

SECOND QUARTER REPORT

Foster Care Ombudsman

October 2025 - December 2025





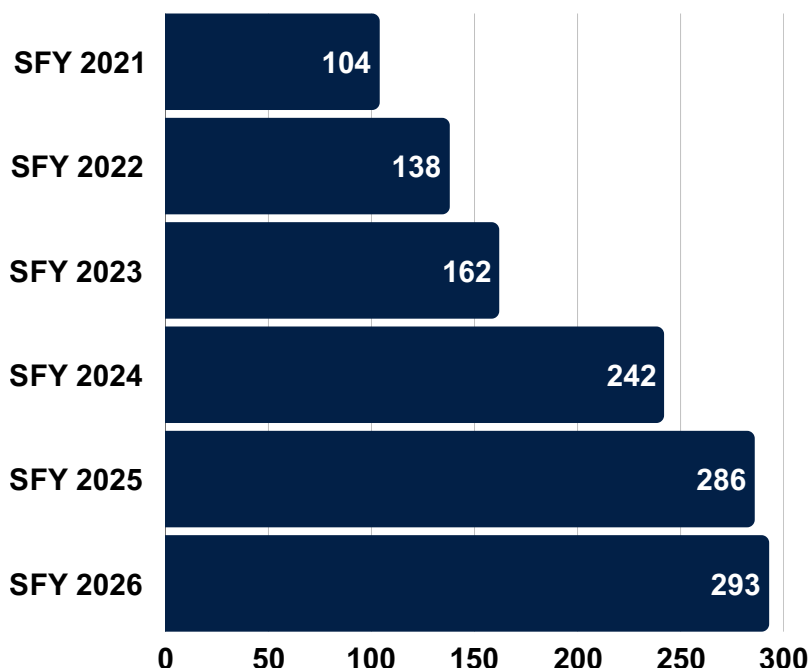
The Foster Care Ombudsman (FCO) Division operates under the Office of Inspector General. Its mission is to receive and investigate concerns and complaints from foster children, foster parents, kinship caregivers, and other stakeholders regarding the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Based on its findings, the Foster Care Ombudsman Division makes recommendations for systemic reform.

Complainant Count by Month and Quarter

In the second quarter of the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026, the Foster Care Ombudsman Division received requests for assistance from 293 individual complainants. The data below reflects the number of complainants by month and quarter for SFY 2026. Unless otherwise specified, the complaint data in this report pertains to complaints that were closed and completed as of December 31, 2025.

Complainant Count by Month and Quarter SFY 2026												
2025						2026						
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	SFY End Running Total
104	112	102	100	75	118							611
Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4		Total	
318			293								611	

Second Quarter Contacts Per SFY



The bar chart on the left compares the number of individuals who received assistance during the second quarter of each State Fiscal Year. There has been a steady increase in the number of individuals assisted each year.

Outreach & Education

In the second quarter of SFY 2026, the Foster Care Ombudsman Division also participated in or presented information to over 50 meetings and events.



Complaint Count by Complaint Theme

The FCO categorizes requests for assistance into several groups based on the type of complaint, the level of intervention required, and the resolution achieved. Complaints that fall into the "Not Applicable" category usually involve situations where the complainant could not be contacted after their initial request for assistance or withdrew their case after reaching a resolution, prior to the Foster Care Ombudsman Division's investigation or involvement.

When individuals contact the Foster Care Ombudsman Division, they often submit multiple complaints. In this quarter, the Division received assistance requests from 293 individual complainants. However, a total of 430 specific complaints were actually investigated by the Foster Care Ombudsman Division, categorized under the primary, secondary, or tertiary complaint themes. Further breaking down the complaint theme of "Financial Issue/Reimbursement", the Foster Care Ombudsman Division assisted complainants in recovering \$50,161.34 in benefits during this quarter.

Complaint Count by Complaint Theme				
Main Complaint Theme	Q1	Q2	Total	Percent
Action/Inaction of Agency/Employee	104	128	232	25.9%
Placement of Children	29	31	60	6.7%
Financial Issue/Reimbursement	53	43	96	10.7%
Lack of Communication	46	38	84	9.4%
Policy/Regulation Issue	67	49	116	13.0%
Decision of Agency Employee	3	4	7	0.8%
Not Applicable	43	48	91	10.2%
Removal of Children	61	40	101	11.3%
Rude/Unfair Treatment	32	28	60	6.7%
Threat/Retaliatory Treatment	16	17	33	3.4%
Information and/or Referral to Resources	11	4	15	1.7%
Total	465	430	895	100%

Complaint Count by Closure Type

The Foster Care Ombudsman Division has effectively addressed all assistance requests, organizing them based on the type of resolution achieved. The information provided on the right outlines the characteristics of complaints at the time they were closed. Complaints that involved intervention or investigation by the Division are classified as either substantiated or unsubstantiated.

This quarter, the FCO substantiated 118 out of the 430 complaints reviewed. Cases may be substantiated if there are significant delays in the child's case processing and procedures, or if there is a deviation from applicable policies, procedures, or laws.

Complaint Count by Closure Type				
Closure	Q1	Q2	Total	Percent
Declined by FCO	5	5	10	1.1%
Information & Referral to Resources	103	80	183	20.4%
Research Only	30	3	33	3.7%
Substantiated	83	118	201	22.5%
Unable to Contact	33	21	54	6.0%
Unable to Determine Substantiation due to Lack of Information	21	9	30	3.4%
Unsubstantiated	182	188	370	41.3%
Withdrawn by Complainant	8	6	14	1.6%
Total	465	430	895	100%

Finally, the three cases classified as "Declined by the FCO" are in accordance with the W. Va. Code §16B-16-2(c). The FCO may decline to take on various cases when they have already conducted thorough investigations into similar cases, and there is no new information available to alter the original case determination.



