



Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q3

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.

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. This report represents monthly data gathered from ODHS cases closed from the quarter above.

GAO Cases Closed by ODHS Program

Case Program Type	7	8	9	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare	35	61	57	153
ODHS-Aging and People with Disabilities	21	35	17	73
ODHS-Self Sufficiency Programs	6	17	22	45
ODHS-Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	1	5	2	8
ODHS-Overpayment Recovery/Estate Admin	2	1	2	5
ODHS-Vocational Rehabilitation		2		2
ODHS-OTIS/Licensing		1		1
Total	65	122	100	287

How GAO heard about concerns

Case Intake SubType	7	8	9	Total
GAO main line	39	86	70	195
GAO Info	14	11	16	41
Governor's Office	2	7	4	13
ODHS/OHA Program	5	5	2	12
GAO.CR	3	3	1	7
Direct to Ombuds		5	1	6
Other	1	2	3	6
Direct Mail	1	2	2	5
Referred by another Program/Agency			1	1
Y.E.S. line		1		1
Total	65	122	100	287

Total days from case open to close

Open Range	7	8	9	Total
02 days or less	2	10	5	17
03 to 10 Days	9	10	14	33
11 to 20 Days	10	18	8	36
21 to 30 Days	10	16	14	40
31 to 60 Days	18	42	40	100
61 to 90 Days	12	18	12	42
90+ Days	4	8	7	19
Total	65	122	100	287

Toll-free: 1-800-442-5238
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GAO Administrator: 503-800-1277
For more questions about this report or for more information about the GAO, please reach out to us!

Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

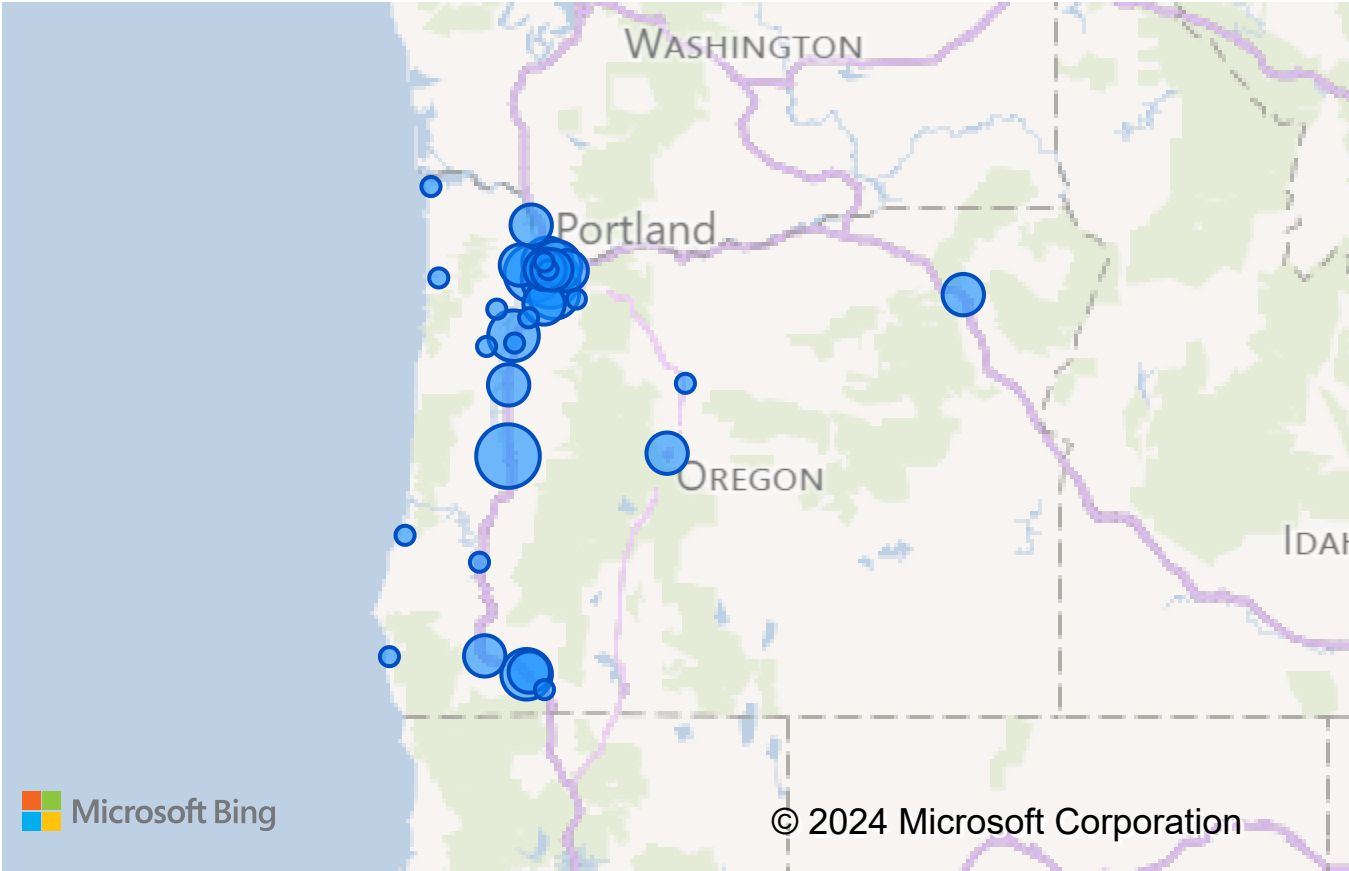
GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q3

