



2017 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 4100 constituents; have reached over 14,000 constituents through conflict resolution, education, outreach, and facilitation; and we have addressed approximately 12,000 issues.

I am pleased to present the tenth annual report on the activities and initiatives of the Office of the Corporate Ombudsman for fiscal year 2017—from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. This report reflects concerns and inquiries brought to the Ombudsman Office from both internal and external constituents.

In FY17, the Ombudsman Office provided resources and supported 1,209 issues raised by 796 constituents. Through outreach, trainings, and group facilitations we were able to reach 1,211 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 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.

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.  
Corporate Ombudsman

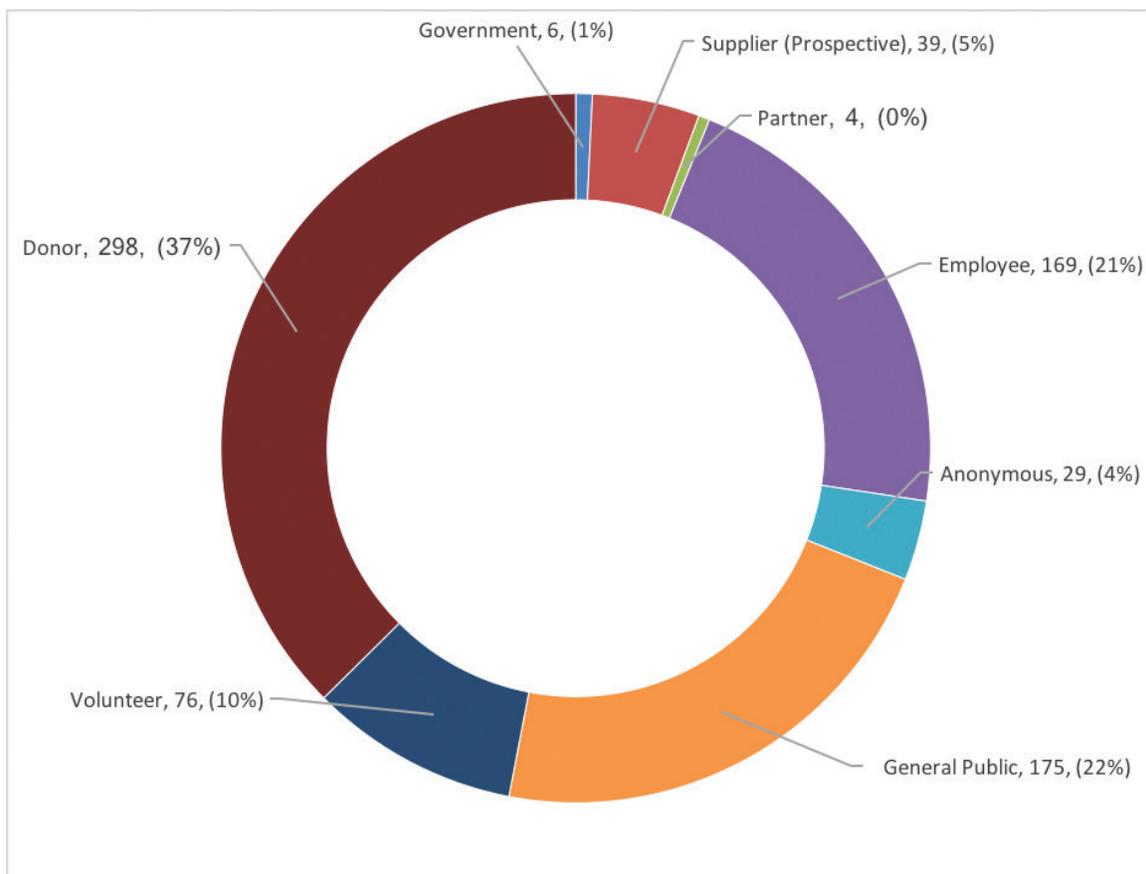
## Constituent Profile

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 FY17, 796 constituents reached out to the Ombudsman Office, and received resources and support to address their inquiries and issues which was an increase of 89 constituents from FY16.

