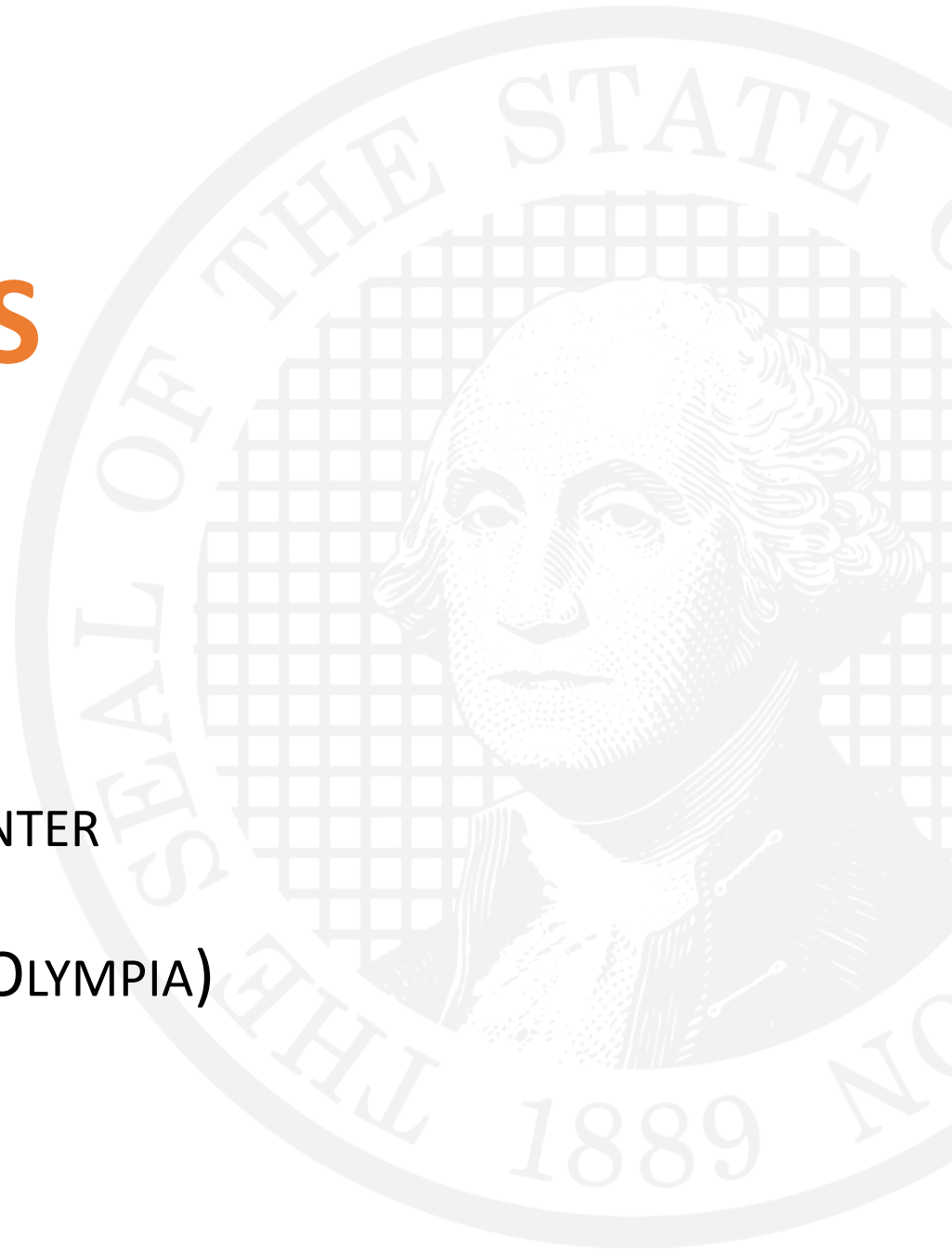


# OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDS

## QUARTERLY MEETING

OCTOBER 6, 2023: CLALLAM BAY CORRECTIONS CENTER

NOVEMBER 1, 2023: HELEN SOMMERS BUILDING (OLYMPIA)



# OCO VISION

The OCO envisions a more humane and transparent Washington Corrections System.

