



# Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

## GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q4

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	10	11	12	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare	23	38	63	124
ODHS-Aging and People with Disabilities	18	41	43	102
ODHS-Self Sufficiency Programs	5	9	20	34
ODHS-Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	5	3	5	13
ODHS-Overpayment Recovery/Estate Admin	1	1	2	4
ODHS-OTIS/Licensing	1		1	2
ODHS-Vocational Rehabilitation			1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>280</b>

### How GAO heard about concerns

Case Intake SubType	10	11	12	Total
GAO main line	34	62	94	190
GAO Info	9	10	12	31
ODHS/OHA Program	4	8	13	25
GAO.CR	4	3	2	9
Governor's Office		6	2	8
Other			6	6
Direct to Ombuds	1	1	3	5
Direct Fax			1	1
Email			1	1
FCO.info	1			1
ODHS Director's Office		1		1
ODHS Info			1	1
Y.E.S. line		1		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>280</b>

### Total days from case open to close

Open Range	10	11	12	Total
02 days or less	4	4	6	14
03 to 10 Days	10	19	15	44
11 to 20 Days	7	7	10	24
21 to 30 Days	6	7	7	20
31 to 60 Days	11	25	36	72
61 to 90 Days	10	21	52	83
90+ Days	5	9	9	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>280</b>

Toll-free: 1-800-442-5238

Email: [gao.info@odhs.oregon.gov](mailto:gao.info@odhs.oregon.gov)

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

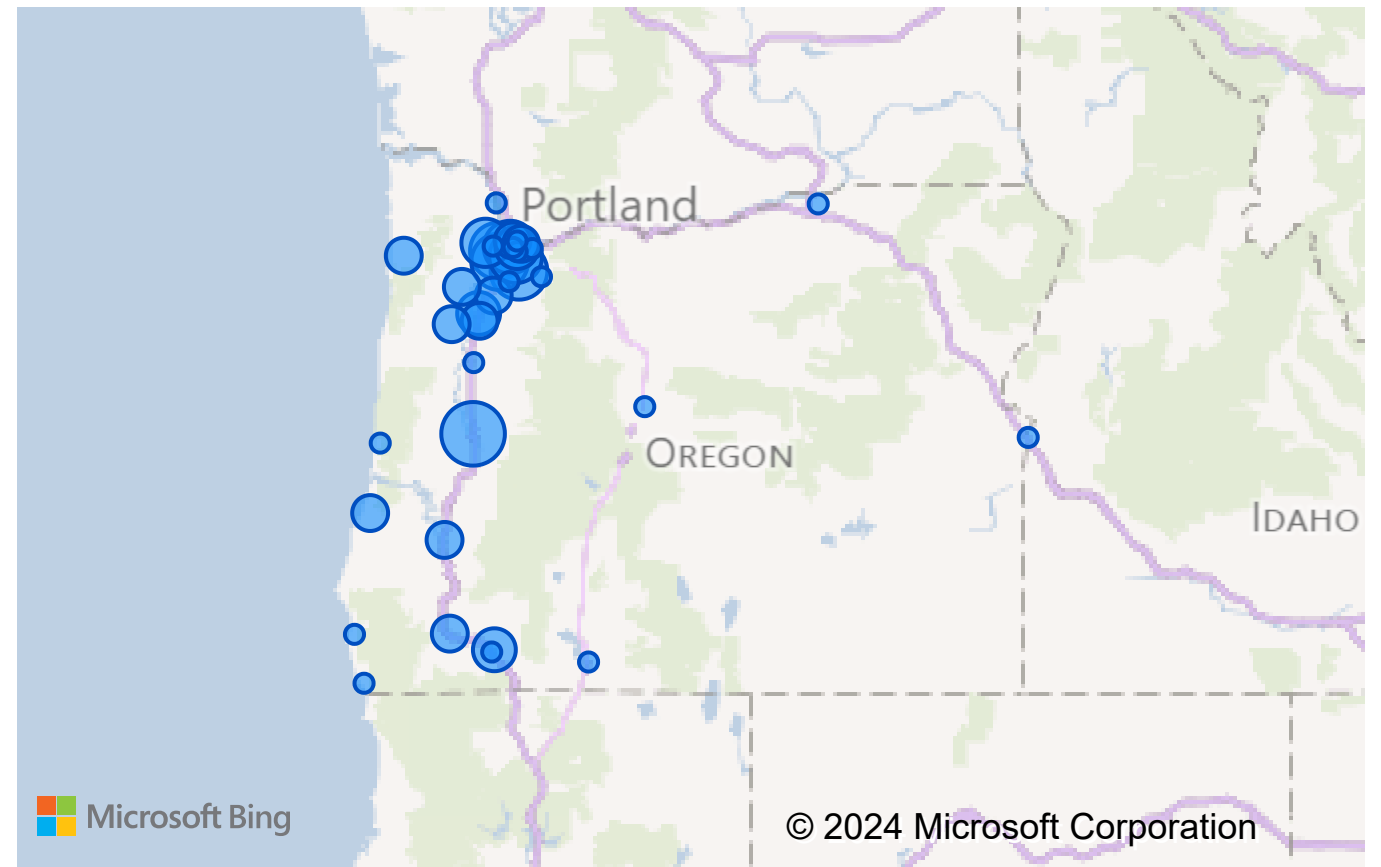
## GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q4