Figure 1 illustrates the number and composition of internal and external constituents who contacted the Ombudsman Office in FY17 excluding 1,211 recipients of outreach, facilitation and training. This fiscal year we modified the Supplier category of contacts to the Ombudsman Office to identify those who were interested in partnering or doing business with the Red Cross as a “prospective” supplier. The largest constituent category is Donor which includes financial and blood donors.

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

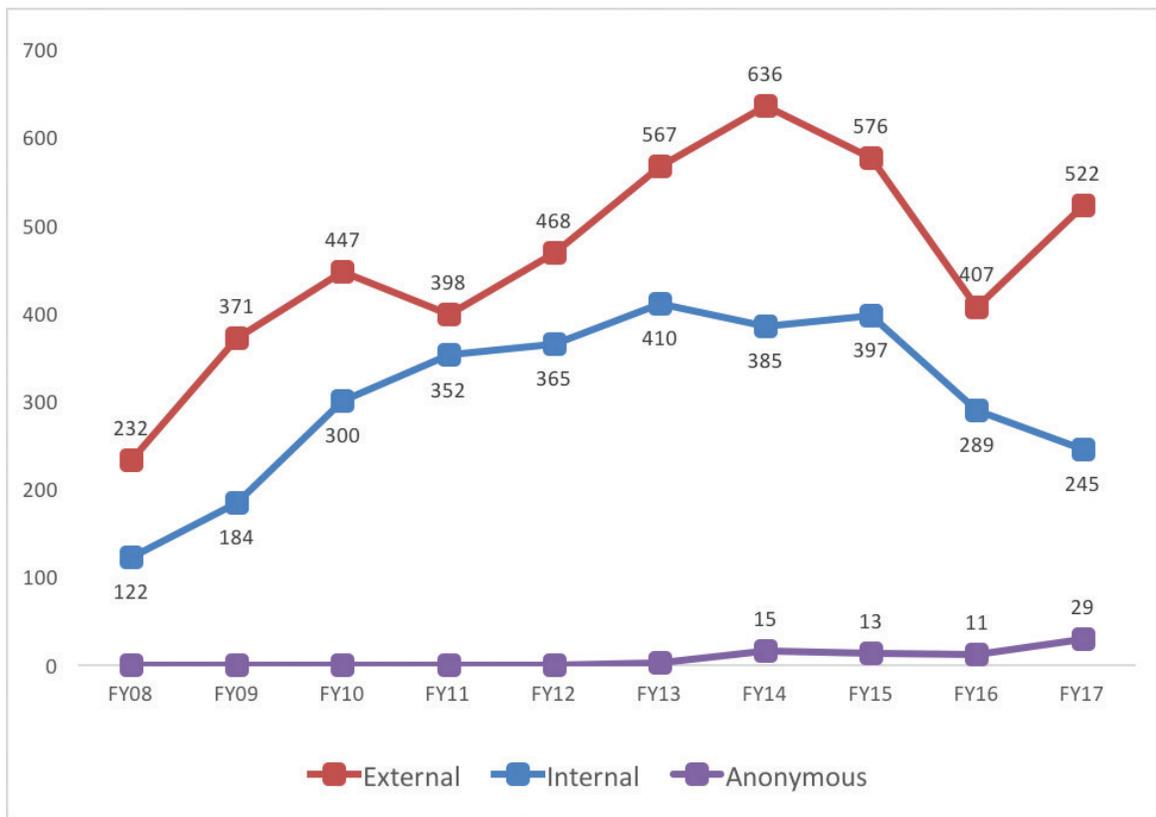


In FY17, 65.5 percent of contacts receiving Ombudsman resources and support were initiated by external stakeholders, while 30.5 percent were initiated by internal stakeholders. The remaining four percent of contacts, identified as “anonymous”, represents 29 contacts compared to 11 anonymous contacts in FY16.

