



# Governor's Advocacy Office Annual Report

## GAO Activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds Cases Closed Comparison for 2024

The **Governor's Advocacy Office (GAO)** was created in 1993 as the the Ombuds office for the **Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS)**, and is also the **Office of Children's Advocate** (ORS 417.810). The role of an **Ombudsman** or **Ombuds** is an independent official who has been appointed to investigate complaints that people make against the government or public organizations.

This report represents data gathered from ODHS cases closed for the years above.

### GAO Cases Closed by ODHS Program

Case Program Type	2024
ODHS-Child Welfare	625
ODHS-Aging and People with Disabilities	380
ODHS-Self Sufficiency Programs	108
ODHS-Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	47
ODHS-Overpayment Recovery/Estate Admin	28
ODHS-OTIS/Licensing	10
ODHS-Vocational Rehabilitation	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1201</b>

### How GAO heard about concerns

Case Intake SubType	2024
GAO main line	756
GAO Info	177
Other	62
ODHS/OHA Program	60
Governor's Office	48
ODHS Info	27
Direct to Ombuds	17
Referred by another Program/Agency	11
GAO.CR	10
Direct Mail	9
FCO.info	8
Y.E.S. line	6
Email	4
Legislator	3
Community Program	1
Director's Office	1
ODHS Director's Office	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1201</b>

### Total days from case open to close

Open Range	2024
02 days or less	83
03 to 10 Days	156
11 to 20 Days	188
21 to 30 Days	152
31 to 60 Days	241
61 to 90 Days	168
90+ Days	213
<b>Total</b>	<b>1201</b>

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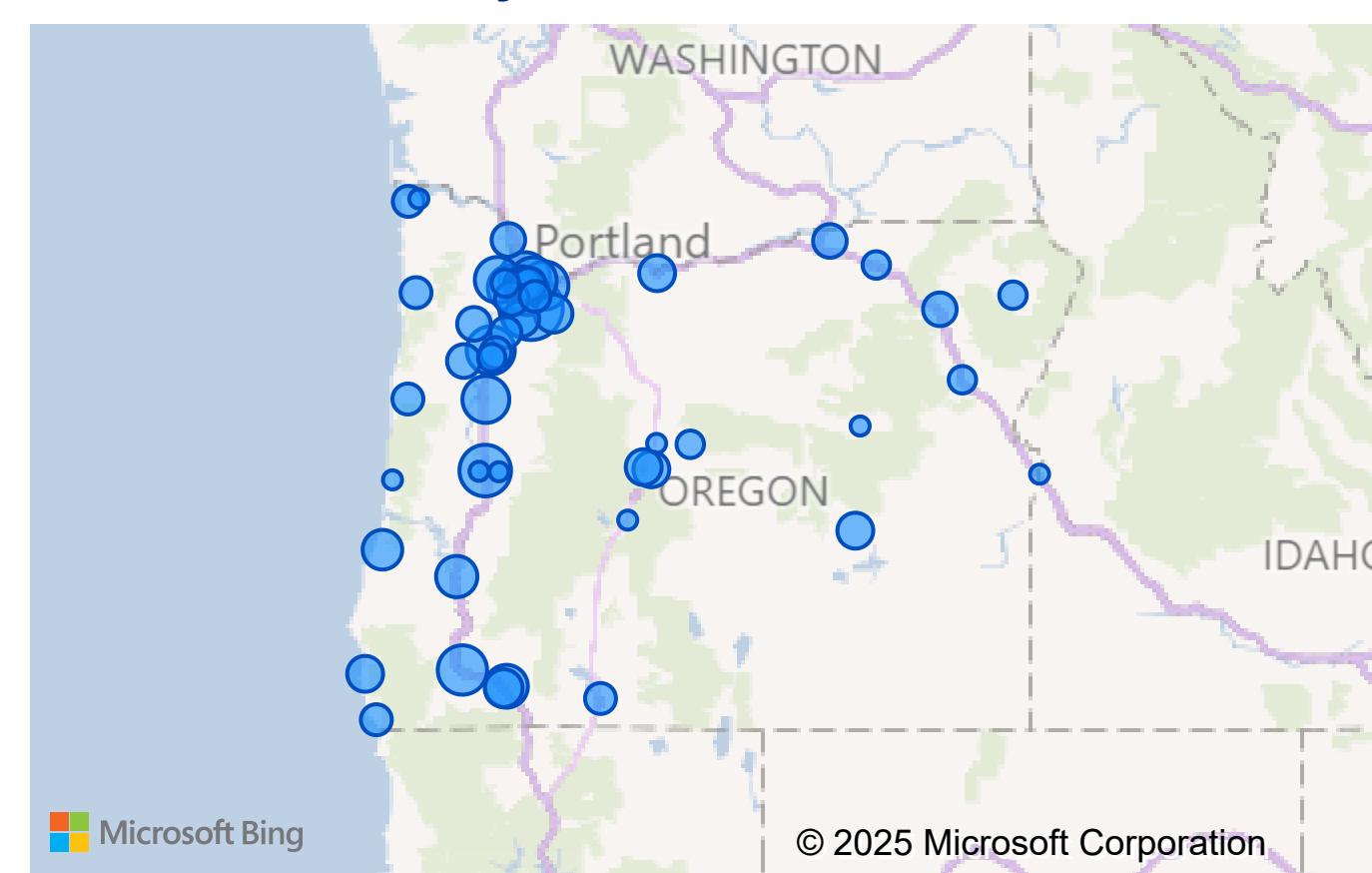
## GAO Activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds Cases Closed Comparison for 2024

