



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

## Office of the Corporate Ombuds



American  
Red Cross

## A Message from the Corporate Ombuds

The Office of the Corporate Ombuds delivers informal dispute resolution services to the various constituents of the American Red Cross in adherence to the organization's ombuds charter. The Ombuds Office utilizes several safeguards to ensure it provides its constituents with a safe and confidential space essential to meeting their needs and assisting them in resolving and addressing conflicts and disputes. The Ombuds Office reviews its safeguards annually to ensure constituents' information is completely confidential.

This is the 18th annual report on the services provided by the Ombuds Office and covers Fiscal Year 2025, from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. In FY2025, the office responded to 746 constituents' inquiries and provided training to 763 Red Cross staff through 29 separate sessions, serving a total of 1509 constituents. Unless otherwise noted in this document, the term Red Cross staff refers to employees and volunteers. Of the 746 constituents who made inquiries, 392 were external constituents and 354 were internal constituents. The top three themes that could be identified among these 746 inquiries were workplace issues (297); donor-related concerns and questions, predominantly regarding blood (113); and disaster-related matters (97).

In addition, the Ombuds Office conducted 25 outreach sessions reaching 1046 Red Cross staff. Outreach events included organization-wide OmbudsTALK sessions on topics such as improving communication and dispute-resolution skills, overviews of services provided by the Ombuds, and participation in organizational panel discussions.

The Ombuds Office strives to provide a safe and confidential resource for anyone seeking to interact with the Red Cross, which includes its volunteer and employee workforce and any stakeholder. The ombuds charter adheres to the International Ombuds Association standards of practice and code of ethics. The Ombuds Office is required to be organizational, and its ombuds charter defines its services. The tenets of an organizational ombuds require it to be a confidential, informal, impartial and independent resource for its constituents. The Red Cross has formal reporting processes through its Human Resources, Volunteer Services, Office of General Counsel, and Office of Ethics & Compliance (OEC). Unlike the Ombuds Office, these departments are empowered to conduct formal investigations, make decisions, issue policies, produce written findings, and receive official notice for the Red Cross. The OEC provides oversight of the Red Cross Whistleblower hotlines.

The Ombuds Office can be transformative, by allowing constituents to be heard and empowered to overcome barriers; it uses an informal process in a manner that promotes trust within the organization to assist and empower individuals in achieving their potential. The Ombuds Office achieves these ends through adherence to its ombuds charter.

In FY2025, the Ombuds Office collaborated with constituents to help address and resolve their issues in an informal manner. This included sharing information in an impartial and confidential manner to assist leadership in having enhanced awareness when making business and management decisions. The Ombuds Office is committed to nurturing and strengthening its relationships with leaders and Red Cross staff, thus assisting the organization in better serving its constituents. The Ombuds Office promotes equitably administered processes and an engaged and inclusive culture.

Sincerely,



Ross T. Morton, M.S., CO-OP®  
Corporate Ombuds

# Table of Contents

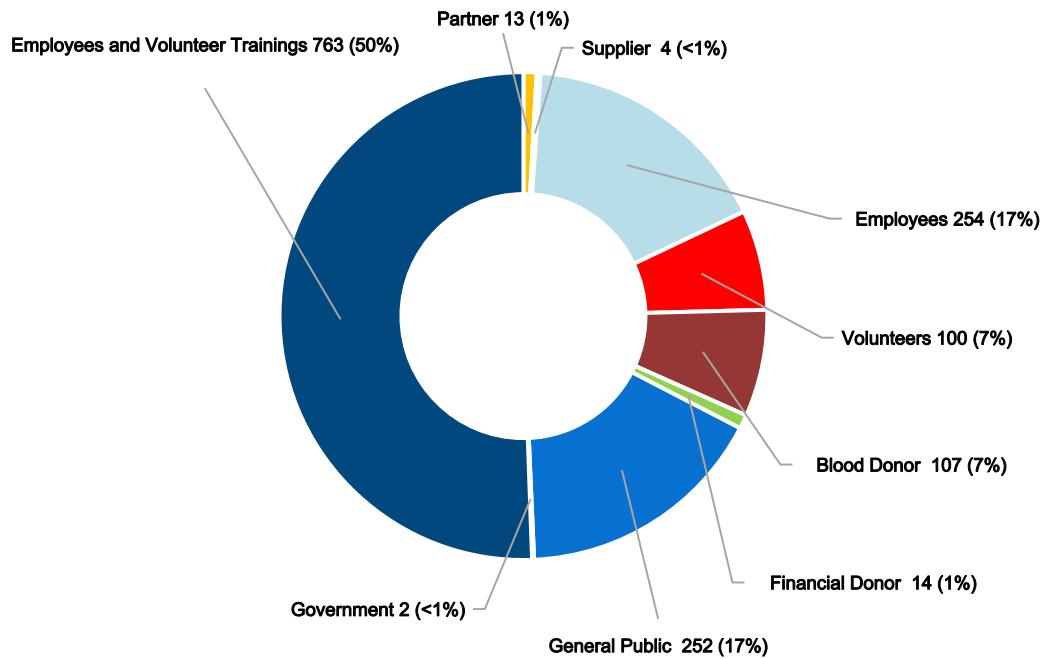
<b>A Message from the Corporate Ombuds</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Constituent Profile</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Figure 1. All Constituents .....	4
Figure 2. Internal and External Constituents by Fiscal Year .....	5
<b>External Constituents</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Figure 3. External Constituents .....	6
<b>Internal Constituents</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Figure 4. Internal Constituents .....	7
<b>Issues</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Reasons for Contacting the Ombuds Office</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Figure 5. Issue Identification.....	8
Figure 6. Issues—Yearly Comparison .....	9
<b>Issues Per Organizational Unit</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Figure 7. Issues Per Organizational Unit.....	10
Figure 8. Issues Per Unit—Yearly Comparison .....	11
<b>Ombuds Actions</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Figure 9. Ombuds Actions .....	12
<b>Supporting the Mission</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Contact Information</b> .....	<b>14</b>

