



Governor's Advocacy Office Quarter (1) Report

GAO activity - Office of Human Services Ombuds cases closed January 1 to March 31, 2025

The **Governor's Advocacy Office (GAO)** was created in 1993 as 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. This report represents data gathered from cases closed during the quarter above.

GAO Cases Closed by ODHS Program

Case Program Type	1	2	3	Total
ODHS-Child Welfare	74	51	62	187
ODHS - AAA	28	20	27	75
ODHS-Aging and People with Disabilities	30	19	17	66
ODHS - SSP - SNAP	10	9	11	30
ODHS-Oregon Health Plan Eligibility	11	4	7	22
ODHS - SSP - TANF	5	6	2	13
ODHS-Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	1	4	4	9
ODHS-Self Sufficiency Programs	1	5	3	9
ODHS-Overpayment Recovery/Estate Admin	3	1	1	5
Law enforcement issues (non-ODHS)	2			2
Legal / Court issues (non-ODHS)	2			2
ODHS-OTIS/Licensing		1	1	2
OHA-Mental Health			1	1
OHA-Oregon Health Plan (post-eligibility)		1		1
Other state / federal agency			1	1
Total	167	121	137	425

How GAO heard about concerns

Case Intake SubType	1	2	3	Total
Community Program		1	1	2
Direct Mail		1	2	3
Direct to Ombuds	1	1	3	5
Email	1		2	3
FCO.info	1	1	2	4
GAO Info	36	15	16	67
GAO main line	97	86	82	265
GAO.CR	2	3	3	8
Governor's Office	4	1	2	7
Legislator	1	1	1	3
ODHS Director's Office	1			1
ODHS Info	3	1	5	9
ODHS/OHA Program	14	8	13	35
Other	5		3	8
Referred by another Program/Agency	1		1	2
Y.E.S. line		2	1	3
Total	167	121	137	425

Total days from case open to close

Open Range	1	2	3	Total
90+ Days	32	35	30	97
61 to 90 Days	19	18	28	65
31 to 60 Days	41	22	17	80
21 to 30 Days	13	11	10	34
11 to 20 Days	16	13	24	53
03 to 10 Days	30	12	19	61
02 days or less	16	10	9	35
Total	167	121	137	425

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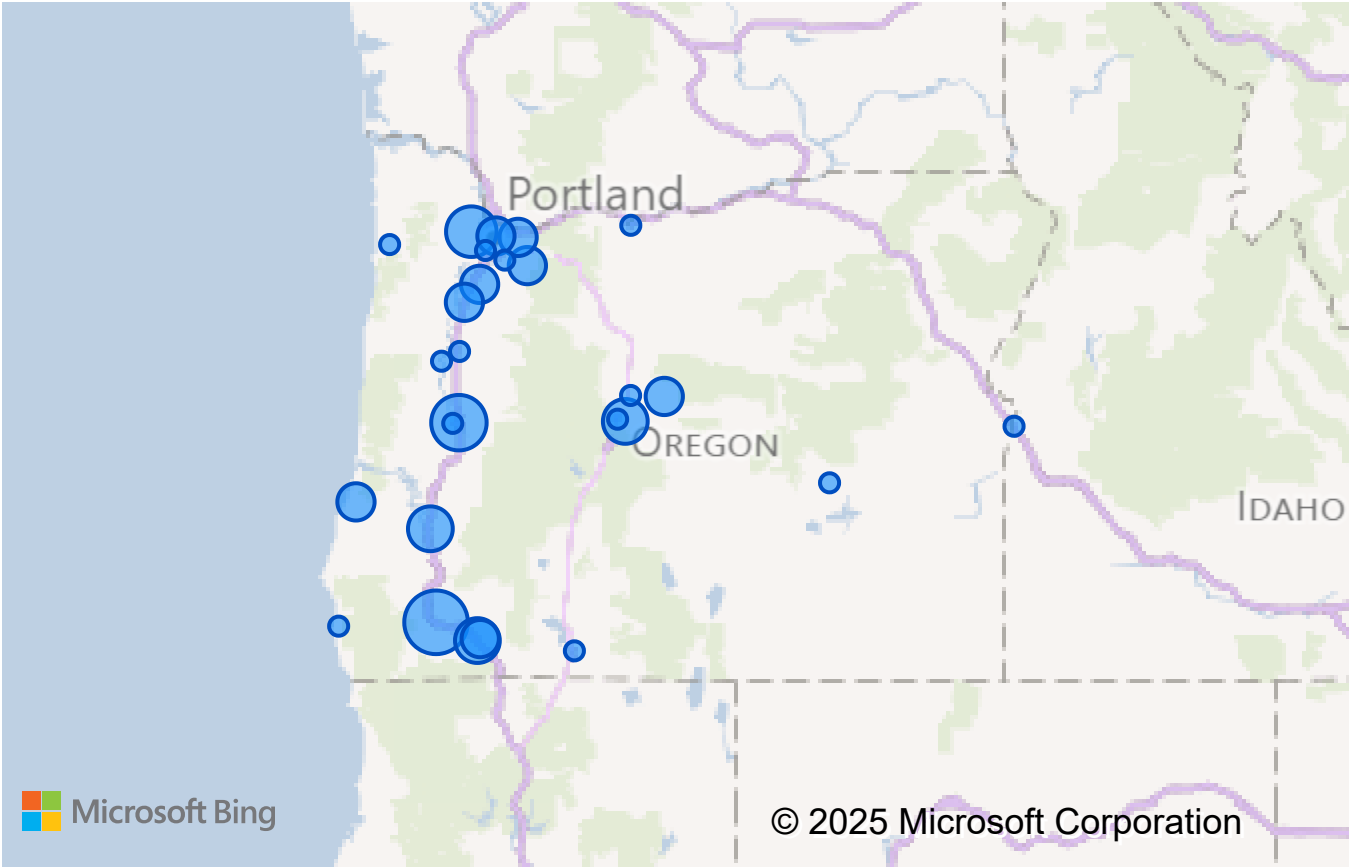
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The GAO tracks cases by branch location of the ODHS client's case. This information helps us track trends in communities and ensure that our role is understood and offered to clients and other affected individuals statewide.