### ODHS branch location (county)

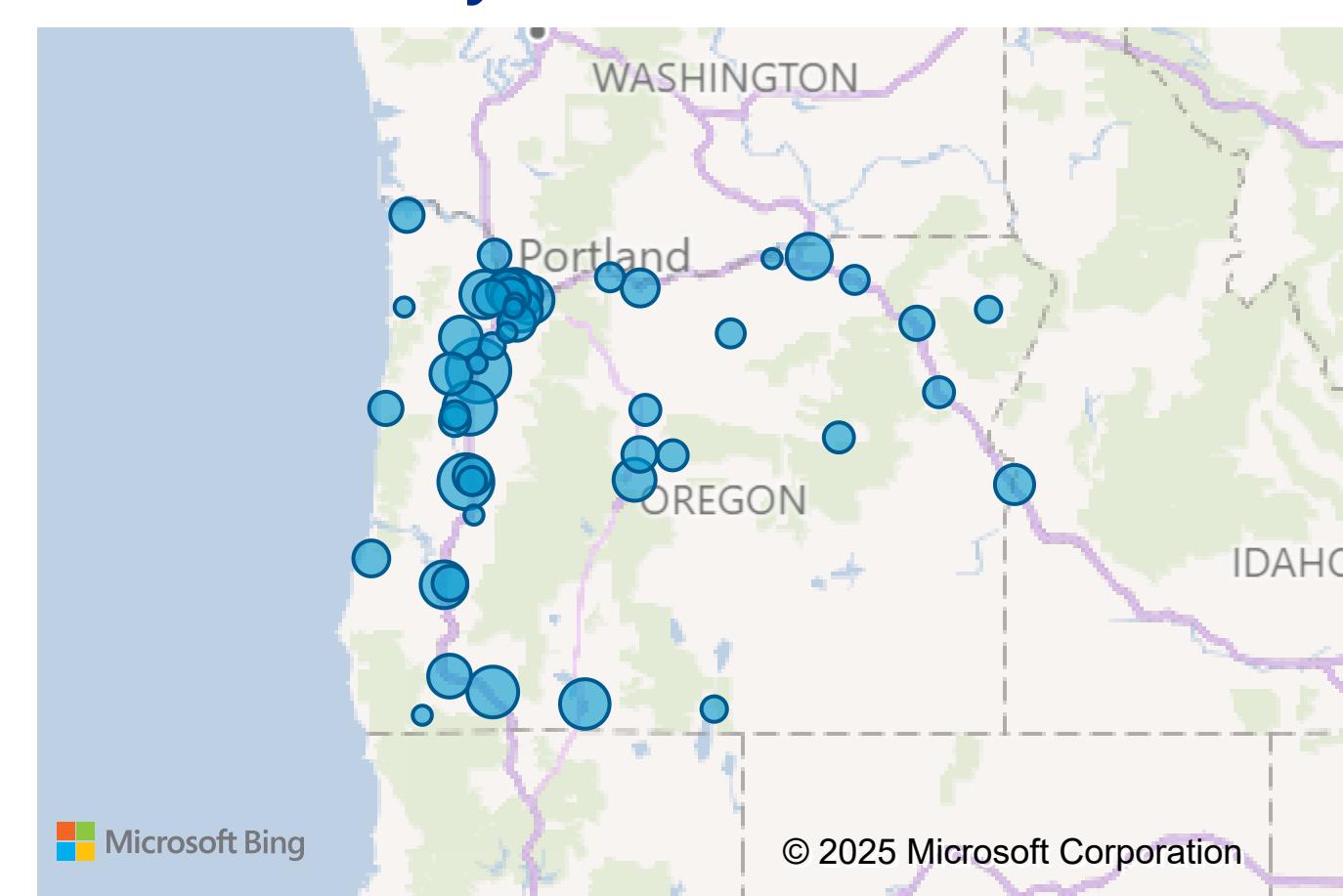
County	2024
MULTNOMAH	144
MARION	108
CLACKAMAS	84
LANE	84
WASHINGTON	64
LINN	46
JACKSON	45
DOUGLAS	40
DESCHUTES	38
JOSEPHINE	33
KLAMATH	28
UMATILLA	26
POLK	19
YAMHILL	19
COOS	15
MALHUE	14
WASCO	14
UNION	12
CLATSOP	11
	10
HARNEY	10
LINCOLN	10
COLUMBIA	9
CURRY	8
BAKER	7
BENTON	7
CROOK	6
GRANT	5
WALLOWA	5
JEFFERSON	4
TILLAMOOK	4
HOOD RIVER	3
LAKE	2
SHERMAN	2
MORROW	1
WHEELER	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1201</b>