External constituent contacts are categorized as government, current external partners, suppliers (prospective), blood donors, financial donors, and the general public. Internal constituents 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**



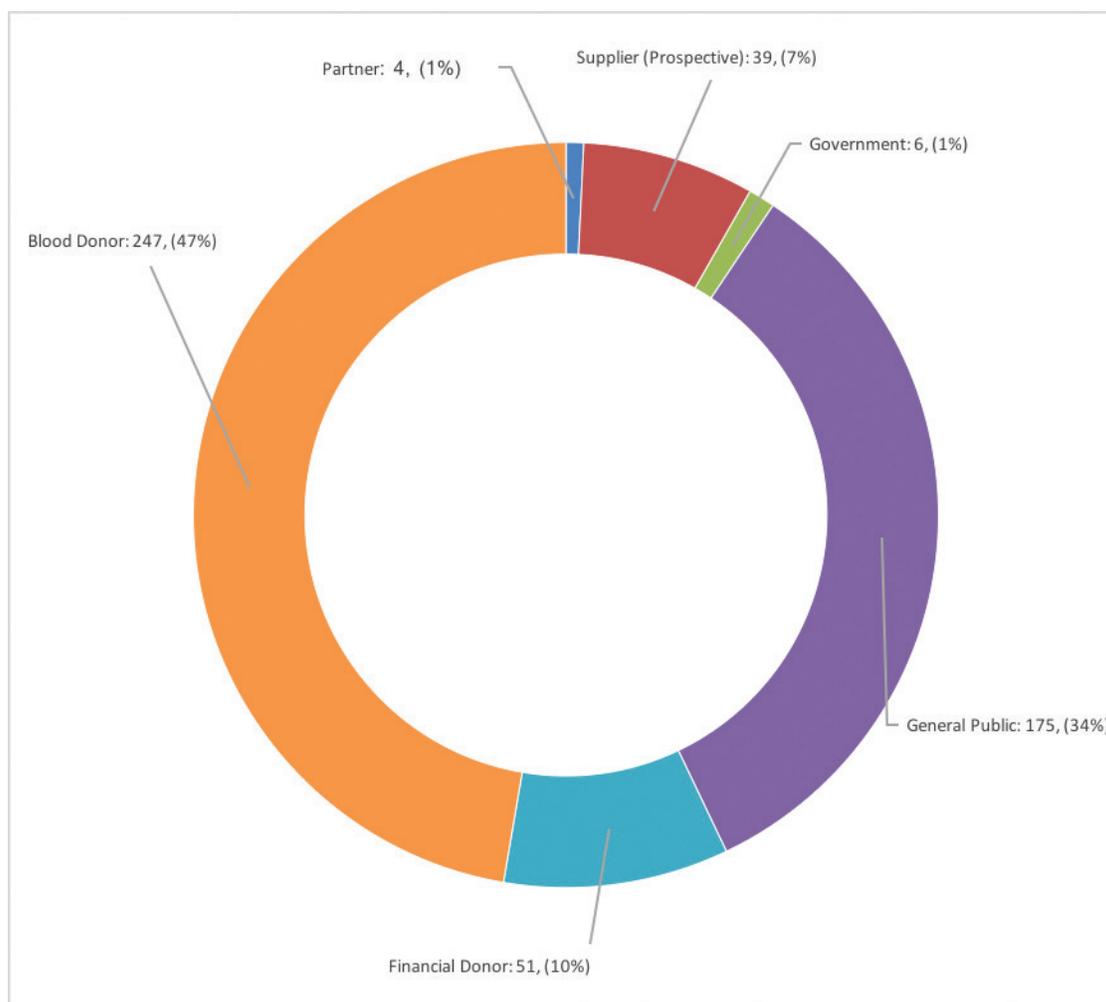
## External Constituents

In FY17, a total of 522 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 FY17, Red Cross donors accounted for 37 percent of all constituents contacting the Ombudsman Office and 57 percent of external constituents. Of the 298 donors reaching out to the Office of the Ombudsman, 247 were blood donors and 51 were financial donors with various concerns. It should be noted that the blood donor contacts are from a base of nearly 2.8 million blood donors nationwide and over a million financial donors. This will be the first year we are differentiating blood and financial donors in our external constituent reporting.

