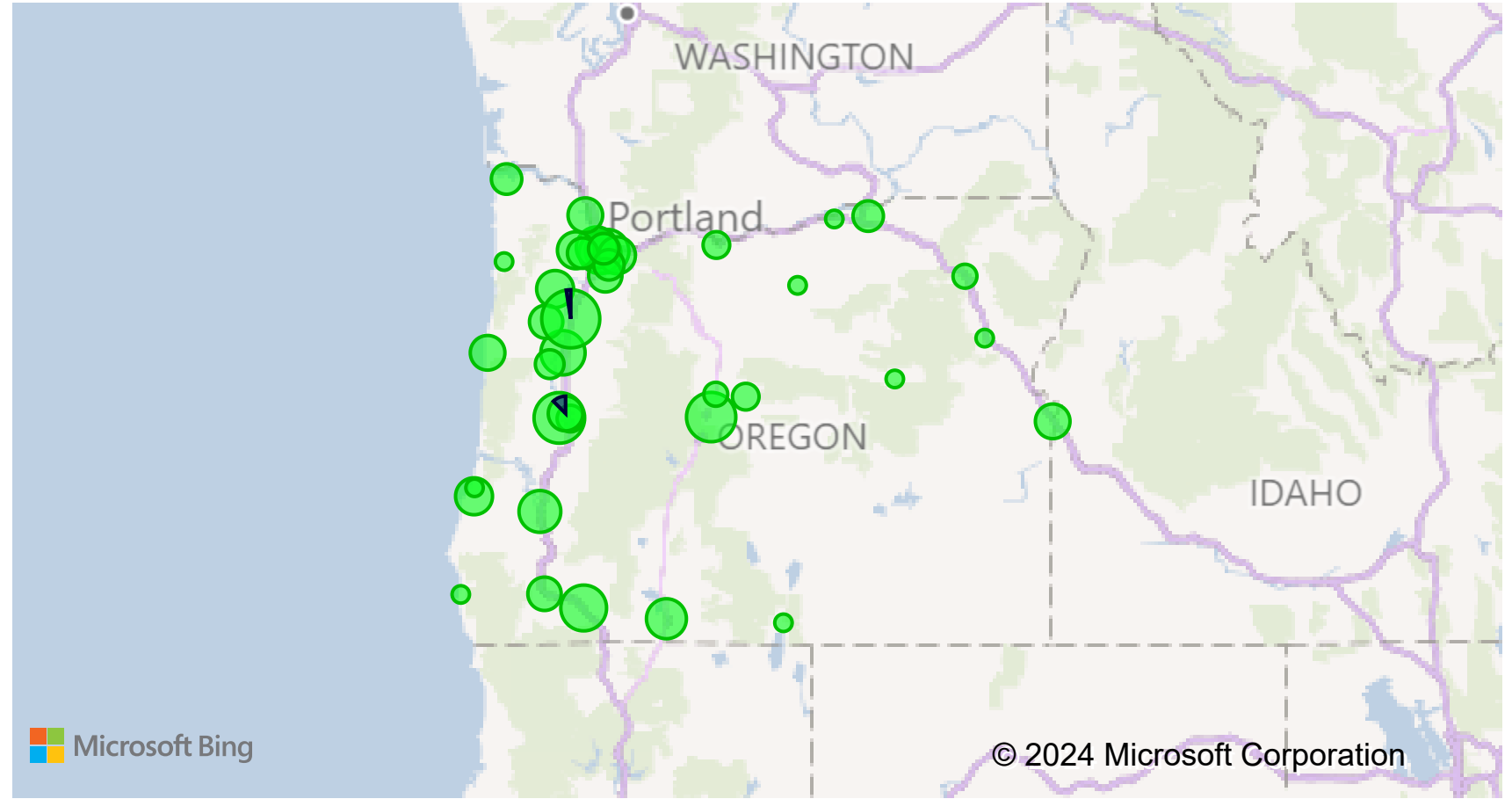
GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed comparison 2022

