



## COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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### ZACHARY PARKER

Ward 5 Councilmember  
Chair, Committee on Youth Affairs

### COMMITTEE MEMBER

Health  
Human Services  
Transportation and the Environment

January 28, 2025

Petrina Jones-Jesz

Ombudsperson, Office of the Ombudsperson for Children  
955 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Third Floor  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Ombudsperson Jones-Jesz:

The Committee on Youth Affairs will hold performance oversight hearings on agencies under its purview in January, February, and March of 2025. **The performance oversight hearing for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children is scheduled for February 13, 2025 from 9:30am-6pm ET.** In preparation for your hearing, the Committee is sending the following questions for your response. Please submit your responses no later than the close of business on February 9, 2025, in PDF format and *minimize the use of attachments*. The Committee additionally requests three bound, paper copies of your responses. If you need to discuss any of the questions, please contact Thomas Franco, Committee Director at (202) 304-6167 or [tfranco@dccouncil.gov](mailto:tfranco@dccouncil.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zachary Parker".

Zachary Parker  
Chair, Committee on Youth Affairs  
Councilmember, Ward 5

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# Overall

## Achievements and Priorities

### **1. Identify the agency's overall mission statement.**

OFC Mission Statement:

The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC) is committed to working collaboratively across systems that impact CFSA children to foster improved outcomes, strengthen service delivery and increase accountability.

### **2. Identify the agency's top achievements in FY 24 and FY 25, to date.**

Agency's top achievements for FY 2024 and FY 2025 to date include:

- The OFC produced and issued seven findings and recommendations report in FY 2024 documenting specific complaints that resulted in findings that reflect violations of law, policy, or best practice.
- Of the cases closed in FY 2024, there were 101 children served in these cases. For FY 2025, the number of children is 33 of the closed cases to date.
- Improvements were made to the OFC complaints form and case management system to update and enhance functionality was launched in May 2024. The database now includes a data dashboard, fields to capture case notes, options to save case documentation, and other new features.
- Appointment of the Ombudsperson/Executive Director occurred in January 2024. The Chief Deputy Ombudsperson was hired in August 2024. The vacant Ombuds Analyst position was filled in June 2024. The Office has five filled positions.
- The OFC held two focus groups in FY 2025 to hear from local constituents about their experiences while involved with the child welfare system. One focus group was with youth and the other focus group was with relative caregivers. These focus groups were held after business hours to accommodate work and school schedules. Food and incentives were provided.
- The OFC held an open house in December 2024 and invited staff from community organizations, government agencies, and child welfare advocates. The purpose of the open house was to invite organizations and individuals to learn more about OFC and share data to be included in the FY 2024 annual report.
- Ongoing community outreach efforts. The OFC team met with and introduced the Office to multiple community and government agencies.

### **3. Identify the agency's top five overall priorities. Explain how the agency expects to address these priorities in FY 24 and identify the metrics used to track success for each.**

- Develop a greater understanding of the child welfare system by monitoring data from various agencies and monitoring child outcomes using available reports.
- Identify for further review child fatality cases, specifically those including an open CFSA case.
- Expand data on crossover youth. Identify and gain access to additional dataset to further assess crossover youth data and make recommendations for improvements in service delivery to this community. Metrics will include access to Superior court and CFSA data through the execution of appropriate MOUs or data sharing agreements.
- Recruit and hire a qualified individual to fill the OFC's vacant Attorney advisor position.
- Ongoing community outreach to government, community agencies, and community members. Increasing our presence in the community is a priority for the OFC. Metric: Meet with agencies to discuss the child welfare system or introduce the Office to community and government agencies at least two times per month. Also, we will continue to hold focus groups with stakeholders.

**4. Describe any new initiatives or programs that the agency implemented in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, to improve the operations of the agency. Describe any funding utilized for these initiatives or program and the results, or expected results, of each initiative.**

- OFC understands the importance of engaging with the community and hearing from individuals with lived experience involving the child welfare system. Because of the importance of these voices, the OFC held its first two focus groups during FY 2025. One focus group was with youth; the other was with relative caregivers. Funding for these events was used for food purchase and incentives. Please see the table below for details on the funds used:

Vendor	Dollar amount/ Number (if applicable)	Total amount
Walmart Gift Cards	\$25.00/5	\$125.00
SmarTrip cards	\$28.00/5	\$140.00
District Taco	\$295.33 + \$309.46	\$604.79 (including \$50.80 tax)

- OFC launched its case management database in FY 2023, and initiated enhancements to the database in the same year, in partnership with OCTO. The database enhancements were completed in FY 2024. OFC funding was used for the development of the database (one time cost \$28,000).
- OFC began tracking the critical events/child fatalities reported by CFSA, to include child deaths and serious injuries to children. The tracking will focus on identifying trends related to these incidents to make recommendations that will enhance prevention activities for policy or practice improvements.

- 5. Identify the agency's Strategic Objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Explain why each KPI was selected and how it supports the overall mission of the agency.**
- a. Include the outcomes for FY 24 and FY 25, to date for each KPI measure.**
  - b. Provide a narrative description of what actions the agency undertook to meet the key performance indicators or any reasons why such indicators were not met.**

Strategic Objectives/Core Duties of the Office of the Ombudsperson:

- Receive complaints through online complaint form, by phone, email and in-person.
- Make recommendations for resolution of complaints from CFSA constituents involving an administrative act of CFSA or a CFSA affiliate;
- Facilitate interagency communication and coordination related to issues impacting CFSA children;
- Investigate, on its own initiative, systemic concerns related to CFSA children, including issues relating to interagency communication and coordination;
- Review policies, procedures, regulations, and directives as established, implemented, or practiced by CFSA or a CFSA affiliate;
- Provide recommendations to policies and procedures, staff training, regulations, and strategies based on investigations performed;
- Notify the appropriate CFSA contact, including the Agency Director and Office of General Counsel (OGC), if necessary, of identified concerns and make recommendations for improvement;
- Facilitate communication between CFSA and CFSA constituents as needed;
- Offer voluntary conflict resolution services; and
- Provide education, information, and referrals to individuals as appropriate.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Engage CFSA and other child and family serving agencies to address systemic issues impacting CFSA children. The OFC meets with CFSA leadership regularly to address investigative findings and systemic issues with the agency.
- Monitor outcomes for CFSA children and hold agencies accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities.
  - During FY 23, a report on dual jacketed youth was developed and distributed in partnership with CFSA and DYRS.
  - In FY 2025, the OFC identified strategies to obtain data for analysis on crossover youth, based on the definition included in the enabling legislation.
  - Outcomes for CFSA children are discussed with the child welfare agency, and a process for submitting documentation on findings and recommendations to CFSA was implemented in FY 24.
- Timely response to acknowledge complaints within (2) business days of receipt. An automatic response email is sent to the constituent when a complaint is submitted to the OFC through the complaints email address. This email

acknowledges receipt and explains that an OFC employee will follow up within two business days.