Figure 3 illustrates the various types of external constituent contacts, differentiating blood donors and financial donors.

**Figure 3. External Constituents (522 Total)**  
**Differentiating Donor Constituents**



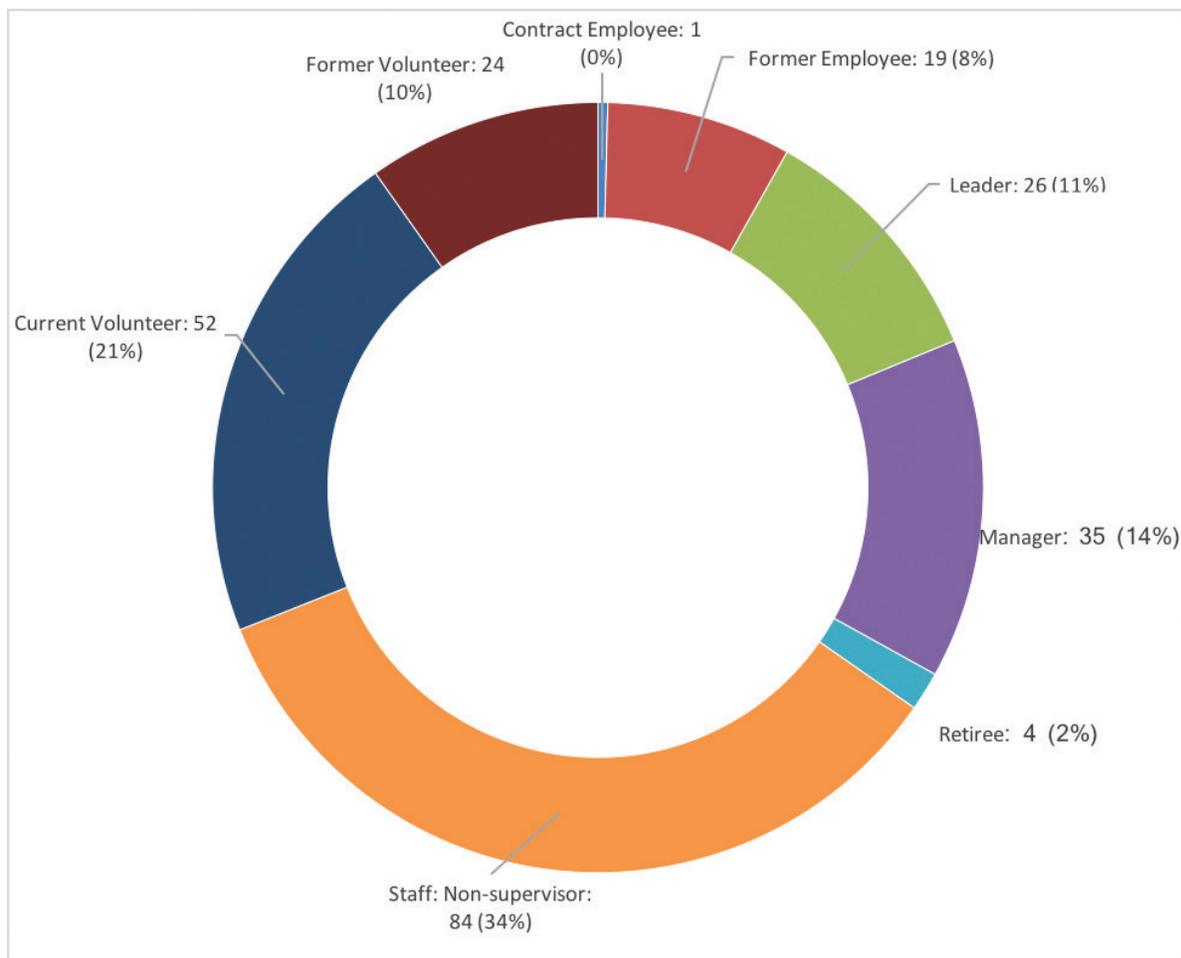
## Internal Constituents

In FY17, 169 current employees contacted the Ombudsman Office. Employees comprised 69 percent of internal constituents and 21 percent of all constituents to the Ombudsman Office in FY17. We do not collect detailed information on those that wish to remain anonymous and they are not included in this part of the report.