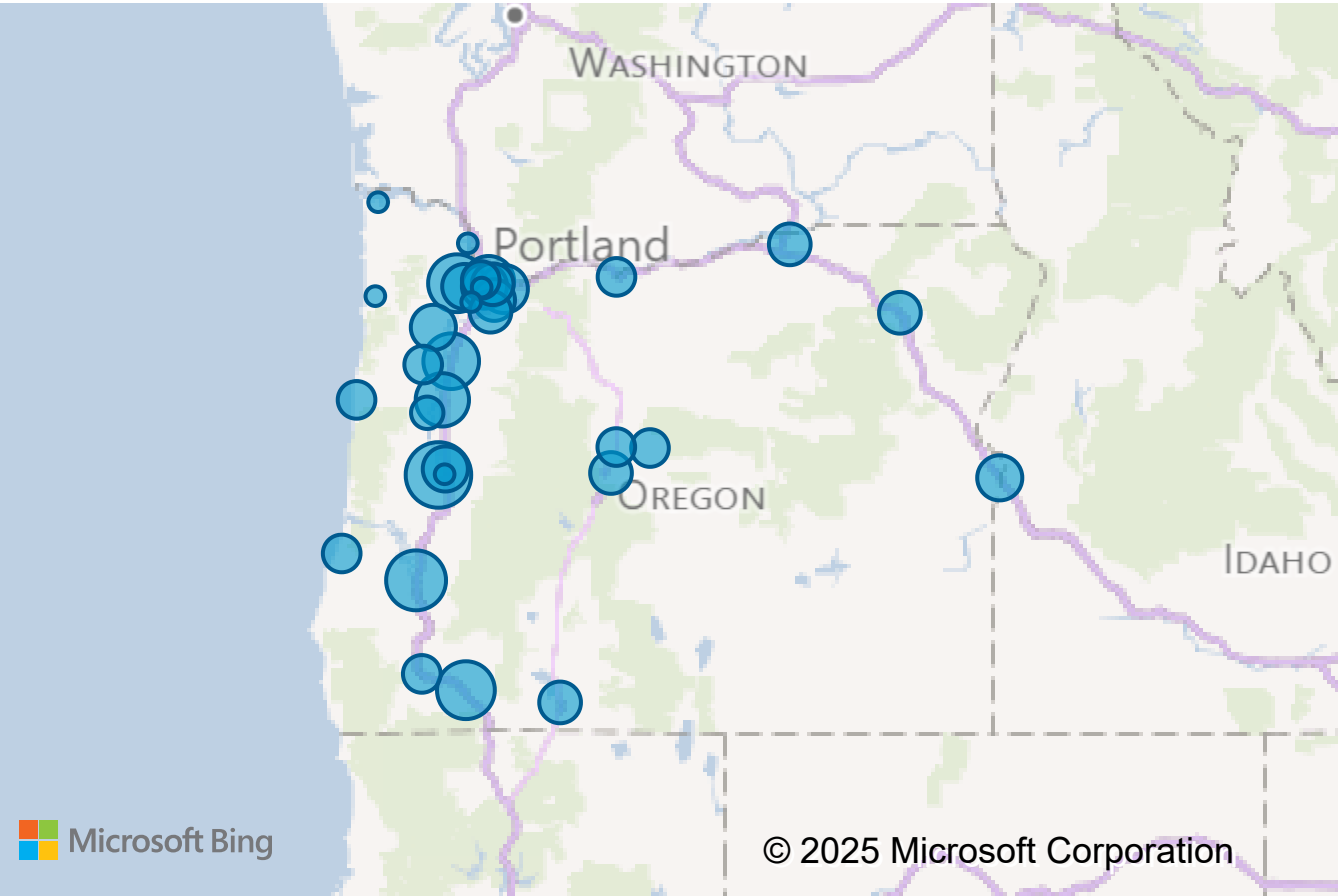
ODHS branch location (county)