- Information and Referral Services will be provided within (5) business days of assignment. The process to provide the constituent with the information they need is met within 5 business days. Examples of information and referral services include: constituents that need to be connected to the Hotline, need a community resource provided to them, need to get connected to their current social worker, or need information about the Child Protection Register. These are completed timely.
- Investigations will be completed within (45) business days of assignment. We continue to track timeliness in completing investigations and take into consideration complex investigations that may go beyond 45 days.
- Annual report submitted to the Council every December 31 covering the prior fiscal year. The FY 2024 annual report was submitted timely on December 31, 2024.

These Key Performance Indicators support the overall mission of OFC by focusing on outcomes for CFSA children and families; engaging and responding to concerns of constituents; identifying and addressing systemic issues; working collaboratively across systems, and holding agencies accountable for providing services that are equitable, high quality, responsive to the needs of those served.

- 6. List each policy initiative of the agency during FY 24 and FY 25, to date. For each initiative provide:**
- a. A detailed description of the program;**
  - b. The name of the employee who is responsible for the program;**
  - c. The total number of FTEs assigned to the program; and**
  - d. The amount of funding budgeted to the program.**

The OFC has not established a policy initiative beyond cementing the process for complaint response and communication during FY 24 and FY 25 to date. Areas of interest for establishing a policy initiative include informal relative caregiver placements and access to resources, and housing for families and youth aging out of care.

The agency is moving forward with establishing a process and framework to further engage constituents and community members, and supporting the analysis of child deaths reports to develop prevention strategies. Further, the Office is initiating the collection of data and reporting on crossover youth to identify and make recommendations that reduce the number of youth in the juvenile justice system.

- 7. Did the agency meet the objectives set forth in the performance plan for FY 24? Provide a narrative description of what actions the agency undertook to meet the objectives or any reasons why such objectives were not met.**

The Office met the objectives set forth in the performance plan established during the FY 23 performance hearing. Objectives discussed in last year's performance plan were met during the fiscal year and include:

- Hire a Chief Deputy Ombudsperson, and fill vacant positions, to fully staff the Office, five positions total. Position classified for the Attorney/legal advisor position and will be posted by March 2025.
- The case management database was initially launched in FY 23. Ongoing work to make further improvements and enhancements to the OFC case management database occurred in FY 24. Completion of the case management system enhancement process occurred in FY 2024.
- Engaging the community on discussion regarding the effectiveness of the child welfare system continued in FY 25. Two focus groups were held: one with youth and the other with relative caregivers.
- Continue to conduct investigations based on complaints submitted to the Office by DC constituents. Further, we continue to connect individuals to resources when the concern is identified as needing information and referral. Implemented the Office's core policy.
- Target metrics for crossover youth data were identified in FY 2023. CFSA and DYRS continue to share data and develop reports on dual jacketed youth. Regarding the development of an administrative order to access crossover youth data, the OFC has requested access to OAG data through the superior court. These data are in alignment with the definition of crossover youth in the Office's enabling legislation. The OFC's request was approved by the Superior Court strategic management office in February 2025.
- Conducting community outreach activities with government and community organizations continues. Outreach included meetings with local organizations to introduce the office and identify opportunities to support the OFC's mission and improve the child welfare system. The OFC has held two focus groups with local community members in FY 25, and an open house with community organizations, government agencies, and local advocates.

**8. List and provide a copy of all memoranda of understanding ("MOU") or other written agreements between OFC and other District agencies during FY 24 and FY 25, to date, as well as any MOU currently in force and any MOU planned for the upcoming year. For each, indicate the date on which the MOU was entered and the termination date.**

For the current FY year, we are planning for MOUs and/or data sharing agreements to address access to data for crossover youth reporting.

Attached please find the following MOU/MOAs:

MOA between CFSA and OFC is attached. October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023, with an automatic renewal unless modifications are requested.

MOU between OCTO and OFC is attached. October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023, with an extension.

**9. List all reports (annual or otherwise) published by the office, citing statutory authority. Highlight the report deadline as well as the date of actual submission for FY 24 and to date in FY 25.**

Statutorily, the Ombudsperson is required to submit an annual report to the Council on every December 31 thereafter containing information collected over the course of the prior fiscal year (D.C. Law 23-270, Sec. 108).

The annual report due and submitted on December 31, 2024, covered the full fiscal year of the Office's operations and findings.

The OFC also created and submitted a mid-year report on the Office's activities and child welfare trends. The purpose of this report is to monitor organizational performance and progress on data metrics, indicators, and trends. This report was distributed in July 2024.

