2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Office of the Corporate Ombudsman

American Red Cross

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A Message from the Corporate Ombudsman

The Office of the Ombudsman opened its doors in October 2007 in accordance with the Governance Modernization Act of 2007. Our Office was created with the intention and focus of being a safe and confidential resource for all persons impacted by the American Red Cross, its workplace, mission and services to share their concerns. Since October 2007, we have provided resources and support to over 5200 constituents; have reached over 16,200 constituents through conflict resolution, education, outreach, and facilitation; and we have addressed approximately 14,000 issues.

I am pleased to present the eleventh annual report on the activities and initiatives of the Office of the Corporate Ombudsman for fiscal year 2018—from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. This report reflects concerns and inquiries brought to the Ombudsman Office from both internal and external constituents.

In FY18, the Ombudsman Office provided resources and supported 1,965 issues raised by 1108 constituents. Through outreach, trainings, and group facilitations we were able to reach 1,234 volunteers, employees and leaders while supporting our donors, recipients of our mission-related services, and help inform the organization of trends that may impact the organization.

The issues raised with the Ombudsman comprise a small slice of data from self-selecting internal and external constituents. Moreover, the role of the Office of the Ombudsman is to provide informal dispute resolution and mediation, and to provide guidance on how best to raise or address issues within the organization. While we do not investigate or determine the veracity of the issues raised, we advocate for a fair process.

The office of Investigations, Compliance and Ethics (ICE) investigates allegations of wrongdoing in administrative, civil and criminal matters. The office of Investigations, Compliance and Ethics provides oversight of the Whistleblower hotlines and fully supports any employee, volunteer or member of management who reports fraud, waste, abuse, Red Cross policy violations, illegal, unsafe or unethical conduct, or any other misconduct within the organization.

Over a decade of providing resources to our constituents, both internally and externally—with growing momentum—is positive. Looking to the future, there will be increased outreach ensuring accessibility and awareness of the resources available to all constituents and enhanced collaboration with the formal parts of the organization regarding conflict resolution programs. We will continue to support the dispute resolution process as the designated confidential, neutral, informal and independent office in the American Red Cross.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Villafañe, Psy.D., CO-OP®
Corporate Ombudsman