Leader 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, differentiating Former Volunteers and Current Volunteers.

**Figure 4. Internal Constituents (245 Total)  
Differentiating Former Volunteers and Active Volunteers**



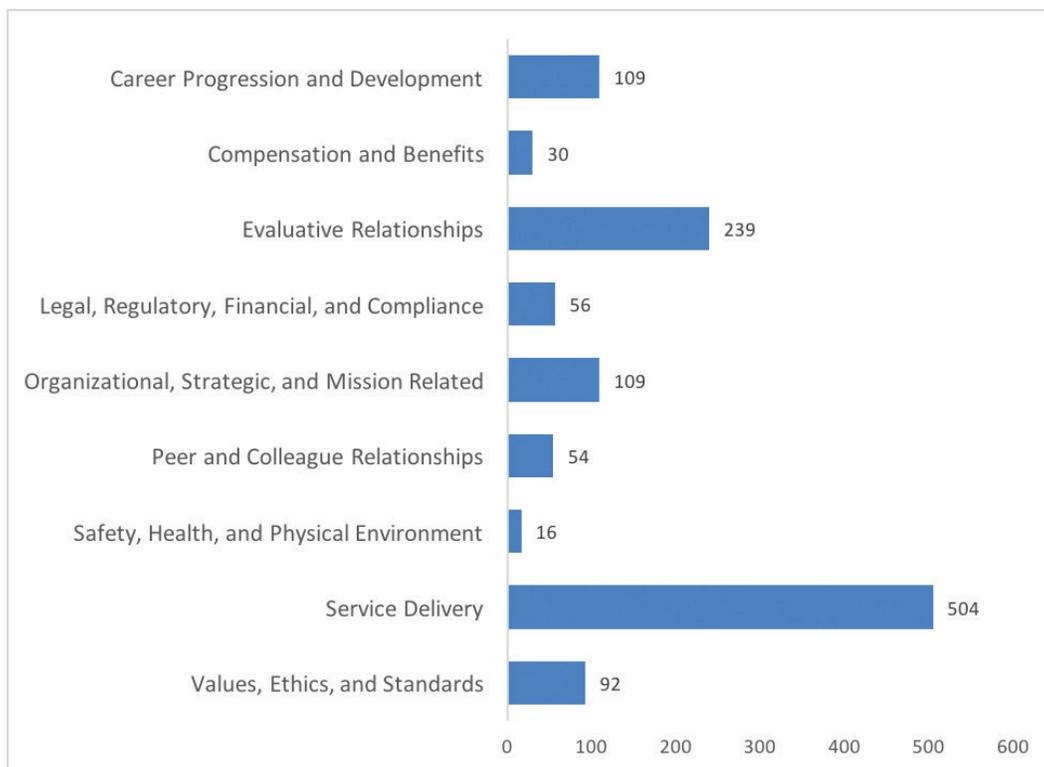
## Issues

### Reasons for Contacting the Ombudsman Office

In FY17, a total of 1209 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 on multiple occasions.

