

# Office of the Children's Ombudsman

## Quarterly Report: Fiscal Year 2023, Q4

The OCO has statutory authority to receive complaints regarding cases involving children who (i) have been alleged to have been abused or neglected, (ii) are receiving child protective services, (iii) are in foster care, or (iv) are awaiting adoption.

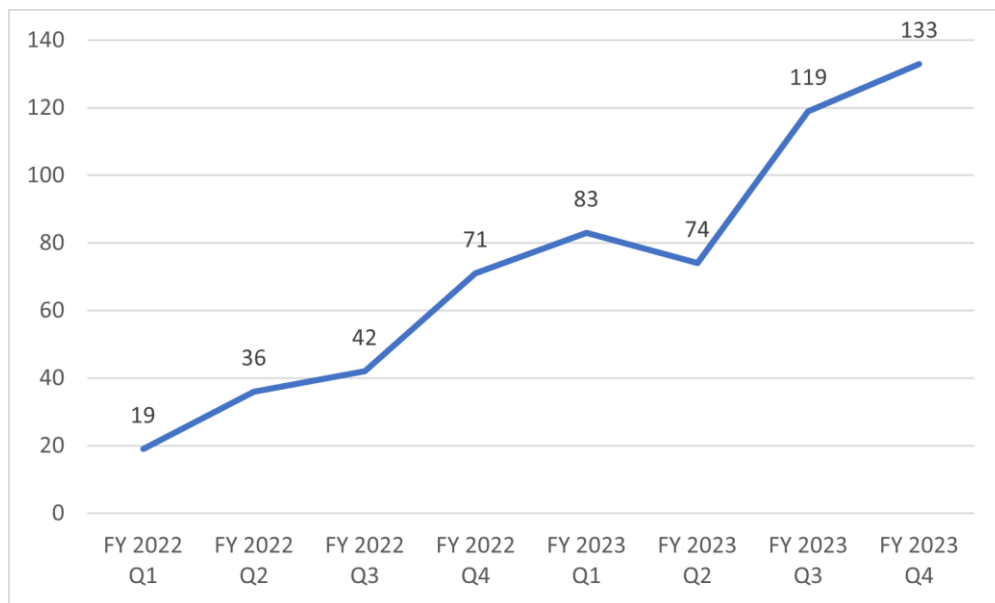
The OCO can receive and investigate complaints alleging that an agency's action was:

- in violation of a law, rule, or policy;
- imposed without an adequate statement of reason; or
- based on irrelevant, immaterial, or erroneous grounds.

Number of children in foster care in Virginia as of June 1, 2023: 5,062

Total Complaints received in FY 2023, Q4: 133

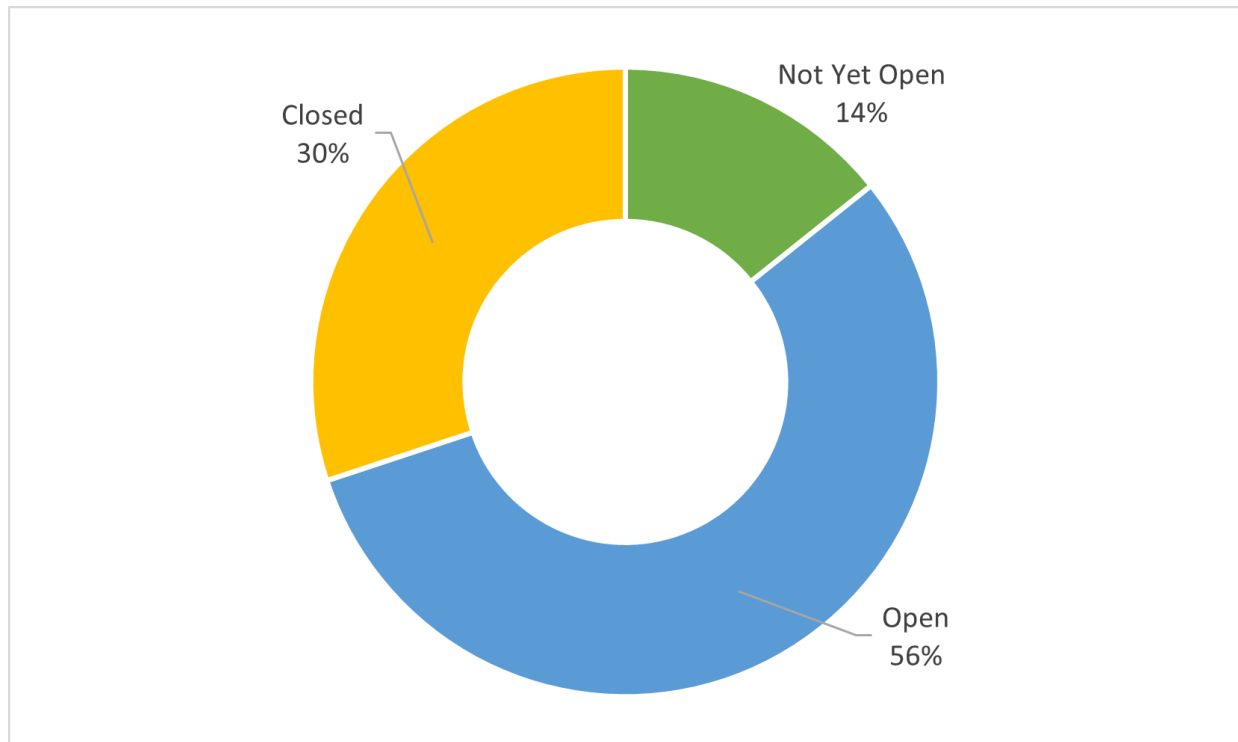
Total Complaints received since the OCO was created: 592