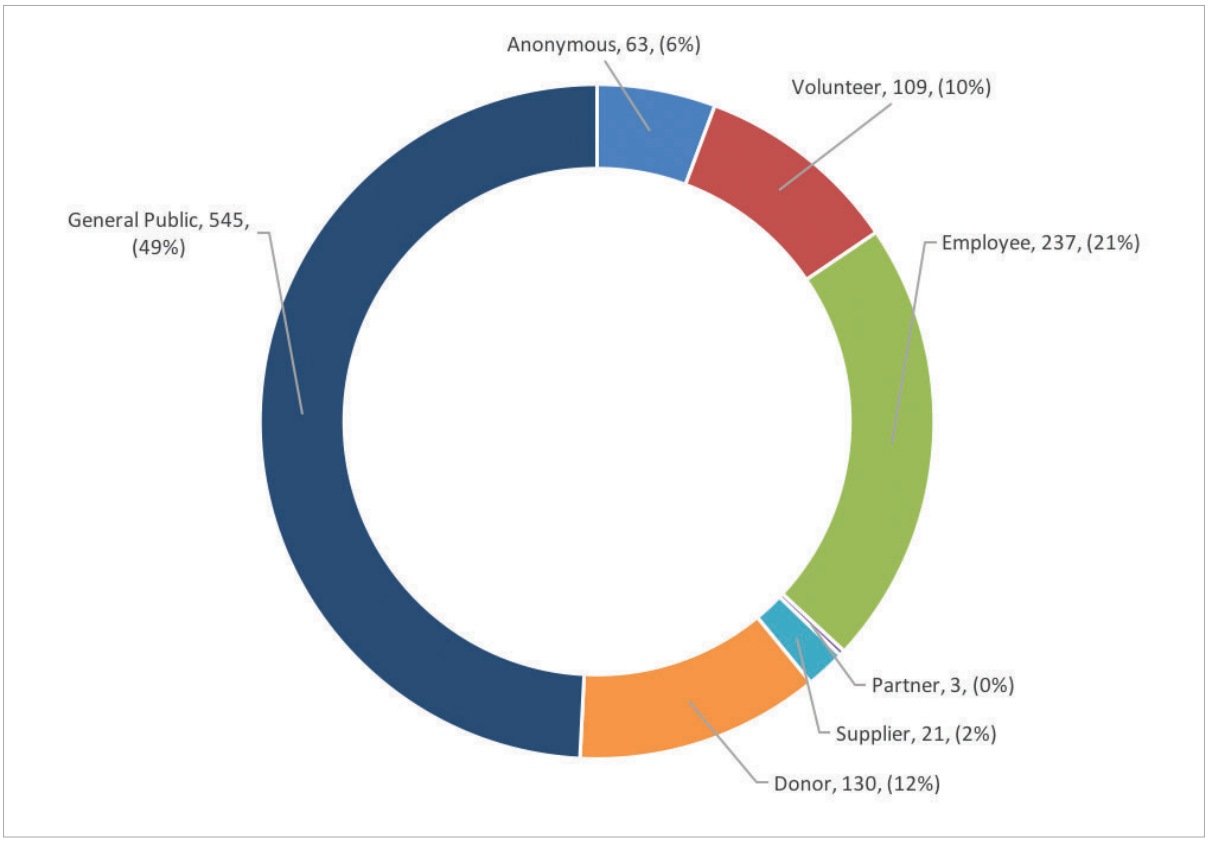
Constituent Profile

It is important to note that an increase or drop in the number of contacts with the Ombudsman Office does not necessarily indicate growing or reduced problems in the organization.

In FY18, 1,108 constituents reached out to the Ombudsman Office, and received resources and support to address their inquiries and issues which was an increase of 312 constituents from FY17.

Figure 1 illustrates the number and composition of internal and external constituents who contacted the Ombudsman Office in FY18 excluding 1,234 recipients of outreach, group facilitations and training. This fiscal year we experienced an increase of General Public inquiries largely due to the exceptionally active Hurricane season in the Fall of 2017.

Figure 1. All Constituents (1,108 Total)

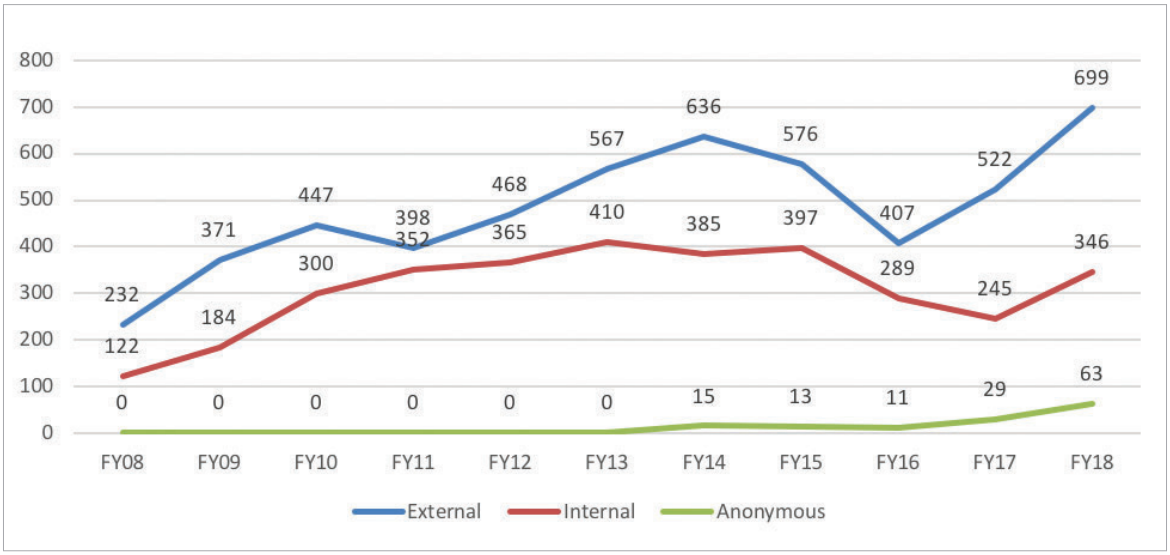


In FY18, 63 percent of contacts receiving Ombudsman resources and support were initiated by external stakeholders, while 31 percent were initiated by internal stakeholders. The remaining six percent of contacts, identified as "anonymous", represents 63 contacts compared to 29 anonymous contacts in FY17.