County	1	2	3	Total
MULTNOMAH	25	15	20	60
MARION	22	8	10	40
LANE	18	9	10	37
WASHINGTON	14	11	6	31
CLACKAMAS	8	7	8	23
DOUGLAS	5	8	8	21
JACKSON	7	4	8	19
DESCHUTES	3	6	6	15
LINN	2	6	7	15
JOSEPHINE	6	3	3	12
POLK	2	4	4	10
YAMHILL	5	1	3	9
KLAMATH	3	2	2	7
MALHUER	2	2	3	7
COOS	2	1	3	6
CROOK	2	3	1	6
UNION	3	1	2	6
	3		2	5
BENTON	3	1	1	5
CLATSOP		2	2	4
TILLAMOOK	1	2	1	4
UMATILLA		1	3	4
WASCO	2	1	1	4
COLUMBIA	2		1	3
LINCOLN		1	2	3
CURRY	2			2
GILLIAM			1	1
HARNEY	1			1
HOOD RIVER	1			1
Total	167	121	137	425

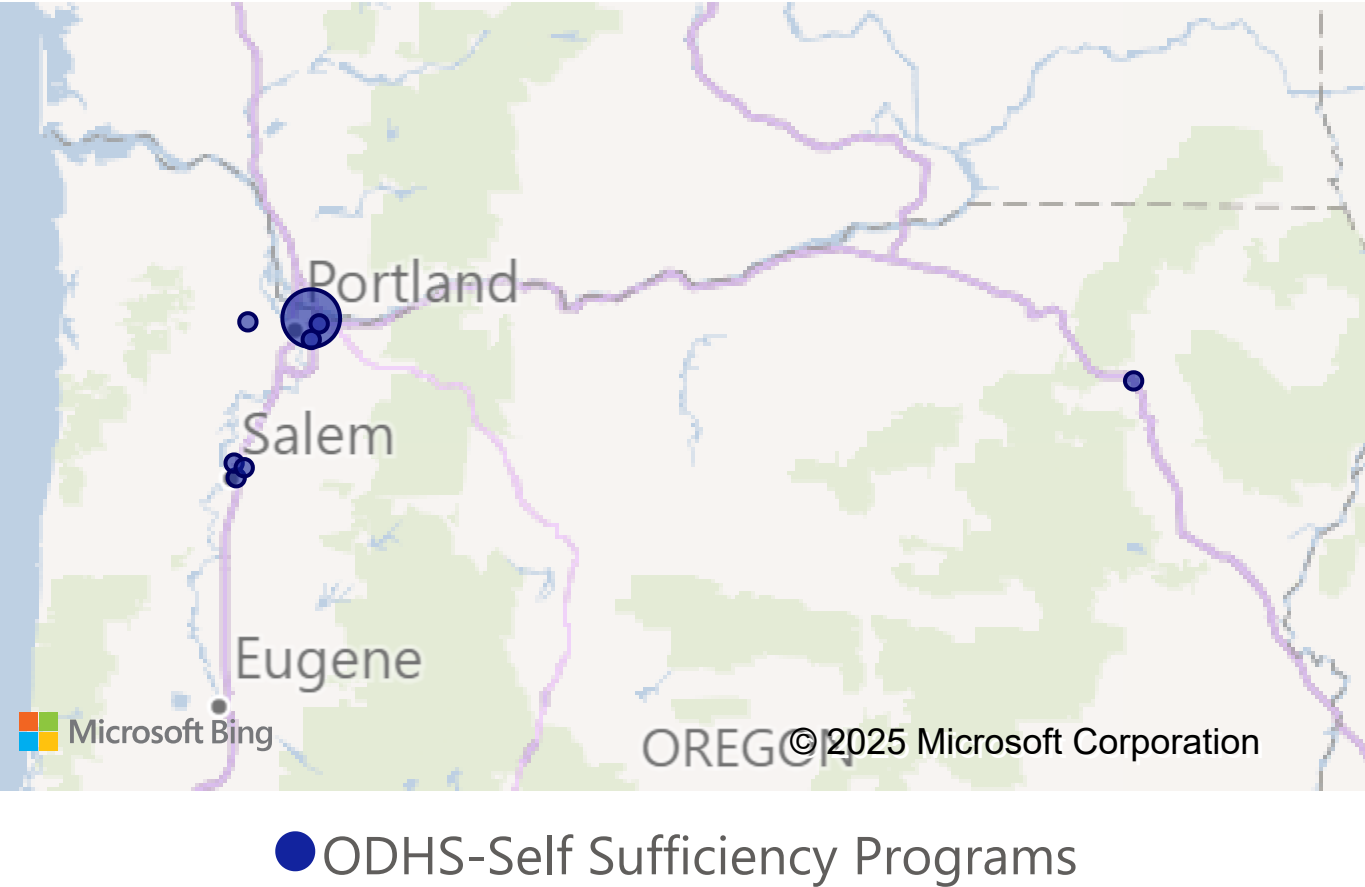
APD Branch by ZIP code



CW Branch by ZIP code



SSP Branch by ZIP code



**The county appearing blank represents a Child Welfare branch in Washington County. This will be corrected for Quarter 3 2025.*

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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	1	2	3	Total
Group 0: Unknown	29	30	19	78
Group 1: 0-4	3	1	2	6
Group 2: 5-8		1	2	3
Group 3: 9-12	1	3	2	6
Group 4: 13-15	1	3	2	6
Group 5: 16-21	11	5	9	25
Group 6: 22-64	108	64	94	266
Group 7: 65+	14	14	7	35
Total	167	121	137	425

Gender

ParticipantGender Description	1	2	3	Total
Did Not Answer	17	14	14	45
Female	92	56	77	225
Male	40	28	30	98
Non-binary	1	2		3
Transgender			1	1
Unknown	17	21	15	53
Total	167	121	137	425

Race / Ethnicity

ParticipantRace	1	2	3	Total
American Indian/Alaska Native	8	3	7	18
Asian	2	1		3
Black or African American	12	11	8	31
Did Not Answer	9	7	4	20
Hispanic/Latino	14	2	12	28
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2			2
Unknown	32	28	22	82
White	101	71	85	257
Total	180	123	138	441

Language

ParticipantLanguageDescription	1	2	3	Total
English	167	121	134	422
Spanish			3	3
Total	167	121	137	425

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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	1	2	3	Total