Continued increases in the number of complaints received are expected as more constituents become aware of the OCO.

The significant increases between FY 2022 Q3 and Q4, and FY 2023 Q2 and Q3 can be attributed to television news broadcasts related to OCO's work.

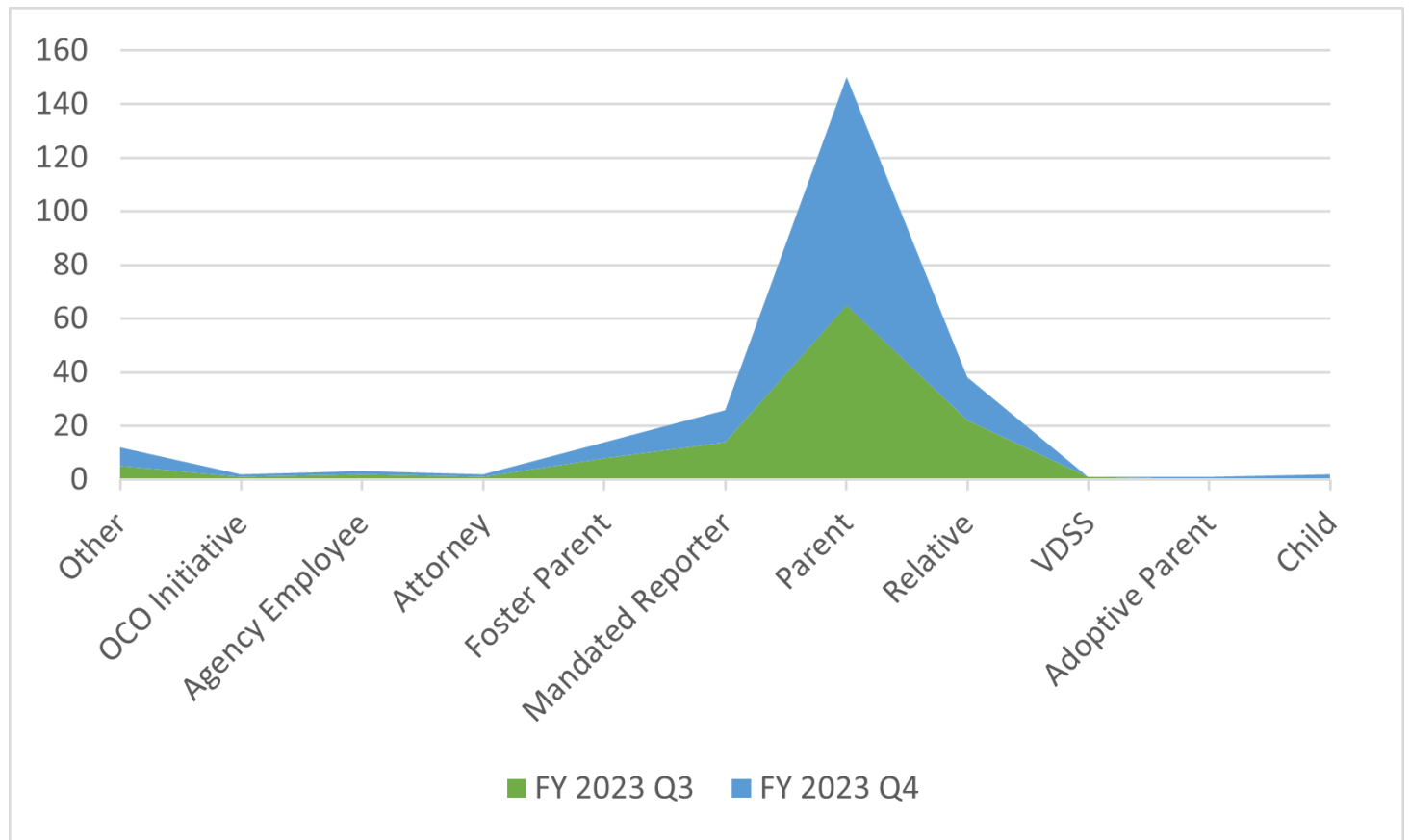
# Stage and Status of Complaints Received During Fiscal Year 2023, Q4



