



DDS

Department of Developmental Services

2014

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Advocacy
Guardianship

Information & Referrals
Respite

Quality Improvement
Client Rights

Case Management
Day Programs

Oversight
Complaint Resolution

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Mandate

As mandated by Public Act NO. 99-271 (Sec. 17a-210a), I hereby submit the 2014 Annual Report Independent Office of the Ombudsman for the Department of Developmental Services.

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Introduction to the Ombudsman



Office of the Ombudsman for the Department of
Developmental Services
460 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106

I am Edward R. Mambruno, the Ombudsman for the State of Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

I am a graduate of the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and a Master of Public Affairs Degree.

During my tenure in state services, I have been instrumental in the development and implementation of bills protecting, empowering and improving the lives of persons with developmental disabilities in the State of Connecticut.

Additionally, I have served and continue to serve on various boards and committees that improve policy for people with disabilities. Some include the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, the Office of Protection and Advocacy Board for persons with disabilities, the Developmental Disability Council, and the Department of Social Services Disability Council.

I served on the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID) for two full terms. This national appointment is bestowed on only twenty-one individuals in the nation. I was nominated by the PCPID Chairwoman to Chair the PCPID sub-committee on Employment. I Chaired for two years and was a member of the subcommittee for Dental Care during my last term.

In 2002, I was nominated to serve as a Commissioner for the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). I am currently serving as Secretary of CHRO and perceive my role on this Commission as an opportunity to serve as a watchdog for the human rights of persons with disabilities throughout Connecticut.

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As the State of Connecticut Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator and legislative liaison for disability policy for the Governor's Office, I helped shape disability policy from the top down. In this capacity, I lobbied for legislation that helped him improve and empower individuals with disabilities.

I was instrumental in the passing of bills allowing individuals with disabilities work without the worry that their insurance would be eliminated or changed due to income limits. Additionally, I was involved with crafting language for the Personal Care Assistance Waiver (PCA waiver) and suggesting that it become budget neutral to get it passed.

In 2002, I was nominated by the Governor and unanimously voted by the General Assembly to serve as a Commissioner for the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). CHRO was established to eliminate discrimination through civil and human rights law enforcement and to create equal opportunity and justice for all persons within the state. CHRO is the first and longest serving civil rights agency in the nation.

I am currently serving as Secretary and perceive my role on this commission as an opportunity to serve as a watchdog for the human rights of individuals with disabilities in Connecticut.

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Role and Mission of the Ombudsman

My role as the DDS Ombudsman is to safeguard the rights, independence, dignity and equality of people with intellectual disabilities who receive services from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

The Independent Office of the Ombudsman for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) follows The Ombudsman Association (TOA) code of ethics and core principles. The principles adhere to **neutrality**, **confidentiality**, and **independence**.

The mission of the Ombudsman is to work on behalf of consumers and their families addressing complaints and/or problems regarding access to services or equity in treatment. The Independent Office of the Ombudsman, hereinafter referred to as the *Office*, makes recommendations to the DDS Commissioner after noting that systemic changes can and would assist in the resolution of complaints affecting consumers under the care or supervision of the department or of any public or private agency with which the department has contracted for the provision of services.

2014 ANNUAL REPORT**The Independent Office of the Ombudsman**

The Independent Office of the Ombudsman was established on June 29, 2001 in accordance with Public Act NO. 99-271 (Sec. 17a-210a).

The Office is located within the Central Office of the State Department of Developmental Services (DDS) in Hartford, Connecticut. The proximity and familiarity with CO Directors, Regional Directors and staff allows for direct access to information needed for each individual review. This collaboration achieves improved advocacy for individuals and their families. The Office maintains a strong policy of confidentiality and consumer protection and informs individuals and their families of the role the DDS Ombudsman has in resolving concerns and issues with the department.

The Department of Developmental Services consists of three regional offices: the North, South, and West Region, which includes the Southbury Training School. The DDS provides approximately 16,000 consumers with supports and/or services.

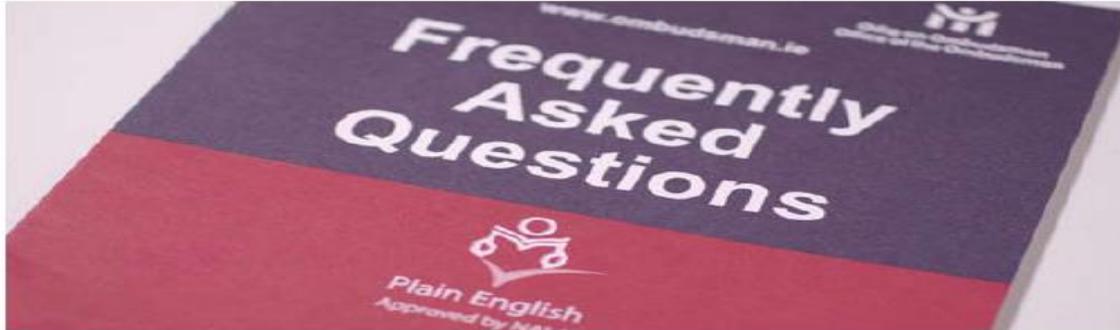
The Office of the Ombudsman receives referrals through consumers and their families, DDS Councils, legislative inquiries, DDS Directors and case managers, DDS newsletters, 2-1-1 info-line, and agency referrals, to name a few.

