

Ombuds for Corrections

Mission

The Office of the Ombuds for Corrections (OBFC) promotes the highest attainable standards of competence, efficiency, and justice in the administration of corrections. See [Minnesota Statutes, chapter 241, sections 90-95](#).

The OBFC is a **neutral and independent investigator** of complaints regarding Minnesota corrections agency actions and policies. It is a separate agency that acts independently from the Department of Corrections and reports directly to the Governor.



Budget

The OBFC has eight full-time staff who receive, investigate, and resolve complaints and systemic issues. The OBFC has jurisdiction in 11 prisons and 150 local adult and juvenile facilities statewide, with a typical daily population of over 17,000 persons and over 210,000 intakes and releases a year.

The OBFC budget in FY25 was \$1.1 million. The governor's recommended budget is \$1,118,000 for FY26 and \$1,137,000 for FY27. 100% is from the General Fund.

The cost is minimal cost for significant resource; for comparison, the OBFC budget equals .06% of the Public Safety and Judiciary budget.



What We Do

- ✓ Review and investigate concerns from incarcerated people, corrections staff, and community members.
- ✓ Initiate, investigate, and address systemic issues.
- ✓ Facilitate resolutions, make recommendations, and publish reports.
- ✓ Provide information to people who are incarcerated, their family, and community.

Objectives

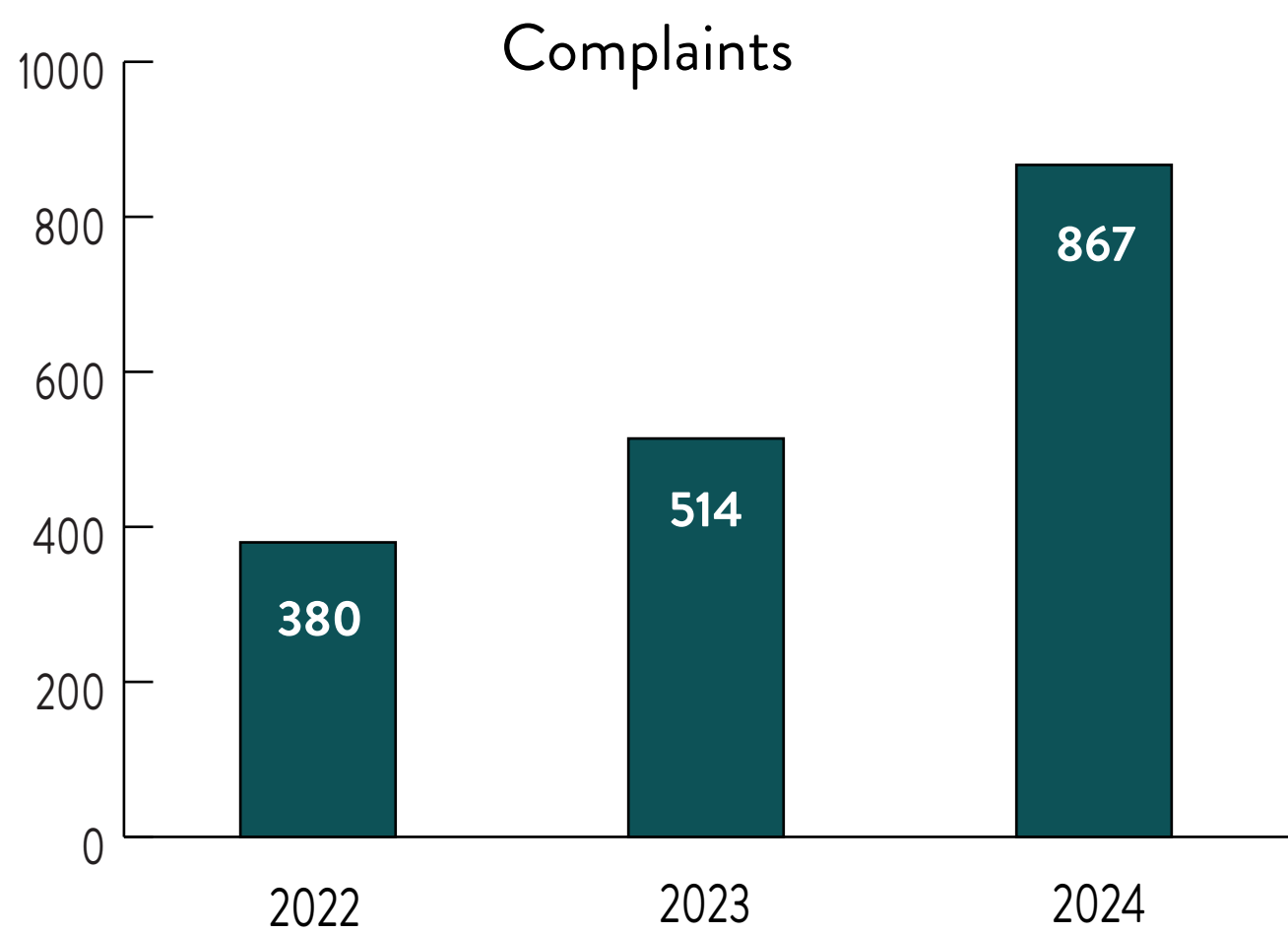
- ✓ Provide oversight of facilities that confine thousands of people.
- ✓ Promote efficiency and justice by recommending improvements.
- ✓ Enhance equity by addressing individual and systemic issues.
- ✓ Increase health and safety by improving programs and policies.