+ AAA			1	1
+ Advocate	2	8	3	13
+ Agency Business	13	7	10	30
+ Attorney	1			1
+ Authorized Representative	4	6	4	14
+ Client	55	45	47	147
+ Community Partner	1	3	2	6
+ Contractor	2	2		4
+ Counselor	1	2		3
+ Current Foster Parent	1	8	3	12
+ Educational Personnel			1	1
+ Family Member	62	31	52	145
+ Former Foster Parent	1	1		2
+ Friend	1	2		3
+ Guardian			2	2
+ Legislator	6	2	3	11
+ Mandatory Reporter	1	1		2
+ Significant Other	8	1	3	12
+ Unknown	4	2	3	9
Total	163	121	134	418

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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	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility	13	6	5	24
Delay of benefit	5	3	3	11
Denial	3	3	1	7
Calculation	4			4
PHE Ending	1		1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	7	4	7	18
Communication	4	2	4	10
Staff Behavior	3	2	3	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Management	7	6	1	14
Long Term Care services	5	3		8
Ongoing case work	1	2		3
Payment or service denial	1		1	2
Administrative coordination / communication		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	4	5	2	11
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal / due process	2	1	2	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Access / Accessibility		1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative			2	2
Background check			1	1
HCW / PSW issues			1	1
Total	33	23	21	77

**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.

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	1	2	3	Total
Complaint Withdrawn	1	1		2
Consultation	6	1	3	10
Forwarded to Program Office	6	1		7
Inquiries			1	1
No Action Taken			1	1
Not Valid	14	7	4	25
Training Need Identified	1	1	1	3
Unable to contact complainant	1	4	2	7
Unable to Determine			1	1
Valid/Not Resolved	1		1	2
Valid/Resolved	6	8	7	21
Total	36	23	21	80