## Constituent Profile

In FY2025, 1509 constituents received support and resources provided by the Ombuds Office. The categories of constituents are identified in Figure 1. The 1509 constituents in this graph consist of 354 internal inquiries, 392 external inquiries, and 763 Red Cross staff who attended a training session.

Figure 1 illustrates the number and composition of internal and external constituents who received resources and support from the Ombuds Office in FY2025.

**Figure 1. All Constituents (1509 Total)**

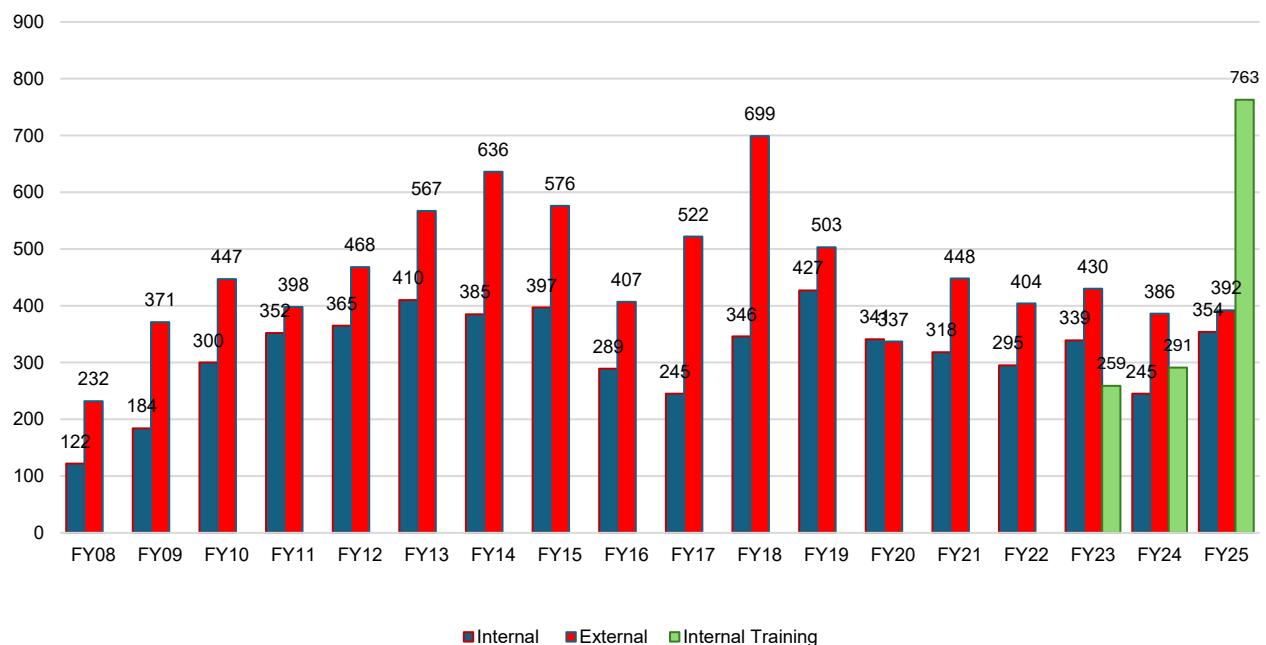


In FY2025, 354 internal constituents and 392 external constituents made inquiries to and received services from the Ombuds Office. In addition, 763 Red Cross staff received training from the Ombuds Office. External constituent inquiries are categorized as government, current partner organizations and suppliers, prospective suppliers, blood donors, financial donors, service members and the general public. Internal constituent inquiries are categorized as employees, volunteers, former employees, former volunteers, current contractors, and retirees.