The GAO tracks cases by branch location of the ODHS client's case. This information helps us track trends in communities and ensure that our role is understood and offered to clients and other affected individuals statewide.

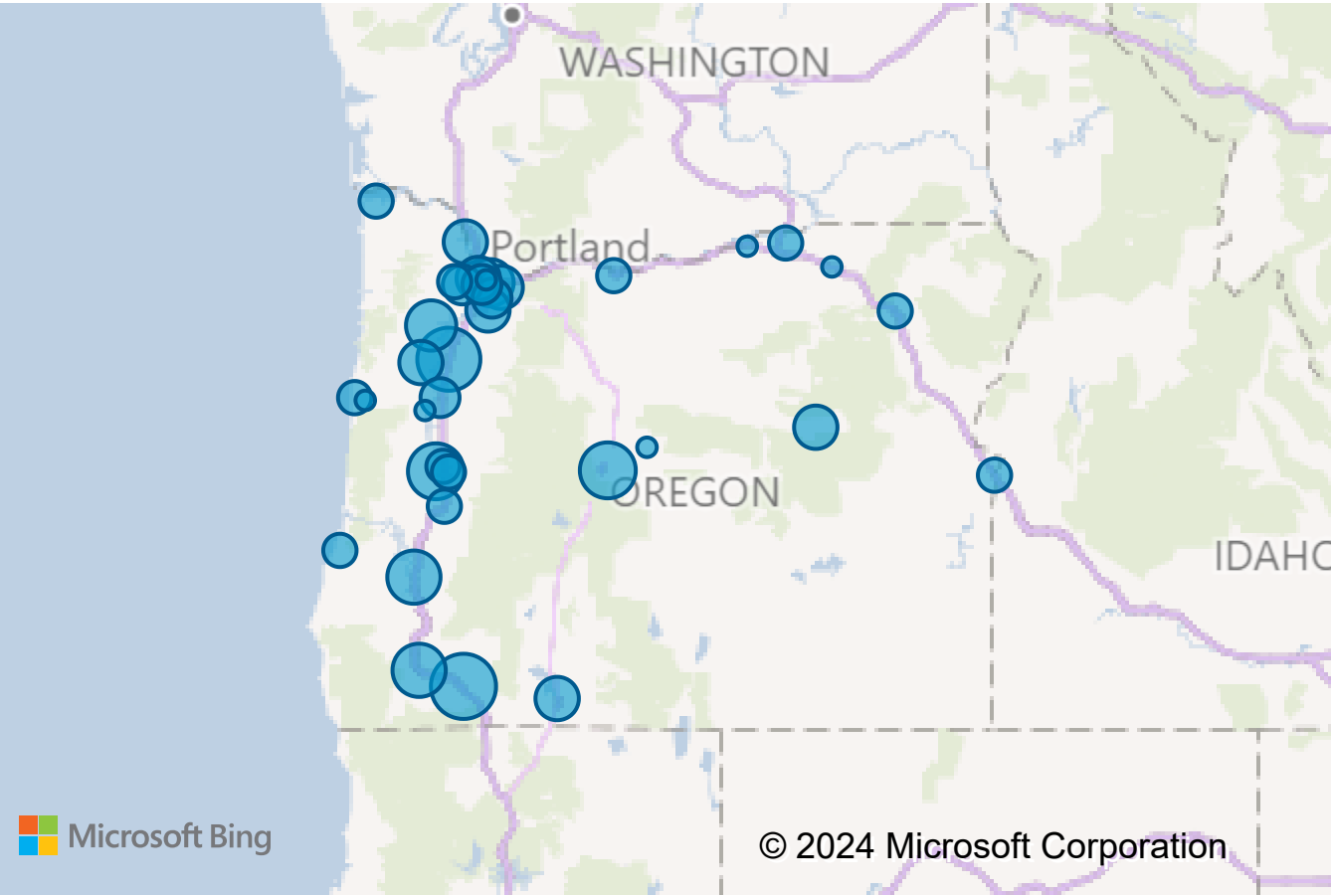
ODHS branch location (county)