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.

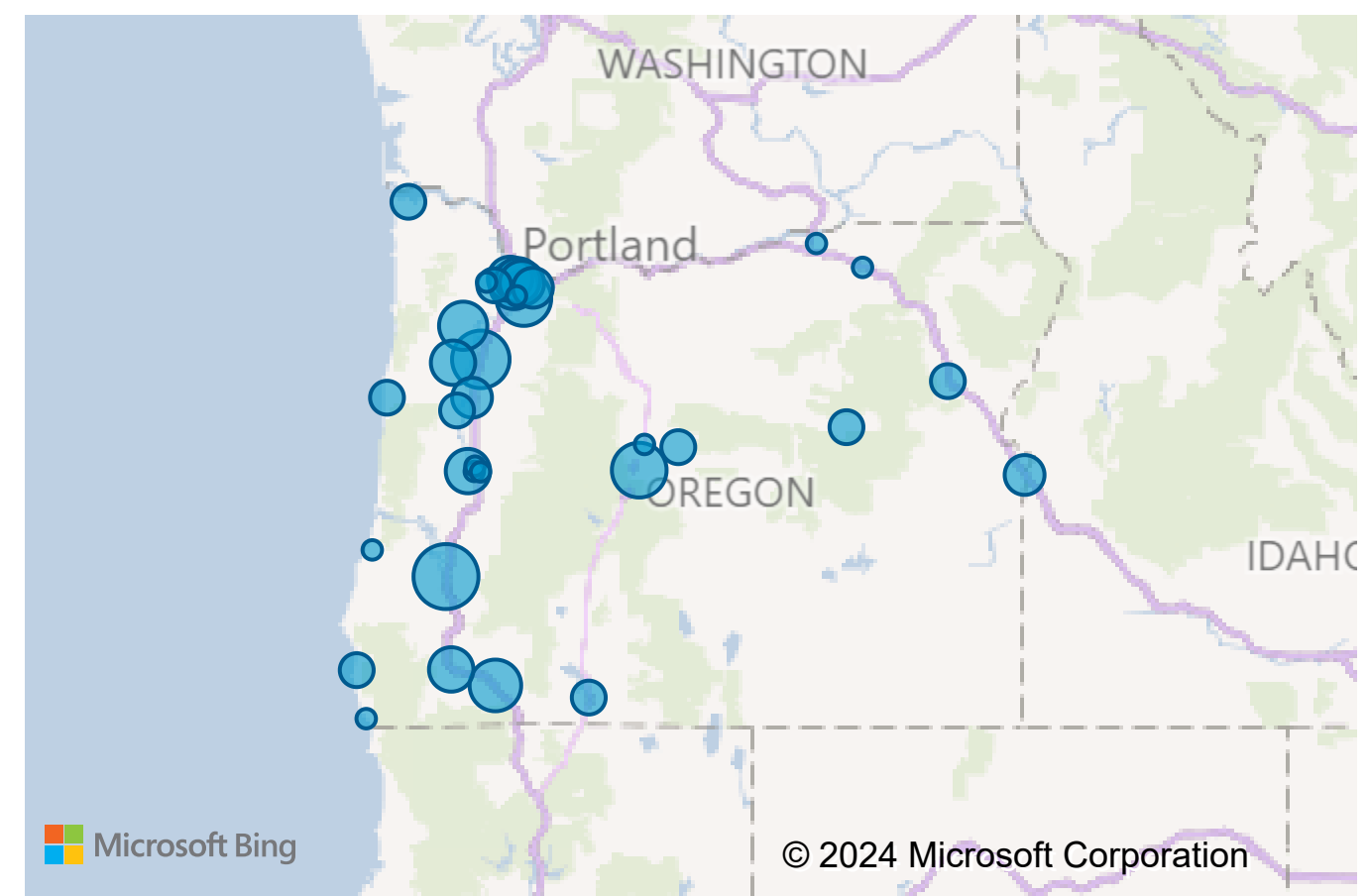
### ODHS branch location (county)