There was a notable increase in Red Cross staff attending training from FY2024 (291) to FY2025 (763). This increase was a result of outreach efforts conducted by the Ombuds Office in FY2024 (1126) and FY2025 (1046) as well as coordination efforts with Red Cross business unit leadership. Any interaction with the Ombuds Office is voluntary and unrelated to formal processes such as disciplinary action and/or finding of cause or fault.

Figure 2 illustrates the long-term trends of this information.

**Figure 2. Internal and External Constituents by Fiscal Year**



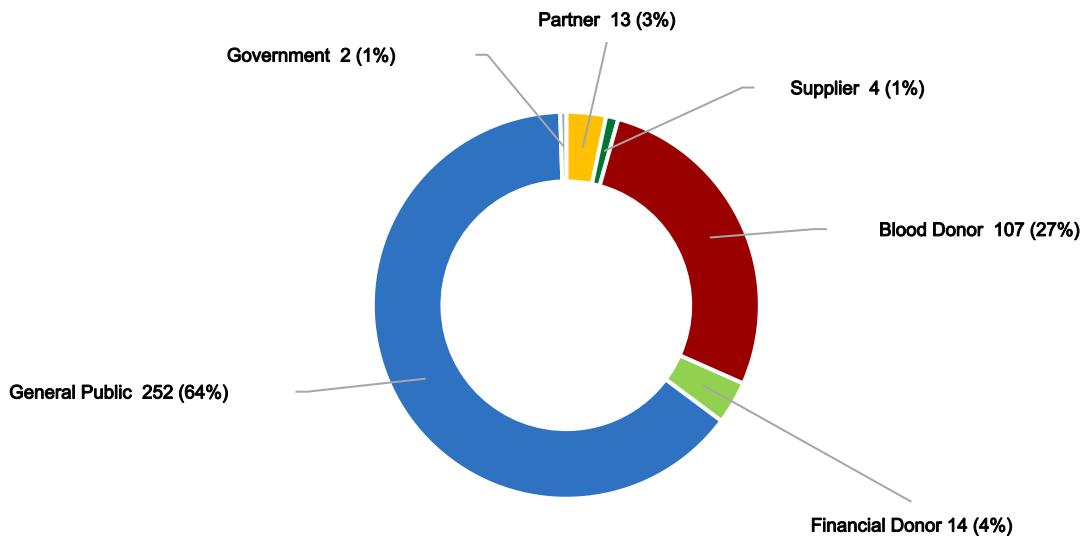
## External Constituents

In FY2025, 392 external constituents contacted the Ombuds Office with concerns or inquiries and received support and/or resources in addressing their issues.

During FY2025, most of the external inquiries were from the general public (252).<sup>1</sup>

Figure 3 illustrates the different categories of external constituent contacts.

**Figure 3. External Constituents (392 Total)**



<sup>1</sup>General Public includes: individuals affected by disasters (84), Red Cross Training Services students (27), members of the U.S. military, veterans, and their families (6) and individuals raising general inquiries (135).

