

## Mission

The Governor's Advocacy Office (GAO) will objectively research, evaluate and work to resolve client and others' issues to respectfully respond to concerns presented by all individuals who contact the GAO.

## Independence

The GAO is a part of the ODHS Director's Office and is organizationally independent of ODHS programs that we review. The GAO produces a quarterly report for the ODHS Director and Office of the Governor and frequently review client and others' concerns at their request.

## Purpose

Navigating a state agency the size of ODHS can be a daunting task, even for its employees. The GAO serves thousands of individuals and families throughout Oregon every year: clients or individuals experiencing a problem with or seeking information about programs or services provided by the agency. Clients and others may receive help and direction from the GAO Ombuds through the following programs:



**ODHS Ombuds** are able to support clients of all ODHS programs through all complaints, questions, and concerns about all ODHS programs and services.

**Phone:** 1-800-442-5238 (hablamos Español) or 503-945-6904      **Email:** [OHSO.info@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:OHSO.info@dhsosha.state.or.us)  
**Website:** <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/aboutdhs/pages/gao.aspx>

**Foster Care Ombuds** maintains a separate toll-free phone number for foster children or their advocates to make complaints and assert grievances regarding their care, safety or well-being.

**Phone:** 1-855-840-6036 (hablamos Español)      **Email:** [FCO.info@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:FCO.info@dhsosha.state.or.us)  
**Website:** <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/ABOUTDHS/Pages/Foster-Care-Ombuds.aspx>

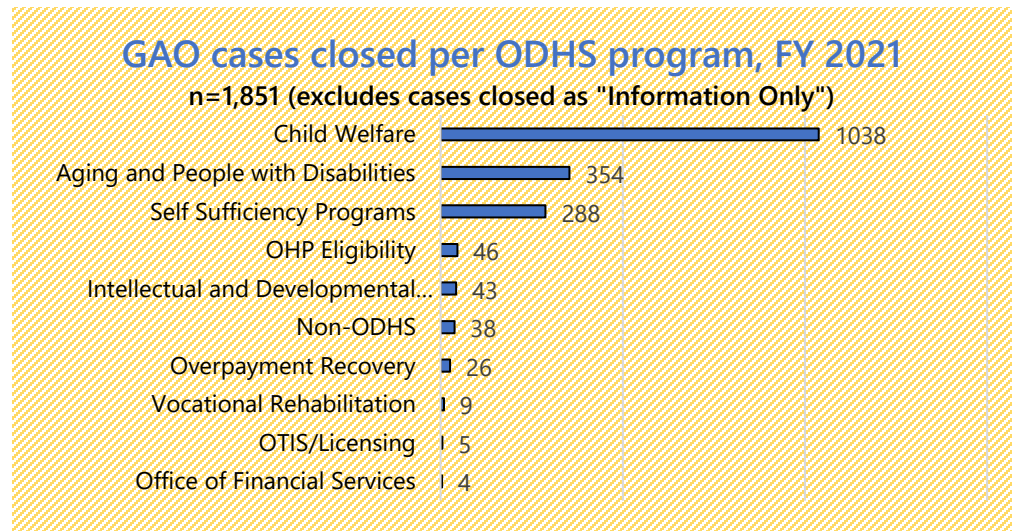
The ODHS Client Complaint and Report of Discrimination process provides centralized screening, coordination, oversight and tracking of formal complaints across ODHS within the GAO. When a report of discrimination is received, the GAO will either independently investigate the matter or refer the case to the appropriate government authority for investigation.

**Phone:** 1-800-442-5238 (hablamos Español)      **Fax:** 503-378-6532      **Email:** [GAO.CR@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:GAO.CR@dhsosha.state.or.us)

## Background

The GAO has been a unit within the ODHS Director's Office since 1993. In 1996, the GAO accepted the activities of the Children's Advocate through an inter-agency agreement with the Commission on Children and Families. During the 2003 Legislative Session,

the Legislative Assembly officially moved the Children's Advocate to the ODHS Governor's Advocacy Office and created the ODHS Ombuds program. In 2014, ODHS created the position of Foster Children's Ombuds in order to implement SB 123 (2013), which included the Foster Children's Bill of Rights and a hotline for foster children to make complaints and assert grievances regarding their care, safety, or well-being.



## Authority

- Ombuds duties are performed at the discretion of the ODHS Director and must report to the office of the Governor on a quarterly basis (ORS 182.500),
- Duties of the Children's Advocate (ORS 417.815) outline GAO's responsibility to investigate Child Protective Services (CPS) actions,
- The role of the Oregon Foster Care Ombuds (ORS 418.201(7)) is mandated for foster children or their advocates to make complaints and assert grievances regarding their care, safety or well-being, and
- ODHS Client Complaint and Report of Discrimination Grievance Processes (OARs 407-005-0030 through 407-005-0120) gives GAO oversight of grievances generally but the sole authority over discrimination investigations.

## Contact

To contact the GAO, please contact call **1-800-442-5238** or reach one of our specific units on the previous page.