

Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Ombudsman

LONG TERM CARE
RESIDENTS' ADVOCATE

Annual Report

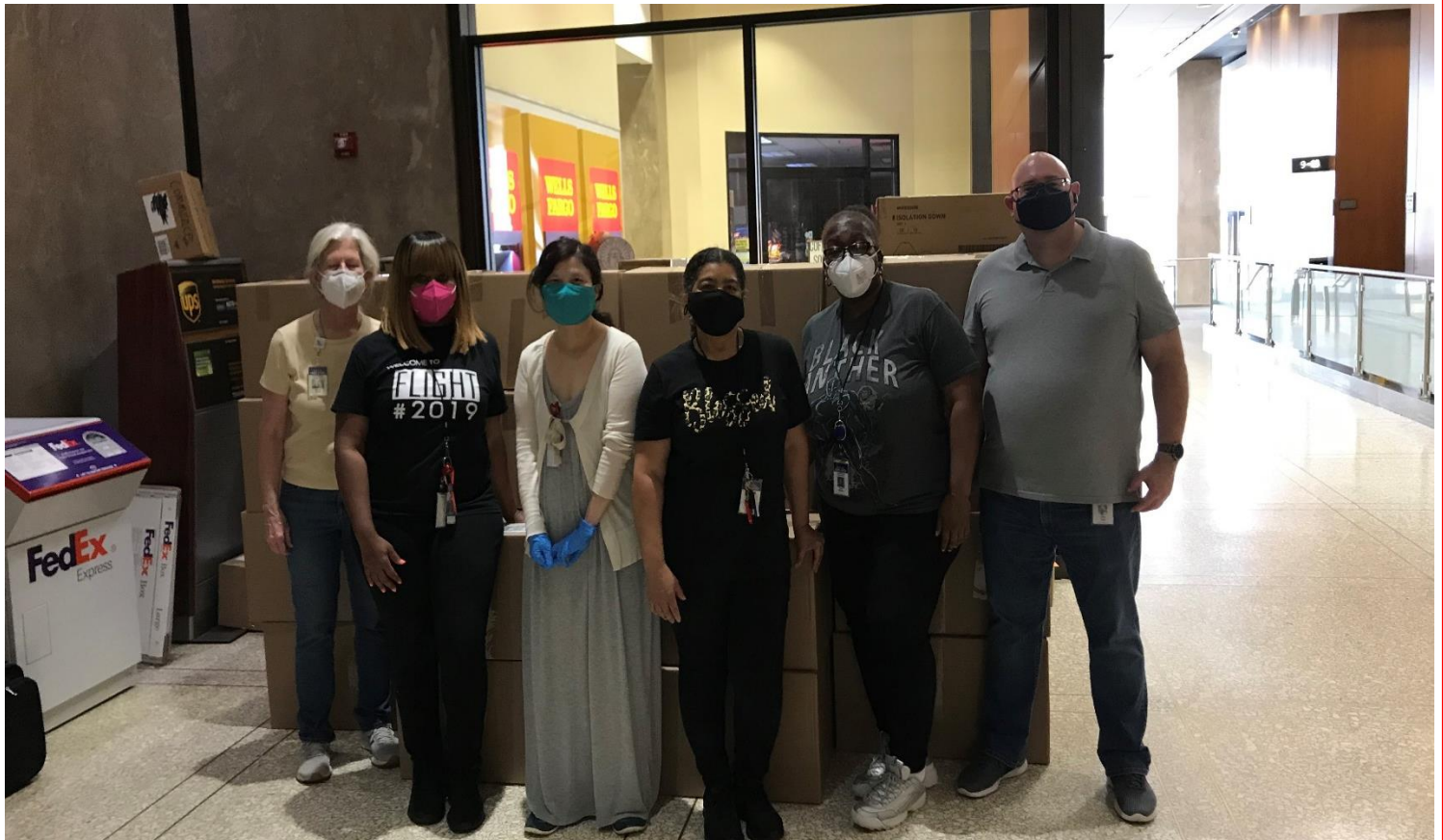
Federal Fiscal Year 2020

October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020

(866) 55AGING

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www.georgiaombudsman.org



(left to right – M. McNeil, T. Lawrence, L. Chao, K. Johnson-Prince, T. Williams, J. Taylor)