County	7	8	9	Total
MULTNOMAH	10	14	15	39
MARION	3	14	9	26
JACKSON	4	8	8	20
LANE	3	8	9	20
CLACKAMAS	7	5	7	19
WASHINGTON	2	8	4	14
DESCHUTES	4	4	2	10
DOUGLAS	2	3	5	10
JOSEPHINE		4	6	10
YAMHILL	2	3	4	9
LINN	2	3	3	8
COLUMBIA	4	1	2	7
POLK	1	3	2	6
COOS	1		3	4
GRANT	1	2	1	4
KLAMATH	1	2	1	4
MALHUER		2	2	4
UMATILLA	1	2	1	4
UNION	2	2		4
		3		3
CLATSOP	1	1	1	3
LINCOLN		1	2	3
CROOK		1	1	2
WASCO			2	2
BENTON	1			1
CURRY		1		1
JEFFERSON	1			1
MORROW		1		1
TILLAMOOK		1		1
Total	65	122	100	287

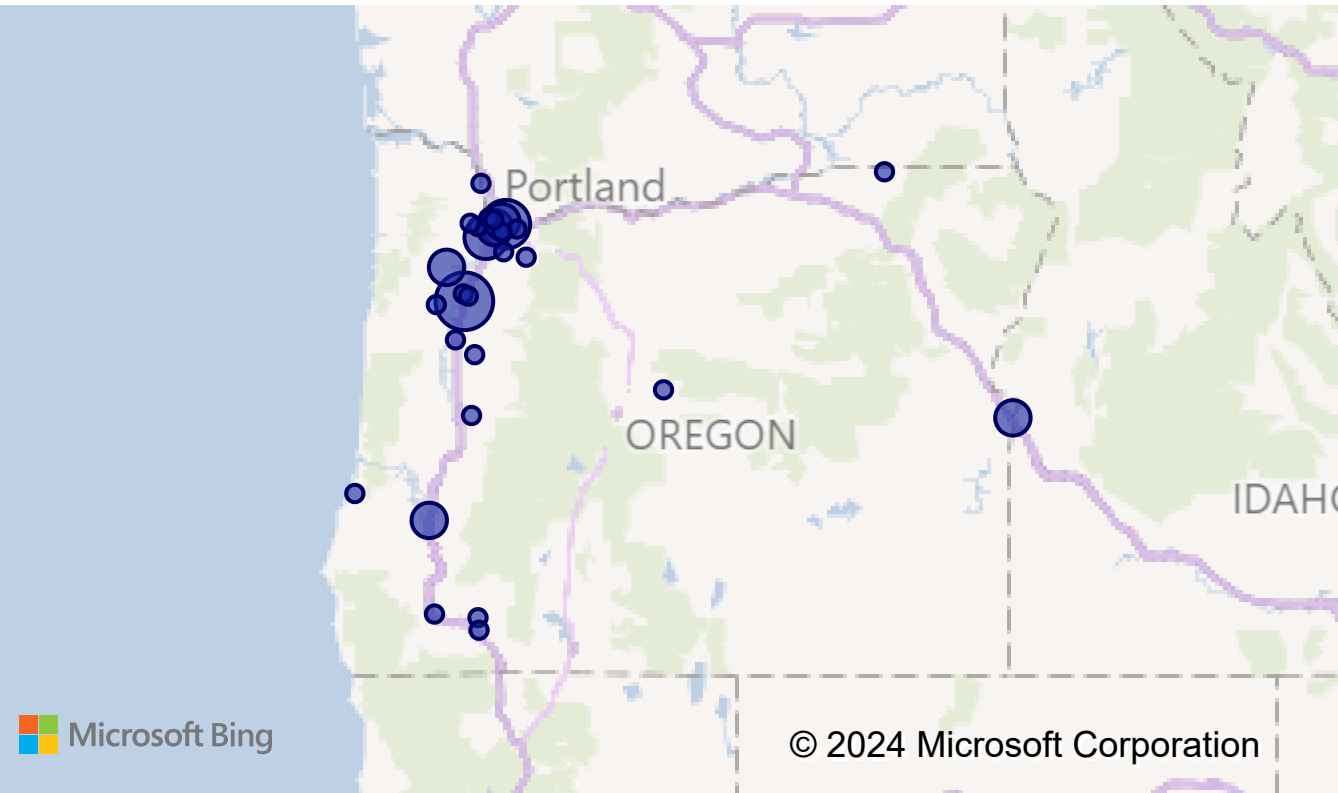
APD Branch by ZIP code



CW Branch by ZIP code



SSP Branch by ZIP code



●ODHS-Self Sufficiency Programs

**the county appearing blank represents a Child Welfare branch in Washington County. This is a known bug in our reporting system and we have requested a fix.*

Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q3

Primary Participant Information

The GAO tracks demographic information about the individuals who are the main subject of the matter of concern. In our case management system this person is the **Primary Participant**. This information is collected from ODHS systems so that we can track trends affecting clients and others overall and plan outreach efforts accordingly. This focus is relatively new and the GAO team welcomes feedback in this area.

Age

Participant Age Group at Closure	7	8	9	Total
Group 0: Unknown	9	37	19	65
Group 1: 0-4	3	1	3	7
Group 2: 5-8			2	2
Group 3: 9-12		3	1	4
Group 4: 13-15	2		3	5
Group 5: 16-21	7	8	6	21
Group 6: 22-64	41	66	63	170
Group 7: 65+	3	7	3	13
Total	65	122	100	287

Gender

ParticipantGender Description	7	8	9	Total
Female	40	81	56	177
Male	25	38	40	103
Non-binary			1	1
Two-spirit			1	1
Unknown		3	2	5
Total	65	122	100	287

Race / Ethnicity

ParticipantRace	7	8	9	Total
American Indian/Alaska Native	3	5	7	15
Asian	1	1	1	3
Black or African American	2	5	5	12
Hispanic/Latino	3	5	6	14
