



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

FYI FYI FYI FYI FYI FYI FYI FYI FYI FYI

Issue 25-11 (REV)

Date: 12/19/2025

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON FOR YOUTH IN SHORT-TERM RESIDENTIAL THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMS (STRTPs)

The purpose of this FYI is to inform staff of the Office of the Ombudsperson for youth in STRTPs (Ombuds) in the Department of the Auditor-Controller. This office was established by the Board of Supervisors to be a problem-solver and advocate for youth in congregate care settings, as well as to track and report trends and make recommendations. The Ombuds is independent of the Departments that place children/youth in congregate care settings and respond to Requests for Assistance from children/youth or requests submitted on their behalf.

One of the primary responsibilities of the Ombuds is to engage with youth under the care of DCFS who are placed in STRTPs, Community Treatment Facilities (CTFs), non-contracted group homes (GH), Transitional Housing Placement-Nonminor Dependent (THP-NMD), and other related settings. This engagement involves discussing youths' rights, providing a platform for youth to express any concerns or needs they may have, and ensuring they are familiar with the Ombuds as a resource.

Staff are also encouraged to invite the Ombuds to DCFS hosted events, so that the Ombuds is able to provide information about their office and the Foster Youth Bill of Rights (FYBOR) to youth who attend.

Upon receiving a Request for Assistance, the Ombuds interviews the youth/requester to understand the situation and to determine an appropriate response and/or course of action. To effectively handle and resolve requests under the jurisdiction of the Ombuds, they coordinate with key personnel in various functional areas within DCFS. This includes but is not limited to collaborating with CSWs, SCSWs, Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD), Out-of-Home Care Investigations Section (OHCIS), Contracts Administration Division (CAD), Education Section, Youth Development Services Independent Living Program (ILP), and Public Inquiry among others. After receiving a request, the Ombuds inform the Public Inquiry section, who forward the information to the applicable DCFS regional office.

Their efforts may also involve reaching out to Children's Law Center (CLC), Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), and personnel from facilities such as STRTP/CTF/GH and their management, Community Care Licensing (CCL), school staff, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). The Ombudsperson does not, however, become involved in decisions made by a court of law.

STRTP/CTF providers have the Ombuds' posters visible in each home, so that children/youth and staff are aware of the availability of the Ombuds. CSWs may inform children/youth in GH placements and STRTPs of their right to access the Auditor Controller's GH and STRTP Ombudsman, Michelle Lucarelli-Beltran at (213)342-5755.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

FYI FYI FYI FYI FYI FYI FYI FYI FYI FYI

Issue 25-11

Date: 12/19/2025

Should a CSW or other staff wish to consult with Ombuds staff or submit a Request for Assistance on behalf of a youth, they can do so by e-mailing afriend@auditor.lacounty.gov, calling (888) 445-1234, or submitting an online request at [Request Assistance \(lacounty.gov\)](http://Request Assistance (lacounty.gov))

For further information for GH and STRTP Ombudsman, please visit Los Angeles County Ombudsperson for Youth in STRTPs.

If you have any questions regarding this release, please email your question to:
Policy@dcfs.lacounty.gov