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	2022
MULTNOMAH	55
MARION	46
LANE	38
DESCHUTES	27
JACKSON	20
LINN	18
DOUGLAS	15
KLAMATH	13
CLACKAMAS	12
COOS	11
WASHINGTON	10
YAMHILL	10
COLUMBIA	8
LINCOLN	8
MALHUER	8
POLK	8
JOSEPHINE	7
	6
CLATSOP	5
UMATILLA	5
BENTON	4
CROOK	3
WASCO	3
UNION	2
BAKER	1
CURRY	1
GRANT	1
HARNEY	1
LAKE	1
MORROW	1
TILLAMOOK	1
WHEELER	1
Total	356

Child Welfare Branch by ZIP code



● ODHS-Child Welfare ● ODHS-Intellectual and Developmental Disa...
**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	2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute care (FCO Only)	356
Non Relative Foster Care	179
Relative Foster Care	52
Not Applicable	38
In-Home Plan	30
BRS Residential	18
I/DD Foster Home	13
Detention/Hospital	8
Guardianship	6
Hotel/Office	5
Treatment Foster Care	5
Out of state	2
Total	356

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.

Foster Care Ombuds Annual Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed comparison 2022

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	2022
American Indian/Alaska Native	37
Asian	8
Black or African American	47
Hispanic/Latino	75
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	10
Unknown	34
White	344
Total	555

Gender

Foster Youth Gender	2022
Female	245
Male	200
Transgender	13
Unknown	3
Total	461

Age

Participant Age Group at Closure	2022
Group 0: Unknown	5
Group 1: 0-4	288
Group 2: 5-8	72
Group 3: 9-12	72
Group 4: 13-15	18
Group 5: 16-21	2
Group 6: 22-64	4
Group 7: 65+	
Total	461

Foster Care Ombuds Annual Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed comparison 2022

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	2022
+ Advocate	18
+ Agency Business	3
+ Attorney	17
+ Authorized Representative	1
+ Community Partner	5
+ Counselor	2
+ Current Foster Child	20
- Current Foster Parent	91
Biological Parent	1
Foster Care Provider	2
Foster Parent	83
Grandparent	2
Home Care Provider	1
Self	2
+ Educational Personnel	3
- Family Member	133
Adoptive Parent	10
Biological Child	1
Biological Parent	70
Foster Parent	1
Grandparent	27
Incarcerated Parent	4
Other Family Member	17
Sibling	3
+ Former Foster Child	12
+ Former Foster Parent	27
+ Friend	14
+ Legislator	4
+ Neighbor	4
+ Regulatory Agency	3
+ Unknown	2
Total	356

Foster Care Ombuds Annual Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed comparison 2022

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	2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Allegation	
Emotional	1
Failure to protect	1
Neglect	4
Physical	4
Sexual	2
Threat of Harm	1
Wrongful use of a physical or chemical restraint	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Disposition	
Founded	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotline/Screening	
Outcome not shared with reporter	4
Screening decision	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Investigative practice	
Appropriate person was not interviewed	2
Inappropriate interview of child	4
Inappropriate lines of inquiry	2
Not enough collateral contacts	4
Outside of timelines	4
Protective Services response to assignment	17
Unwarranted/unreasonable investigation	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory reporting	1
Total	64

Case Management

Concern SubCategory Type	2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing case work	
Safety planning	13
Services	13
Permanency planning	7
Face to face contact	6
Protective action plan	4
Visits	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanency / Adoption	
Relative preference	3
Adoption assistance	2
Adoptive placement	2
Adoption committee review	1
Current caretaker preference	1
Disruption	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children	
Timeliness	3
Other state issues	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian Child Welfare Act	
ICWA determination	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Notification	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Payment or service denial	
Payment / benefit issue	1
Total	64

Foster Care Ombuds Annual Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed comparison 2022

Case Concerns (continued)

Confidentiality / Privacy

Concern SubCategory Type	2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal information	
Agency shared information inappropriately	3
Community partner shared info inappropriately	1
Total	4