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander			2	2
Unknown	11	37	21	69
White	47	72	70	189
Total	67	125	112	304

Language

ParticipantLanguageDescription	7	8	9	Total
English	65	121	99	285
Russian			1	1
Spanish		1		1
Total	65	122	100	287

Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q3

Role of the 'Reporter'

The person that contacts the GAO is identified as our **Reporter**. If the ODHS client is the Reporter, they will also be counted as the Primary Participant (previous page). Some reporter roles have been expanded below to show more specific detail about their relationship to the affected primary participant.

Role of the 'Reporter'

ParticipantRoleDescription	7	8	9	Total
+ Advocate	1	4	2	7
+ Agency Business	1	1		2
+ Attorney	1			1
+ Authorized Representative	1	2	2	5
+ Client	23	43	37	103
+ Community Partner	1	4	2	7
- Contractor	1	3		4
Complainant		1		1
Home Care Provider	1	1		2
Private Business Representative		1		1
Self				
+ Counselor		1		1
+ Current Foster Child				
+ Current Foster Parent	1	2		3
- Family Member	30	45	47	122
Adopted Child				
Biological Child		3		3
Biological Parent	21	27	30	78
Foster Child				
Foster Parent				
Grandchild				
Grandparent	4	6	10	20
Home Care Provider				
None				
Other Family Member	1	2	2	5
Self	1	5	1	7
Sibling		1		1
Significant Other		1		1
Step Child				
Step Parent	3		4	7
+ Former Foster Child			1	1
+ Former Foster Parent	1	1	1	3
+ Former Significant Other		2	1	3
+ Friend		4	1	5
+ Guardian		1		1
+ Legislator	3	6	4	13
+ Neighbor			1	1
+ Significant Other	1	1		2
+ Unknown		2	1	3
Total	65	122	100	287

Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q3

GAO Concern categories explained

The GAO 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. Each chart will show the subcategories chosen by Ombuds to match the concern. Cases will often have more than one concern recorded.