County	10	11	12	Total
MULTNOMAH	11	7	22	40
CLACKAMAS	5	10	8	23
MARION	5	7	10	22
WASHINGTON	3	11	7	21
LANE	1	7	11	19
DOUGLAS	3	8	6	17
JACKSON	3	3	5	11
DESCHUTES	1	1	7	9
YAMHILL	3	2	4	9
POLK	1	3	4	8
JOSEPHINE	4	2	1	7
MALHUER	4		3	7
CURRY	1	2	2	5
LINN	1	3	1	5
COOS	1		3	4
KLAMATH		2	2	4
UMATILLA	1	2	1	4
CLATSOP		1	2	3
		1	1	2
BAKER			2	2
BENTON		2		2
CROOK		1	1	2
GRANT			2	2
LINCOLN		2		2
TILLAMOOK		1	1	2
COLUMBIA			1	1
HOOD RIVER		1		1
JEFFERSON			1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>280</b>

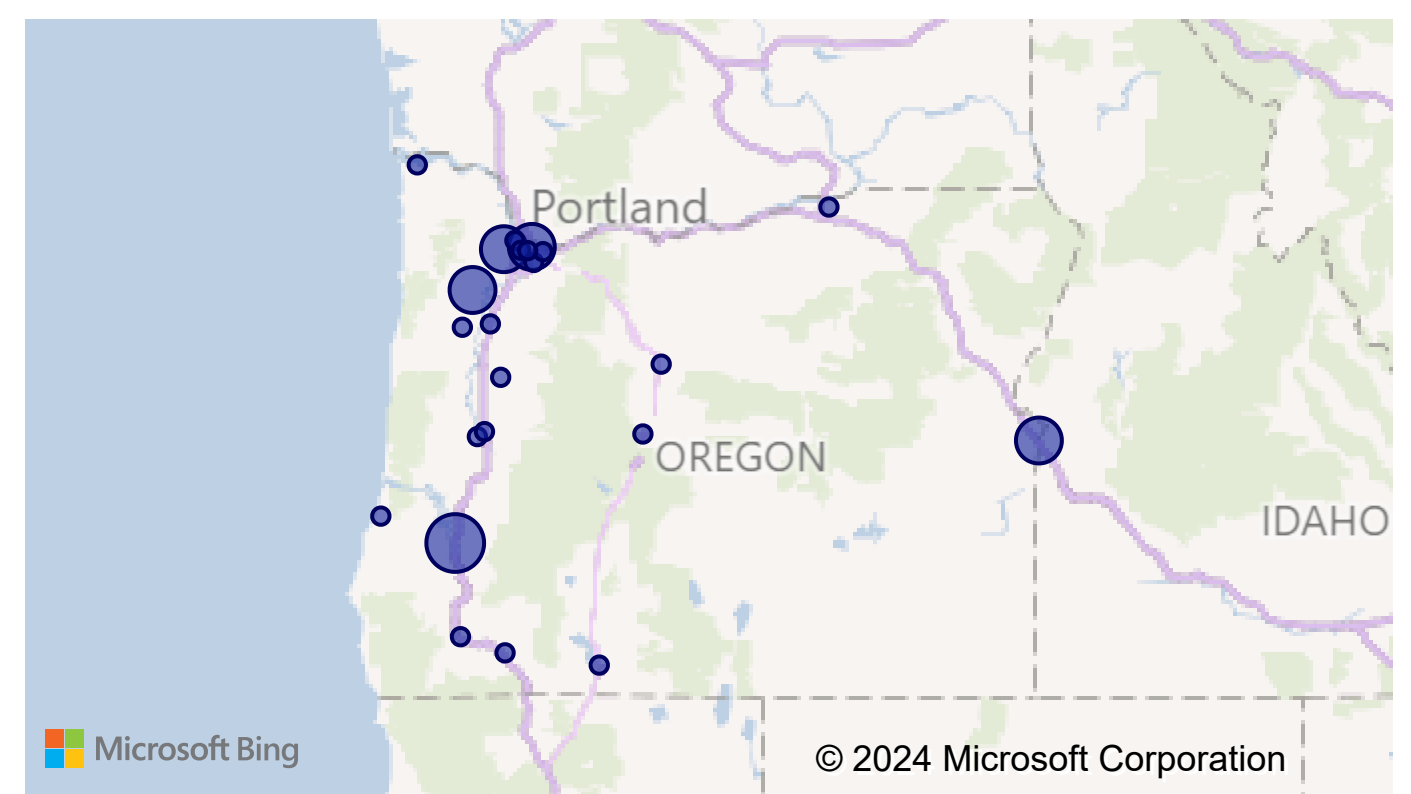
### APD Branch by ZIP code



### 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.

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## GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q4

### 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	10	11	12	Total
Group 0: Unknown	9	15	31	<b>55</b>
Group 1: 0-4	3	3	2	<b>8</b>
Group 2: 5-8		1	2	<b>3</b>
Group 3: 9-12	2	1		<b>3</b>
Group 4: 13-15	1	1	1	<b>3</b>
Group 5: 16-21	1	6	5	<b>12</b>
Group 6: 22-64	33	50	83	<b>166</b>
Group 7: 65+	4	18	12	<b>34</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>284</b>

#### Gender

Participant Gender Description	10	11	12	Total
Female	33	64	87	<b>184</b>
Male	19	31	45	<b>95</b>
Non-binary	1		1	<b>2</b>
Unknown			3	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>284</b>

#### Race / Ethnicity

Participant Race	10	11	12	Total
American Indian/Alaska Native	4	2	6	<b>12</b>
Asian	1	2	2	<b>5</b>
Black or African American	2	5	6	<b>13</b>
Did Not Answer		4	1	<b>5</b>
Hispanic/Latino	2	4	8	<b>14</b>
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		1	1	<b>2</b>
Unknown	11	17	27	<b>55</b>
White	35	64	92	<b>191</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>297</b>

#### Language

Participant Language Description	10	11	12	Total
English	52	95	134	<b>281</b>
Other			1	<b>1</b>
Spanish	1		1	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>284</b>



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## GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q4