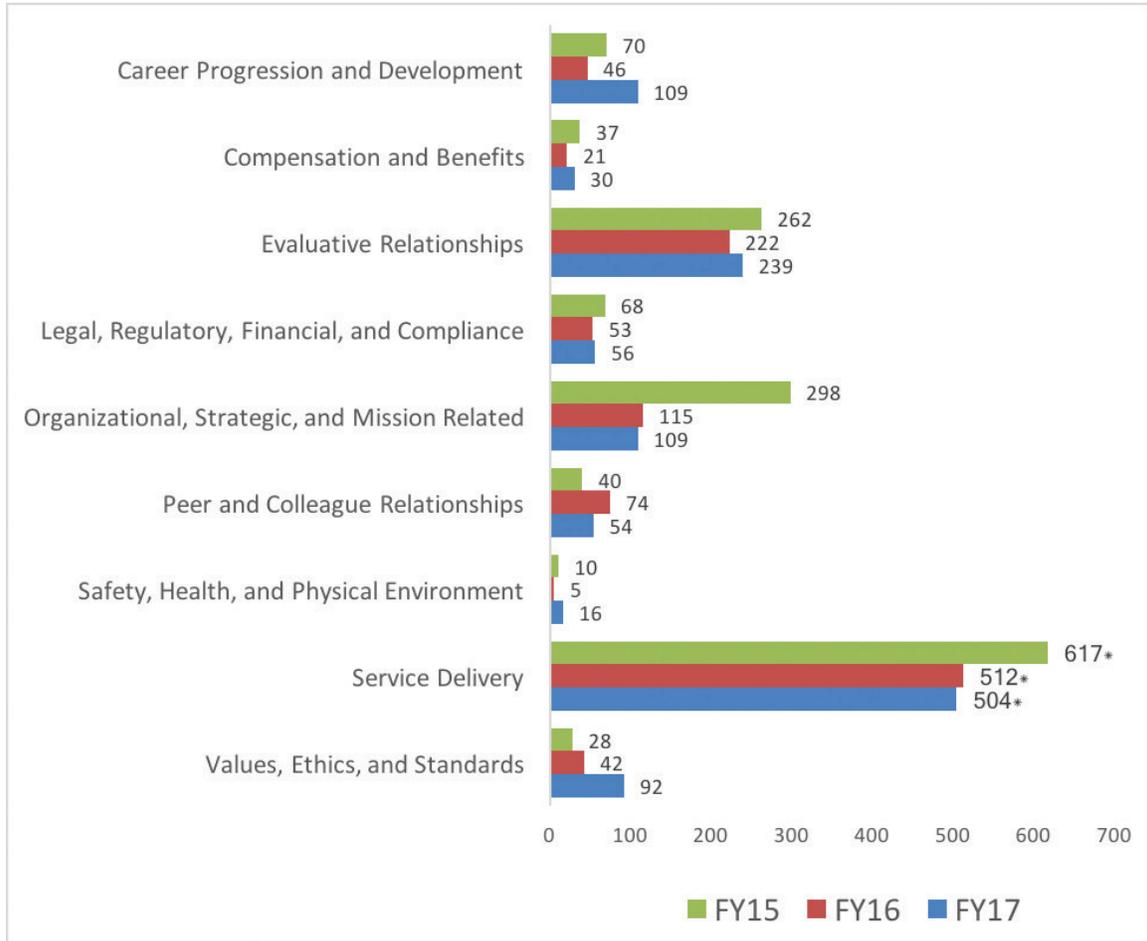
**Figure 5. Issue Identification**  
**All Issues Identified Under IOA Uniform Reporting Categories**  
**(1,209 Total)**



\*In FY17, there were 207 constituents requesting to be removed from Red Cross donor outreach for various reasons. Historically, these donor requests have been included in the Service Delivery category, which may skew the interpretation of mission related services we provide. In FY18, there will be a focus on classifying the reasons for these requests.