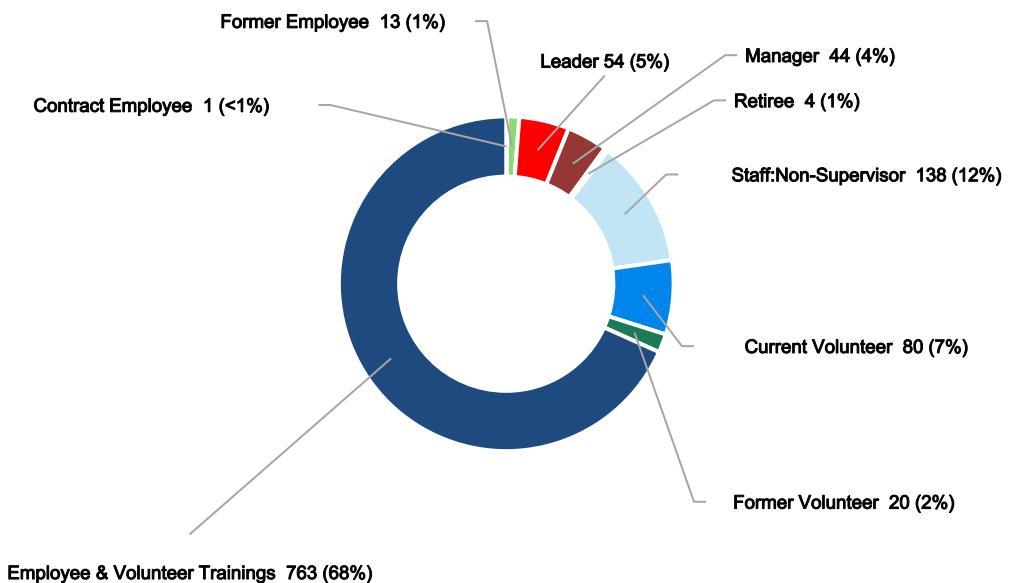
## Internal Constituents

In FY2025, 1117 internal constituents used the services of the Ombuds Office. This included 354 internal constituents that made inquiries to and received services from the Ombuds Office and 763 internal constituents that attended a training session. The Ombuds Office conducted the training sessions at the request of Red Cross leaders and managers. There was a notable increase in training session attendance from FY2024 to FY2025. This increase can be attributed to ongoing outreach efforts and coordination with the organization's business unit leadership. The training sessions typically focus on improving dispute resolution and communication skills. The Ombuds Office proactively coordinates with business units that provide training, such as Volunteer Services and Human Resources, to avoid duplicative efforts within the organization.

For data collection purposes and reflected in the graph below, a leader is defined as someone who supervises multiple teams or is in an executive role. A manager is responsible for a program and supervises work groups or teams with deliverables. A contract employee is hired for a specific job, for a defined period, at a specific rate of pay. AmeriCorps participants, temporary disaster employees and employees contracted through third-party agencies have been categorized as contract employees.

Figure 4 reflects internal constituents by category and role.

**Figure 4. Internal Constituents (1117 Total)**



# Issues

## Reasons for Contacting the Ombuds Office

In FY2025, a total of 1260 issues were brought to the attention of the Ombuds Office as the result of 746 inquiries from internal and external constituents. A single inquiry often reflects more than one issue. For data tracking purposes, no more than three issues are associated with any one inquiry. Figure 5 identifies the 1260 issues brought to the attention of the Ombuds Office in FY2025.

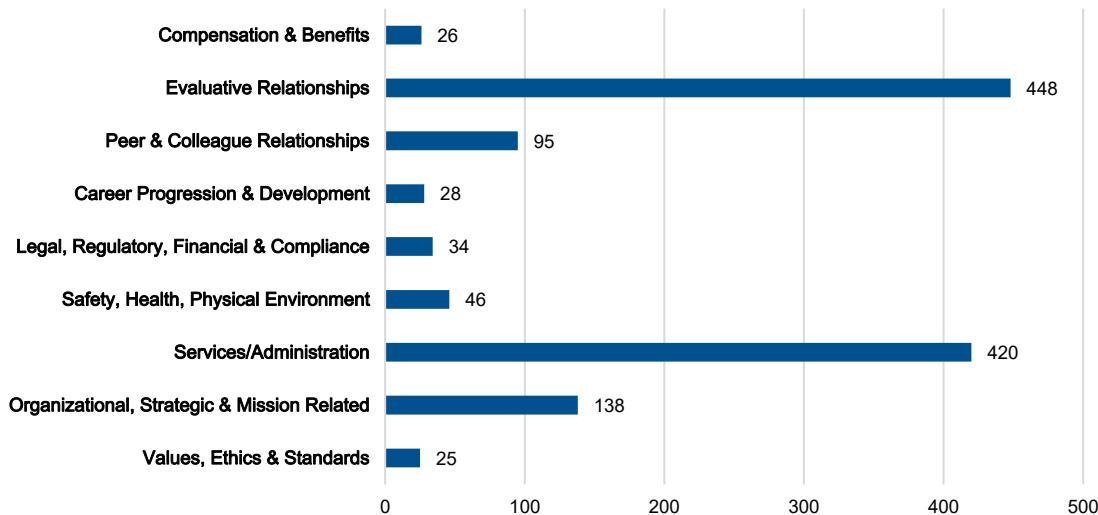
The issues have been categorized in a manner consistent with the guidance provided by the International Ombuds Association (“IOA”). The categories of issues used in this report are intended to assist in identifying the types of issues, identifying trends for consistent historical reporting, and allowing the organization to identify and/or address systemic issues in comparison to other tools (such as pulse surveys).

The top issues brought to the attention of the Ombuds Office are as follows and illustrated in Figure 5.

- Evaluative Relationships
  - The prevalent themes within this category relate to the professional relationship between supervisors and their direct reports.
- Services Administration
  - The prevalent themes are related to quality of service, administrative decisions and responsiveness. These issues are often associated with external constituents.
- Organizational, Strategic & Mission Related
  - The prevalent themes relate to restructuring, reductions in force, leadership strategic decisions, and communication.