**10. Provide OFC's annual report and a summary of its key findings.**

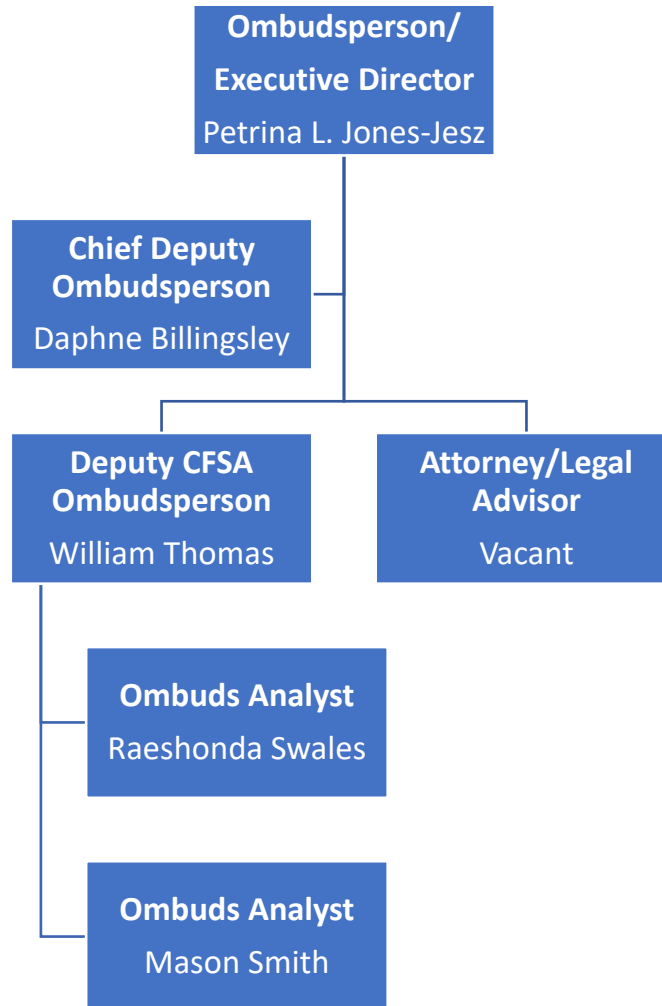
The annual report can be found on the OFC website at [ofc.dc.gov](https://ofc.dc.gov) at the following link: [OFC FY2024 Annual Report.pdf](#)

## Organization and Staffing

**11. Provide a current organizational chart for the agency, including the number of vacant and filled positions in each division or subdivision. Include the names and titles of all personnel and note the date that the information was collected on the chart.**

- a. Include an explanation of the roles and responsibilities for each division and subdivision.
- b. Provide a narrative explanation of any organizational changes made during the previous year.

**District of Columbia**  
**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN**  
**Organizational Chart**  
**as of February 4, 2025**



**Explanation of the Office's Role and Responsibilities**

The Office of the Ombudsman for Children is an agency made up of six positions. These individual positions work together to implement the mission and purpose of the Office. The OFC is an independent and impartial office responsible to the DC Council whose role is to improve outcomes for CFSA children by holding agencies accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities under the law (D. C. Law 23-270). The Office meets its defined responsibilities by investigating complaints received from constituents, conducting research and data analysis, and engaging community and government organizations.



The Office building at 955 L'Enfant Plaza has security at the front entrance, and a key fob is needed to use the elevator and to access the office suite.

**15. Provide an update on the office's website, helpline, and database to process complaints.**

OFC's Website can be found at: [ofc.dc.gov](https://ofc.dc.gov). The complaint form is linked to the website. Enhancements were made to the OFC case management database in FY 2024 including the addition of a data dashboard, documentation upload functionality, and case note entry and storage, for example. This enhancement project was completed, and the new database features were launched in May 2024.

The Office's helpline/main office number was launched in October 2023. The number is 202-671-1321.

## Contracting and Procurement

**16. List each contract, procurement, lease, and grant ("contract") awarded or entered into by the agency during FY 24 and FY 25, to date. For each contract, provide the following information, where applicable:**

**a. The name of the contracting party;**

Department of General Services (DGS)

**b. The nature of the contract, including the end product or service;**

Office space lease

**c. The dollar amount of the contract, including budgeted amount and actually spent;**

**First Fiscal Year Fixed Costs**

Fixed Costs for First Fiscal Year of Occupancy: [\_\_\_\_\$94,882.08\_\_\_\_]  
(i.e., total amount for 12 months) Fixed Costs amount subject to adjustment each Fiscal Year.

Monthly Fixed Cost Payment Amount: [\_\_\_\_\$7,906.84\_\_\_\_]  
(prorated for any partial month of occupancy)

**Fixed Cost will have 2.5% escalation each fiscal year.**

Fixed Cost Payment Amount FY24 : [\_\_\_\_\$97,254.13\_\_\_\_]

Fixed Cost Payment Amount FY25 : [\_\_\_\_\$99,685.48\_\_\_\_]

Fixed Cost Payment Amount FY26 : [\_\_\_\_\$102,177.62\_\_\_\_]

**d. The term of the contract;**

March 1, 2023-September 30, 2026

**e. Whether the contract was competitively bid or not;**

It was not competitively bid.

**f. The name of the agency's contract monitor and the results of any monitoring activity; and**

The agency head is the contract monitor for all OFC contracts.

**g. Funding source.**

Funds for leasing office space is included in OFC's budget.

**17. Provide the following information for all contract modifications made in FY 24 and FY 25, to date:**

- a. Name of the vendor;**
- b. Purpose of the contract;**
- c. Modification term;**
- d. Modification cost, including budgeted amount and actual spent;**
- e. Narrative explanation of the reason for the modification; and**
- f. Funding source.**

No contract modifications occurred during FY 23 or FY 24 to date.

**18. Provide a list of any contractors or consultants performing work within the agency, including job description, salary, and length of contract and city of residence.**

Not applicable

**19. For FY 24 and FY 25, to date, provide the number of contracts and procurements executed by the agency. Indicate how many contracts and procurements were for an amount under \$250,000, how many were for an amount between \$250,000-\$999,999, and how many were for an amount over \$1 million.**

One contract was executed by the agency in FY 2023 to lease office space at 955 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Third floor, Washington, DC for an amount under \$250,000.

**20. Provide the typical timeframe from the beginning of the solicitation process to contract execution for:**

- a. Contracts and procurements under \$250,000;**
- b. Contracts and procurements between \$250,000-\$999,999; and**
- c. Contracts and procurements over \$1 million.**

Execution of the contract to lease the office space at 955 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Third floor, Washington DC was completed in approximately 60 days.

