

DCS Ombudsman Bureau Overview

Department of Child Services Interim Study Committee

*Susan Hoppe, Director
DCS Ombudsman Bureau*

History

- Created in 2009 by IC 4-13-19 to provide independent oversight of DCS
- Ombudsman assumed duties 12/14/2009
- Agency became operational January 2010
- Annual Reports submitted for 2010 and 2011
- Staff
 - 2010 Part time assistant
 - 2012 Full time assistant (Intake/Investigator); recently hired another assistant

Authority (IC 4-13-19-5)

- To receive, investigate/resolve complaints alleging DCS failed to protect or failed to follow laws, rules and written policies
- To provide recommendations when problems are identified
- To request a response to the recommendation within a reasonable time
- Other
 - *Periodic review of relevant policies and procedures with a view toward safety and child well being*
 - *Recommend changes in procedures for investigating reports of AB/N and overseeing the welfare of children who are under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court.*
 - *Make the public aware of the services of the DCS Ombudsman Bureau*

Ombudsman Services and Levels of Responses

- **Provide Information and/or Referrals**

*Telephone and email generated
Responded to 516 inquiries during 2011*

- **Assist**

Telephone and email generated

- **Review**

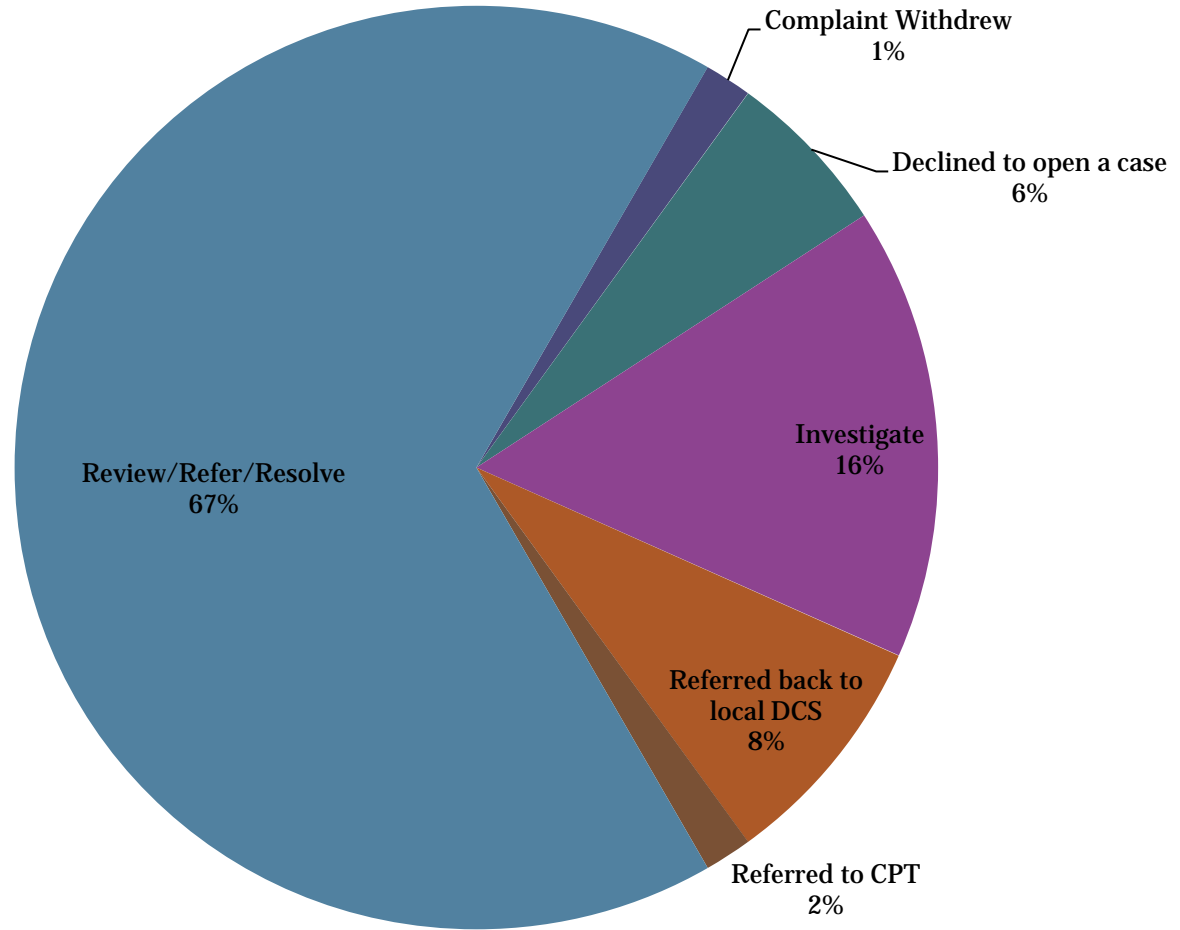
Requires a written complaint form

- **Investigate**

Requires a written complaint form

- **Other**

2011 Responses to Complaints (120 Total)



Findings

Findings are determined in some reviews and all investigations

Validity Designations

- ***Merit***
- ***Non Merit***
- ***Both Merit and Non Merit***

During 2011 of the cases that were given a validity determination (64), 6% had merit, 25% had multiple allegations that included both merit and non-merit determinations, and 69% of the allegations did not have merit.

Recommendations

Case Specific

Provided when a complaint is determined to have merit

- Modify, cancel or reconsider an action
- Develop a plan to ensure compliance in the future

General Recommendations

Provided quarterly based on observations of recurring issues

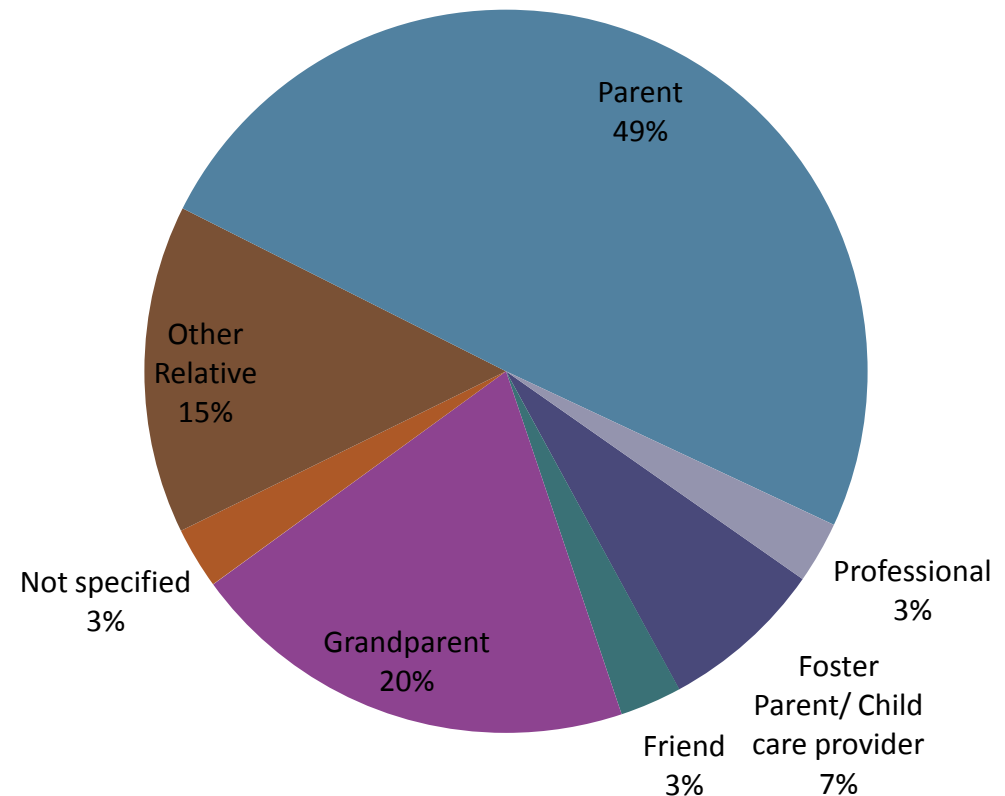
- Revise, reconsider, or clarify a policy or practice

Who Complains...

