

ANNUAL REPORT

Foster Care Ombudsman

State Fiscal Year
July 2023 - June 2024





The West Virginia Foster Care Ombudsman was created by the West Virginia Legislature in 2019. The duties are outlined in W. Va. Code §16B-16-1, et seq. The Foster Care Ombudsman division operates under the Office of Inspector General. Its purpose 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 makes recommendations for systemic reform.

If you or your family are affected by the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, contact the Foster Care Ombudsman division directly by calling us at (304) 558-1117, scan the QR Code to complete an Assistance Form, or email directly to FosterCareOmbudsman@wv.gov.



TESTIMONIAL

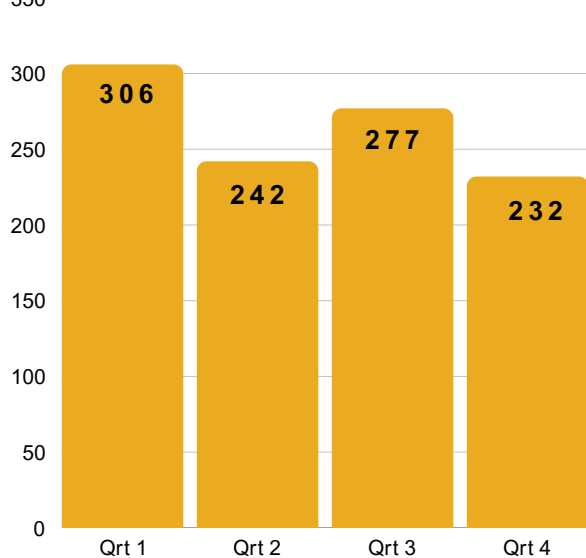
“The Ombudsman was pleasant and very eager to help me and understand my problem and solution.”



Complaint Count by Month and Quarter SFY 2024												
2023						2024						
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	SFY End Running Total
93	82	131	101	73	68	72	99	106	69	81	82	1057
Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4			Total
306			242			277			232			1057

State Fiscal Year 2024

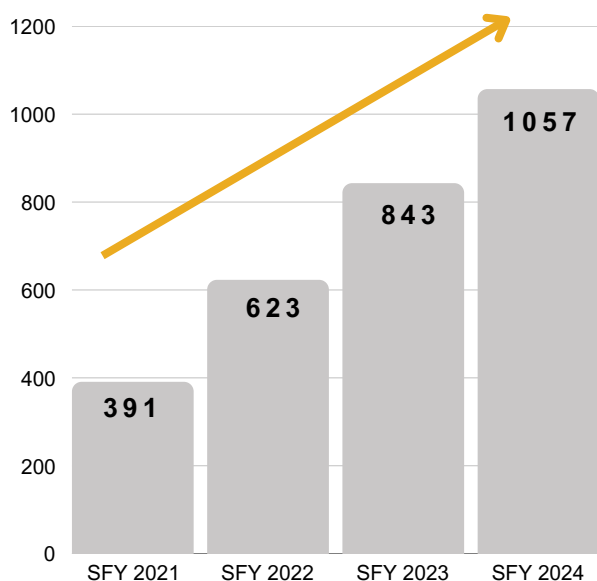
Total of 1057 Individual Contacts



The Foster Care Ombudsman continues to build TRUST as a credible resource, problem solve in a co-creative manner, which is shown by the volume of complaints received by our government officials, our community stakeholders, and families. This State Fiscal Year, the Foster Care Ombudsman division has served 1057 families, children, and stakeholders.

TESTIMONIAL

“...[The ombudsman] is very knowledgeable, kind and considerate. She answers emails and phone calls promptly. She provides additional information and resources. She is a great listener and helpful.”



COMPLAINT CASES INVESTIGATED



216

Action or Inaction
of Agency or
Worker

195

Placement of
Children

154

Financial Issues or
Reimbursements

146

Lack of
Communication

419

Education provided on Policy,
Processes, and Resources

216

Substantiated Cases

758

Child
Protective
Services

53

Legal
Guardianship

38

Post - Adoption

118

Kanawha
County

48

Marion
County

45

Harrison
County

These counties are the highest number of complaints received during this annual reporting period. This does not necessarily indicate systemic issues. 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.

NUMBER OF TRAININGS AND OUTREACH



278

Outreach Exhibits,
Presentations, and
Stakeholder
Meetings

58

Weekend and Weekday
Parent Resources
Information Development
Education
Session 7 Panels

TESTIMONIALS

"It took an ease off my chest just knowing someone cared enough to call me back."

"I have to tell you I absolutely love you. You were so helpful and were right on all of [the] issues and now everything is straightened out. I will be calling you from now on."

"[The ombudsman] was amazing!!! She helped clarify information. It took getting her involved to 'light a fire' to get things moving."

"[The ombudsman] is amazing! She was prompt in her response to me, and made sure to follow up. She facilitated contact with the assigned worker in a prompt, professional manner. She also kept me updated on the progress of the case. I am [an] attorney, and have worked in public service my entire career. This is an excellent service, and [the ombudsman] provided excellent support."





Highlight of Stakeholder Meetings:

- Aetna Better Health of West Virginia
- All In Foster Care Summit
- Bureau of Juvenile Services
- Child Fatality Review Team
- Christian Alliance for Orphans
- Citizen Review Panel
- Court Improvement Program
- Education of Children in Out-of-Home Care Advisory Committee
- Family Resource Network
- Handle with Care Conference
- Healthy Grandfamilies
- Human Trafficking
- Intermountain Collaborative
- Kids in Transition Collaborative
- Kids Thrive
- Mission West Virginia
- Potomac Center Quarterly Meeting
- Reentry Council Meetings
- Student Success Summit
- Transitional Independent Living
- United States Ombudsman Association
- Upper Potomac Children's Collaborative
- WV Center for Children's Justice
- WV Child Advocacy Network
- WV Foster Kinship Adoptive Parents Network: Kids in Care Annual Conference

THANK YOU



Contact Us

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