Trends

The office received nearly 70% more complaints in 2024 than 2023.

Rising complaint volume is driven by:

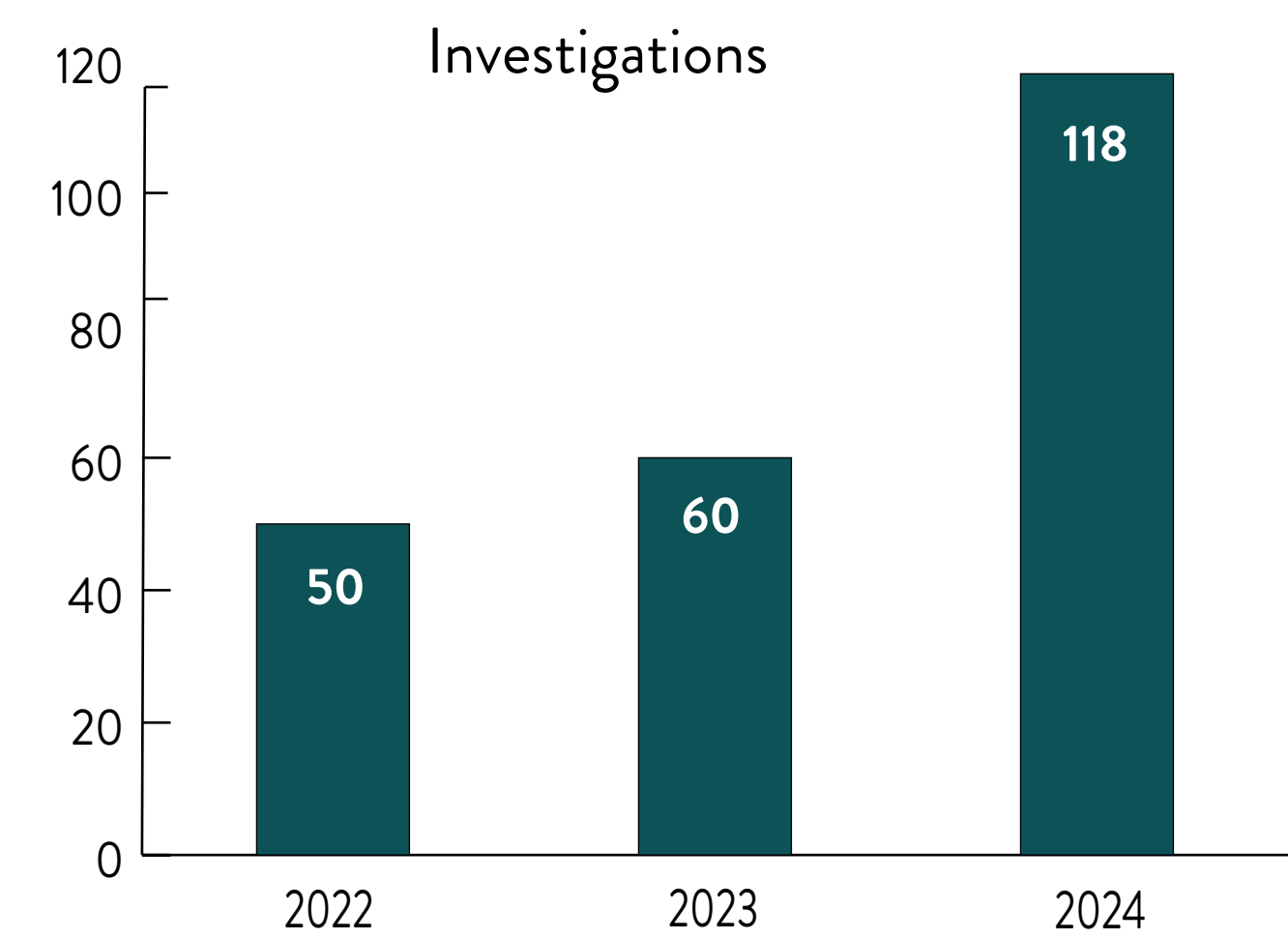
- Greater awareness of OBFC’s mission.
- Improved access for incarcerated individuals.
- Expanded staffing provided increased ability to provide resolutions.



In about three-fourths of the cases from 2024, the OBFC was able to conclude preliminary investigations through early resolution. Despite the frequency of early resolutions, in-depth investigations increased significantly in 2024.

Not only is the volume of cases increasing, but the agency’s work has become substantially more complex. The OBFC faces more investigations related to:

- The rights of incarcerated persons
- Systemic issues
- Staff well-being
- Unexpected deaths and near-deaths



Priorities

To effectively manage resources amid increasing complaint volumes, the office prioritizes cases that involve:

- 01

Health
- 02

Safety
- 03

Actions or policies that affect many people

Strategies

Creative and effective strategies help the OBFC boost effectiveness with limited resources.

- ✓

Staff spend increased time at facilities, including “open office hours” for incarcerated persons at most prisons.
- ✓

When possible, the agency uses informal recommendations to guide policy changes. These can address issues quickly and effectively.
- ✓

Each staff member has expertise in multiple areas and fulfills unique roles in challenging environments.
- ✓

Upgraded processes and procedures help staff work collaboratively and effectively, resulting in better service to Minnesota.

Even with effective strategies and priorities, the agency as currently resourced is unable to fully meet the need for systems change.