# MISSION

The OCO is on a mission to provide opportunities for people impacted by incarceration to raise issues and resolve conflicts. We work to reduce harm in the Washington corrections system by negotiating outcomes, recommending positive change, and reporting individual and systemic concerns.

# VALUES

INTEGRITY

RESPECT

COLLABORATION

EQUITY

COURAGE

# PURPOSE OF THE OCO

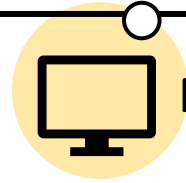
- Provide information
- Promote public awareness & understanding
- Ensure compliance with relevant statutes, rules, & policies
- Identify system issues and responses for the governor & the legislature to act upon

# PHASES OF A COMPLAINT



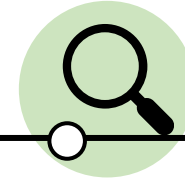
## PHASE 1: INTAKE

Complaints can be reported via hotline, mail, or webform.



## PHASE 2: TRIAGE SCREENING

Complaints are screened for OCO jurisdictional requirements and resource availability.



## PHASE 3: DETERMINE INVESTIGATION TYPE

The case holder determines the investigation type.



## PHASE 4: DOCUMENTATION & EVIDENCE REVIEW

The case holder reviews documentation and evidence related to the complaint.



## PHASE 5: FINDINGS & NEGOTIATION

Once documentation and evidence is reviewed the case holder will contact the DOC to negotiate a possible resolution.



## PHASE 6: OUTCOMES & CASE CLOSING

Once an outcome is determined, the case holder will close the case and notify the incarcerated individual by mail of the findings and outcome.

# JULY-SEPTEMBER 2023 MONTHLY OUTCOME NUMBERS

## CASE INVESTIGATIONS: 544

Assistance Provided: 113

Information Provided: 224

DOC Resolved: 55

Insufficient Evidence to Substantiate: 37

No Violation of Policy: 103

Substantiated: 12

## INTAKE INVESTIGATIONS: 123

Administrative Remedies Not Pursued: 56

Declined: 36

Lacked Jurisdiction: 12

Person Declined OCO Involvement: 18

Person Left DOC Custody Prior to OCO Action: 1

## UNEXPECTED FATALITY REVIEWS: 3\*

## TOTAL RESOLVED INVESTIGATIONS

# 670

## WITH ASSISTANCE PROVIDED OR INFORMATION PROVIDED IN

# 62%

## OF CASE INVESTIGATIONS

\*As of 7/1/23, the OCO opens a complaint for every fatality referred to the UFR Committee, regardless of the referral source.