External constituent contacts are categorized as government, current external partners, suppliers (prospective), blood donors, financial donors, and the general public. Internal constituent contacts are categorized as employees, volunteers, former employees, former volunteers, current contractors, and retirees.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship of internal, external and anonymous contacts since the Ombudsman Office began its reporting in FY08.

Figure 2. Internal and External Constituents by Fiscal Year



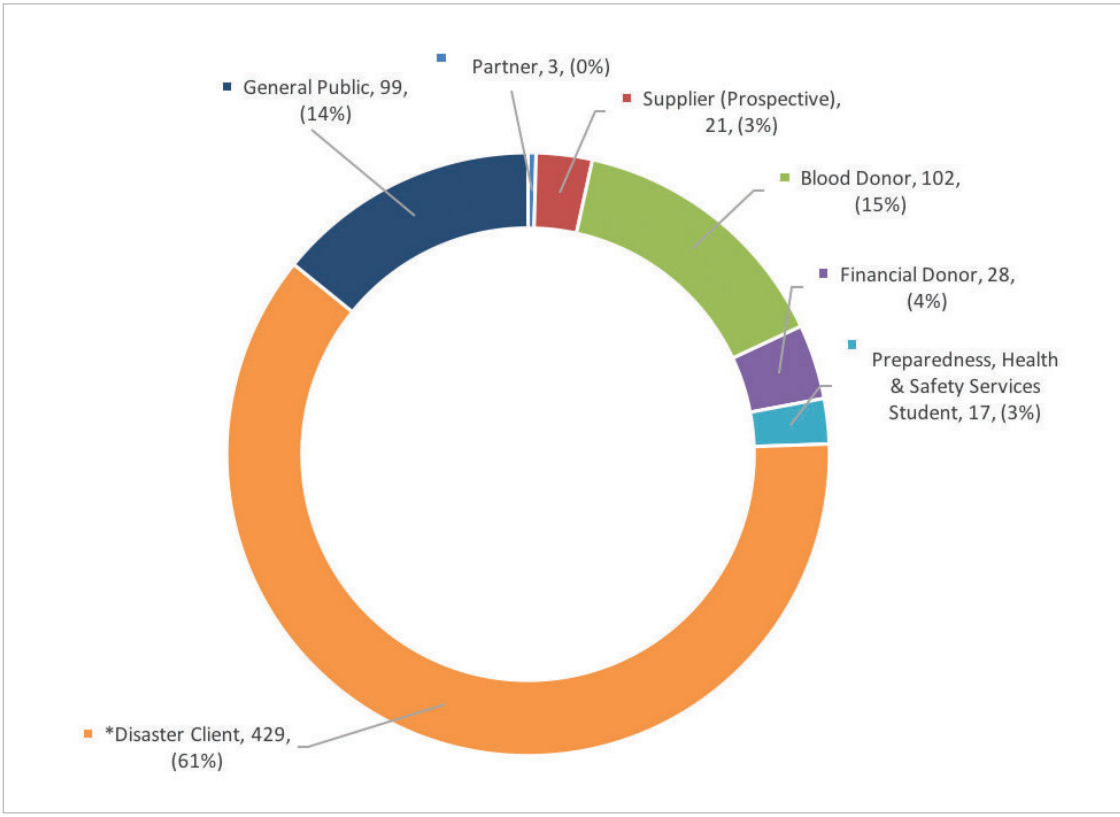
External Constituents

In FY18, a total of 699 external constituents contacted the Office of the Ombudsman with concerns or inquiries and received support and resources. We do not collect detail information on those that wish to remain anonymous, and they are not included in this part of the report.

During FY18, Red Cross donors accounted for 12 percent of all constituents contacting the Ombudsman Office and 19 percent of external constituents. Of the 130 donors reaching out to the Office of the Ombudsman, 102 were blood donors and 28 were financial donors with various concerns. It should be noted that the blood donor contacts are from a base of nearly 2.8 million volunteer donors nationwide.

Figure 3 illustrates the various types of external constituent contacts.