**21. In cases where you have been dissatisfied with the procurement process, what have been the major issues?**

Not applicable

**22. What changes to contracting and procurement policies, practices, or systems would help the agency deliver more reliable, cost-effective, and timely services?**

OFC does not have any recommendations for changes.

### Racial Equity

**23. The District defines racial equity as “the elimination of racial disparities such that race no longer predicts opportunities, outcomes, or the distribution of resources for residents of the District, particularly for persons of color and Black residents.” What are three areas, programs, or initiatives within the agency that have the most opportunity to make progress toward racial equity?**

- The Office conducts impartial and confidential investigations into complaints that rise to that level.
- Data analysis of crossover youth and dual jacketed youth data includes racial demographics to help identify racial disparities.
- Per enabling legislation, the Office can provide mediation services to address individuals on issues pertaining to the child welfare system. The mediation of concerns can include racial equity and discrimination.

**24. In the past year, what are two ways the agency has addressed racial inequities internally or through the services you provide?**

In the past year:

- The OFC provided opportunities to all DC residents to give a voice to their complaints and concerns directly to the Office. We provide complainants an opportunity to express their concerns, which may include bias and discrimination, in a confidential manner.
- Per enabling legislation, the Office has the authority to provide mediation and conflict resolution. This discussion can address racial equity and experiences due to racism.

**25. Consider one area where the agency collects race information. How does the agency use this data to inform decision-making?**

The agency collects race information regarding dual jacketed youth. The data is used to identify racial disparity in the provision of services to youth or overall treatment.

**26. How are communities of color engaged or consulted when the agency considers changes to programs or services? Provide one specific example from the past year.**

During the past year, the OFC has held focus groups with youth and relative caregivers in person at our office. The purpose of the focus groups was to consult and engage with individuals who have been involved with the child welfare system. These focus groups included the participation of communities of color who shared their experiences and insights about child welfare.

### Sexual Harassment

**27. Describe the agency's procedures for investigating allegations of sexual harassment or misconduct committed by or against its employees. List and describe any allegations received by the agency in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, and whether and how those allegations were resolved.**

If the OFC received an allegation of sexual harassment, the Office would request guidance from the District of Columbia's Department of Human Resources. We have not received any allegations of sexual harassment in FY 2024 or FY 2025, to date.

**28. Has OFC identified a primary and alternate sexual harassment officer ("SHO") as required by Mayor's Order 2023-131 ("Sexual Harassment Order")? If no, why not? If so, provide the names of the primary and alternate SHOs.**

Due to the number of staff reporting to the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, the OFC has elected to seek guidance from DCHR regarding any allegations of sexual harassment.

All OFC employees have completed the DCHR mandated Sexual Harassment training.

**29. Has OFC received any requests from staff in an otherwise prohibited dating, romantic, or sexual relationship for a waiver of provisions of the Sexual Harassment Order? What was the resolution of each request? If a waiver has been granted, are there limitations on the scope of the waiver?**

No requests were received from staff regarding a waiver of provisions of the Sexual Harassment Order.

### Other

**30. Explain any significant impacts on the agency, if any, of legislation passed at the federal or local level during FY 24 and FY 25, to date.**

There was no federal or local level legislation passed in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, that impacted the Office.

- 31. Provide the number of FOIA requests received for FY 24, and FY 25, to date. Include the number granted, partially granted, denied, and pending. In addition, provide the average response time, the estimated number of FTEs required to process requests, the estimated number of hours spent responding to these requests, and the cost of compliance.**

No FOIA requests were made to the Office in FY 2024 or FY 2025.

## Budget

- 32. Provide a table showing the agency's Council-approved budget, revised budget (after reprogrammings, etc.), and actual spending, by program, activity, and funding source for FY 24 and FY 25, to date. Detail any over- or under-spending and if the agency had any federal funds that lapsed.**

FY 2024 Budget Summary					
		Data			
Account Category Description (Parent Level 3)	Account Group (Parent Level 1) Description	Approved Budget	Revised Budget	Actual Expenditures	Remaining Budget
PERSONNEL SERVICES	CONTINUING FULL TIME	\$765,971.25	\$488,975.64	\$444,542.91	\$44,432.73
	FRINGE BENEFITS - CURR PERSONNEL	\$183,939.58	\$155,473.96	\$117,078.03	\$38,395.93
	ADDITIONAL GROSS PAY	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,384.62	-\$1,384.62
PERSONNEL SERVICES Total		\$949,910.83	\$644,449.60	\$563,005.56	\$81,444.04
NON-PERSONNEL SERVICES	ENERGY COMM & BLDG RENTALS	\$60,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES	\$136,375.00	\$56,375.00	\$9,574.75	\$46,800.25
	P-CARD CLEARING ACCOUNT BUDGET TRACKING	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	SUPPLIES & MATERIALS	\$15,809.09	\$15,809.09	\$6,275.03	\$9,534.06
NON-PERSONNEL SERVICES Total		\$212,184.09	\$72,184.09	\$15,849.78	\$56,334.31
Grand Total		\$1,162,094.92	\$716,633.69	\$578,855.34	\$137,778.35

FY 2025 Budget Summary					
		Data			
Account Category Description (Parent Level 3)	Account Group (Parent Level 1) Description	Approved Budget	Revised Budget	Actual Expenditures	Remaining Budget
PERSONNEL SERVICES	CONTINUING FULL TIME	\$831,911.00	\$831,911.00	\$188,379.04	\$643,531.96
	FRINGE BENEFITS - CURR PERSONNEL	\$199,658.64	\$199,658.64	\$41,186.31	\$158,472.33
PERSONNEL SERVICES Total		\$1,031,569.64	\$1,031,569.64	\$229,565.35	\$802,004.29
NON-PERSONNEL SERVICES	ENERGY COMM & BLDG RENTALS	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$0.00	\$60,000.00
	OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES	\$136,375.00	\$136,375.00	\$5,831.02	\$130,543.98
	P-CARD CLEARING ACCOUNT BUDGET TRACKING	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$450.00	-\$450.00
	PURCHASES EQUIPMENT & MACHINERY	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
	SUPPLIES & MATERIALS	\$14,309.00	\$14,309.00	\$1,282.90	\$13,026.10
NON-PERSONNEL SERVICES Total		\$215,684.00	\$215,684.00	\$7,563.92	\$208,120.08
Grand Total		\$1,247,253.64	\$1,247,253.64	\$237,129.27	\$1,010,124.37

- 33. Provide a list of all budget enhancement requests (including capital improvement needs) for FY 24 or FY 25. For each, include a description of the need, the amount of funding requested, and the status of the enhancement.**

No enhancements or improvements were requested.