SLTCO office staff in front of 80 boxes of PPE we packaged and shipped to Ombudsman Representatives for visiting long-term care residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Melanie S. McNeil, Esq.
 State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
 2 Peachtree Street NW, 32nd Floor
 Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142

State Office Staff

Lin Chao
 Ombudsman Services Coordinator

Kim Johnson-Prince
 Ombudsman Services Coordinator

Jeff Taylor
 Ombudsman Services Coordinator

Tina Lawrence
 Administrative Assistant

Tracey R. Williams
 Ombudsman Program Consultant

Community Ombudsman Programs

	Counties Served	Telephone Numbers
Capitol	Cobb, Douglas, Fulton	404-627-1057
East	Barrow, Burke, Clarke, Columbia, Elbert, Glascock, Greene, Gwinnett, Hancock, Jackson, Jefferson, Jenkins, Lincoln, Madison, McDuffie, Morgan, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Richmond, Screven, Taliaferro, Walton, Warren, Washington, Wilkes	706-549-4850
Middle	Appling, Baldwin, Bibb, Bleckley, Bryan, Bulloch, Candler, Chatham, Crawford, Dodge, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Houston, Jasper, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Jones, Laurens, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, Monroe, Montgomery, Peach, Pulaski, Putnam, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Twiggs, Wayne, Wheeler, Wilcox, Wilkinson	912-367-4866 866-991-9988
North	Banks, Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Dade, Dawson, Fannin, Floyd, Forsyth, Franklin, Gilmer, Gordon, Habersham, Hall, Haralson, Hart, Lumpkin, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, Walker, White, Whitfield	706-369-3003
South	Atkinson, Bacon, Baker, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Calhoun, Camden, Charlton, Chattahoochee, Clay, Clinch, Coffee, Colquitt, Cook, Crisp, Decatur, Dooly, Dougherty, Early, Echols, Grady, Glynn, Irwin, Lanier, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Marion, Miller, Mitchell, Muscogee, Pierce, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Seminole, Stewart, Sumter, Taylor, Terrell, Thomas, Tift, Turner, Ware, Webster, Worth	229-432-1124 800-282-6612
West	Butts, Carroll, Clayton, Coweta, DeKalb, Fayette, Harris, Heard, Henry, Lamar, Meriwether, Newton Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, Talbot, Troup, Upson	678-378-2934

Expected changes from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living, and unexpected changes due to COVID-19, challenged long-term care residents and the Ombudsman Representatives who serve them in Federal Fiscal Year 2020.

Expected changes:

- New complaint codes and new federal reporting requirements took effect

Unexpected changes:

- Long-term care facilities closed to visitors
- Many residents caught COVID and some died
- Residents were moved with little warning
 - some to different rooms to cohort
 - some to different facilities miles away
- Residents could not visit with family and friends
- Residents could not leave the facility
- Residents were confined to their rooms
- Residents could not eat in the dining room with other residents
- Residents are isolated, lonely, bored, feel forgotten
- Ombudsman Representatives were barred from facilities for months
- Virtual visits were not always successful due to lack of technology and physical limitations with residents
- Ombudsman Representatives, using Personal Protective Equipment, were allowed back in facilities to fulfill their responsibilities to advocate for residents