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.

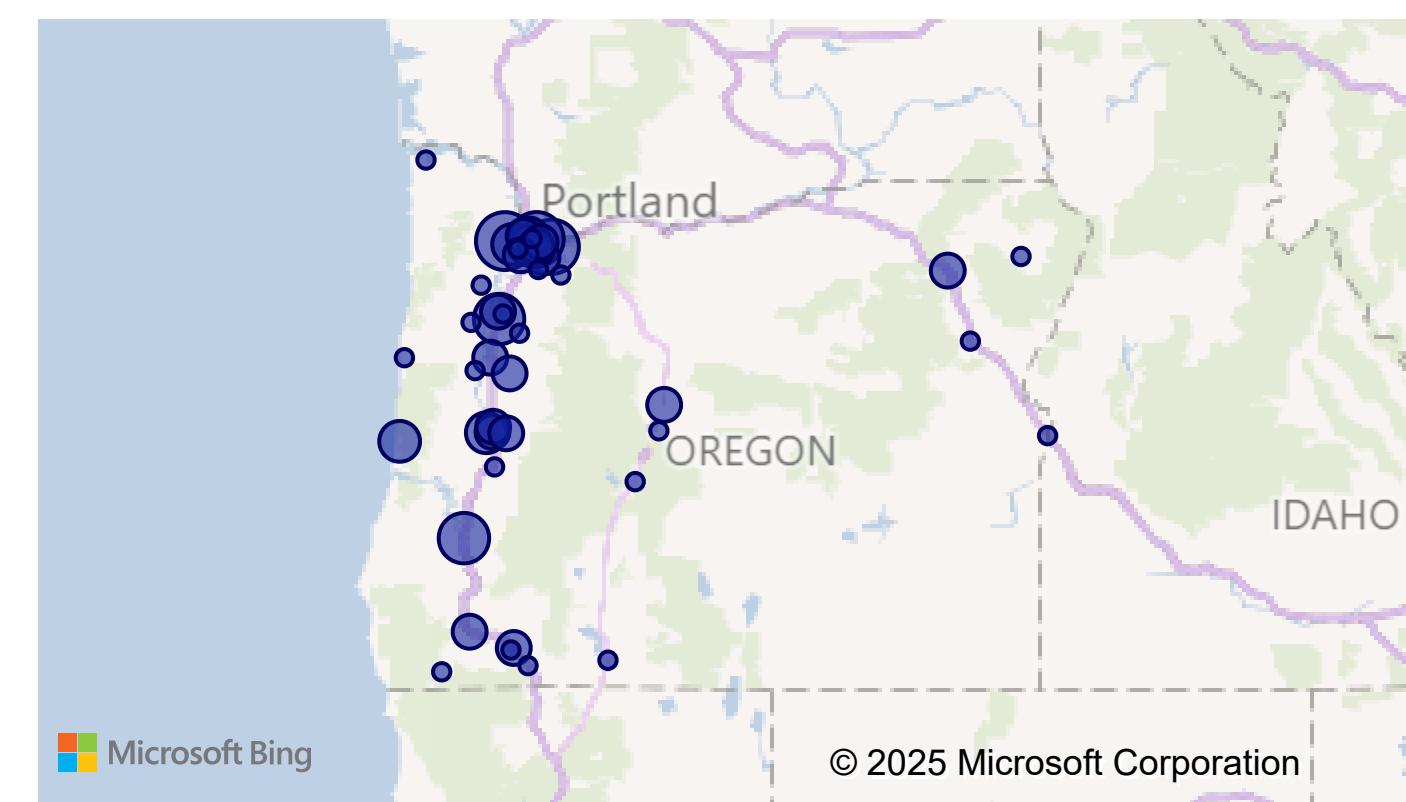
### APD Branch by ZIP code



### 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 Comparison for 2024

### 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	2024
Group 0: Unknown	287
Group 1: 0-4	19
Group 2: 5-8	11
Group 3: 9-12	10
Group 4: 13-15	13
Group 5: 16-21	68
Group 6: 22-64	708
Group 7: 65+	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>1201</b>

#### Race / Ethnicity

Participant Race	2024
American Indian/Alaska Native	59
Asian	22
Black or African American	64
Did Not Answer	49
Hispanic/Latino	56
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	8
Unknown	314
White	679
<b>Total</b>	<b>1251</b>

#### Gender

Participant Gender Description	2024
Did Not Answer	27
Female	704
Male	359
Non-binary	3
Transgender	4
Unknown	104
<b>Total</b>	<b>1201</b>

#### Language

Participant Language Description	2024
Arabic	1
English	1192
Other	2
Russian	1
Sign Language	2
Spanish	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1201</b>

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## GAO Activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds Cases Closed Comparison for 2024

### 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	2024
AAA	1
Advocate	71
Agency Business	32
Attorney	1
Authorized Representative	34
Client	439
Community Partner	20
Contractor	25
Counselor	5
Current Foster Child	
Current Foster Parent	17
Educational Personnel	5
Family Member	430
Adopted Child	
Adoptive Parent	7
Authorized Representative	2
Biological Child	31
Biological Parent	224
Complainant	
Foster Child	
Foster Parent	2
Grandchild	
Grandparent	70
Home Care Provider	2
Incarcerated Parent	
None	1
Other Family Member	20
Self	44
Sibling	14
Significant Other	4
Step Child	
Step Grandparent	1
Step Parent	6
Unknown	2
Former Foster Child	1
Former Foster Parent	7
Former Significant Other	2
Friend	7
Guardian	5
Legislator	46
Mandatory Reporter	7
Neighbor	7
Regulatory Agency	
Religious Counselor	1
Significant Other	15
Unknown	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>1201</b>

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## GAO Activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds Cases Closed Comparison for 2024

### 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.

### 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 concerns

Concern Category Type	2024
Customer Service	139
Eligibility	107
