



King County

King County Office of the Ombuds

Government Accountability and
Oversight Committee
September 13, 2022

Briefing Overview

Ombuds Office – What We Do

- Ombuds/Public Complaints
- Ethics Enforcement
- Whistleblower Protection/Retaliation
- Lobbyist Disclosure
- Tax Advisor – Tida Keovernkhone

Ombuds Mission Statement

To promote public confidence in King County government by responding to complaints in an impartial, efficient, and timely manner, and to contribute to the improved operation of County government by making recommendations based upon the results of investigations.

Public Complaints/Tax Advisor KCC 2.52

General government oversight through investigation of administrative acts of administrative agencies

- Jurisdiction: all Executive branch agencies, including the Assessor and Elections
- Exceptions: County Council and their staffs, County Executive and his/her personal staff, the Prosecuting Attorney and his/her staff, Judges and employees of the Judicial branch

Investigate acts that may be contrary to law or regulation, arbitrary, inconsistent, unfair, and otherwise objectionable

Subpoena power, authority to inspect agency premises and examine records, make formal findings and recommendations

Rural and Transit Ombuds specialty functions

Ethics Enforcement KCC 3.04

Ethics Code promotes public confidence in government

- Guide for behavior for county employees
- Prevent conflicts of interest and misuse of county resources

Applies to all county employees – including Council, Executive, and the Prosecuting Attorney – with the exception of the Judicial branch

Formal investigative process resulting in written findings, conclusion and order that may include penalties

- Settlement Option – Early Resolution Agreement
- Reasonable cause findings may be appealed to the Ethics Board

Code Revision Project

Whistleblower Protection KCC 3.42

Roadmap for employees to report “Improper Governmental Action,” and retaliation

Applicable to all county employees, with the exception of the Judicial Branch

Improper Governmental Action includes violation of law, ordinance, or rule; gross waste of public funds; gross mismanagement; and/or creates a substantial danger to the public health or safety

Formal process that results in written findings, action plans, and may include penalties in egregious cases

Mediated settlements

Lobbyist Disclosure KCC 1.07

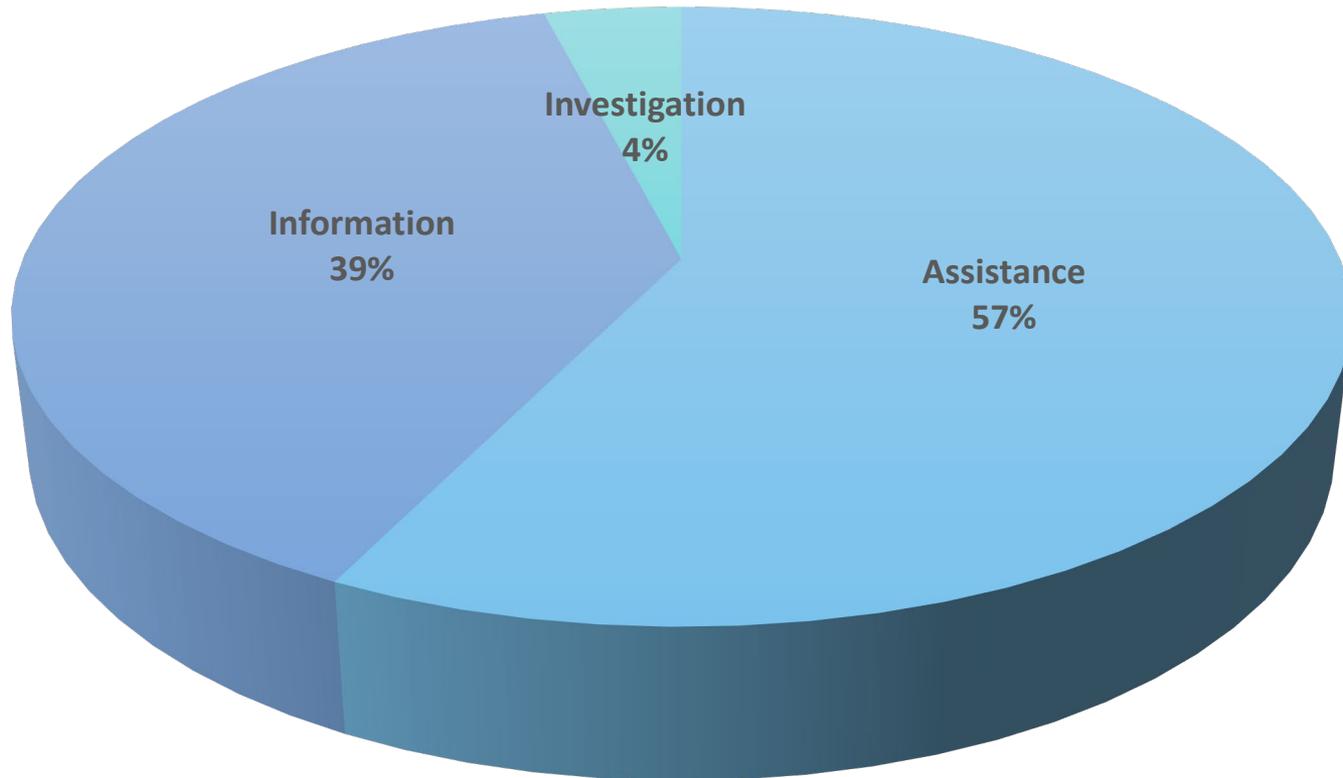
Full disclosure of lobbyists and lobbyists' employees in order to protect the openness and integrity of legislative process