# HIGHEST NUMBER OF RECEIVED COMPLAINTS

## MEN'S PRISON DIVISION

**Washington State Penitentiary: 148 OCO Complaints**

**Top 3 concerns: Classification, Staff Conduct, & Healthcare**

**Stafford Creek Corrections Center: 108 OCO Complaints**

**Top 3 concerns: Healthcare, Discipline, & Staff Conduct**

**Airway Heights Correction Center: 107 OCO Complaints**

**Top 3 concerns: Healthcare, Staff Conduct, & Discipline**

**Monroe TRU: 101 OCO Complaints**

**Top 3 concerns: Healthcare, Staff Conduct, & Discipline**

# RECEIVED COMPLAINTS

## WOMEN'S PRISON DIVISION

### **Washington Corrections Center for Women:**

60 OCO Complaints

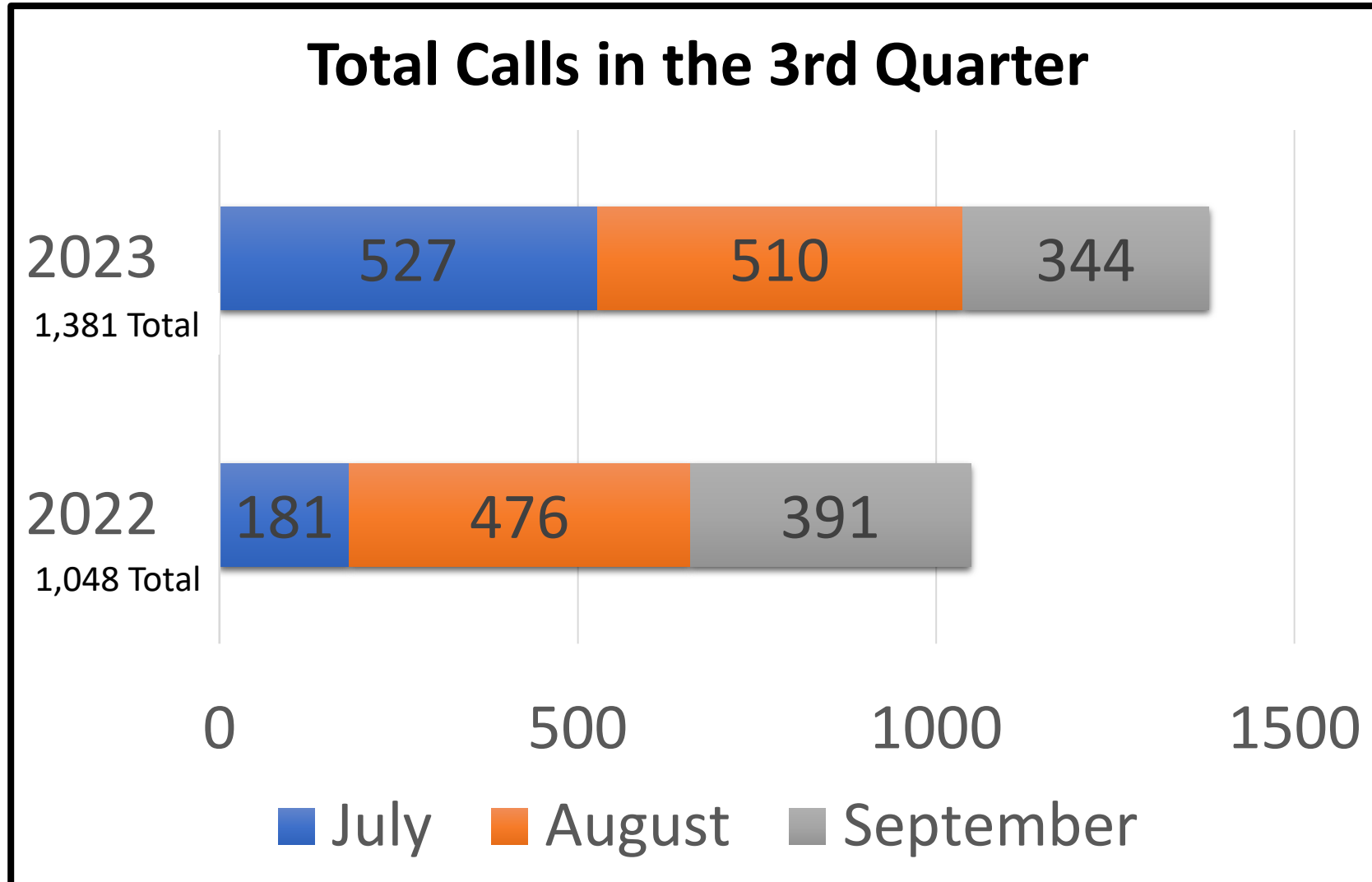
**Top 3 concerns:** Healthcare, Discipline & Staff Conduct

### **Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women:**

5 OCO Complaints

**All concerns were about:** Healthcare

# OCO ACTION – CONFIDENTIAL HOTLINE



**Average of**

**27**

**calls per day**

Of the 1,381 calls received in Q3 2023, only 597 were reporting new cases.



# OCO ACTION – HEALTH SERVICES

## Case Example 1: End of Life Visits

**Reported Concerns:** Person reported an elderly man in the medical unit does not have family and several incarcerated people have requested to visit with him before he passes away. DOC told them the patient is not allowed to have visitors.

### OCO Actions

- Discussed concern with health services and custody staff.
- Requested resolution through health services leadership, the facility Superintendent, and Custody Unit Supervisor (CUS).