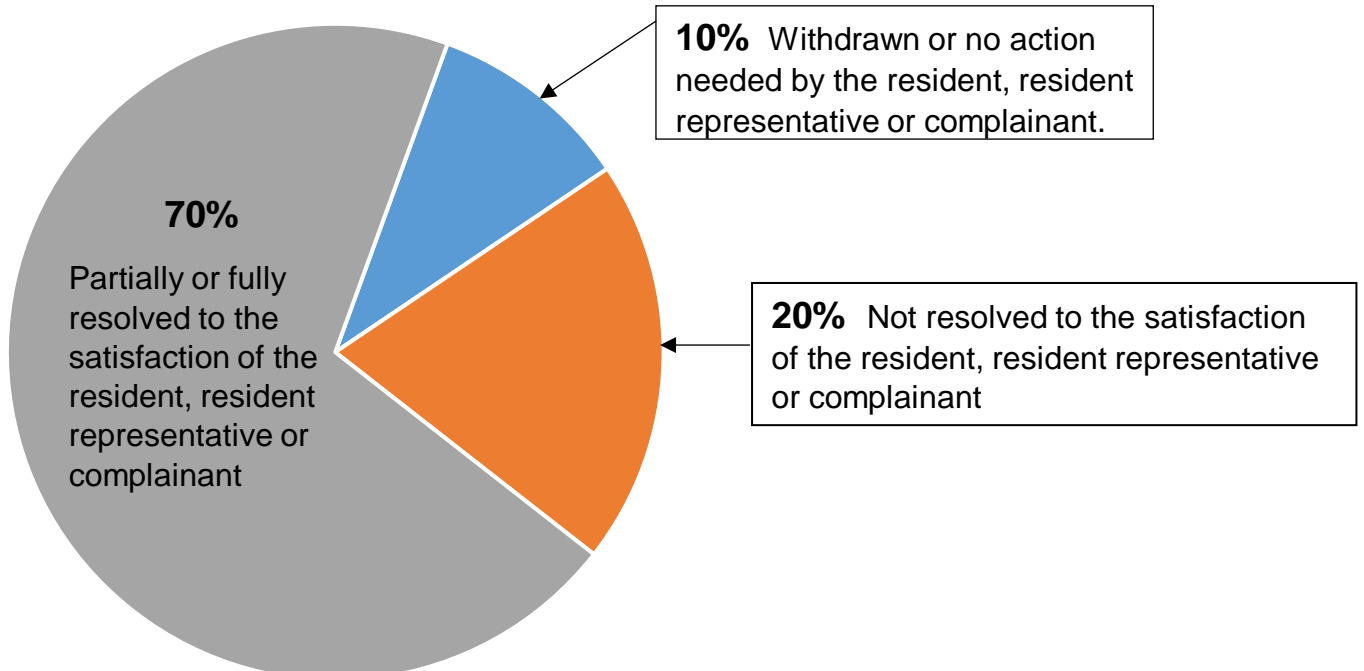
Complaints Received FY2020: 3,672

Top Complaint Categories:

1. Discharge or eviction
2. Dignity and respect
3. Response to request for assistance
4. Food Services
5. Housekeeping, laundry and pest abatement (including infection control)

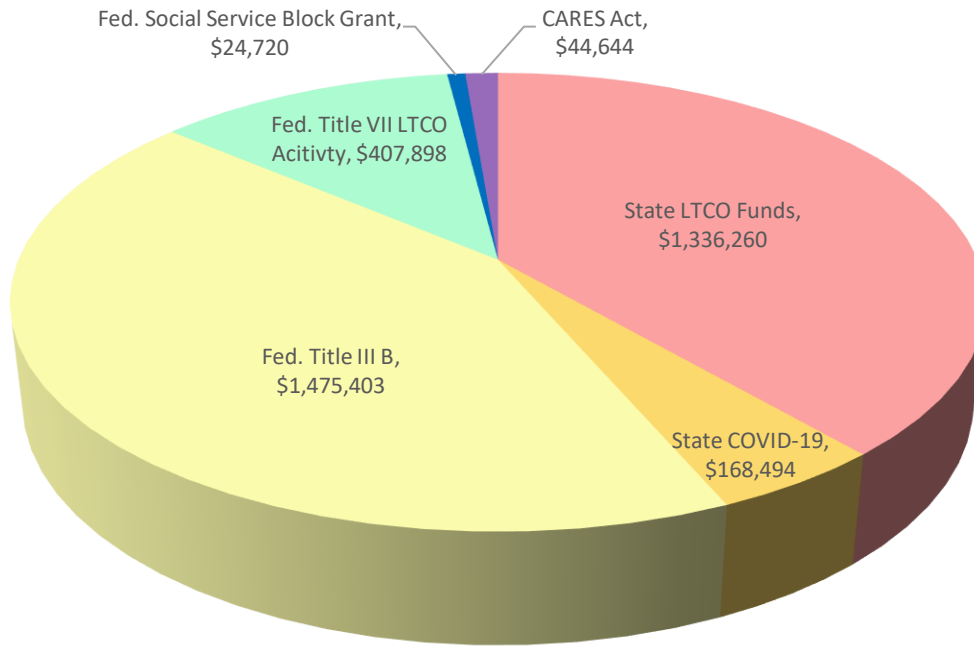
Staff & Volunteers	
Paid Staff	40
Volunteer ombudsmen certified to address complaints	11
Number of hours donated by certified volunteer Ombudsmen	344
Number of other volunteers	16