APD concerns

Concern Category Type	7	8	9	Total
⊕ Eligibility	6	14	5	25
⊕ Customer Service	8	9	7	24
⊕ Case Management	1	11	1	13
⊕ Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	2	4	2	8
⊕ Administrative	1	2	1	4
⊕ Legal / due process	2	1	1	4
⊕ Confidentiality / Privacy	1	1	1	3
⊕ Access / Accessibility	1		1	2
⊕ Discrimination			1	1
⊕ Discrimination SNAP		1		1
Total	22	43	20	85

**Concerns exclude GAO Actions and Substitute care (FCO Only) areas of concern. Concerns Totals may be different than Findings totals due to this exclusion.*

Case Concerns and Resolutions - Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) program

APD's mission is to assist Oregon’s older adults, people with disabilities and their families experience person-centered services, supports and early interventions that are innovative and help maintain independence, promote safety, wellbeing, honor choice, respect cultural preferences and uphold dignity.

APD Findings

Resolution Findings	7	8	9	Total
Consultation	5	13	4	22
Forwarded to ODHS HR			1	1
Forwarded to Program Office	1	1	1	3
Inquiries		1		1
No Action Taken	1			1
Not Valid	8	12	7	27
Training Need Identified	1			1
Unable to contact complainant	3	3		6
Valid/Not Resolved	1	2	4	7
Valid/Resolved	3	11	4	18
Total	23	43	21	87

Case Resolutions

At the conclusion of a case, the Ombuds must record a **Finding**, which documents the result of their review of each concern in the previous table.

Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q3

Case Concerns and Resolutions (continued) - Child Welfare (CW) program

The Child Welfare Division’s mission is to ensure every child and family is empowered to live a safe, stable and healthy life. Their role includes Child Protective Services, management of the state's Foster Care system, and ensuring family permanency through adoptions and other services.

CW concerns

Concern Category Type	7	8	9	Total
☐ Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	15	37	32	84
Allegation		1	1	2
Disposition	3	4	3	10
Hotline/Screening		7	3	10
Investigative practice	11	23	25	59
Mandatory reporting	1	2		3
☐ Administrative		1	1	2
Background check		1	1	2
☐ Case Management	15	17	13	45
Administrative coordination / communication	1		1	2
Indian Child Welfare Act		1		1
Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children	1		1	2
Ongoing case work	13	13	11	37
Payment or service denial		3		3
☐ Confidentiality / Privacy	1	7	3	11
☐ Customer Service	8	19	16	43
☐ Discrimination	1			1
☐ Foster Care	2		2	4
☐ Legal / due process	7	11	5	23
☐ Rights of...	4	1	4	9
Total	53	93	76	222

Case Resolutions

At the conclusion of a case, the Ombuds must record a **Finding**, which documents the result of their review of each concern in the previous table.

CW Findings

Resolution Findings	7	8	9	Total
Not Valid	28	45	35	108
Consultation	11	21	17	49
Valid/Resolved	7	5	9	21
Unable to contact complainant	4	7	6	17
Valid/Not Resolved		8	2	10
Forwarded to Program Office	1	2	3	6
Training Need Identified	1	4		5
No Action Taken		2		2
Unable to Determine			2	2
Forwarded to ODHS HR			1	1
Inquiries			1	1
Unsubstantiated - Investigation Completed	1			1
Total	53	94	76	223

**Concerns exclude GAO Actions and Substitute care (FCO Only) areas of concern. Concerns Totals may be different than Findings totals due to this exclusion.*

Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q3

Case Concerns and Resolutions (continued) - Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS)

The Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) mission is to join stakeholders and the developmental disabilities community to provide services, supports and advocacy to empower Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live full lives in their communities. The ODDS program [maintains a separate complaint process](#), whose staff work collaboratively with GAO Ombuds when we receive concerns or complaints. Individuals are free to contact GAO about any ODHS complaint or concern.

ODDS concerns

Concern Category Type	7	8	9	Total
Eligibility	1			1
Denial	1			1
Discrimination	1			1
Race/Color or National Origin	1			1
Customer Service	1	1		2
Staff Behavior		1		1
Communication	1			1
Case Management		3	1	4
Ongoing case work		1		1
Notification		1		1
Long Term Care services		1	1	2
Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services		1		1
Allegation		1		1
Total	3	5	1	9

Case Resolutions

At the conclusion of a case, the Ombuds must record a **Finding**, which documents the result of their review of each concern in the previous table.