- Intake: 19
  - Not yet open- Awaiting complaint form: 19
- Preliminary Assessment: 111
  - Closed: 40
    - Assistance provided to complainant: 2
    - Declined to investigate\* : 14
    - Complainant was provided information about their case: 23
    - Referred to another agency: 1
  - Open: 71
    - Conducting initial assessment: 31
    - Pending closeout notification: 9
    - Scheduling intake call: 10
    - Assigned to investigator: 21
- Investigation: 3
  - Open: 3

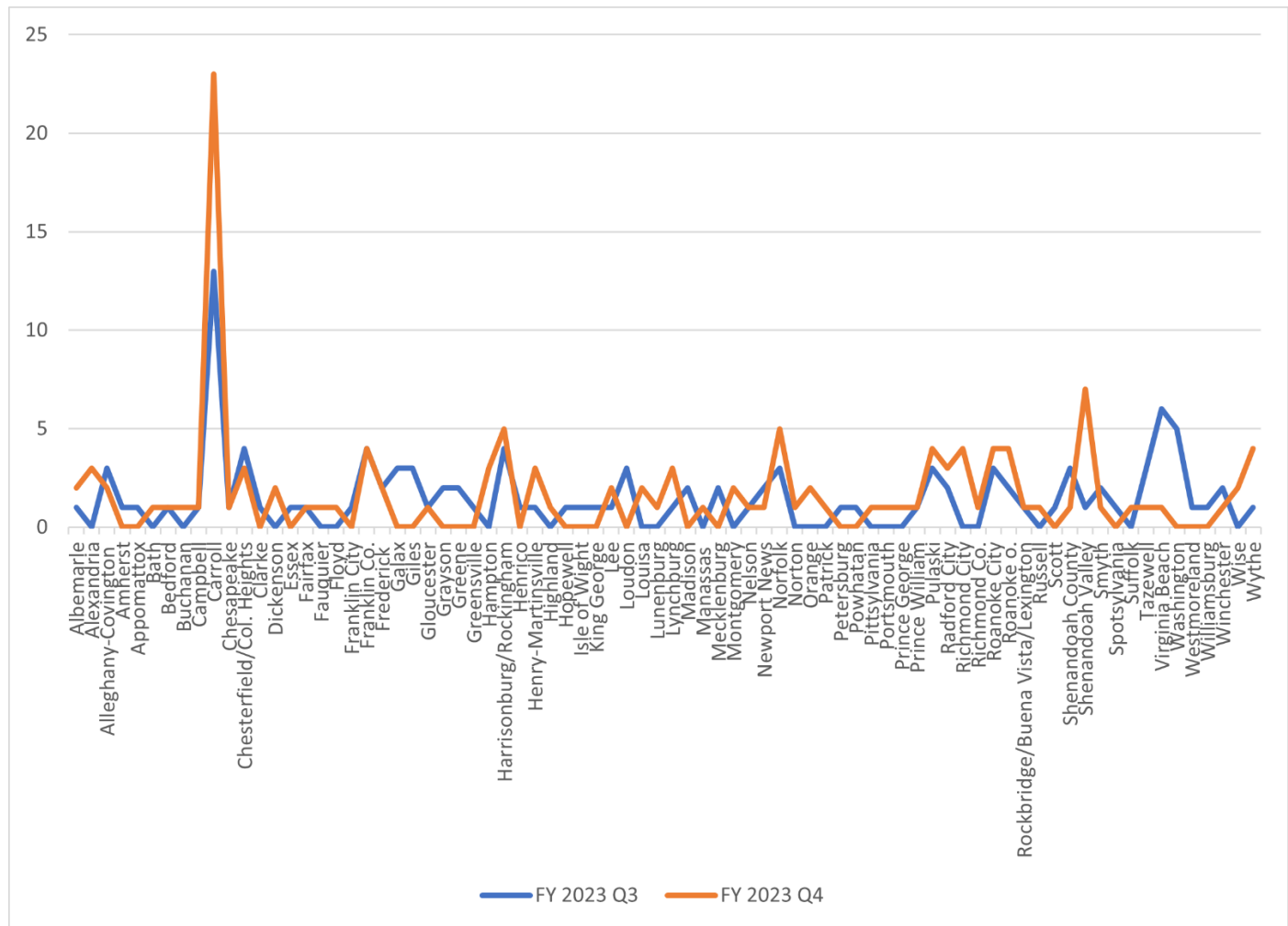
\*Complainant concerns were not substantiated or outside OCO jurisdiction

