

Office of the Children's Ombudsman

Quarterly Report: Fiscal Year 2025, Q2

October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

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.

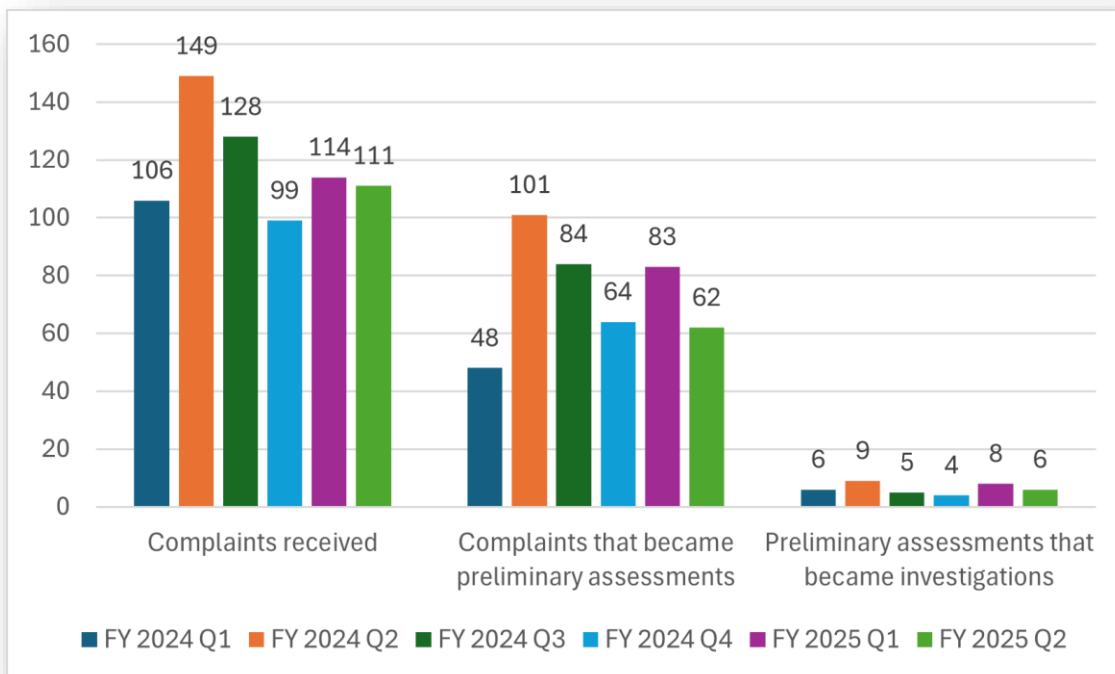
Total **Complaints** received in Q2 FY2025: **111**

Total **Notifications of Child Fatalities** in Q2 FY2025: **11**

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.



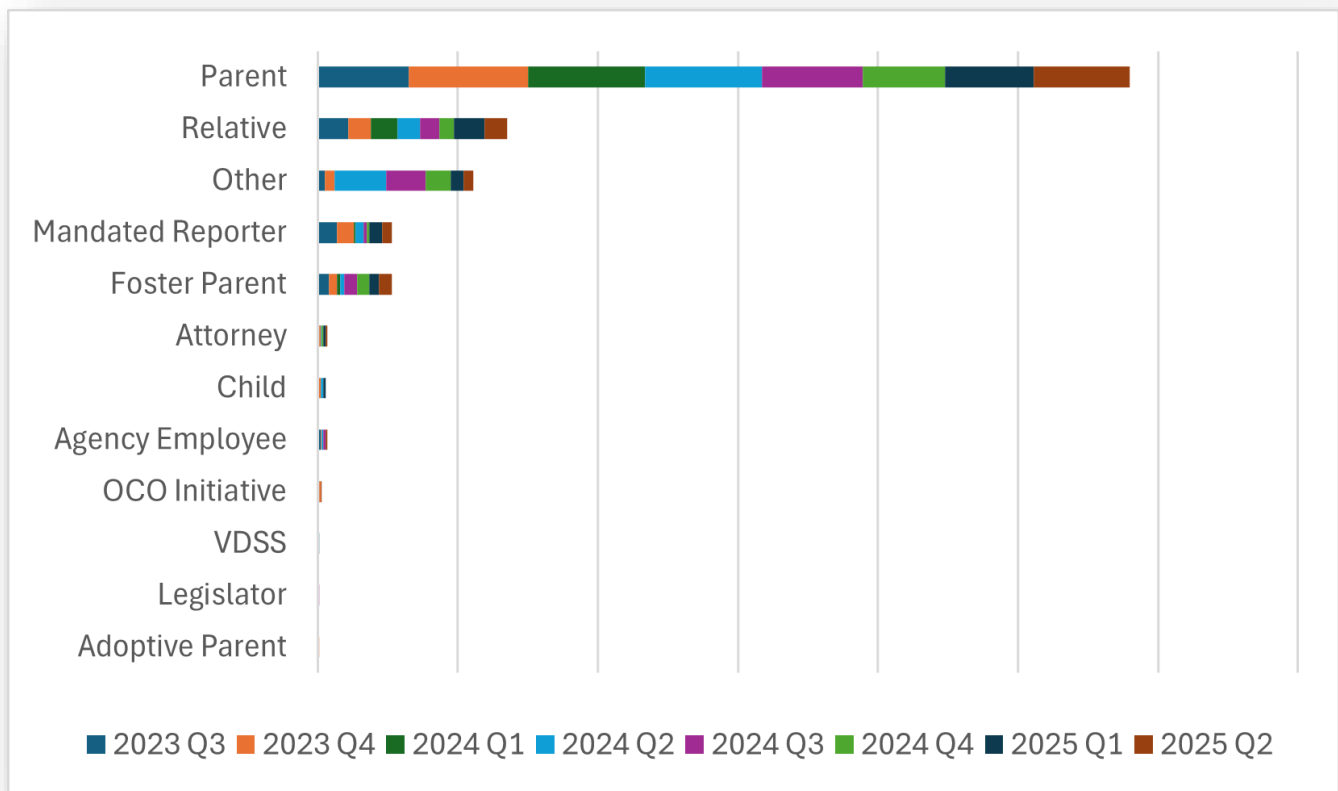
Stage and Status of Complaints Received During Q2 FY2025