- 34. For FY 24 and FY 25, to date, list all intra-District transfers to or from the agency. For each, provide a description of the purpose of the transfer and which programs, activities, and services within the agency the transfer impacted.**

There were no interagency transfers for FY 24 and FY 25.

- 35. List, in chronological order, each reprogramming that impacted the agency in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, including those that moved funds into the agency, out of the agency, and within the agency. For each reprogramming, list the date, amount, rationale, and reprogramming number.**

There was no reprogramming for FY 25.

For FY 24: Out of Agency, \$298,881, District Wide Year End Reprogramming, REPROGRAM25-0158, October 9, 2024

- 36. List and describe any spending pressures the agency experienced in FY 24 and any anticipated spending pressures for the remainder of FY 25. Include a description of the pressure and the estimated amount. If the spending pressure was in FY 24, describe how it was resolved, and if the spending pressure is in FY 25, describe any proposed solutions.**

The agency did not have a spending pressure for FY 24 and does not have a spending pressure for FY 25.

- 37. For FY 24 and FY 25, to date, identify any special purpose revenue funds maintained by, used by, or available for use by the agency. For each fund identified, provide:**
- a. The revenue source name and code;**
  - b. The source of funding;**
  - c. A description of the program that generates the funds;**
  - d. The amount of funds generated by each source or program;**
  - e. Expenditures of funds, including the purpose of each expenditure; and**
  - f. The current fund balance.**

The agency does not have special purpose funds.

- 38. For FY 24 and FY 25, to date, provide a list of employee bonuses, special pay granted, or separation pay issued, that identifies the employee receiving the bonus, special pay, or separation pay, the amount received, and the reason for the bonus, special pay, or separation pay.**

N/A for FY 24 and FY 25.

- 39. List all currently open capital projects for your agency including those projects that are managed or overseen by another agency or entity. Include a brief description of each, the total estimated cost, expenditures to date, the start and completion dates, and the current status of the project. Also, indicate which projects are experiencing delays and which require additional funding.**

N/A. The Office does not have capital projects.

- 40. For FY 24 and FY 25, to date, provide the following information regarding your agency's authorization of employee travel:**
- a. Each trip outside the region on official business or at agency expense;**
  - b. Individuals (by name and title/position) who traveled outside the region;**
  - c. Total expense for each trip (per person, per trip, etc.);**
  - d. What agency or entity paid for the trips; and**
  - e. Justification for the travel (per person and trip).**

See below for this information:

Agency authorization of employee travel for FY 24 and FY 25 (to date)					
Trips outside of the region	Individuals/Employees	Title/Position	Total expenses for each trip	Agency or entity paying	Justification for the travel
United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) National Conference - Oceanside, CA	Daphne Billingsley	Chief Deputy Ombudsperson	\$4,318.48	ROO	To attend the USOA 2-day preconference new Ombudsman training and the 3-day national conference to participate in the professional development opportunity and learn from other ombudsman offices on a national level.
United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) National Conference - Oceanside, CA	Raeshonda Swales	Ombuds Analyst	\$4,271.35	ROO	To attend the USOA 2-day preconference new Ombudsman training and the 3-day national conference to participate in the professional development opportunity and learn from other ombudsman offices on a national level.
United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) National Conference - Oceanside, CA	Mason Smith	Ombuds Analyst	\$4,414.10	ROO	To attend the USOA 2-day preconference new Ombudsman training and the 3-day national conference to participate in the professional development opportunity and learn from other ombudsman offices on a national level.
United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) National Conference - Oceanside, CA	William Thomas	Deputy CFSA Ombudsperson	\$2,717.67	ROO	To attend the 3-day national conference to participate in the professional development opportunity and learn from other ombudsman offices on a national level.
United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) National Conference - Oceanside, CA	Petrina Jones-Jesz	Ombudsperson	\$2,623.08	ROO	To attend the 3-day national conference to participate in the professional development opportunity and learn from other ombudsman offices on a national level.

## Duties of the Office

### Complaints

#### **41. What is the procedure for processing complaints regarding CFSA or other government agencies? Provide a detailed description including how OFC maintains confidentiality during the complaint process.**

- A. The OFC will receive and process complaints from CFSA constituents.
- B. OFC will receive complaints through (1) the online complaint form, (2) phone, (3) email or (4) in person. Furthermore, access to the online complaint form will be included on the OFC's website ([ofc.dc.gov](https://ofc.dc.gov)).
- C. Each complaint received by the OFC will be assigned an intake number.
- D. Once the constituent's complaint is received, an OFC Ombuds Analyst contacts the constituent within 48 hours to obtain any additional information the complainant would like to share regarding their concerns. All information gathered during the intake screening will be entered into the OFC case management database for complaint processing.
- E. The Ombudsperson maintains discretion regarding how to handle intakes, as well as decline the acceptance of an intake if it is reasonably believed that:

- 1) The complaint alleges an emergency situation regarding the safety of a child.  
\*OFC will immediately refer the complainant, if by phone or in person, to contact the CFSA child abuse hotline and/or OFC will make a report to CFSA child abuse hotline if such complaint is received by OFC through online complaint form or by email;
- 2) It is plain on the face of the complaint that an adequate remedy is presently available such that an investigation by OFC is unwarranted, and information can be provided to the complainant about the remedy;
- 3) The complaint relates to a matter that is outside the purpose of OFC (i.e., does not relate to an involved, previously involved or otherwise known child of CFSA);
- 4) The complaint is not made in good faith;
- 5) The complaint is against a court decision, court order, or the actions of judges or attorneys;
- 6) The complaint regards a personnel matter of CFSA or affiliate;
- 7) The complaint has been too long delayed to justify present examination;
- 8) Legal advice or legal representation is requested of OFC.
- 9) To maintain the confidentiality of the constituent, OFC asks all complainants as part of the complaint process if the complainant consents to the sharing of their identity and the information provided. OFC works to maintain the confidentiality of the complainant at all points during the investigation process. If the complainant does provide consent to share their identity and information, this is shared on a need-to-know basis as is essential for OFC to conduct a thorough investigation of the complainant's concerns.

