

Office of the Children's Ombudsman

Quarterly Report: Fiscal Year 2025, Q1

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.

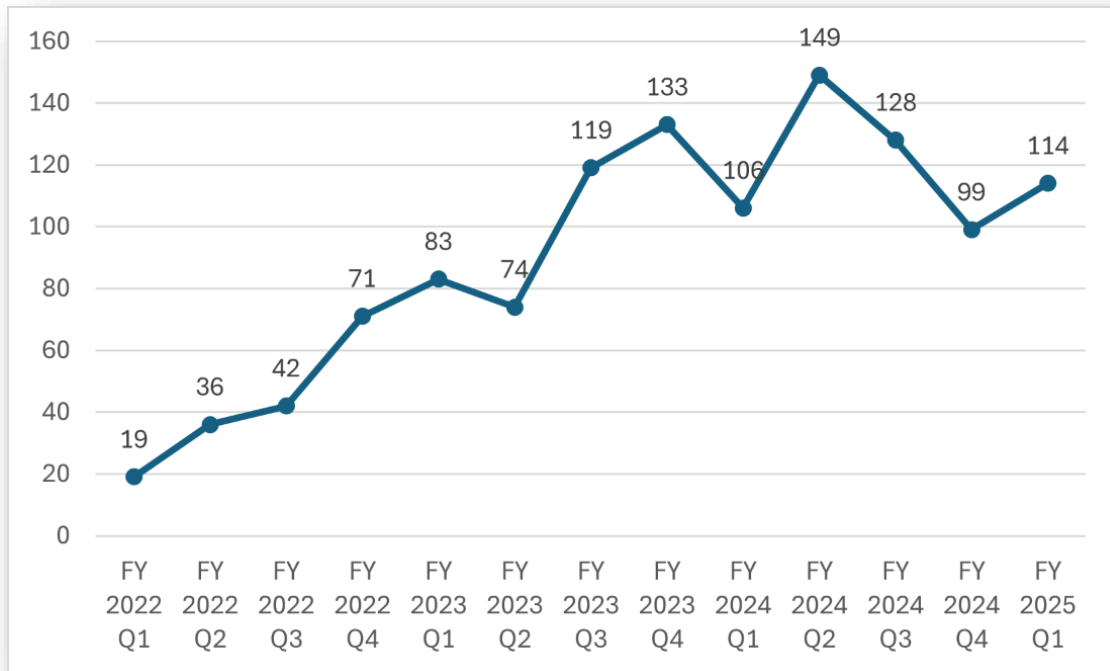
The OCO may investigate child fatality cases that occurred or are alleged to have occurred due to abuse or neglect of a child in the following situations:

- A child died during an active child protective services investigation or open services case, or there was a valid or invalid child protective services complaint within 12 months immediately preceding the child's death.
- A child died while in foster care, unless the death is determined to have resulted from natural causes and there were no prior child protective services or licensing complaints concerning the foster home.
- A child was returned home from foster care and there is an active foster care case.
- A foster care case involving the deceased child or sibling was closed within 24 months immediately preceding the child's death.

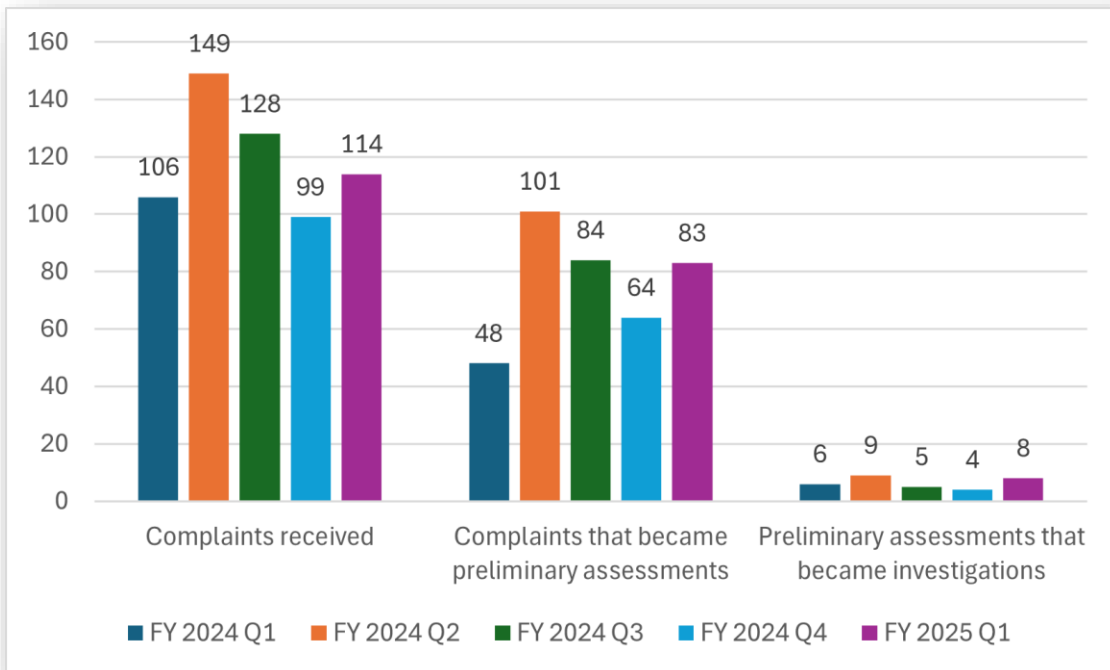
Total **Complaints** received in Q1 FY2025: **114**