ODDS Findings

Resolution Findings	7	8	9	Total
Not Valid	3	1		4
Consultation		2	1	3
Valid/Resolved		1	1	2
No Action Taken		1		1
Total	3	5	2	10

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Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q3

SSP concerns

Concern Category Type	7	8	9	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility	2	13	7	22
Denial	1	7	2	10
Delay of benefit		4	4	8
Calculation	1	2	1	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	4	10	7	21
Communication	3	8	6	17
Staff Behavior	1	1		2
Wait time		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Management	1	5	5	11
Notification		2	1	3
Ongoing case work		1	2	3
Payment or service denial	1		2	3
Administrative coordination / communication		1		1
Disqualification		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal / due process		3	5	8
Fraud		3	3	6
Administrative Hearing			1	1
Federal / state law or admin rule			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Access /		2		2
Applications / forms		1		1
Benefit / service		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Confidentiality / Privacy			2	2
Personal			2	2
Total	7	33	26	66

Case Concerns and Resolutions - Self Sufficiency programs (SSP)

ODHS Self Sufficiency programs (SSP)'s mission is to provide a safety net, family stability and a connection to careers that guide Oregonians out of poverty. These programs administer federal and state goals in the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Employment Related Day Care (ERDC), Youth Services and Refugee Programs.

Case Resolutions

At the conclusion of a case, the Ombuds must record a **Finding**, which documents the result of their review of each concern in the previous table.

SSP Findings

Resolution Findings	7	8	9	Total
Not Valid	1	10	9	20
Valid/Resolved	2	6	7	15
Unable to contact complainant		6	4	10
Consultation	2	2	3	7
Training Need Identified	1	5	1	7
Inquiries		2	2	4
Valid/Not Resolved		1	1	2
Forwarded to Program Office	1			1
No Authority to Investigate			1	1
Total	7	32	28	67

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Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q3

Case Concerns and Resolutions - Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) helps individuals with disabilities get and keep a job that matches their skills, interests and abilities. VR staff work in partnership with the community and businesses to develop employment opportunities and provide individualized services to each eligible person for their employment success. Similar to ODDS, VR has a Dispute Resolution Process, and GAO will collaborate with that team or local staff to assist clients with the program.

VR concerns

Concern Category Type	8	Total
Customer Service	1	1
Wait time	1	1
Case Management	1	1
Ongoing case work	1	1
Total	2	2

Case Resolutions

At the conclusion of a case, the Ombuds must record a **Finding**, which documents the result of their review of each concern in the previous table.

VR Findings

Resolution Findings	8	Total
Not Valid	2	2
Total	2	2

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Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q3

Case Concerns and Resolutions - ODHS Central and Shared Services

GAO also receives complaints and concerns about ODHS Central and Shared Services. Central Services are ODHS Administrative functions that serve the entire Department. Shared Services serve both ODHS and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). These administrative functions may include the Background Check Unit (BCU), the Overpayment Recovery Unit (OPAR), the Office of Training, Investigations and Safety (OTIS), and more.

OTIS / Licensing concerns

Concern Category Type	8	Total
Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	1	1
Disposition	1	1
Total	1	1

Overpayment Recovery concerns

Concern Category Type	7	8	9	Total
Legal / due process	3			3
Fraud	1			1
Federal / state law or admin rule	1			1
Administrative Hearing	1			1
Customer Service	1	2		3
Staff Behavior		1		1
Communication	1	1		2
Case Management		1		1
Long Term Care services			1	1
Administrative		1		1
Estate		1		1
Total	4	1	3	8

Case Resolutions

At the conclusion of a case, the Ombuds must record a **Finding**, which documents the result of their review of each concern in the previous tables.

Shared and Central Services Findings

Case Program Type	7	8	9	Total
ODHS- Overpayment Recovery/Estate Admin	4	1	3	8
Unable to contact complainant		1		1
Not Valid	4		1	5
Forwarded to Program Office		2		2
ODHS- OTIS/Licensing		1		1
Not Valid		1		1
Total	4	2	3	9

**Concerns exclude GAO Actions and Substitute care (FCO Only) areas of concern. Concerns Totals may be different than Findings totals due to this exclusion.*

Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q3

Other Case Outcomes

GAO 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. **GAO Action** is the way this office documents mandatory reports and other actions and issue tracking outside of normal case management.

GAO Action

Concern Category Type	7	8	9	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> GAO action	1	1	6	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Other agency referrals		1	4	5
Human Resources			2	2
Licensing		1	1	2
Overpayment/Fraud			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory	1		1	2
Adult abuse report made	1			1
Child abuse report made			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Issue tracking			1	1
Pandemic EBT (P-			1	1
Total	1	1	6	8

Recommendations

Case Program Type	8	Total
ODHS-Aging and People with Disabilities	1	1
ODHS-Child Welfare	3	3
Total	4	4

Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q3

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.