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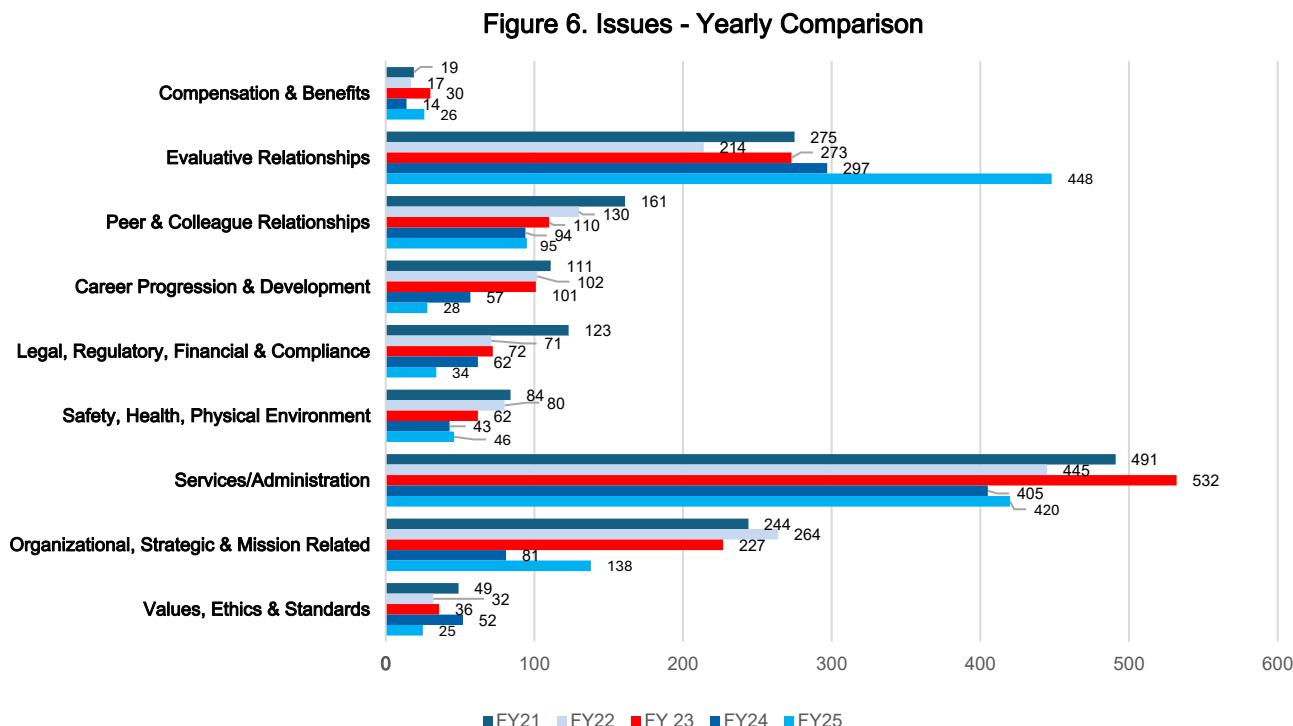
**Figure 5. Issue Identification**  
**All Issues Identified Consistent with IOA Uniform Reporting Categories (1260 Total)**



The graph in Figure 6, below, illustrates trends in issues raised from FY2021 through FY2025. It is important to note that some of the issues identified are beyond the scope of the Red Cross. For example, services/administrative issues can involve external constituents, such as donors, individuals affected by disasters or the general public, inquiring about issues outside the scope of the Red Cross mission, such as FDA blood donation requirements, policy changes, or international events.

When issues raised are outside of the organization's mission, the Ombuds Office takes these as opportunities to provide relevant information and assist constituents in better understanding the mission of the Red Cross and the scope of its activities. For example, the Ombuds Office might coordinate within the organization to include content in relevant statements or press releases that address issues constituents have raised related to areas outside the purview of the Red Cross.

There was a notable increase in issues raised within Evaluative Relationships from FY2024 (297) to FY2025 (448). This is also a reflection of the increase in the number of internal inquiries received from FY 2024 (245) to FY 2025 (354). Some of the factors that influenced this increase were greater awareness of Ombuds Office services by Red Cross staff, disaster-related events and associated operational conditions, restructuring, and return to in-person work schedules for certain business units. The greater awareness by Red Cross staff of the services provided by the Ombuds Office was influenced by the outreach and training sessions conducted within this time period. The factors referenced above also influenced the increase in Organizational, Strategic & Mission Related issues from FY2024 (81) to FY2025 (138).



## Issues Per Organizational Unit

Figure 7 reflects the number and percentage of issues raised in FY2025 pertaining to Red Cross organizational units. These issues are raised by internal and external constituents requesting assistance from the Ombuds Office in resolving matters utilizing an independent, informal and confidential process. In this section, issues associated with training sessions have been excluded.