Total **Notifications of Child Fatalities** in Q1 FY2025: **14**

Number of complaints received per FY quarter since June 2021:



The chart below reflects the path that complaints take during a particular quarter. This shows the number of complaints received during that quarter that become preliminary assessments, and then the number that become investigations during each quarter.



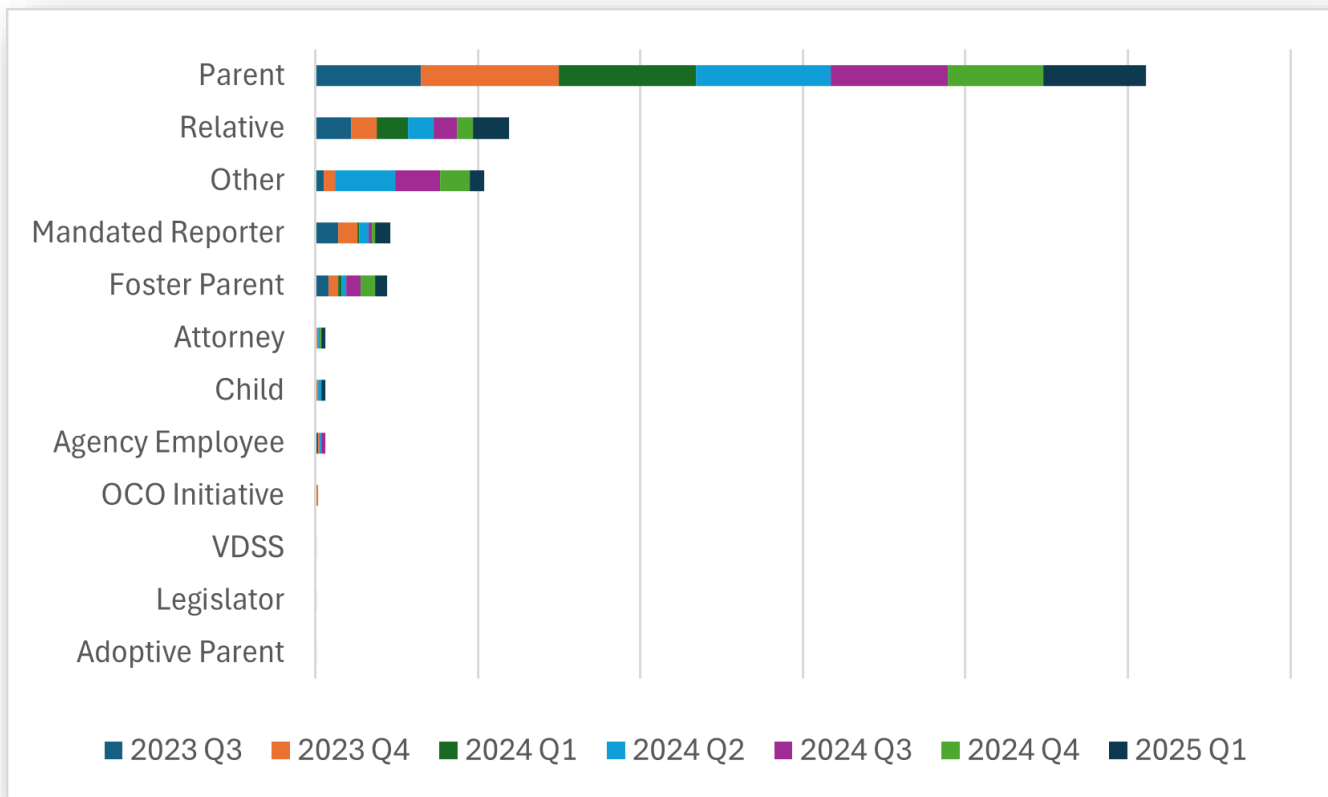
Stage and Status of Complaints Received During Q1 FY2025

In previous quarterly reports, we included a pie chart illustrating the status of complaints received during the quarter. This chart reflected the efficiency of OCO staff in receiving, and assessing complaints received. The OCO added a fifth full-time position on July 1, 2024. This has drastically improved our response time and reduced our time from intake to preliminary assessment from approximately one-month, to less than one-week.