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	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	36	21	33	90
Allegation	2	1		3
Disposition	1			1
Hotline/Screening	4	2	3	9
Investigative practice	29	18	30	77
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Access / Accessibility			1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Management	17	11	18	46
Notification			1	1
Ongoing case work	15	9	15	39
Payment or service denial	1		1	2
Permanency / Adoption	1	2	1	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Confidentiality / Privacy	2	1		3
Personal information	2	1		3
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	20	17	21	58
Communication	12	4	9	25
Staff Behavior	8	13	12	33
<input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination	1	3		4
Disability / Title II		1		1
Race/Color or National Origin	1	1		2
Religion		1		1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eligibility	3			3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foster Care	2	8	6	16
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal / due process	14	9	8	31
Custody	2	2	2	6
Disposition or findings review	9	6	5	20
Release of records / records requests	3	1	1	5
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rights of...	7	6	3	16
Total	102	76	90	268

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	1	2	3	Total
Not Valid	45	40	47	132
Consultation	16	5	14	35
Valid/Resolved	11	3	8	22
Valid/Not Resolved	7	8	6	21
Unable to contact complainant	3	8	3	14
Forwarded to Program Office	5	6	2	13
Complaint Withdrawn	3		3	6
No Authority to Investigate	2	3		5
No Action Taken		2	2	4
Unable to Determine	1		2	3
Unable to Determine, complainant unresponsive	3			3
Training Need Identified			2	2
Inquiries			1	1
Substantiated, Training need identified	1			1
Unsubstantiated - Investigation Completed	1			1
Unsubstantiated - No Evidence	1			1
Total	99	75	90	264

*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 (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	1	2	3	Total
☐ Foster Care	1			1
Education	1			1
☐ Eligibility		2		2
Denial		1		1
Delay of benefit		1		1
☐ Customer Service	1			1
Staff Behavior	1			1
☐ Case Management	2	1		3
Payment or service denial	1			1
Ongoing case work	1			1
Notification		1		1
☐ Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	2	1		3
Investigative	2			2
Allegation		1		1
Total	1	5	4	10

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	1	2	3	Total
Not Valid		2	2	4
Consultation	1	1	1	3
Valid/Resolved		2	1	3
Total	1	5	4	10

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SSP concerns

Concern Category Type	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility	1	1	3	5
Denial	1		2	3
Calculation		1	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	2			2
Communication	1			1
Staff Behavior	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Access /	1			1
Building / branch location	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Management	1			1
Payment or service denial	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination	1			1
Race/Color or National Origin	1			1
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal / due process	1			1
Fraud	1			1
Total	1	7	3	11

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	1	2	3	Total
Not Valid		4	1	5
Valid/Resolved	1	1	1	3
Consultation			1	1
Training Need Identified	1			1
Unsubstantiated, No evidence/examples provided		1		1
Total	1	7	3	11

**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 - 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	Total
Total	

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	Total
Total	

**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 - 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	2	3	Total
Abuse / Neglect / Protective Services	1		1
Investigative practice	1		1
Customer Service	1		1
Communication	1		1
Total	1	1	2

Overpayment Recovery concerns

Concern Category Type	1	2	3	Total
Case Management		1		1
Administrative coordination / communication		1		1
Eligibility	1			1
Calculation	1			1
Legal / due process	2	1		3
Administrative Hearing	2	1		3
Total	3	1	1	5

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	1	2	3	Total
ODHS-OTIS/Licensing	1	1		2
Forwarded to Program Office		1		1
Not Valid	1			1
ODHS-Overpayment Recovery/Estate Admin	3	1	1	5
Consultation	1			1
Not Valid	1			1
Unable to contact	1	1		2
Valid/Resolved		1		1
Total	3	2	2	7

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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	1	2	3	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> GAO action	5	6	9	20
<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory	2	1	5	8
Adult abuse report made	2		2	4
Child abuse report made		1	3	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Other agency referrals	3	2	2	7
Human Resources	1		1	2
Licensing	1		1	2
Overpayment/Fraud	1	1		2
Office of Public Defense Services (OPDS)		1		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Issue tracking		3	2	5
Skimming		2	2	4
ONE Eligibility Transformation		1		1
Total	5	6	9	20

Recommendations

Case Program Type	Total
Total	

**Recommendations may appear on Foster Care Ombuds and/or primary GAO reports for this period.*

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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.