Complainant Count by the Bureau for Social Services (BSS) Program

The Complainant Count by BSS Program data shows the number of complaints related to specific BSS programs. Complaints categorized as "Not Applicable" involve issues that do not pertain to BSS. In future reports, the FCO division plans to introduce more detailed categories to better capture additional complaints within this dataset.

Complainant Count By Bureau for Social Services (BSS) Case County

The Foster Care Ombudsman gathers data during the intake process, which includes information about the complainant's county. Additionally, data is collected on the case county, which refers to the county where the child's Bureau of Social Services (BSS) case is based. When analyzing the total number of complaints by county, it is crucial to recognize that each county has unique characteristics, including its population, demographics, and the number of child abuse and neglect petitions filed.

These seven counties included in this quarterly report account for 29.4% of the overall cases and investigations handled by the Foster Care Ombudsman Division. These counties with the highest complaint numbers this quarter do not necessarily indicate systemic issues.

Complainant Case Count by Bureau for Social Services Unit				
Bureau for Social Services Unit	Q1	Q2	Total	Percent
Adoption	8	10	18	2.9%
Centralized Intake (Abuse & Neglect Hotline)	1	1	2	0.5%
Child Protective Services	251	237	488	79.9%
Homefinding	8	6	14	2.3%
Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children	2	0	2	0.5%
Institutional Investigative Unit	5	5	10	1.6%
Legal Guardianship	9	9	18	2.9%
Post-Adoption	17	17	34	5.6%
Youth Services	3	3	6	1.0%
Not Applicable	8	0	8	1.3%
Non-BSS	6	5	11	1.8%
Total	318	293	611	100%

Note: The federal Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children regulates the placement of children in other states. The Institutional Investigative Unit within BSS is responsible for investigating cases of child abuse and neglect in residential facilities, schools, and foster homes.

Counties with Highest Complaint Count in 2nd Quarter		
County	Q2	Percent
Kanawha & Cabell	24	8.2%
Marion	19	6.5%
Ohio	16	5.5%
Mercer	14	4.8%
Hancock & Harrison	13	4.4%
Total	293	29.4%



This data may represent past or ongoing outreach efforts from the FCO division, which could have enhanced educational awareness about the FCO's role and functions within that county. As a result, this may have led to an increase in the number of complaints filed by stakeholders or families in those areas.

The numbers listed below indicate the number of cases handled by the FCO division from each county during this quarter, presented in alphabetical order.

Complaint Count by BSS Case County				
County	Q1	Q2	SFY Total	Percent
Barbour	6	4	10	1.6%
Berkeley	11	4	15	2.5%
Boone	1	2	3	0.5%
Braxton	4	2	6	1.0%
Brooke	1	0	1	0.2%
Cabell	21	24	45	7.4%
Calhoun	2	1	3	0.5%
Clay	3	2	5	0.8%
Doddridge	2	3	5	0.8%
Fayette	6	3	9	1.5%
Gilmer	2	2	4	0.7%
Grant	2	0	2	0.3%
Greenbrier	5	4	9	1.5%
Hampshire	8	2	10	1.6%
Hancock	6	13	19	3.1%
Hardy	2	1	3	0.5%
Harrison	17	13	30	4.9%
Jackson	2	1	3	0.5%
Jefferson	4	4	8	1.3%
Kanawha	35	24	59	9.7%
Lewis	3	5	8	1.3%
Lincoln	1	0	1	0.2%
Logan	11	3	14	2.3%
Marion	19	19	38	6.2%
Marshall	6	8	14	2.3%
Mason	2	4	6	1.0%
McDowell	3	5	8	1.3%
Mercer	13	14	27	4.4%
Mineral	2	2	4	0.7%

Complaint Count by BSS Case County				
County	Q1	Q2	SFY Total	Percent
Mingo	2	0	2	0.3%
Monongalia	12	10	22	3.6%
Monroe	1	0	1	0.2%
Morgan	0	2	2	0.3%
Nicholas	1	6	7	1.1%
Ohio	16	16	32	5.2%
Pendleton	0	0	0	0%
Pleasants	0	2	2	0.3%
Pocahontas	1	2	3	0.5%
Preston	7	3	10	1.6%
Putnam	12	6	18	2.9%
Raleigh	6	5	11	1.8%
Randolph	5	0	5	0.8%
Ritchie	6	8	14	2.3%
Roane	4	5	9	1.5%
Summers	3	0	3	0.5%
Taylor	2	10	12	2.0%
Tucker	0	0	0	0%
Tyler	1	1	2	0.3%
Upshur	3	3	6	1.0%
Wayne	3	7	10	1.6%
Webster	3	1	4	0.7%
Wetzel	3	2	5	0.8%
Wirt	0	0	0	0%
Wood	12	9	21	3.4%
Wyoming	2	5	7	1.1%
Not Applicable	10	19	29	4.7%
Out of State	3	2	5	0.8%
Statewide	0	0	0	0%
Total	318	293	611	100%

THANK YOU



Contact Us

-  304-558-1117
-  Request for Assistance Form
-  FosterCareOmbudsman@wv.gov
-  OIG Foster Care Ombudsman