### Negotiated Outcomes

- DOC agreed to set up visits with the patient and incarcerated loved ones.
- Patient had six visitors and CUS agreed to additional visits with the patient as long as health permits.

# OCO ACTION – HEALTH SERVICES

## Case Example 2: Dental Protocol Update

**Reported Concerns:** Patient reported being denied access to a dental partial after agreeing to remove a broken tooth.

### OCO Actions

- Brought concern to and requested resolution from health services staff.
- OCO found DOC's dental protocol was updated in July 2023, and the patient may now qualify for the care that was previously not included in the health plan.
- OCO asked that DOC schedule the patient and discuss options for dental care according to the new protocol.

### Negotiated Outcomes

- Patient was scheduled and received an updated comprehensive dental exam.
- A consultation for tooth replacement was submitted after the exam.

# OCO ACTION – CUSTODY

## Case Example 1: Approval of EFVs after denial

**Reported Concerns:** Person reports that their Extended Family Visits (EFVs) were denied, but the reason DOC staff gave for the denial was incorrect. The individual reports that they appealed the denial, but it was upheld by DOC Headquarters.

### OCO Actions

- Reviewed the denial documentation and located the error.
- Met with DOC Visitation staff to discuss the denial reason and share the OCO findings.

### Negotiated Outcomes

- DOC acknowledged the information used in the denial was not correct.
- DOC agreed to bring the EFV application back to the EFV review committee.
- DOC EFV review committee approved the EFVs.

# OCO ACTION – CUSTODY

## Case Example 2: Release from IMU

**Reported Concerns:** Person reports he was placed into segregation after an incident with a staff member. The person states there is no reason that he should still be in segregation.

### OCO Actions

- The OCO reviewed the person's file and was unable to locate a policy-based reason for his IMU placement.
- The OCO spoke with DOC staff and requested he be transferred to appropriate housing.

### Negotiated Outcome

- The DOC agreed to move the person out of segregation and into appropriate housing.

# OCO ACTION – INFRACTION

## Case Example: Assistance Writing Infraction Appeal

**Reported Concerns:** Person reported they are unable to read and write and thus are unable to write an infraction appeal.

### OCO Actions

- The OCO verified the person has contacted the OCO previously about the need for a reading and writing assistance but has been unsuccessful in obtaining said help.
- The OCO contacted the facility Associate Superintendent and requested that the individual be provided with assistance writing an infraction appeal.

### Negotiated Outcome

- The Associate Superintendent visited with the individual the day of OCO outreach to confirm the individual's needs.
- The unit CUS aided the individual in writing and submitting an infraction appeal.

# OCO ACTION – TRIAGE

## Case Example: Accessible Cell

**Reported Concerns:** Person reports he was moved out of his ADA accessible cell without reason. He has mobility limitations and requires a cell with accommodations.

### OCO Actions

- Contacted DOC staff and inquired about the cell move.
- Recommended that the DOC place the individual into an accessible cell.

### Negotiated Outcomes

- DOC agreed to move the individual into an accessible cell that same day.
- Person was placed into a cell they could use.

# UNEXPECTED FATALITY REVIEWS (UFRs)

The OCO participated in the fatality reviews conducted for the three UFR reports published in Q3 2023.

The deaths reviewed in Q3 reports were attributed to respiratory complications, suicide, and overdose.

OCO's first standalone UFR Annual Report will be published in 2023.