Figure 3. External Constituents (699 Total)



*In FY18, there were 377 constituents requesting resources related to the Hurricane Harvey Immediate Assistance program.

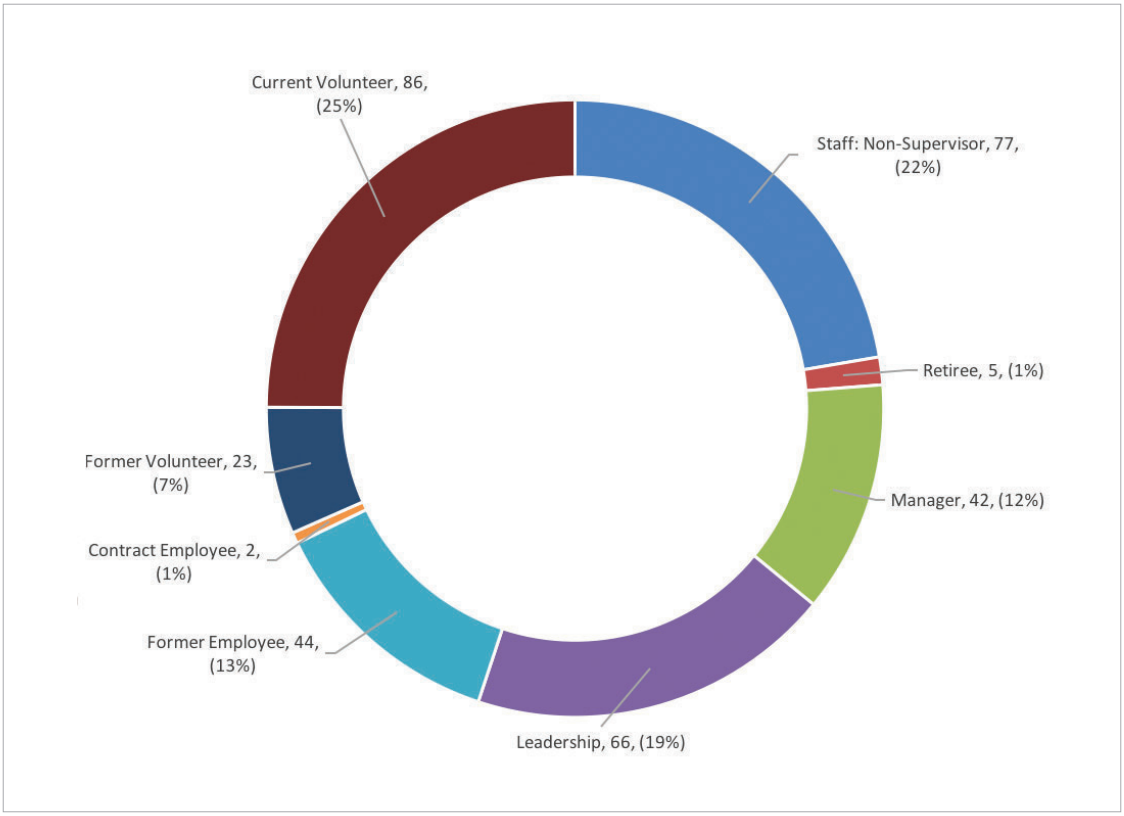
Internal Constituents

In FY18, 187 current employees contacted the Ombudsman Office. Employees comprised 54 percent of internal constituents and 21 percent of all constituents to the Ombudsman Office in FY18. We do not collect detailed information on those that wish to remain anonymous and they are not included in this part of the report.

Leadership is defined as someone who supervises multiple teams or is in an executive role. A manager is responsible for a program, supervises work groups or teams with deliverables.

Figure 4 reflects internal constituents by category and role within the Red Cross.