- **Intake: 32**
 - Not yet open- Awaiting complaint form: 19
 - Closed: 13
 - Lack of Jurisdiction: 4
 - No active CPS or foster care cases: 6
 - No Information Provided by Claimant: 3
- **Preliminary Assessment: 81**
 - Closed: 40
 - Assistance Provided: 2
 - Complainant was provided information about their case: 15
 - Complainant did not respond to intake phone call attempts: 8
 - OCO declined to investigate – no active CPS or foster care cases: 14
 - Referred to another agency: 1
 - Open: 41
 - Conducting initial assessment: 2
 - Assigned to investigator: 14
 - Awaiting Response from Agency: 1
 - Awaiting Response from Complainant: 3
 - Scheduling Intake Phone Call: 5
 - Pending closeout notification: 15
 - Monitoring: 1
- **Investigation: 8**
 - Open: 8

Complaint Source comparison: Q3 FY 2023 – present

Claimant Type	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1
Parent	65	85	84	83	72	59	63
Relative	22	16	19	16	14	10	22
Other	5	7	0	37	28	18	9
Foster Parent	8	6	2	3	9	9	7
Mandated Reporter	14	12	1	6	2	2	9
Agency Employee	2	1	0	1	2	0	0
Child	0	2	0	2	0	0	2
Attorney	1	1	0	1	0	1	2
OCO Initiative	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Adoptive Parent	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Legislator	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
VDSS	1	0	0	0	0	0	0



Case Closures During Q1 FY 2025

(includes cases opened prior to Q1 FY 2025)

- **The OCO concluded 97 cases during Q1 FY2025**
 - 120 cases concluded during Q4 FY 2024
 - 150 cases concluded during Q3 FY 2024
 - 131 cases concluded during Q2 FY2024
 - 123 cases concluded during Q1 FY 2024
 - 106 cases concluded during Q4 FY 2023
 - 84 cases concluded during Q3 FY 2023
- **Average case age (time between date received and date concluded): 88 days**
 - 98 days during Q4 FY 2024
 - 94 days during Q3 FY 2024
 - 114 days during Q2 FY2024
 - 91 days during Q1 FY2024
 - 77 days during Q4 FY2023
 - 110 days during Q3 FY2023
- **The OCO concluded 60 preliminary assessments and 1 investigation during Q1.**
- **Preliminary Assessments concluded by:**
 - Assistance provided to complainant: 4
 - Declined to investigate – No Active Cases*: 16
 - Complainant was provided information about their case: 27
 - No response from complainant to schedule call: 12
 - Referred to another agency: 1

*There were no active CPS or foster care cases related to the complaint submitted

Allegations Made in Complaints Received – Q1

Allegations listed are complainants' issues initially raised in their complaint but were not necessarily substantiated.

Agency Issues	Agency staff were biased against the complainant	11
	Agency Internal CPS-FC Collaboration	2
	Documentation	7
	Lack of responsiveness from agency staff	2
	Records contain false information	5
Alternate Living Arrangements (In-Home Services)	Inappropriate or inadequate support or services to ALA caregiver	1
	Inappropriate or inadequate support or services to child	3
	Inappropriate or inadequate support or services to parent	2
	Placement decision	2
	Service Plan Issues	2
	Visitation Issues	3
Child Protective Services	Family Assessment process	10
	Inadequate services	4
	Inappropriate services	4
	Investigation process	34
	Lack of Responsiveness	2
	Removal process	16
	Safety plans	9
	Validation process	12
Family Engagement	Inadequate relative contact	2
	Inadequate trauma informed care/practices	2
Foster Care	Foster Care licensing	2
	Inadequate case management	7
	Inadequate permanency efforts (for non-reunification permanency goal)	2
	Inadequate reunification efforts	5
	Inadequate services	9
	Inappropriate services	4
	Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC)	1
	KinGAP	1
	Lack of Responsiveness	2
	Normalcy	1
	Placement decision	9
	Abuse or Neglect in Foster Home	3
	Service Plan issues	1
	Sibling placement	2
	Visitation issues	12
	VEMAT	1
Miscellaneous Items – Beyond the Scope of OCO Jurisdiction	Confidentiality of Records	2