Case Management	91
Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	42
Legal / due process	23
Administrative	15
Access / Accessibility	7
Confidentiality / Privacy	4
Discrimination	1
Discrimination SNAP	1
Foster Care	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>

### APD Findings

Resolution Findings	2024
Complaint Withdrawn	2
Consultation	84
Forwarded to Policy Unit	2
Forwarded to Program Office	32
Inquiries	2
No Action Taken	12
No Authority to Investigate	2
Not Valid	140
Training Need Identified	9
Unable to contact complainant	42
Unable to Determine, complainant unresponsive	5
Unsubstantiated - No Evidence	1
Valid/Not Resolved	21
Valid/Resolved	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>455</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.

### 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 Comparison for 2024

### 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	2024
Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	309
Allegation	9
Disposition	23
Hotline/Screening	49
Investigative practice	221
Mandatory reporting	7
Access / Accessibility	2
Administrative	2
Case Management	122
Administrative coordination / communication	3
Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children	1
Notification	1
Ongoing case work	108
Payment or service denial	3
Permanency / Adoption	6
Confidentiality / Privacy	20
Customer Service	184
Communication	80
Staff Behavior	104
Discrimination	2
Eligibility	3
Foster Care	59
Legal / due process	99
Rights of...	50
Foster Parents ORS 418.648	4
Grandparents 419B.875 / Relatives	43
x-Foster Children Siblings 418.608	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>852</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	2024
Not Valid	365
Consultation	148
Valid/Resolved	98
Unable to contact complainant	79
Valid/Not Resolved	57
No Action Taken	34
Forwarded to Program Office	32
Training Need Identified	11
Complaint Withdrawn	8
No Authority to Investigate	7
Unable to Determine, complainant unresponsive	5
Forwarded to ODHS HR	4
Unable to Determine	4
Inquiries	3
Outside Time Requirements	2
Substantiated	1
Unsubstantiated - No Evidence	1
Unsubstantiated, No evidence/examples provided	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>860</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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## GAO Activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds Cases Closed Comparison for 2024