Figure 4. Internal Constituents (345 Total)



Issues

Reasons for Contacting the Ombudsman Office

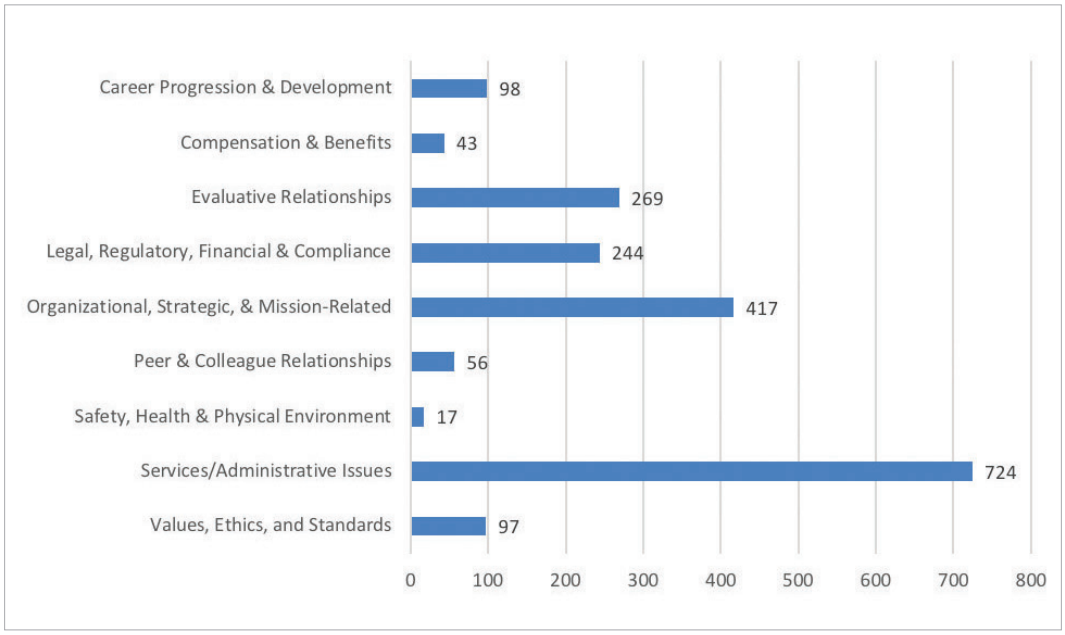
In FY18, a total of 1,965 issues were brought to the attention of the Ombudsman Office. The issues are represented according to the uniform reporting categories promulgated for the organizational ombudsman field by the International Ombudsman Association (IOA). The reporting categories are designed to classify the types of issues for which people use Ombudsman services and help identify trends for consistent reporting.

It is important to note that the issue count reflects: individual contacts to the Office of the Ombudsman raising multiple concerns; group facilitations to address organizational issues; and issues raised by constituents who have reached out to the Office of the Ombudsman.