### Role of the 'Reporter'

#### 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.

ParticipantRoleDescription	10	11	12	Total
+ Advocate	1	2	9	12
+ Agency Business		5	3	8
+ Authorized Representative	2	7	6	15
+ Client	20	35	47	102
+ Community Partner	1		4	5
- Contractor		4	3	7
Foster Care Provider				
Friend		1		1
Home Care Provider		2	2	4
Private Business Representative		1		1
Unknown			1	1
+ Current Foster Child				
+ Employer		1		1
- Family Member	21	28	51	100
Adopted Child				
Adoptive Parent			1	1
Authorized Representative		1	1	2
Biological Child	2	2	3	7
Biological Parent	14	19	26	59
Foster Parent			1	1
Grandchild			1	1
Grandparent	3	4	11	18
Home Care Provider		1		1
Other Family Member			1	1
Self	1	1	3	5
Sibling			1	1
Significant Other	1		1	2
Step Parent			1	1
+ Former Foster Child	1	1		2
+ Former Foster Parent		1	1	2
+ Former Significant Other	1			1
+ Friend	2	2		4
+ Guardian	1	1	2	4
+ Legislator		3	2	5
+ Mandatory Reporter			1	1
+ Neighbor		1	1	2
+ Significant Other		1	4	5
+ Unknown	3	1	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>281</b>

# Governor's Advocacy Office Quarterly Report

## GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q4

### 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	10	11	12	Total
⊕ Customer Service	9	19	18	46
⊕ Eligibility	3	16	17	36
⊕ Case Management	2	11	10	23
⊕ Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	3		4	7
⊕ Legal / due process	2	3	2	7
⊕ Administrative		3	1	4
⊕ Confidentiality / Privacy		1	1	2
⊕ Access / Accessibility		1		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>126</b>

#### 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.

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

#### APD Findings

Resolution Findings	10	11	12	Total
Consultation	5	13	10	28
Forwarded to Program Office		3	1	4
Inquiries	1	1		2
No Action Taken		2		2
Not Valid	4	12	16	32
Training Need Identified		1		1
Unable to contact complainant	1	3	4	8
Valid/Not Resolved	3	6	7	16
Valid/Resolved	8	14	16	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>131</b>