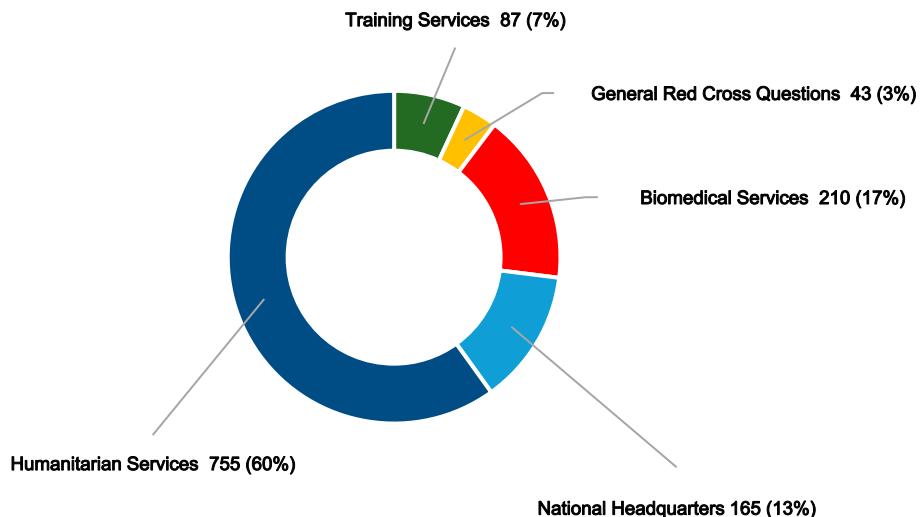
The greatest number of issues identified were associated with Humanitarian Services: 755 issues through 398 constituent inquiries. The top categories in these issues were (1) evaluative relationships, (2) services/administrative questions, and (3) organizational, strategic & mission related. Humanitarian Services includes International Services, Disaster Cycle Services, Service to the Armed Forces, Volunteer Services, and regions or chapters. The top four service areas where inquiries originated within Humanitarian Services are regions or chapters, Disaster Cycle Services, Service to the Armed Forces, and Volunteer Services. Disaster-related events and the associated operational conditions influenced the number of issues attributed to Humanitarian Services.

Biomedical Services had the next highest number of issues, with 210 issues raised through 134 constituent inquiries. These issues include inquiries and concerns related to Red Cross operations associated with blood product recruitment, collections (i.e., appointments, atmosphere of collection sites, etc.), manufacturing, international events, testing, eligibility, and distribution.

Issues and concerns related to specific corporate departments are designated for tracking purposes as National Headquarters. National Headquarters had the third-highest number of issues, with 165 issues raised through 115 constituent inquiries. Disagreement with decisions and associated outcomes are often a theme with these inquiries.

Figure 7 depicts issues attributed to Red Cross organizational business units in FY2025.

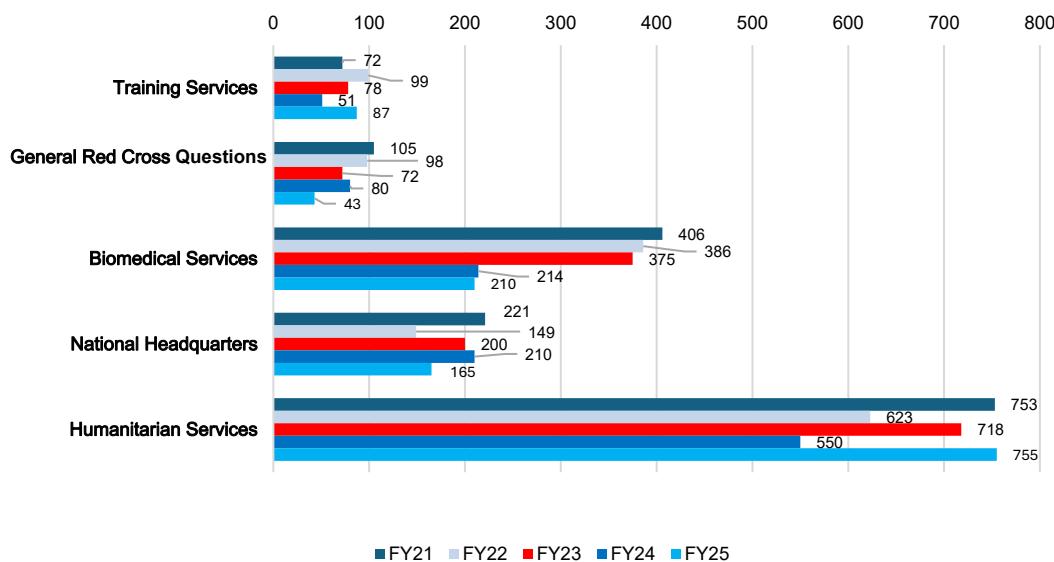
**Figure 7. Issues Per Organizational Unit FY25 (1260 Total)**



There was a notable increase in the number of issues associated with Humanitarian Services from FY 2024 (550) to FY 2025 (755). The increase was influenced by factors such as greater awareness of Ombuds Office services by Red Cross staff, disaster related events and associated operational conditions, restructuring, and return to in-person work schedules in certain locations. The greater awareness by Red Cross staff of the services provided by the Ombuds Office was influenced by the outreach and training sessions conducted within this time period.