**42. Provide a breakdown for the complaints received by the agency in FY 24 and FY 25, to date. Include:**

Below is the information for FY 24:

- a. The number of complaints; 69**
- b. The number of complaints that led to an investigation; 42**
- c. The type of complaints (categorize);**

Below are the types/categorizations of complaints made to the OFC.

Lack of Visitation

Lack of Services/Resources to child/family

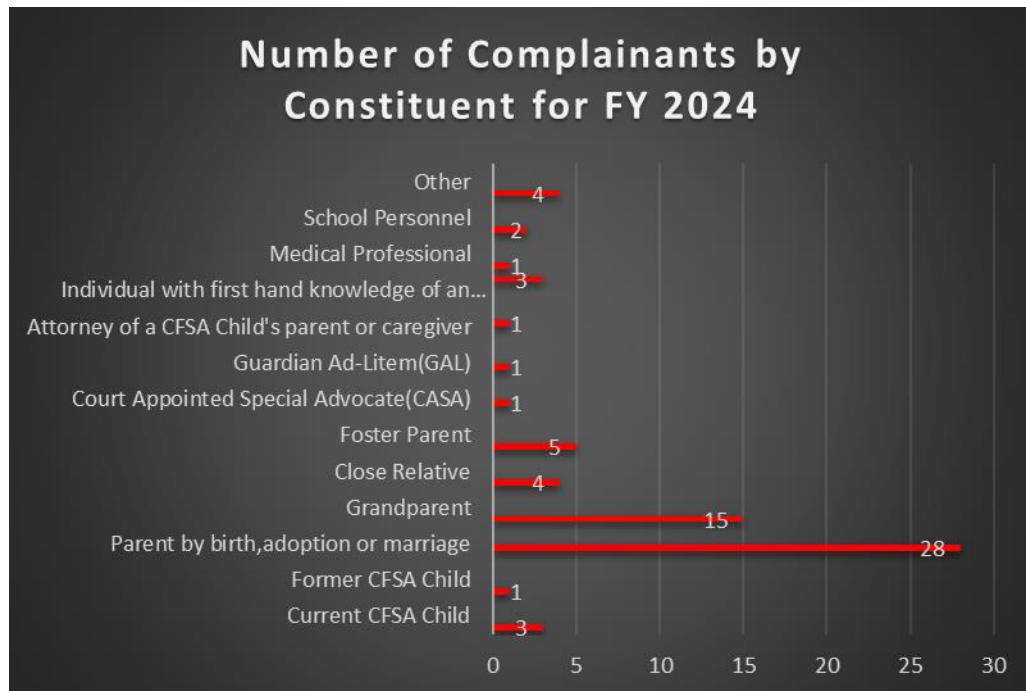
CPS Investigation issue  
Child Placement issue  
Concerns from Foster Parents  
Concerns from Foster Child/Youth  
Child Safety related issue  
School related concern  
Child Medical concern  
Child Mental Health/Behavioral concern  
CFSA Violation of Policy or Best Practice/Other  
Child Protection Register inquiry  
Community Resources Inquiry  
Kinship Caregiver related concern  
Information & Referral  
Lack of Professionalism-CFSA/NCCF Staff  
Lack of Residential Treatment for Youth  
Child Custody related issue  
NCCF related concern

**d. The number of days between a complaint filing and its closure or escalation to an investigation;**

Complaints are screened within 48 hours to determine if the complaint will be accepted for investigation, information and referral, or screened out as not within OFC Jurisdiction. OFC policy mandates that investigations are resolved within 45 business days. In FY24 the OFC completed most investigations within 52 business days.

**e. Process by which such complaints were escalated to an investigation, if applicable; and**

**f. Who or what entities are filing complaint (categorize).**



Below is the information for FY 25 to date:

- a. The number of complaints; 29**
- b. The number of complaints that led to an investigation; 16**
- c. The type of complaints (categorize);**

Below are the types/categorizations of complaints made to the OFC.

- Lack of Visitation
- Lack of Services/Resources to child/family
- CPS Investigation issue
- Child Placement issue
- Concerns from Foster Parents
- Concerns from Foster Child/Youth
- Child Safety related issue
- School related concern
- Child Medical concern
- Child Mental Health/Behavioral concern
- CFSA Violation of Policy or Best Practice/Other
- Child Protection Register inquiry
- Community Resources Inquiry
- Kinship Caregiver related concern
- Information & Referral
- Lack of Professionalism-CFSA/NCCF Staff

Lack of Residential Treatment for Youth  
Child Custody related issue  
NCCF related concern

**d. The number of days between a complaint filing and its closure or escalation to an investigation;**

Complaints are screened within 48 hours to determine if the complaint will be accepted for investigation, information and referral, or screened out as not within OFC Jurisdiction. OFC policy mandates that investigations are resolved within 45 business days. In FY24 the OFC completed most investigations within 52 business days.

**e. Process by which such complaints were escalated to an investigation, if applicable; and**

**f. Who or what entities are filing complaint (categorize).**

Birth Parent=16

Grandparent=2

School Personnel=1

Close Relative=1

Individual with firsthand knowledge=2

Current CFSA Child=1

Court-ordered custodian=1

Foster Parent=2

Relative Caregiver=1

Other=2 (1 complaint is an OFC initiated investigation and the other involved no CFSA children).

**43. How many complaints are currently open?**

The OFC has 15 complaints that are currently open for investigation.

**44. What documentation or information is provided to the complainant on case closure?**

When a case is closed, we provide the complainant with a notification of case closure letter.