Figure 6 illustrates the issues raised across the past three fiscal years (FY15-FY17)

**Figure 6. Issues – Yearly Comparison**



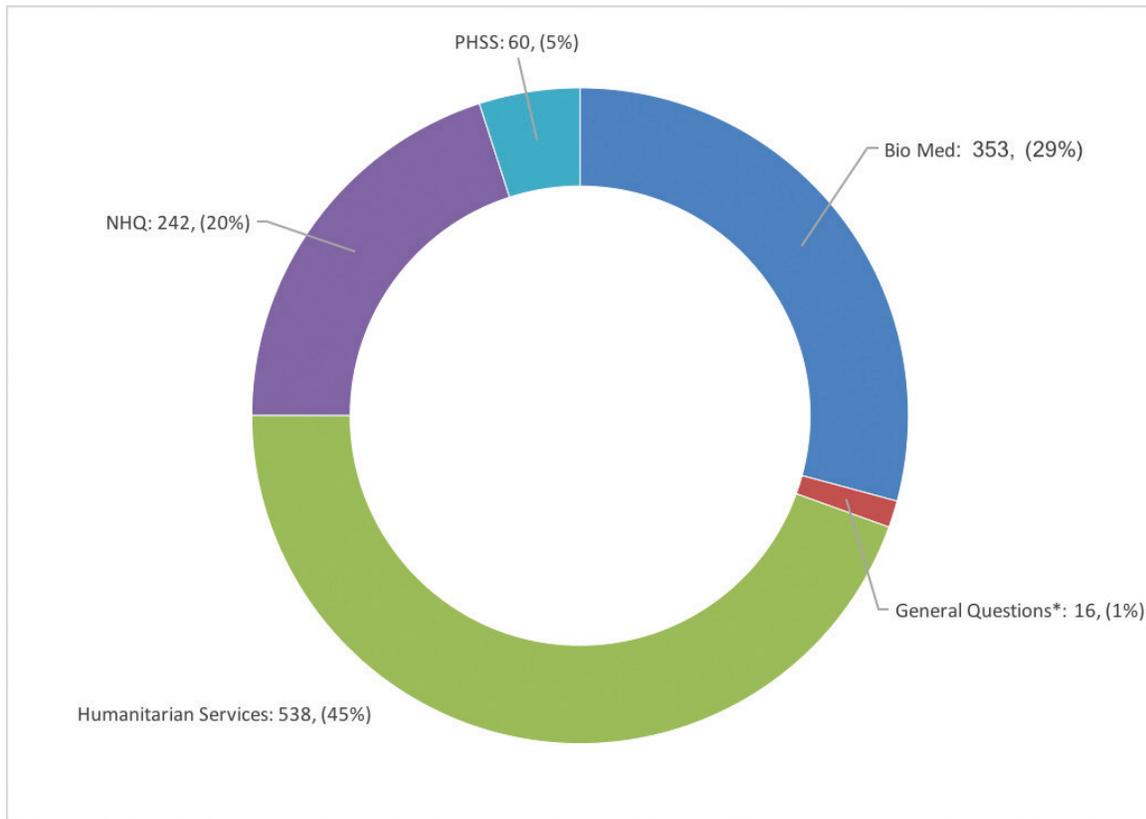
\*It is important to note that Service Delivery inquiries and concerns have historically included requests for removal from the donor automated call system.

## Issues Per Organizational Unit

Figure 7 reflects the number and percentage of issues raised in FY17 pertaining to Red Cross organizational units. In FY17, Humanitarian Services includes: International Services, Disaster Cycle Services, Service to the Armed Forces, and the Office of Volunteer Services. Biomedical Services (Bio Med) 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 FY17, general questions are associated with the organizational unit. There were 16 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.