Figure 5. Issue Identification

All Issues Identified Under IOA Uniform Reporting Categories

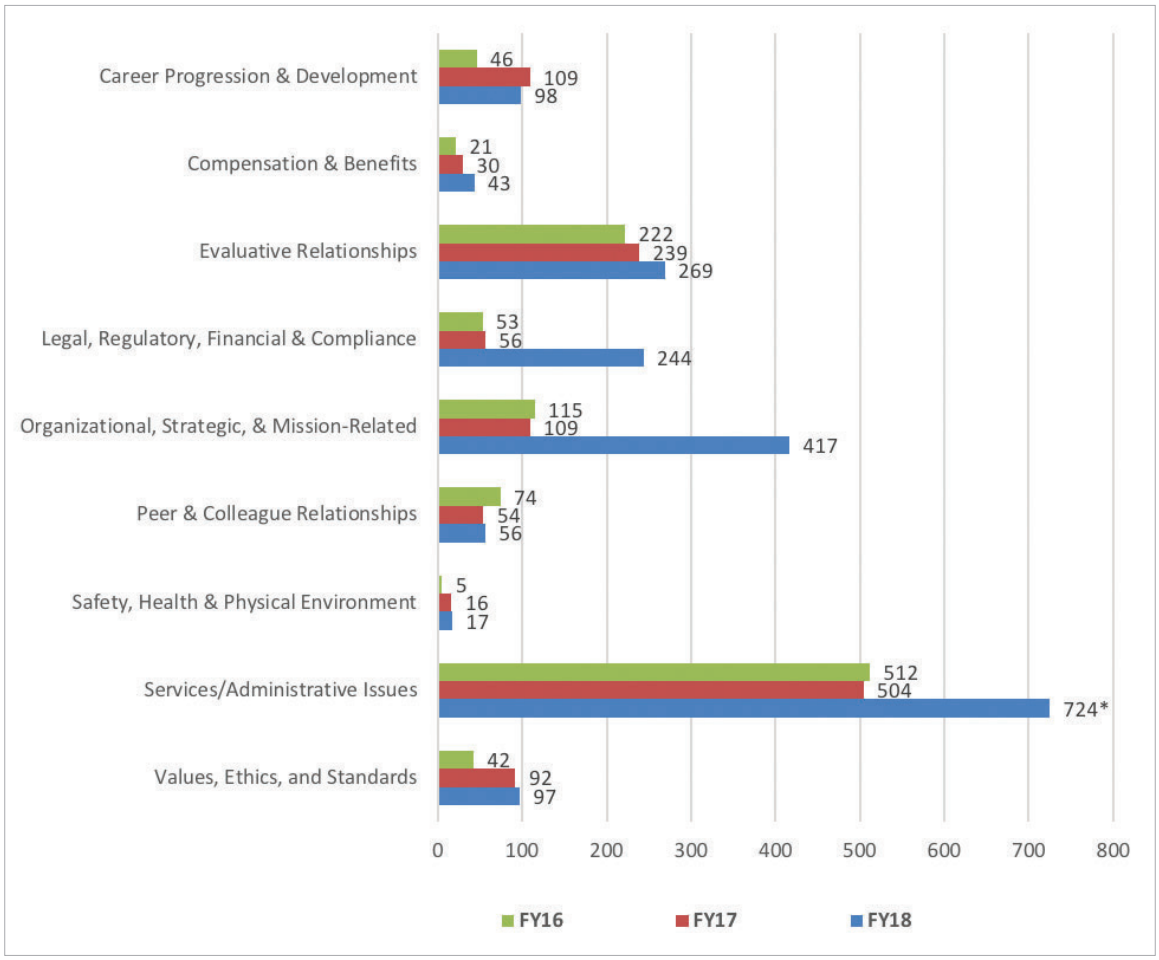
(1,965 Total)



It is important to note, in FY18, there were 377 constituents requesting support from the Ombudsman Office for the Hurricane Harvey Immediate Assistance program. Using the uniform reporting categories issued by IOA, 764 issues were predominantly categorized as: Organizatonal, Strategic, and Mission-Related; Services/Administrative Issues; Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance; and Values, Ethics, and Standards.

Figure 6 illustrates the issues raised across the past three fiscal years (FY16-FY18)

Figure 6. Issues – Yearly Comparison



*It is important to note that Services/Administrative Issues inquiries and concerns include requests from external constitutents during the active hurricane season in the Fall of 2017.