Customer Service

Concern SubCategory Type	2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication	
Lack of response	35
Accuracy	14
Timeliness	10
Clarity	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Behavior	
Professionalism	10
Conflict of interest	8
Expertise / training	6
Bias	4
Total	96

Discrimination

Concern SubCategory Type	2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Religion	
Unfair / unequal treatment	1
Total	1

Eligibility

Concern SubCategory Type	2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Delay of benefit	
Suspension due to interim change report (852)	1
Total	1

Foster Care Ombuds Annual Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed comparison 2022

Case Concerns (continued)

Foster Care

Concern SubCategory Type	2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Separation/Reunification	
Visitation	37
Transition	18
Belongings	3
Continuation of svcs	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Certification / licensing	
Foster placement concerns (not related to safety)	20
Safety concerns	12
Out-of-Home Care assessments	5
Applicant counseled to withdraw	3
Exceptions requests	3
Home study process	3
Revocation	2
Timeliness	2
Denial	1
Emergency certification	1
Foster provider has not received training	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Placement	
Appropriateness of placement	41
Removal from current caretaker	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical/Dental	
Medical Access	15
Dental Access	2
Medical Refusal	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health	
Access	10
CANS level	2
Crisis	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	
Support	7
Information	2
Placement	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal needs	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Residential care	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Finances	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation/Activities/Employment	4
Total	221

Foster Care Ombuds Annual Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed comparison 2022

Case Concerns (continued)

Legal / Due Process

Concern SubCategory Type	2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Disposition or findings review	7
Did not receive disposition letter	3
Founded review past due	3
Local office review	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal / state law or admin rule	5
Advocacy for change	2
Advocacy for new law / rule	2
Advocacy against	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Custody	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship	1
CW involvement	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Release of records / records requests	1
Not a DHS record / DHS not custodian	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Termination of parental rights	1
Legal process	1
Total	16

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

Concern SubCategory Type	2022
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foster Child / Children ORS 418.201	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Children Siblings 418.608	37
Explanation if sib contact is denied or prohibited	1
Have a sibling contact plan	5
Maintain contact through visits and other comm	13
Placed together when safe and appropriate	14
Private, less restrictive contact as appropriate	3
Sibling contact encouraged in guard and adoptions	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parents ORS 418.648	18
Included as a valued member of a team	4
Informed of any condition...that affects FP	1
Informed of how to receive services 24/7	1
Informed of pol/procedures relating to role	1
Notified of right-limit particip in juv proceeding	3
Receive support services	5
Treated with dignity / respect	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Grandparents 419B.875 / Relatives	15
Consideration for placement / relative search	2
Notification of Court hearings	4
Relative visitation	9
Total	74

Foster Care Ombuds Annual Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed comparison 2022

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	2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Placement	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	2
Information	1
Placement	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Finances	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Residential care	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Certification / licensing	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical/Dental	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal needs	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Separation/Reunification	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Management	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing case work	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Payment or service denial	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Behavior	3
Professionalism	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Rights of...	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Children Siblings 418.608	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Child / Children ORS 418.201	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Allegation	3
Emotional	1
Failure to protect	1
Neglect	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Investigative practice	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal / due process	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Disposition or findings review	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Termination of parental rights	1
Total	38

Foster Care Ombuds Annual Report

GAO activity - Foster Care Ombuds cases closed comparison 2022

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	2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care Ombuds	542
Consultation	177
Not Valid	164
Valid/Resolved	160
Valid/Not Resolved	33
Forwarded to Program Office	4
Unable to contact complainant	2
Forwarded to Policy Unit	1
No Action Taken	1
Total	542

Ombuds Action

Concern Category Type	2022
<input type="checkbox"/> GAO action	16
<input type="checkbox"/> Other agency referrals	10
Human Resources	4
Office of Public Defense Services (OPDS)	4
Information Security & Privacy Office (ISPO)	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory reporting	6
Child abuse report made	6
Total	16

Recommendations

Case Program Type	2022
ODHS-Child Welfare	13
OHA-Mental Health	1
Total	14

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.