



Maryland Office of the Correctional Ombudsman
Fiscal Year 2026 Operating
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Public Safety, Transportation, and Environment Subcommittee
Senator Michael Jackson, Chair

Appropriations Committee
Public Safety and Administration Subcommittee
Delegate Jazz Lewis, Chair

DLS Question and Response

OCO should specify what measures it is able to track with the resources currently available and discuss the goals and performance measures that will be reported in future MFR submissions.

The Maryland Office of the Correctional Ombudsman is an independent and transparent State agency that is responsible for coordinating oversight activity for the Department of Public Safety Correctional Services and the Department of Juvenile Services. The OCO is striving to facilitate observation, investigation, and oversight. The goal of the agency is to ensure compliance, accountability, and efficiency for each agency. OCO is guided by the legislative mandate of independence, impartiality, transparency, objectivity, and fairness.

To date, OCO has successfully integrated the Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit inclusive of hiring one new staff member, the agency has a identified temporary office space, secured three fuel-efficient vehicles to ensure the safety of staff and facilitate travel throughout the state to perform oversight measures, responded to complaints, toured all focused facilities, networked with thought leaders across the country and continues in the establishment of the agency and its policies and procedures.

OCO has began tracking the number of complaints, reportable and non-reportable complaints, categories of complaints, institutions, sources of complaints, and general request for help. Keeping in mind the goal of ensuring that the agency operates in transparency to ensure accountability. The agency hopes to reduce the number of medical complaints, the number of reportable complaints, as compared to non-reportable complaints, and to establish a case management system and website that will enhance the operations of the Office of the Correctional Ombudsman and the Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU). This endeavor aims to ensure that all complaints are meticulously tracked and managed, thereby establishing the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the agency's operations.

For MFR reporting, OCO will track the number of referrals/complaints received, categories of complaints, and the number of investigations opened. However, as a team, we will continue to work to finalize the metrics and will publish an MFR with FY2027 Allowance.

Thank you for the opportunity. We are appreciative and look forward to continuing to work with you. We are happy to address any questions.