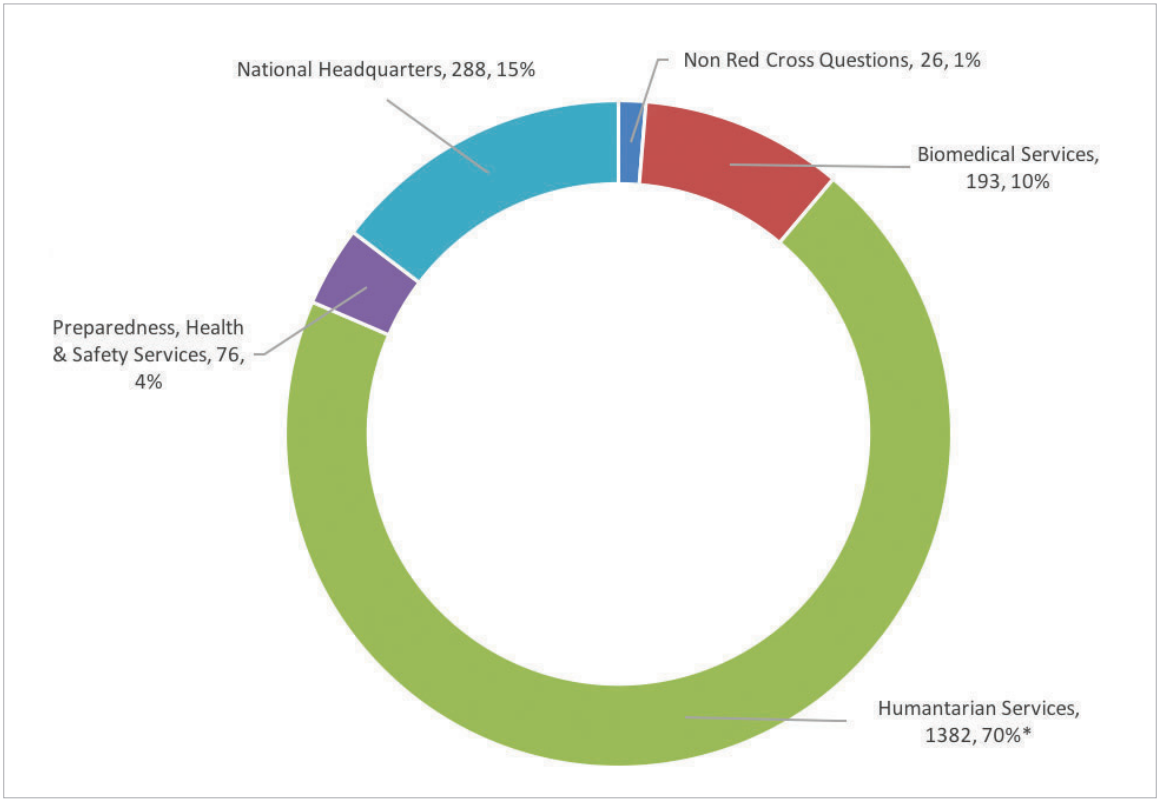
Issues Per Organizational Unit

Figure 7 reflects the number and percentage of issues raised in FY18 pertaining to Red Cross organizational units. In FY18, Humanitarian Services includes: International Services, Disaster Cycle Services, Service to the Armed Forces, and the Office of Volunteer Services. Biomedical Services includes inquiries and concerns related to Biomedical Regions, National Testing Labs and Biomedical Services Headquarters operations. Issues and concerns related to specific corporate departments have been designated to National Headquarters (NHQ). All issues presented by a constituent have been attributed to the identified primary unit of concern.

In FY18, general questions are associated with the organizational unit. There were 26 questions from the general public inquiring about Red Cross services that were not mission related or related to a corporate department specifically and have not been assigned to an organizational unit.

Figure 7. Issues Per Organizational Unit

(1,965 Total)