Complaint Resolution



Ombudsman Program Expenditures

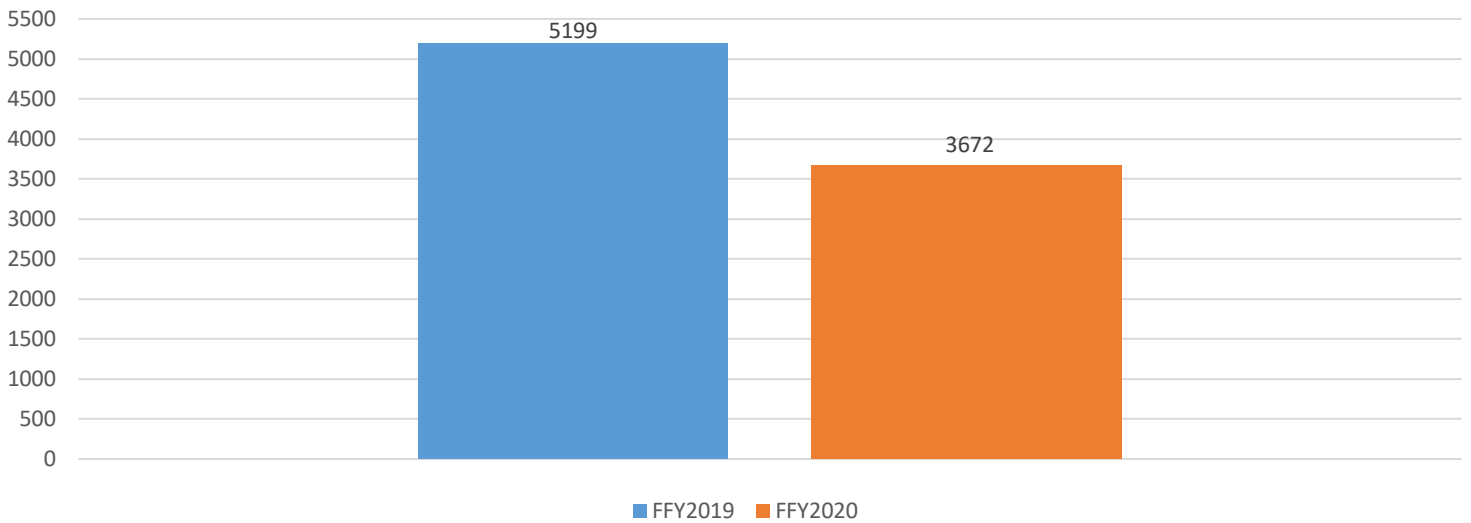
FFY20 expenditures of the Ombudsman Program totaled \$3,457,419. Funds expended were comprised of state funds (44%) and federal funds (56%).