#### 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.

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## GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed 2023 Q4

### 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	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	11	27	30	68
Allegation	1	2		3
Hotline/Screening	1	5	4	10
Investigative practice	9	19	26	54
Mandatory reporting		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative			1	1
Background check			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Management	7	8	13	28
Administrative coordination / communication		1	1	2
Indian Child Welfare Act		1		1
Ongoing case work	6	6	11	23
Payment or service denial			1	1
Permanency / Adoption	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Confidentiality / Privacy	3	1	2	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	8	10	18	36
<input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care		5		5
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal / due process	5	7	11	23
<input type="checkbox"/> Rights of...		1	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>171</b>

#### 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	10	11	12	Total
Not Valid	16	26	26	68
Consultation	2	8	18	28
Unable to contact complainant	9	3	10	22
Valid/Resolved	2	9	11	22
Valid/Not Resolved	1	6	8	15
Forwarded to Program Office	4	2	5	11
Forwarded to ODHS HR	1	3	1	5
No Action Taken		2		2
No Authority to Investigate	1	1		2
Training Need Identified	1	1		2
Unable to Determine, complainant unresponsive			1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>178</b>

\*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 Q4

### 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	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Legal / due process</b>	2		2	
Federal / state law or admin rule	1		1	
Administrative Hearing	1		1	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Eligibility</b>	1	1	2	
Delay of benefit	1	1	2	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Customer Service</b>	2	1	1	4
Staff Behavior	2		1	3
Communication		1	1	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Case Management</b>	1	1	2	4
Ongoing case work	1	1	1	3
Administrative coordination / communication			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Administrative</b>		1	1	2
HCW / PSW issues		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services</b>	2		2	

\*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 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	10	11	12	Total
Not Valid	5		1	6
Consultation	1	3	1	5
Forwarded to Program Office	1		3	4
Inquiries		1	1	
Valid/Resolved	1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17</b>



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### SSP concerns

Concern Category Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Customer Service</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>
Staff Behavior	1	2	4	7
Wait time	1		6	7
Communication		2	2	4
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Eligibility</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>
Denial		2	4	6
Delay of benefit	1	2	2	5
Calculation	1	1	1	3
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Access /</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
Applications / forms			1	1
Benefit / service			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Case Management</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Payment or service denial	1		1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Confidentiality / Privacy</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Personal		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Administrative</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Payments / Direct Pay Unit			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Legal / due process</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
Fraud		1		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>40</b>

### 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	10	11	12	Total
Not Valid	2	6	8	16
Unable to contact complainant	2		4	6
Valid/Resolved	1	2	3	6
Consultation		3	2	5
Valid/Not Resolved			4	4
Forwarded to Program Office		1	1	2
Unable to Determine, complainant unresponsive			1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>40</b>

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



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### 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	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	1	1
Communication	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

#### 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	12	Total
Consultation	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

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

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### 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	10	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Foster Care</b>		1	1
Placement		1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Customer Service</b>	2		2
Staff Behavior	1		1
Communication	1		1
<b>Total</b>	2	1	3

#### Overpayment Recovery concerns

Concern Category Type	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Customer Service</b>		1	1	2
Staff Behavior			1	1
Communication		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Administrative</b>	1			1
Estate	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Access /</b>			1	1
Language services			1	1
<b>Total</b>	1	1	2	4

#### 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	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ODHS- Overpayment Recovery/Estate Admin</b>	1	1	3	5
Valid/Resolved			3	3
Inquiries	1			1
Consultation		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ODHS- OTIS/Licensing</b>	2		1	3
Valid/Resolved	2			2
Consultation			1	1
<b>Total</b>	3	1	4	8

\*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 Q4

### 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	10	11	12	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>GAO action</b>	4	5	11	20
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other agency referrals</b>	1	5	7	13
Overpayment/Fraud		2	3	5
Licensing		2	1	3
Human Resources			2	2
Information Security & Privacy Office (ISPO)	1			1
Nursing Facility Complaints (NF.Complaints)		1		1
Office of Public Defense Services (OPDS)			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mandatory</b>	1		4	5
Adult abuse report made	1		2	3
Child abuse report made			2	2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Issue tracking</b>	2			2
ONE Eligibility Transformation	2			2
<b>Total</b>	4	5	11	20

#### Recommendations

Case Program Type	11	12	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	1	1	2



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### 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.