Figure 8 depicts the number of issues attributed to the Red Cross organizational business unit from FY2021 through FY2025.

**Figure 8. Issues Per Unit - Yearly Comparison**



## Ombuds Actions

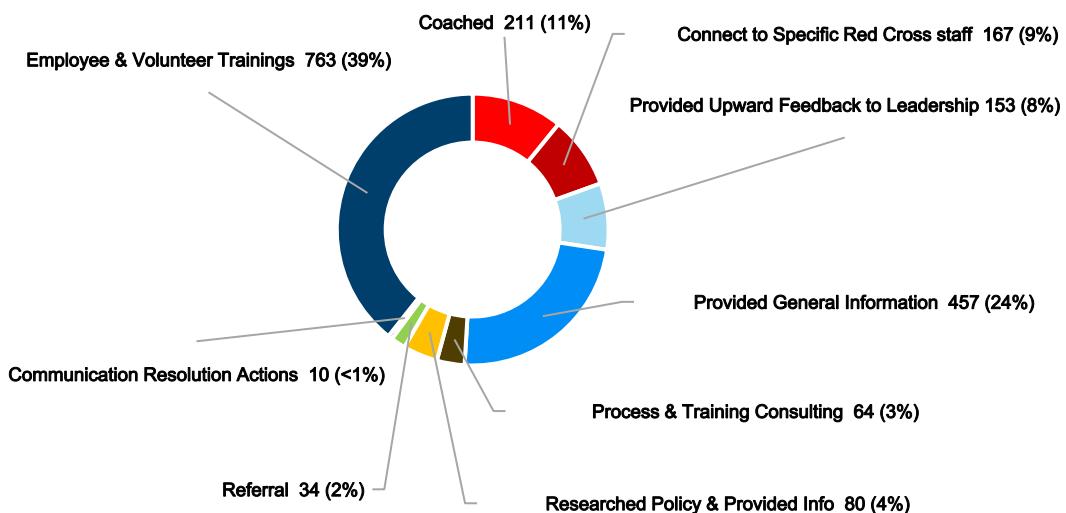
In FY2025, the Ombuds Office responded to 746 constituents' inquiries, provided training to 763 Red Cross staff, and conducted outreach sessions attended by 1046 Red Cross staff. In total, the Ombuds Office had 2555 interactions in FY2025, in comparison with 2048 interactions in FY2024. As indicated in prior sections of this report, the increase in interactions is due in large part to the Ombuds Office's outreach conducted in FY2024 and FY2025. The outreach activities include organizational-wide OmbudsTALK sessions, which are open to all Red Cross staff and cover topics developed to enhance conflict resolution and communication skill sets. Other outreach activities include organizational outreach panels and presentations of the services provided by the Ombuds Office to various Red Cross business units. Referrals based on past interactions were also a likely influence that led to the increase in the number of training session attendees.

Figure 9 identifies the 1939 actions taken by the Ombuds Office to assist constituents and the organization in resolving and addressing issues. Actions identified as "Communication Resolution Actions" include dispute resolution techniques such as facilitated discussions and shuttle diplomacy. This number also includes 763 Red Cross staff that attended training sessions ("Employee and Volunteer Training"). The training sessions are identified and included in this figure to illustrate some of the proactive measures taken by leadership in requesting training from the Ombuds Office for their staff.

The top four actions provided by the Ombuds Office for the 746 internal and external constituents that contacted the Ombuds Office are categorized as follows:

- Provided general information (457)
- Coached (211)
- Connected to specific Red Cross staff (167)
- Provided feedback to leadership (153)