Cases are resolved or closed by researching and investigating the complaint that is referred to the Office. Most times, this requires collaborating with CO staff, DDS regional staff and other state agencies that may be involved with the issue in an ancillary capacity. The Office is mandated to assist only individuals who are eligible for DDS services and is prohibited from addressing employee or labor grievances. Once the Office has concluded its investigation into a complaint, the findings are then communicated back to the individual who issued the complaint.

The Office provides a valuable resource to consumers and families given the current economic status that people are faced with today.

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Filing a Complaint



What services can I complain about?

- Any services offered, contracted or overseen by The Department of Developmental Services including its regions and providers.

What issues can I complain about?

- Equity in treatment
- Any issues/problems involving DDS consumers

The Ombudsman **CANNOT**

- Address complaints that are part of formal litigation or formal grievance procedures or investigations already underway.
- Give formal legal notice to the DDS regarding grievances, complaints or concerns.
- Address concerns from employees of the DDS.
- Testify in formal or legal actions.
- Conduct formal investigations.

When should I complain?

Before you make your complaint, you should try and solve your problem with the parties concerned...

- Talk to the Case Manager, if still unresolved
- Talk to the Case Supervisor, if still dissatisfied
- Meet with the Regional Director, if none of the above helps
- **Contact the Office of the Ombudsman**

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Where do I make a complaint?

Contact the Office by...

- Fax: 860-418-8707
- Phone: 860-418-6047 (local) & 866-737-0331 (toll free)
- E-mail: ed.mambruno@ct.gov
- Website: <http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/ombudsperson/ombudform.pdf>
- Correspondence: 460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106
- In person: Please call to schedule an appointment

How long will the process take?

- Depending on the complexity of the issue, the Office will try to resolve your complaint in 7-10 business days

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Complaints Form

A confidential link is provided in both English & Spanish on the Ombudsman's website where an individual can make a complaint. The complaint can be made anonymously however; all information will be generalized to maintain confidentiality. Below is what an individual will see when the link is opened.

<http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/ombudsperson/ombudform.pdf> English

<http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/ombudsperson/ombudformes.pdf> Spanish

SAMPLE



Complaints/Concerns for the Ombudsperson

All fields are optional except Name and Complaint/Concern. You may enter your full name, or use only your first name or initials, however you feel comfortable. Remember to include at least one contact method so that we may respond to your concern.

Name:

Email:

Telephone 1:

Telephone 2:

Street:

Street 2:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Complaint/

SUBMIT BY E-MAIL

RESET FORM

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Complaints Management

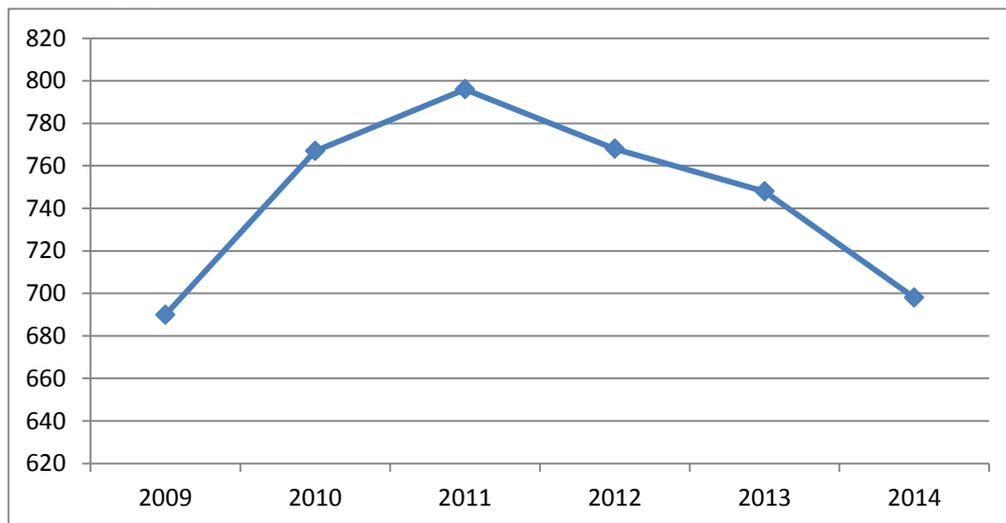
The Office maintains a database that logs all concerns and keeps track of all resolutions.

In 2014, this Office addressed **698 cases** that involved complaints, inquiries and concerns regarding the Department of Developmental Services. This total marked a **decrease in 50 cases** or **7% decrease** in the number of cases that the Office addressed compared to that in 2013, (**748 to 698**).

Approximately **97%** of these cases were resolved or closed. Since the origination of the Office of the Ombudsman, approximately **8,500** cases have been logged.

YEARLY AGGREGATE CONCERNS

Number Aggregate Concerns



Yearly Aggregate Concerns

-END-

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