## Investigations

**45. What is the procedure for an investigation? Discuss the amount of time it may take to investigate and provide recommendations on resolving complaints, and the factors affecting how quickly complaints are investigated and recommendations provided.**

During the fiscal year, the OFC has created a core policy that governs the process for resolving complaints and other concerns. When an investigation is needed, the OFC staff will review the family's case in CFSA's system of record, if needed, hold a follow-up discussion with the CFSA social worker and supervisor for additional information and clarification, and interview collateral stakeholders with knowledge of the family and/or case. Findings and recommendations are identified to improve agency practice or ensure compliance with the law and policy. If a constituent contacts the Office for information or to request services, a referral will be made to an appropriate agency.

The office established within policy the completion of cases within 45 business days. The cases that closed beyond the 45-business day requirement needed further investigative steps completed, to include additional meetings with constituents and CFSA staff in addition to further reviews of assessments completed on children, parents, or adoptive families.

Factors affecting how quickly investigations are completed and/or cases are closed include:

- Significant details and complex case records to review to complete the investigation.
- Multiple agencies are involved with the complaint and contact is required with each agency.
- Ongoing updates and changes with the family's circumstances require the case to remain open to complete a comprehensive investigation.
- If there are safety concerns regarding a child/children to ensure that agencies are fulfilling their responsibilities under the law.
- The OFC may not close a case if the recommendations submitted to CFSA are not implemented by the agency.

**46. Provide a breakdown for the investigations completed in FY 24 and FY 25, to date.**

**Include:**

**a. Number of investigations (ongoing, completed, incomplete);**

OFC completed 74 complaints/investigations in FY 24 and 26 complaints/investigations in FY 25.

**b. Outcome of completed investigations; and**

Completed investigations were either closed with no findings, or findings were identified and recommendations developed to address the issues or legal violations.

**c. Reasons for an incomplete investigation.**

All opened investigations were completed.

**47. Discuss any policy recommendations that your agency has published or discussed with the community or CFSA in FY 24 and FY 25, to date.**

Policy recommendations shared with CFSA and published in the OFC annual report include:

- The child welfare agency should conduct a comprehensive needs assessment for all Kinship arrangements for the children and the caregivers prior to case closure.
- The child welfare agency should ensure that all Kinship arrangements have a second level approval prior to closure. (Supervisor and Program Manager approval).
- The child welfare agency should implement a standard checklist developed for Kinship arrangement cases to ensure that all areas of need are addressed, and the probability of a need being missed is decreased. The checklist should cover the critical needs of a child during informal relative caregiver arrangements.
- The child welfare agency should implement clear guidance and practice regarding transporting children to other states that are not in their custody.

**48. How does your agency work with other District agencies when conducting investigations? Also describe other government agencies' involvement in completing investigations.**

When the Office receives a complaint that includes concern about the actions of CFSA and another government agency, the OFC will contact the other agency and inform them of the constituent's concern. The OFC will schedule time to meet with the other government agency to discuss the concern, receiving input from them about their actions and policies related to the concern. Typically, the other government agency is aware of the concern and has attempted to address it internally.

The information obtained from other government agencies is used to determine if local and federal policies and laws are being followed based on the concerns identified in the complaint.

**49. Outline how the agency engages with the community. Discuss regular meeting schedules and plans for FY 24 and FY 25, to date.**

The Office engages with the community through regular and ad hoc meetings and discussions based on the complaints received from the community and initiated interactions established by the Office. The OFC attends the following meetings with community and government organizations FY 24 and continues in FY 25:

- Monthly and quarterly meetings with child welfare advocates
- Held two focus groups in FY 2025 with community members – one focused on youth and one focused on relative caregivers
- Meetings with community advocate agencies and local organizations
- Monthly meetings with CFSA executive leadership
- CFSA Internal Child Fatalities Review committee monthly meetings
- City wide OCME child fatality review committee monthly meetings
- Initiated the first OFC open house
- United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) Child and Family chapter monthly meetings

- Quarterly Mayor’s Advisory Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect (MACCAN) meetings
- Students in the Care of DC regularly scheduled meetings

Ad hoc meetings are based on issues identified through investigations or opportunities to introduce the Office.

OFC will continue to engage with community stakeholders to ensure that stakeholders and constituents are aware of the services provided by the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children.

**50. Identify any statutory or regulatory impediments to your agency’s operations.**

District laws regarding access to Juvenile justice records – including OFC in the language of the law.

**51. Have there been any barriers to completing the investigation in FY 24 and FY 25, to date? If so, describe.**

No barriers have been experienced by the Office in completing investigations. However, we would like greater access to other district database to review educational records and the records of youth who have been involved with the juvenile justice system.

**52. In CY 23, OFC held a roundtable on kinship foster care. Describe OFC’s takeaways from that roundtable. What roundtables or other community stakeholder events do you plan to hold in CY 25?**

CFSA data on kinship placements was presented at this meeting. Information discussed and learned during the meeting includes:

- Of the 200 entries in FY 22, 21% were placed in a kinship placement.
- Barriers to a successful kinship placement can include the child’s behavior, parent’s behavior, or the willingness/ability of the relative caregiver. Child’s behavior and unwilling caregivers were consistent barriers in FY 22 and FY 23.
- The primary relationships with the child and kin were maternal grandmother, fictive kin, and maternal cousin in FY 22. Maternal aunt was the primary kin relationship in FY 23. Fictive kin and maternal cousin remained consistent.

In FY 2025, The OFC held two focus groups: one with youth and one with relative caregivers. Examples of takeaways from the youth focus group include:

**CFSA Youth Focus Group Key Takeaways**

- **Empathy and Engagement:** Youth expressed a desire for CFSA staff to demonstrate greater empathy in addition to professional qualifications. While social workers

provided sympathy, youth felt their concerns were not always fully understood or addressed.

- **Placement and Stability:** Many CFSA Youth experienced placements outside of the District, which increased stress and created barriers to maintaining connections with family, friends, and support systems. Limited transportation further complicated their ability to achieve permanency goals.
- **Investigative Approach:** Youth found questioning during child abuse and neglect investigations to be distressing and, at times, confusing. They felt that investigations prioritized identifying specific allegations rather than holistically assessing family safety and support needs. Additionally, some questioning was perceived as inappropriate for their age group.