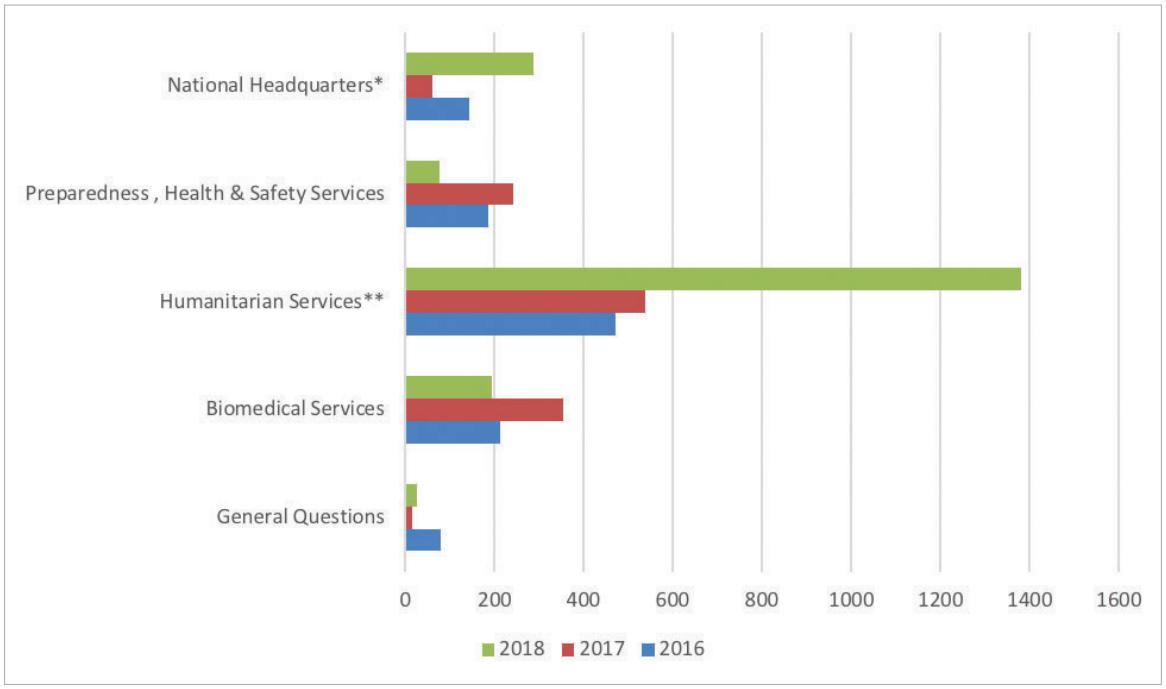


Note that in FY18, there were nine issues brought to the Office of the Ombudsman anonymously without a specific organizational unit designated. These were captured as part of National Headquarters.

*The increase in issues in Humanitarian Services from prior years is due to outreach from constituents requesting resources related to the Hurricane Harvey Immediate Assistance Program.

Figure 8 illustrates issues in relation to the Red Cross organizational lines of service from FY16 through FY18.

Figure 8. Issues Per Unit – Yearly Comparison



*In FY18, general questions were associated with the organizational unit regarding the inquiry, a noted difference in historical data capture. There were nine contacts with issues non attributable to unit, although the issues were significant to the organization and are attached to the National Headquarters unit.

**The increase in issues in Humanitarian Services from prior years is due to outreach from constituents requesting resources related to the Hurricane Harvey Immediate Assistance Program.

Ombudsman Office Actions

The Ombudsman Office provides an independent, neutral, informal and off-the-record, confidential and alternate channel of communication for all constituents to bring forward and resolve workplace issues and concerns without fear of retribution at any level. In FY18, the Ombudsman Office engaged in 39 activities related to outreach, training and group facilitation, reaching approximately 1,234 individuals across the Red Cross.

The Ombudsman Office identifies trends and emerging issues within the organization. While maintaining confidentiality of individual communications, the Ombudsman Office provides "upward feedback" to leadership to proactively address workplace and service delivery issues. This ensures the Red Cross values and its mission are not compromised.

Ombudsman Office cases are met with diverse approaches and actions such as confidential coaching, to help people think strategically through difficult situations. The Ombudsman Office also, as appropriate, uses shuttle diplomacy, in which we reach out to individuals involved in conflict or disagreement independent of each other to help move them toward a mutually satisfactory resolution. We can also bring disputing parties together to mediate an in-person resolution.

In our matrix organization, where reporting structures do not always follow a typical hierarchy, we facilitate processes within a team, or between teams. Group facilitation enhances working relationships, intra-team functioning, inter-team coordination and collaboration. Teams and their leaders look to the Ombudsman Office in its neutral role as subject matter experts in process consultation, group dynamics and facilitation of events involving organizational change and reinforcing conflict resolution strategies.

Ombudsman training includes topics relating to: engaging in difficult conversations, giving effective feedback, communicating with trust, identifying what effective teams need to perform, managing effective group meetings and decision-making, and facilitative leadership skills.

As an enhancement to other parts of the organization, and when appropriate, the Ombudsman Office refers constituents to other departments for formal resolution. In FY18, we helped facilitate 285 referrals to formal parts of the organization such as Concern Connection Line, Human Resources, Office of General Counsel and connected 73 constituents to various departments in the Red Cross. We coached, consulted, and helped constituents with their concerns and determining the best options towards resolution.

The Ombudsman Office provided direct support and guidance throughout the organization in relation to the 2017 hurricane season, our Fundamental Principle of Neutrality, and Diversity & Inclusion issues related to race, age, gender, religion and sexuality. We supported various organizational initiatives such as: employee engagement surveys and feedback sessions, disaster response operations trending issues and concerns, and reinforcing the Red Cross values and guiding behaviors in trainings, group facilitations, and when helping constituents evaluate resolutions.

As we celebrate our eleventh year, the Office of the Ombudsman remains committed to serving the American Red Cross, its employees, volunteers, donors, partners, government, suppliers, and the general public.

Eleven Years of Service

2007 – 2018

5,200 Constituents

Another **16,200** reached through Outreach, Training, and Facilitation

14,000 Issues

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