**Figure 9. Ombuds Actions (1939 Total)**



## Supporting the Mission

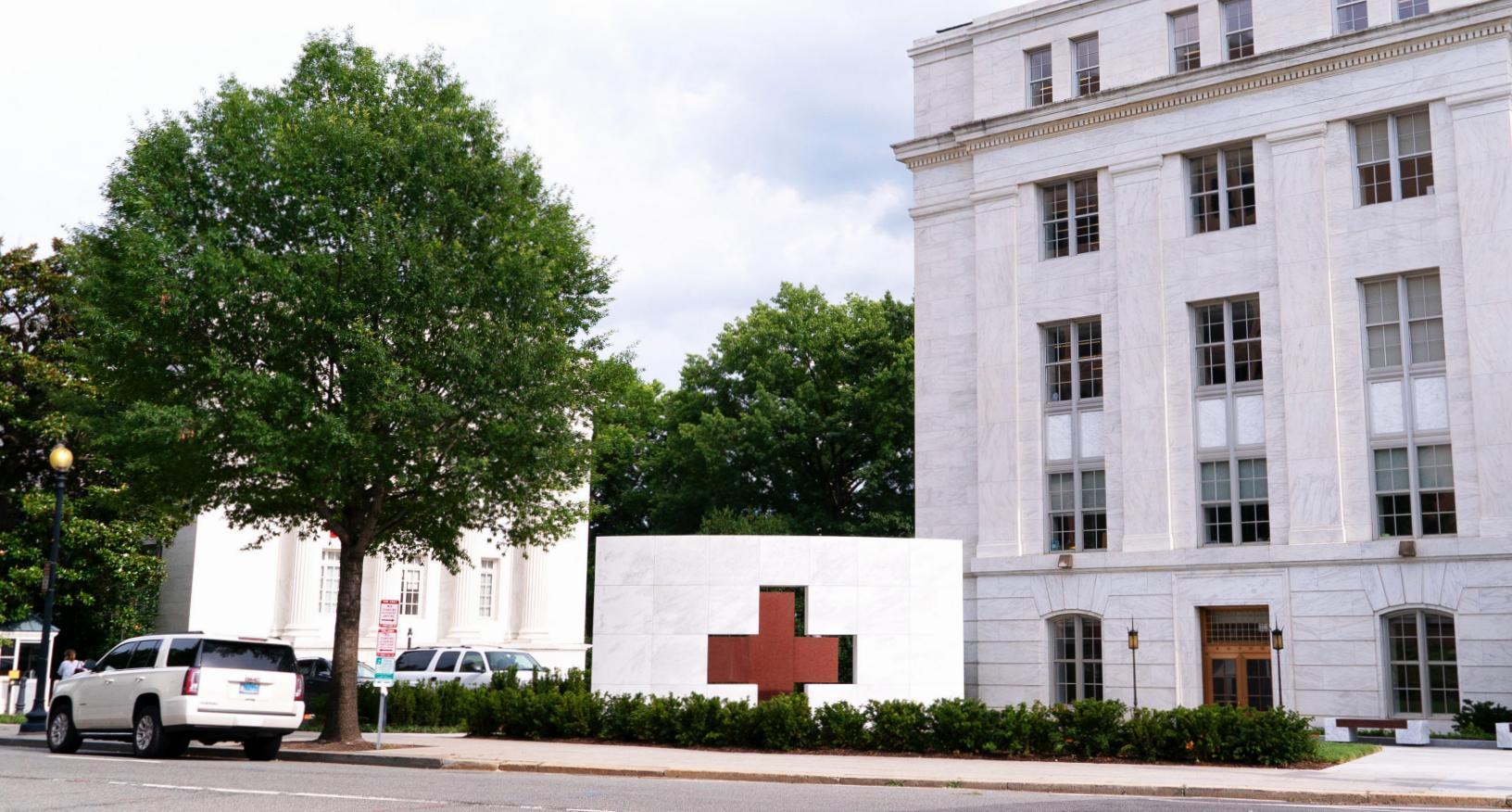
The primary responsibilities of the Ombuds Office are to work with internal and external constituents of the Red Cross to assist and empower them in determining options to help informally resolve conflicts. This includes identifying problematic issues, concerns, risks, and trends and bringing them to the attention of the organization for awareness and resolution. In addition, when requested, the Ombuds Office conducts training sessions designed to enhance Red Cross staff conflict resolution and communication skills. The Ombuds Office follows its ombuds charter, which adheres to the International Ombuds Association standards of practice.

The Ombuds Office strives to empower individuals and the organization in a manner that builds awareness of potential issues and enhances skills to effectively resolve conflict and disputes.

Here are a few examples of FY2025 accomplishments.

- Conducted 29 group training sessions attended by 763 Red Cross staff. Training sessions were requested by leadership and management and primarily focused on communication and dispute resolution skills.
- Conducted 25 outreach events attended by 1046 Red Cross staff. The outreach events included OmbudsTALK, organizational panel events and overviews of the services provided by the Ombuds Office.
- Streamlined data entry process and enhanced internal technical support to ensure continuity.
- Participated in two organizational panels designed to facilitate discussions on bullying and inclusion in the workplace.
- Coordinated with Enterprise Contact Center Operations to better direct calls to the appropriate business units, including providing written guidance to the call centers.
- Provided updates and feedback to leadership on trends and/or issues identified by the Ombuds Office. This included meeting with the business unit leadership and soliciting feedback.
- The Corporate Ombuds and Assistant Ombuds are certified practitioners (i.e., CO-OP®) by the International Ombuds Association.

As the Ombuds Office celebrates its 18th year, it remains focused on and dedicated to serving the Red Cross and its constituents, in accordance with its ombuds charter, with inclusivity and fairness. It remains committed to assisting the organization in proactively identifying trends and systemic issues and addressing identified issues in an informal manner that promotes the values of the Red Cross and its mission.



## Contact Information

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2007–2025



**10,777**  
Constituents



Another **25,726** reached through  
Outreach, Training and Facilitation



**24,634**  
Issues