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: 49**
 - Not yet open- Awaiting complaint form: 39
 - Closed: 10
 - Lack of Jurisdiction: 5
 - No active CPS or foster care cases: 3
 - No Information Provided by Claimant: 2
- **Preliminary Assessment: 62**
 - Closed: 40
 - Assistance Provided: 2
 - Complainant was provided information about their case: 16
 - 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
 - Request by complainant: 1
 - Open: 22
 - Assigned to investigator: 3
 - Awaiting Response from Agency: 2
 - Awaiting Response from Complainant: 3
 - Scheduling Intake Phone Call: 8
 - Pending closeout notification: 6
- **Investigation: 6**
 - Open: 6

Complaint Source comparison: Q3 FY 2023 – present

| Claimant Type | 2023 Q3 | 2023 Q4 | 2024 Q1 | 2024 Q2 | 2024 Q3 | 2024 Q4 | 2025 Q1 | 2025 Q2 |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Adoptive Parent | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Legislator | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| VDSS | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OCO Initiative | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Agency Employee | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Child | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Attorney | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Foster Parent | 8 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 9 |
| Mandated Reporter | 14 | 12 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 7 |
| Other | 5 | 7 | 0 | 37 | 28 | 18 | 9 | 7 |
| Relative | 22 | 16 | 19 | 16 | 14 | 10 | 22 | 16 |
| Parent | 65 | 85 | 84 | 83 | 72 | 59 | 63 | 69 |



Case Closures During Q2 FY 2025

(includes cases opened prior to Q2 FY 2025)

- **The OCO concluded 99 cases during Q1 FY2025**
 - 97 cases concluded during Q1 FY 2025
 - 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**
 - 88 days during Q1 FY 2025
 - 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 66 preliminary assessments and 4 investigations during Q2.**
- **Preliminary Assessments concluded by:**
 - Assistance provided to complainant: 5
 - Declined to investigate – No Active Cases*: 16
 - Complainant was provided information about their case: 27
 - No response from complainant to schedule call: 6
 - Recommendations to agency: 10
 - Referred to another agency: 1
 - Request by complainant: 1

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

Allegations Made in Complaints Received – Q2

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

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| Agency Issues | Agency staff were biased against the complainant | 13 |
| | Agency Internal CPS-FC Collaboration | 2 |
| | Agency Communication/Collaboration with LCPA | 6 |
| | Documentation | 8 |
| | Agency Staffing Issues/Worker Changes | 2 |
| Alternate Living Arrangements (In-Home Services) | Inappropriate or inadequate support or services to ALA caregiver | 2 |
| | Inappropriate or inadequate support or services to child | 1 |
| | Inappropriate or inadequate support or services to parent | 6 |
| | Placement decision | 3 |
| | Visitation Issues | 2 |
| Child Protective Services | Family Assessment process | 20 |
| | Inadequate services | 16 |
| | Inappropriate services | 3 |
| | Investigation process | 54 |
| | Lack of Responsiveness | 24 |
| | Removal process | 37 |
| | Safety plans | 9 |
| | Validation process | 33 |
| Family Engagement | Inadequate relative contact | 9 |
| | Inadequate trauma informed care/practices | 5 |
| | Family Partnership Meetings | 3 |
| Foster Care | Foster Care licensing | 1 |
| | Inadequate case management | 16 |
| | Inadequate permanency efforts (for non-reunification permanency goal) | 4 |
| | Inadequate reunification efforts | 5 |
| | Inadequate services | 13 |
| | Inappropriate services | 2 |
| | KinGAP | 1 |
| | Lack of Responsiveness | 10 |
| | Normalcy | 1 |
| | Placement decision | 8 |
| | Abuse or Neglect in Foster Home | 2 |
| | Service Plan issues | 3 |
| | Sibling placement | 2 |
| | Visitation issues | 5 |
| Miscellaneous Items – Beyond the Scope of OCO Jurisdiction | Confidentiality of Records | 1 |