## Complaint Source, Fiscal Year 2023, Q3 and Q4



Claimant Type	Q3	Q4
Parent	65	85
Relative	22	16
Mandated Reporter	14	12
Other	5	7
Foster Parent	8	6
Child	0	2
OCO Initiative	1	1
Agency Employee	2	1
Attorney	1	1
Adoptive Parent	0	1
VDSS	1	0

# Complaints Made Against Local Departments of Social Services During Q3 and Q4



## Agencies with the Most Complaints During FY 2023, Q4

Local Department of Social Service	Q3	Q4
Carroll	13	23
Shenandoah Valley	1	7
Harrisonburg/Rockingham	4	5
Norfolk	3	5
Franklin Co.	4	4
Pulaski	3	4
Roanoke City	3	4
Roanoke Co.	2	4
Wythe	1	4
Richmond City	0	4

# Case Closures During Q4

(includes cases opened prior to Q4)

- **The OCO concluded 106 cases during Q4**
  - 84 cases concluded during Q3
- **Average case age (time between date received and date concluded): 77 days**
  - 110 days during Q3
- **The OCO concluded 2 investigations and 104 preliminary assessments.**
- **Preliminary Assessments concluded by:**
  - Assistance provided to complainant: 6
  - Declined to investigate\*: 30
  - Complainant was provided information about their case: 53
  - Investigation Initiated: 1
  - No response from complainant to schedule call: 12
  - Referred to another agency: 3

\*Complainant concerns were not substantiated or are outside OCO jurisdiction

## Common Allegations Made in Complaints Received – Q4

- |                                    |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Inadequate Services: 15          | • CPS Validation Process: 9      |
| • CPS Investigation Process: 12    | • Diversion: 8                   |
| • Removal Procedures: 10           | • Agency bias: 6                 |
| • Visitation: 10                   | • Placement Decisions: 6         |
| • CPS Family Assessment Process: 9 | • Family Partnership Meetings: 5 |

### Other Issues Noted:

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| • Foster Care Service Plan Issues             | • FOIA                         |
| • Documentation                               | • Custody                      |
| • Inappropriate Services                      | • Sibling Placement            |
| • Safety Planning                             | • ICPC                         |
| • Lack of Agency Response to Family           | • Lack of Trauma Informed Care |
| • Lack of Relative Contact                    | • Worker Changes               |
| • Lack of Reasonable Efforts                  |                                |
| • Foster Parent Expectations                  |                                |
| • Issues with Licensed Child Placing Agencies |                                |
| • Worker Visits                               |                                |