Recommendations

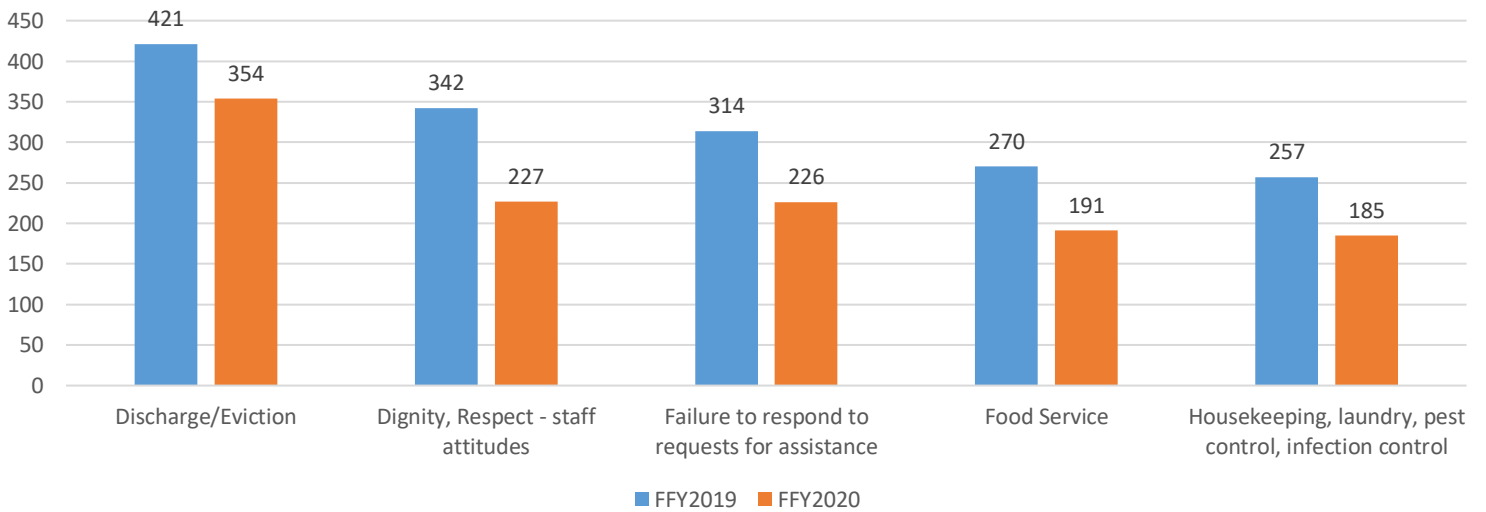
Problem	Strategy
Facility Visits Restricted During Pandemic	Advocacy at the national level with CMS helped with CMS relaxing the restrictions for Ombudsman Representative visits. We also had a governor's order restricting access. Advocacy at the state level resulted in the governor authorizing resumption of Ombudsman Representative visits to facility residents.
Smaller Facilities (less than 25 beds) Not Required to Test for COVID-19	The Ombudsman Program developed a re-entry strategy for determining whether to visit at the facilities that are not testing and reporting their COVID status. Ombudsman Representatives have discretion to visit in person inside the facility, visit outside, or continue to make contact with residents virtually.
Nursing Homes Not Required to Report Resident Deaths to the Coroner	Ombudsman Representatives and other advocates have been working on legislation for years. Some strategies included asking nursing home representatives to negotiate the legislation. So far, those efforts have not been fruitful. Enlarging the advocacy base, raising the issue with the media, and meeting with many legislators to raise the profile of the issue have helped, but legislation has not passed yet.

