

Summary of the 2024 OYCR Ombudsperson Report to the Legislature

The establishment of the OYCR Ombuds Division marks a new chapter in California’s youth justice system. For the first time, California has an impartial state-level agency with the ability to investigate allegations of rights violations and harmful practices relating to the care of incarcerated youth in county-run facilities.

The Ombuds Division is part of the Office of Youth and Community Restoration within the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) and has four primary areas of responsibility: complaint investigations, annual site visits, Youth Bill of Rights dissemination and education, and reporting. This report highlights the progress made and key developments that have shaped the work to date.

Timeline of Key Milestones

<p>SB 823 (Stats. 2020, c. 337) created OYCR and granted the Ombudsperson authority to investigate complaints from youth, families, and staff.</p>	<p>SB 187 (Stats. 2022, c. 50) expanded the Ombudsperson’s authority by granting access to youth and records, outlining requirements, prioritizing hiring individuals with youth justice experience, and more.</p>	<p>The Ombuds Helpline was launched, and poster distribution to facilities began.</p>	<p>AB 2417 (Stats. 2022, c. 786) established California’s first Youth Bill of Rights for youth in facilities and tasked OYCR with distributing the materials in consultation with youth and advocacy groups.</p>	<p>AB 505 (Stats. 2023, c. 528) strengthened the Ombudsperson’s investigative powers by granting access to youth, facilities, records, and court files without a court order, and requiring annual facility visits.</p>
<p>July 1, 2021</p>	<p>July 1, 2022</p>	<p>September 1, 2022</p>	<p>January 1, 2023</p>	<p>January 1, 2024</p>

Key Accomplishments



Created Procedures and Case Practices to ensure consistent and robust complaint investigations, and revised them consistent with AB 505



Developed and implemented a sophisticated Case Management System to track and document complaint investigations



Developed a telephone helpline to receive complaints and upgraded the system to a sustainable call center product



Developed and disseminated age-appropriate Youth Bill of Rights materials



Visited each of the state’s juvenile facilities at least once, and some of them multiple times



Recruited and hired six-person team

By the Numbers

296
Complaints received

154
Complaints closed

Decline to investigate – 84

Unsubstantiated – 25

Substantiated – 21

No findings – 18

Inconclusive – 4

Referred out - 2

84
Site visits

5,711
Youth Bill of Rights posters provided

39,315
Youth Bill of Rights brochures provided

2,490
Helpline calls (in- and out-bound)

The full OYCR Ombudsperson Report to the Legislature can be found at

oycr.ca.gov/ombudsperson/