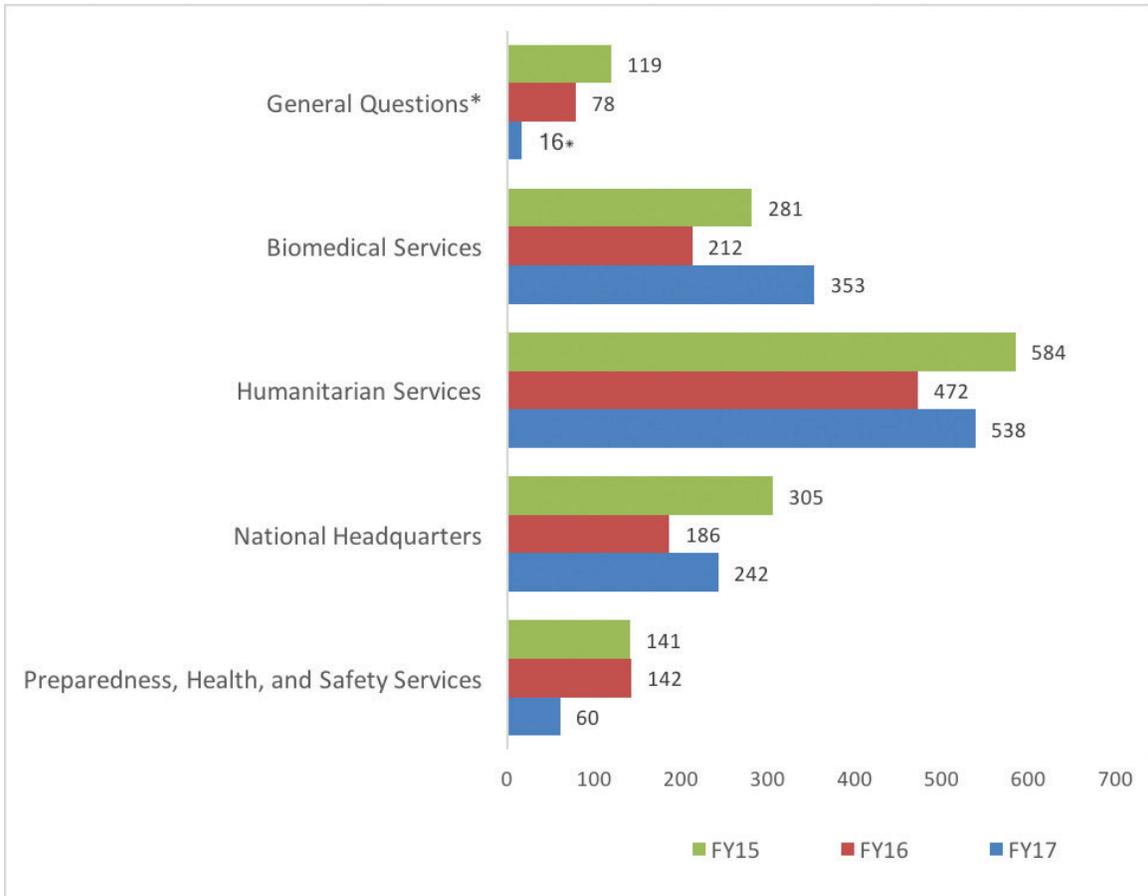
**Figure 7. Issues Per Organizational Unit**  
**(1,209 Total)**



Note that in FY17 reporting, International Services issues have been captured within the Humanitarian Services organizational unit.

Figure 8 illustrates issues in relation to the Red Cross organizational lines of service from FY15 through FY17.

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



\*In FY17, general questions are associated with the organizational unit regarding the inquiry, a noted difference in historical data capture.

## 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 FY17, the Ombudsman Office engaged in 39 activities related to outreach, training and group facilitation, reaching approximately 1,211 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 and mediate a face-to-face resolution.

In our matrix organization, we facilitate processes for handling issues 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 consulting, 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, working effectively in virtual team environments, supporting and managing a volunteer workforce, 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 resolution. In FY17, we provided 408 referrals and provided 54 connections to other parts of the organization. The Ombudsman Office provided direct support and guidance throughout the organization in relation to 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 Engage! feedback sessions, Fair Labor Standards Act dialogue at the local level, disaster response operations trending issues and concerns, and Home Fire Campaign recipient concerns.

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

### Contact Information:

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[redcross.org/Ombudsman](http://redcross.org/Ombudsman)

## Ten Years of Service

2007 – 2017

4,100 Constituents

Another 14,000 Reached Through  
Outreach, Training and Facilitation

12,000 Issues





**American  
Red Cross**