Complaints Received

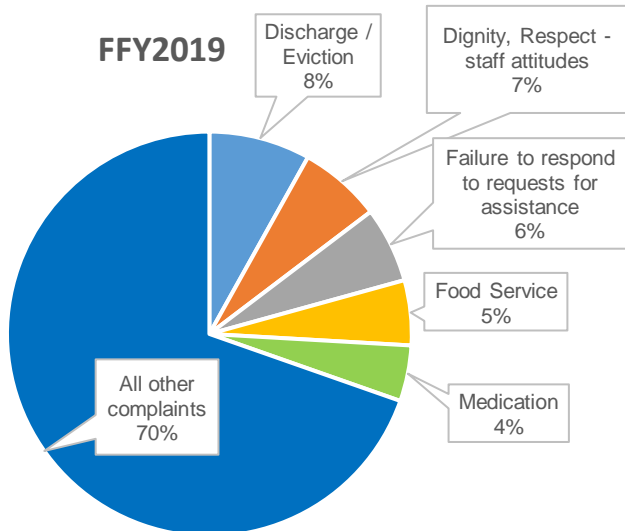


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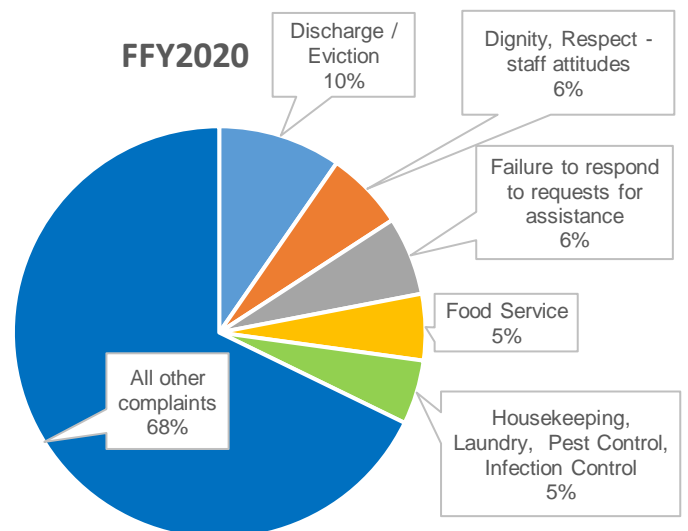
Top Complaint Categories