### **Kinship Caregiver Focus Group Key Takeaways**

- **Access to Resources:** Kinship caregivers expressed the need for clearer communication about available programs and licensing processes. Many felt that essential resources should be shared proactively at the start of their involvement with CFSA.
- **Social Worker Caseloads:** Caregivers noted that CFSA social workers manage high caseloads, which can impact the level of support provided. Concerns were raised regarding workload exceeding policy guidelines, affecting both investigations and service delivery.
- **Financial and Long-Term Stability:** Caregivers highlighted financial challenges and the unexpected burden of caring for relatives. Many grandparents expressed concerns about their ability to provide long-term care due to age-related limitations. While financial support, such as gift cards, was appreciated, caregivers noted that these resources often did not cover essential needs such as school uniforms and textbooks.

### **Common Themes Across Both Focus Groups**

- **Interagency Communication & Collaboration:** Participants emphasized the need for better coordination among CFSA departments, especially during transitions from investigations to in-home or out-of-home care. Greater awareness of available resources among both staff and constituents would enhance service delivery.
- **Consistency in Policies & Practices:** While CFSA offers extensive programs and services, access and implementation varied widely among individuals. Participants noted discrepancies between official policies and actual practice.

### **Strengths & Positive Outcomes**

- **Legislative Impact:** Youth appreciated the implementation of the Preserving Our Kids' Equity Through Trusts and Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act of 2022 (POKETT Act).
- **Community Partnerships:** CFSA has built strong collaborations with nonprofit organizations and the **Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaboratives**, which continue to provide essential support.
- **211 Warmline:** Participants expressed enthusiasm for the **211 Warmline**, which has improved access to critical resources for DC residents.
- **Positive Staff Engagement:** Many participants shared stories of CFSA staff members who demonstrated exceptional collaboration, active listening, and timely resource provision.

A formal process for reporting takeaways and making recommendations in consideration of feedback provided from individuals with lived experience is being developed. The OFC is planning for focus groups with foster parents, in home cases/birth parents, and crossover youth in 2025. Also, we are planning on a second focus group with youth during the calendar year.

**53. What systemic issues have you identified to date with respect to CFSA operations or policies? Do you have recommendations to address these issues?**

Issues related to complaints received are listed in the annual report. Examples of those issues are:

- CFSA staff should remain vigilant in following the agency's policy regarding removal decisions to ensure the safety of children involved in a CPS investigation.
- Ensuring the timely removal of children when concerns are warranted.
- CFSA documentation was missing in some cases and not entered per CFSA policy, within 24 hours.
- Challenges regarding the agency addressing the needs of relative caregivers that step in to provide temporary care for their relatives to avoid the children's placement into foster care.
- OFC investigated one complaint where a maternal grandmother that stepped in to care for her two grandchildren when CFSA commenced an investigation experienced a serious housing challenge contributing to a temporary period of homelessness, and the loss of her employment.
- Create a communication and assessment checklist and acknowledgement form to share information with kin/relative placements and assess needs prior to closing the case.

## Data Collection

### **54. Describe how OFC maintains data collected for all complaints.**

Data for all complainants are stored in the OFC case management database.

### **55. Describe how OFC maintains data collected for crossover youth and crossed over youth. (For this and other questions, the term crossover youth means youth who are simultaneously involved in the juvenile delinquency and child welfare systems; crossed over youth are those who were once in the child welfare system and have crossed over to the juvenile delinquency system.) In particular, describe:**

#### **a. How OFC is tracking the number, demographics, and other relevant characteristics of the crossover-youth and crossed-over youth populations;**

During FY 2023, the OFC developed targeted measures to track the number, demographics, and other relevant characteristics of this population. These measures were provided to CFSA and DYRS to be included in the report.

The OFC receives reports produced by CFSA in partnership with DYRS on dual jacketed youth. We currently have data for FY 2021, FY 2022, FY 2023, and FY 2024. We are working closely with the Strategic Division at Superior Court to access data that will assist with the development of crossover youth reporting.

#### **b. What are the other Data, metrics, and trend analyses OFC is assessing to track outcomes for crossover and crossed-over youth;**

Targeted metrics include data detailing:

- # of youth in dual status – served by both CFSA and DYRS
- Demographics – age, race, gender, ward of origin
- Placement Type
- # of youth who have crossed between systems
- Pathways to involvement trends (i.e. youth has open cw case, youth is arrested, youth enters delinquency system)
- School attendance/truancy concerns
- Involvement with DBH
- HS Graduation rates (18-21)
- Employment (16-21)
- Re-entry/Recidivism rate
- # of placement moves within a (6 or 12 month period)
- Extended Foster Care participation
- Exits from custody for dual status youth
- Time in custody for dual status youth

- Exit type could be included as a metric (i.e. aged out, exit to relative, etc.)
- c. **How OFC is assessing interagency communication and coordination related to crossover and crossed-over youth and its impact on outcomes for crossover youth and crossed-over youth; and**

The OFC is assessing interagency communication and coordination regarding youth served by both agencies through in person discussions that occurred during the fiscal years, and a review of biannual reporting of data and systemic findings based on data provided by CFSa and DYRS.

- d. **Any other information the Ombudsperson considers relevant to the outcomes for crossover and crossed-over youth.**

The OFC's goal is to expand reporting on crossover youth using additional datasets.

**56. Describe any policy recommendations made in the December 2024 Annual Report and how OFC plans to move the recommendations forward.**

Please see question 47.

To move forward with the recommendations identified, the OFC will:

- Keep the case open on the OFC caseload and follow up with the child welfare agency on progress with implementing the recommendations.
- The OFC implemented a tracker of findings and recommendations identified and made to the child welfare agency. The tracker is a communication tool to ensure that recommendations are followed up on and resolved.
- Discussion are ongoing with the agency in order to move the recommendations forward.
- The OFC publishes the annual report on its website, and it is posted on Office's LinkedIn page, for community reference and information.