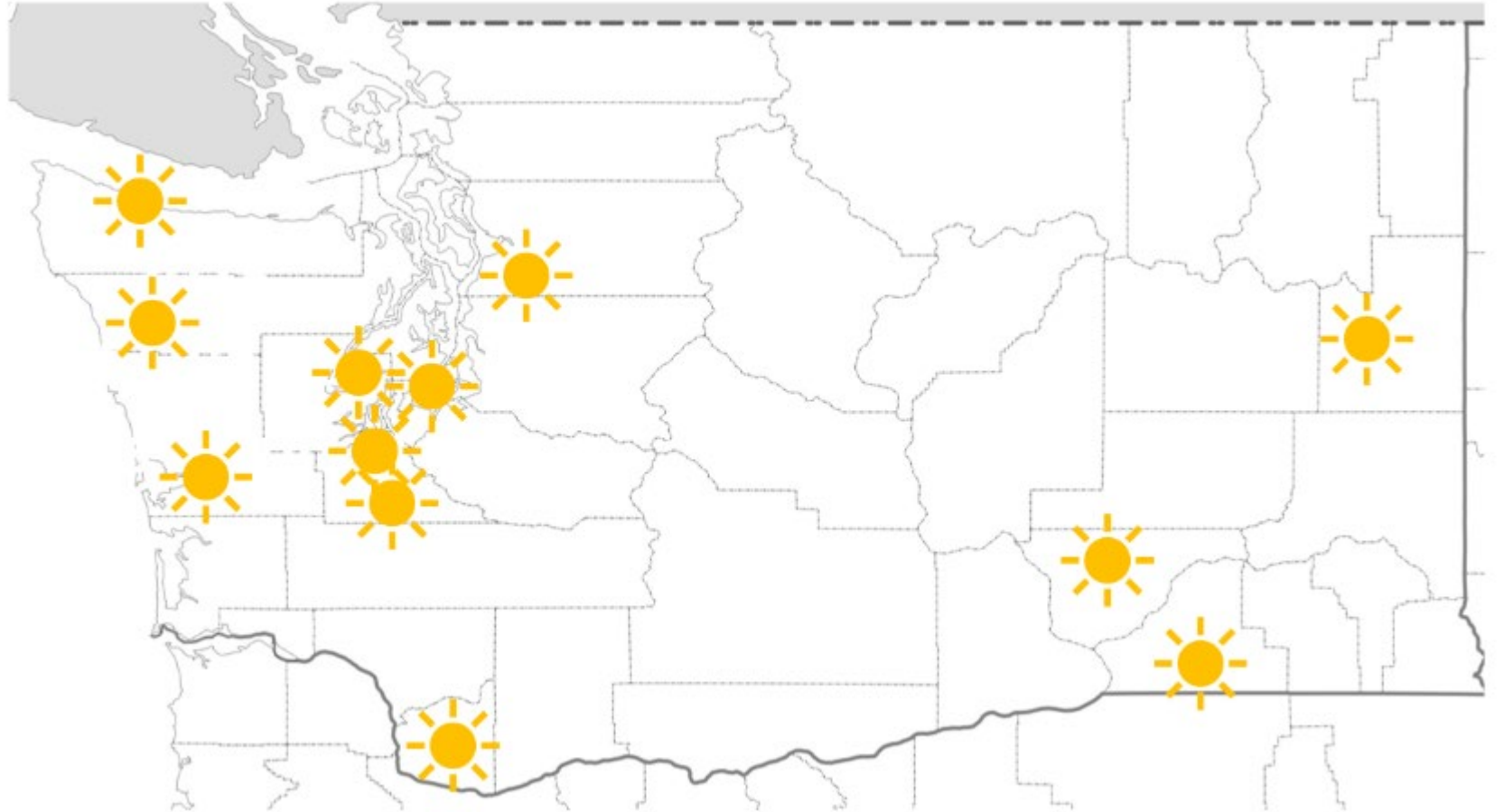
Unexpected Fatality Reviews and Corrective Action Plans are published on DOC's website.

- UFR Committee participants include OCO, DOH, HCA, and DOC
- OCO can also request reviews of deaths not identified by the DOC as “unexpected”
- Committee members review incident reports, medical records, video, and other relevant documentation
- Committee meets to discuss findings, questions, and recommendations

**25**

**Facility  
Visits**

**July-Sept 2023**





## **2023 OCO QUARTERLY MEETINGS INSIDE PRISONS**

**January 6 : WCC**

**April 26 : MCC**

**July 7 : WSP**

**October 6 : CBCC**

## **2024 OCO QUARTERLY MEETINGS INSIDE PRISONS**



# OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDS

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Hotline:** (360) 664-4749

**Mail:** PO Box 40009  
Olympia, WA 98504

**Online:** [www.oco.wa.gov/submit-complaint](http://www.oco.wa.gov/submit-complaint)