FFY2019

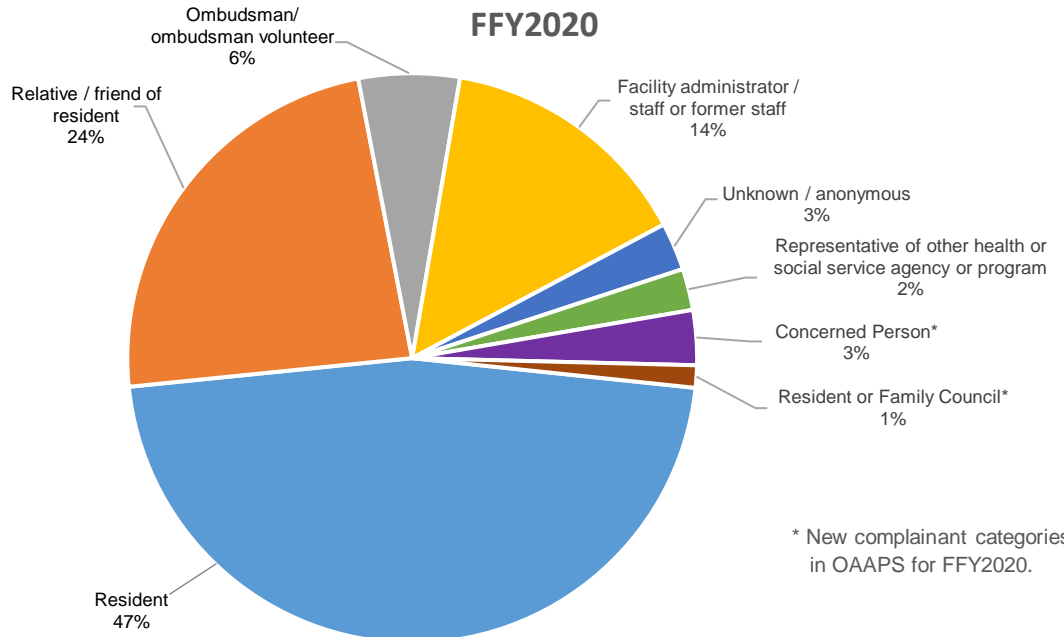
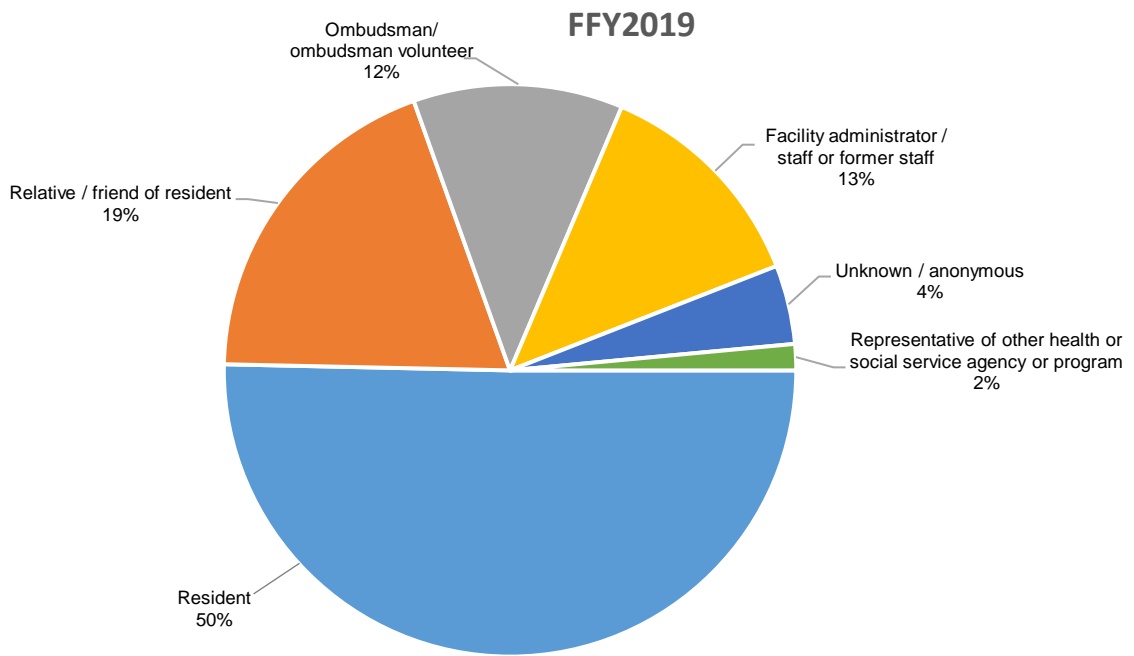
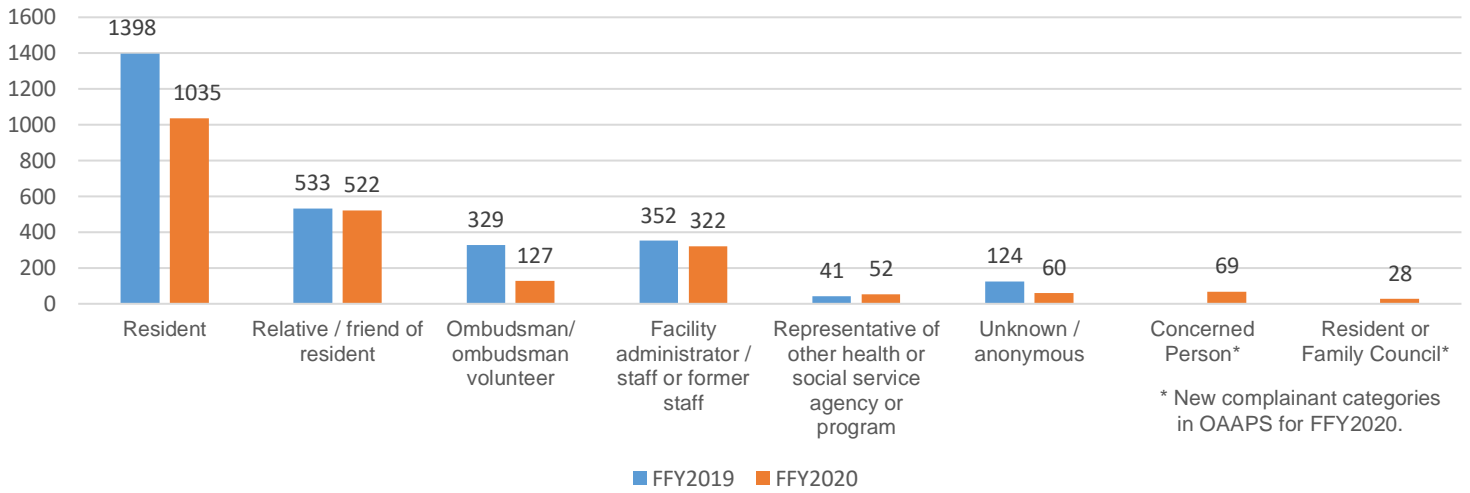