### 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	2024
+ Legal / due process	3
- Eligibility	9
Denial	3
Delay of benefit	5
Calculation	1
- Customer Service	14
Staff Behavior	7
Communication	7
+ Confidentiality / Privacy	1
- Case Management	10
Payment or service denial	1
Ongoing case work	5
Long Term Care services	2
Administrative coordination / communication	2
- Administrative	5
HCW / PSW issues	5
- Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	5
Investigative practice	3
Disposition	1
Allegation	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</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.

#### ODDS Findings

Resolution Findings	2024
Consultation	11
Not Valid	10
Forwarded to Program Office	8
Valid/Resolved	8
No Action Taken	4
Unable to contact complainant	4
Valid/Not Resolved	3
No Authority to Investigate	1
Unable to Determine, complainant unresponsive	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</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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## GAO Activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds Cases Closed Comparison for 2024

### SSP concerns

Concern Category Type	2024
<b>Customer Service</b>	<b>45</b>
Communication	26
Staff Behavior	19
<b>Eligibility</b>	<b>45</b>
Denial	18
Delay of benefit	16
Calculation	11
<b>Case Management</b>	<b>17</b>
Payment or service denial	11
Administrative coordination / communication	2
Ongoing case work	2
Disqualification	1
Notification	1
<b>Access / Accessibility</b>	<b>10</b>
Benefit / service	6
Applications / forms	4
<b>Legal / due process</b>	<b>4</b>
Administrative Hearing	2
Fraud	2
<b>Administrative</b>	<b>3</b>
Payments / Direct Pay Unit	3
<b>Confidentiality / Privacy</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Rights of...</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</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	2024
Not Valid	41
Valid/Resolved	32
Consultation	16
Unable to contact complainant	13
Training Need Identified	9
Valid/Not Resolved	7
Forwarded to Program Office	6
No Action Taken	6
Complaint Withdrawn	2
Referred to Website	2
Forwarded to ODHS HR	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>

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## GAO Activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds Cases Closed Comparison for 2024

### 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	2024
Customer Service	1
Staff Behavior	1
Case Management	3
Ongoing case work	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</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	2024
Forwarded to Program Office	2
Forwarded to ODHS HR	1
No Action Taken	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</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	2024
+ Legal / due process	1
+ GAO action	3
+ Customer Service	3
+ Administrative	2
- Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	4
Investigative practice	1
Hotline/Screening	1
Disposition	1
Allegation	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

#### Overpayment Recovery concerns

Concern Category Type	2024
- Legal / due process	6
Fraud	2
Administrative Hearing	4
+ Eligibility	2
- Customer Service	7
Staff Behavior	2
Communication	5
+ Case Management	3
- Administrative	4
HCW / PSW issues	1
Estate Administration	3
+ Access / Accessibility	1
- Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	1
Investigative practice	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</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 tables.

Case Program Type	2024
- ODHS-Overpayment Recovery/Estate Admin	33
Valid/Resolved	6
Unable to contact complainant	6
Outside Time Requirements	2
Not Valid	7
No Authority to Investigate	1
No Action Taken	3
Consultation	8
- ODHS-OTIS/Licensing	13
Valid/Resolved	1
Valid/Not Resolved	2
Substantiated	1
Not Valid	2
Inquiries	1
Forwarded to Program Office	2
Consultation	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</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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## GAO Activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds Cases Closed Comparison for 2024

### 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	2024
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>GAO action</b>	<b>60</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Other agency referrals</b>	<b>37</b>
Overpayment/Fraud	13
Licensing	11
Nursing Facility Complaints (NF.Complaints)	7
Human Resources	3
Information Security & Privacy Office (ISPO)	3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Mandatory reporting</b>	<b>19</b>
Child abuse report made	13
Adult abuse report made	6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Issue tracking</b>	<b>3</b>
ONE Eligibility Transformation	3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Welfare check</b>	<b>1</b>
APS	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

#### Recommendations

Case Program Type	2024
ODHS-Aging and People with Disabilities	1
ODHS-Child Welfare	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>

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## GAO Activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds Cases Closed Comparison for 2024

### 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.