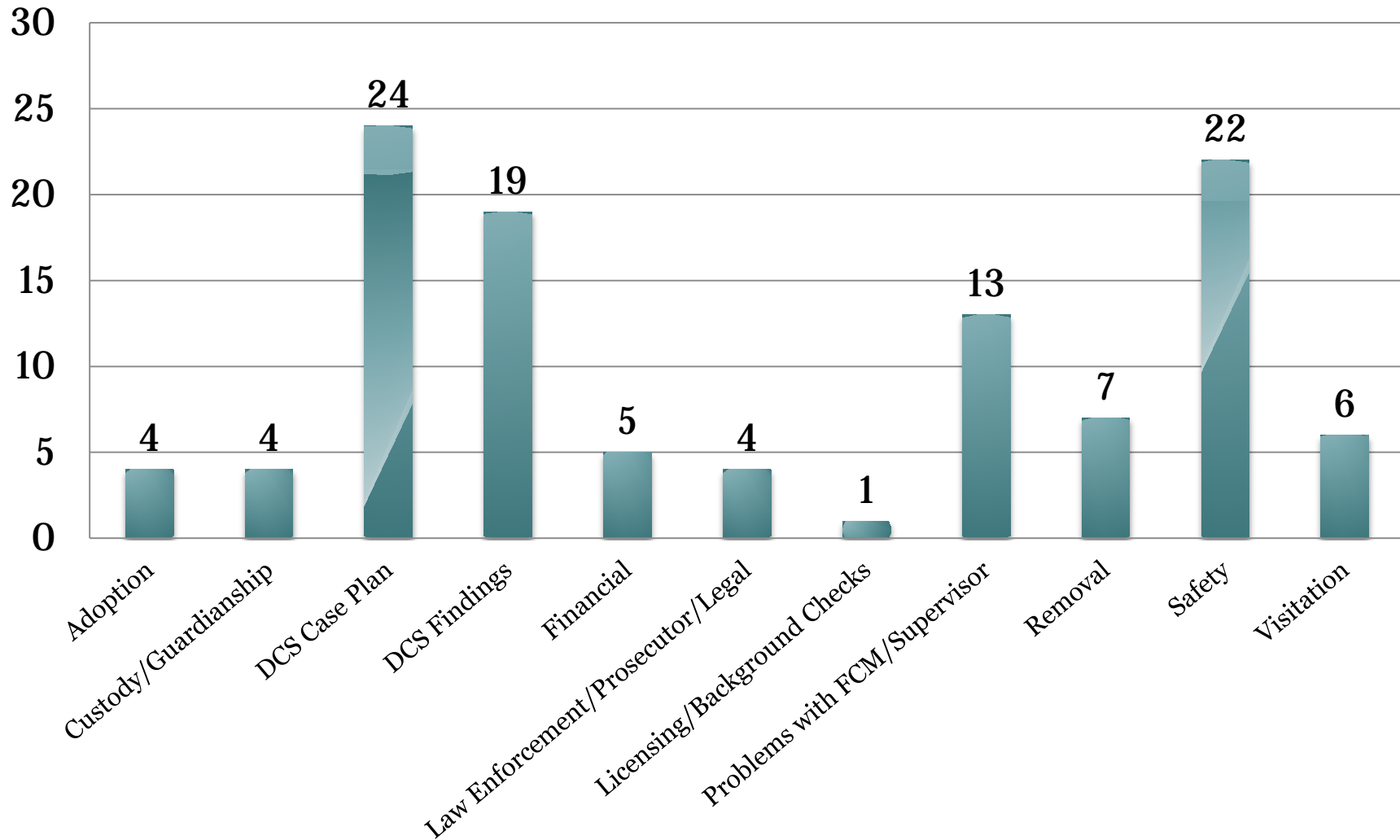
- Parents
- Grandparents
- Relatives
- Friends
- Foster Parents/
Caregivers
- Professionals
- Other/Unknown

NOTE: Pursuant to IC 4-13-19-7 (3) except as necessary to investigate and resolve a complaint, the identity of the complainant will not be disclosed without the complainant's written consent or a court order. The complainant is provided the opportunity to give written consent on the complaint form.

Complaint Source 2011



2011 Major Complaint Topics



Mission

To effectively respond to complaints concerning DCS actions by providing problem resolution services and independent case reviews and to provide recommendations to improve DCS service delivery and promote public confidence

Guiding Principles

- A healthy family and supportive community serve the best interest of every child.*
- Independence and impartiality characterizes all Bureau practices and procedures.*
- All Bureau operations reflect respect for parents' interest in being good parents and DCS professionals' interest in implementing best practice.*

Contact Us

DCS Ombudsman Bureau
Indiana Department of Administration
402 W Washington Room W479
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
Local: (317) 234-7361
Toll Free: (877) 682-0101
Fax: (317) 232-3154

DCSOmbudsman@idoa.in.gov
www.IN.gov/IDOA/2610.htm