FFY2020



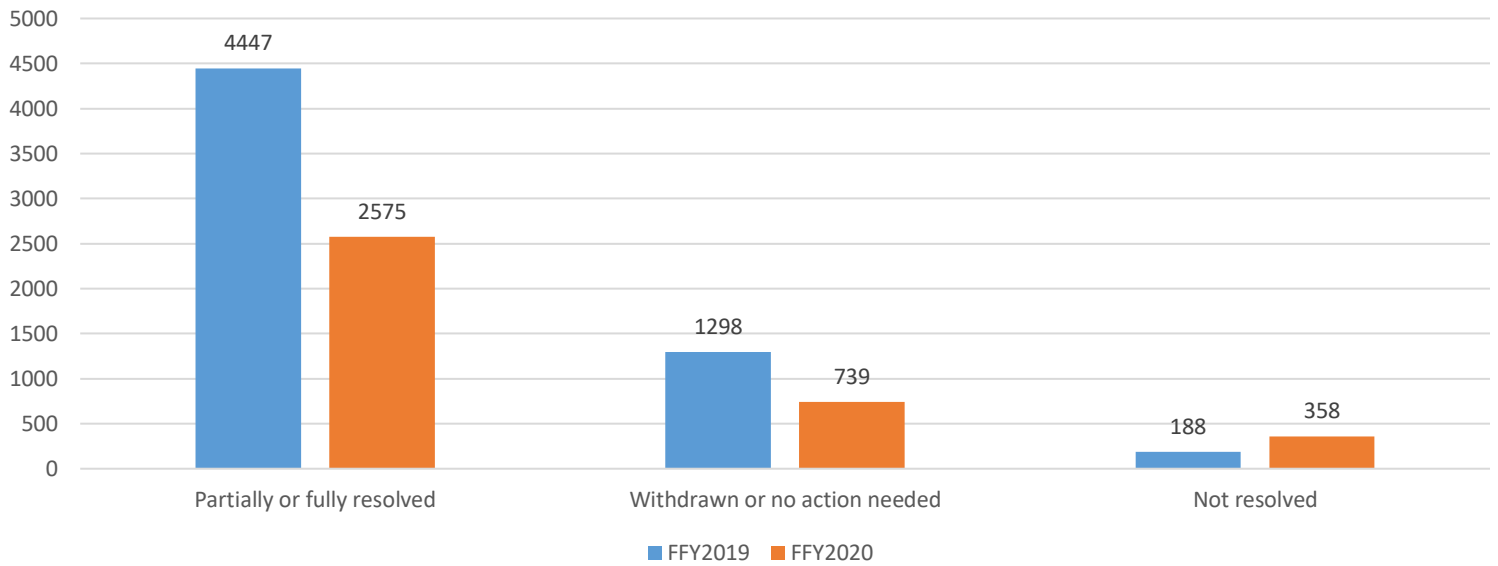
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Type of Complainants



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Complaint Resolution



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**If you would like further details, please contact the
Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
at: 1-866-552-4464 option 5**