Requires registration of paid lobbyists and some grassroots lobbyists

Formal process that may include penalties

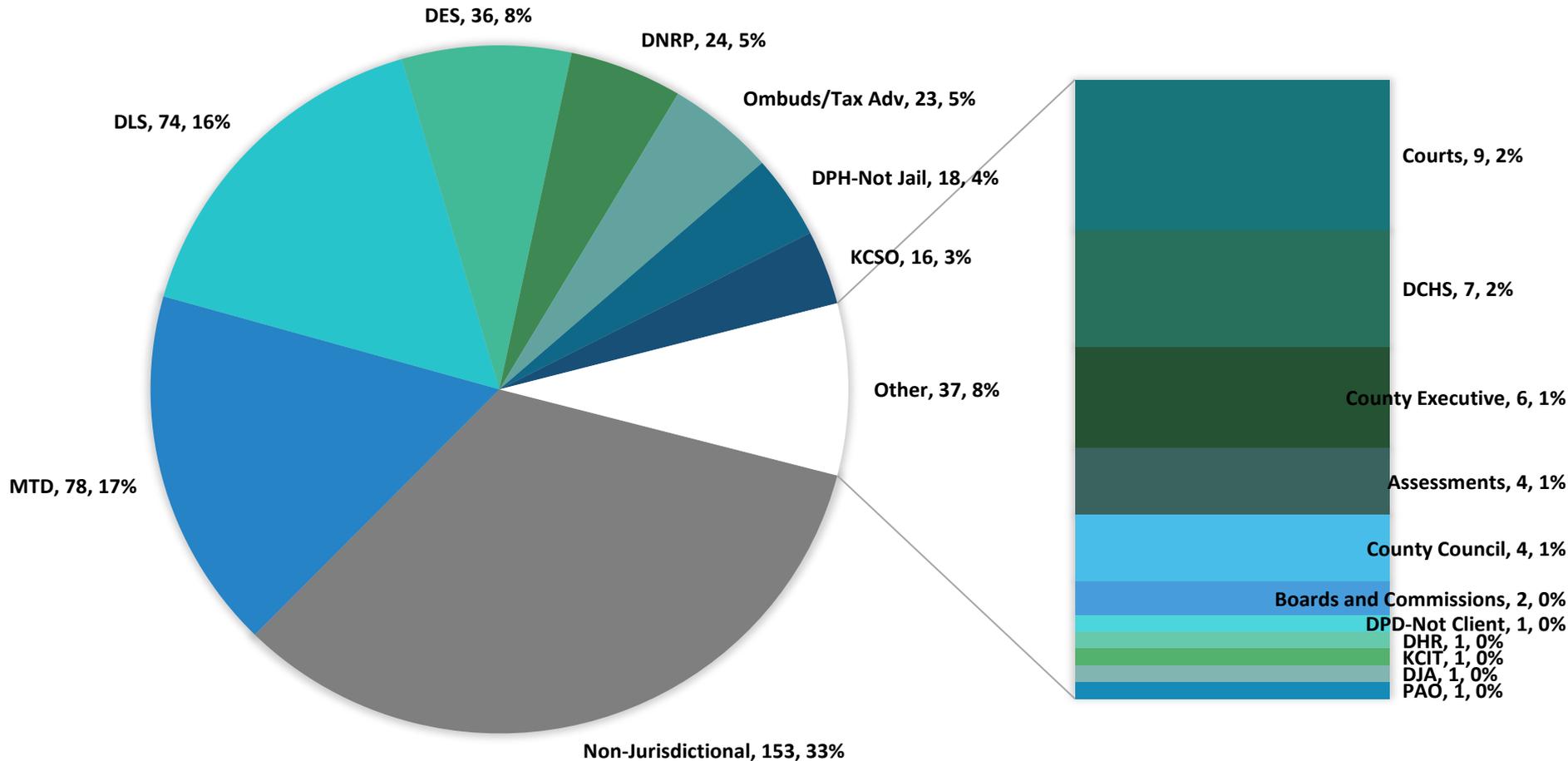
Findings may be appealed to Hearing Examiner

Ombuds Inquiries by Case Type in 2021



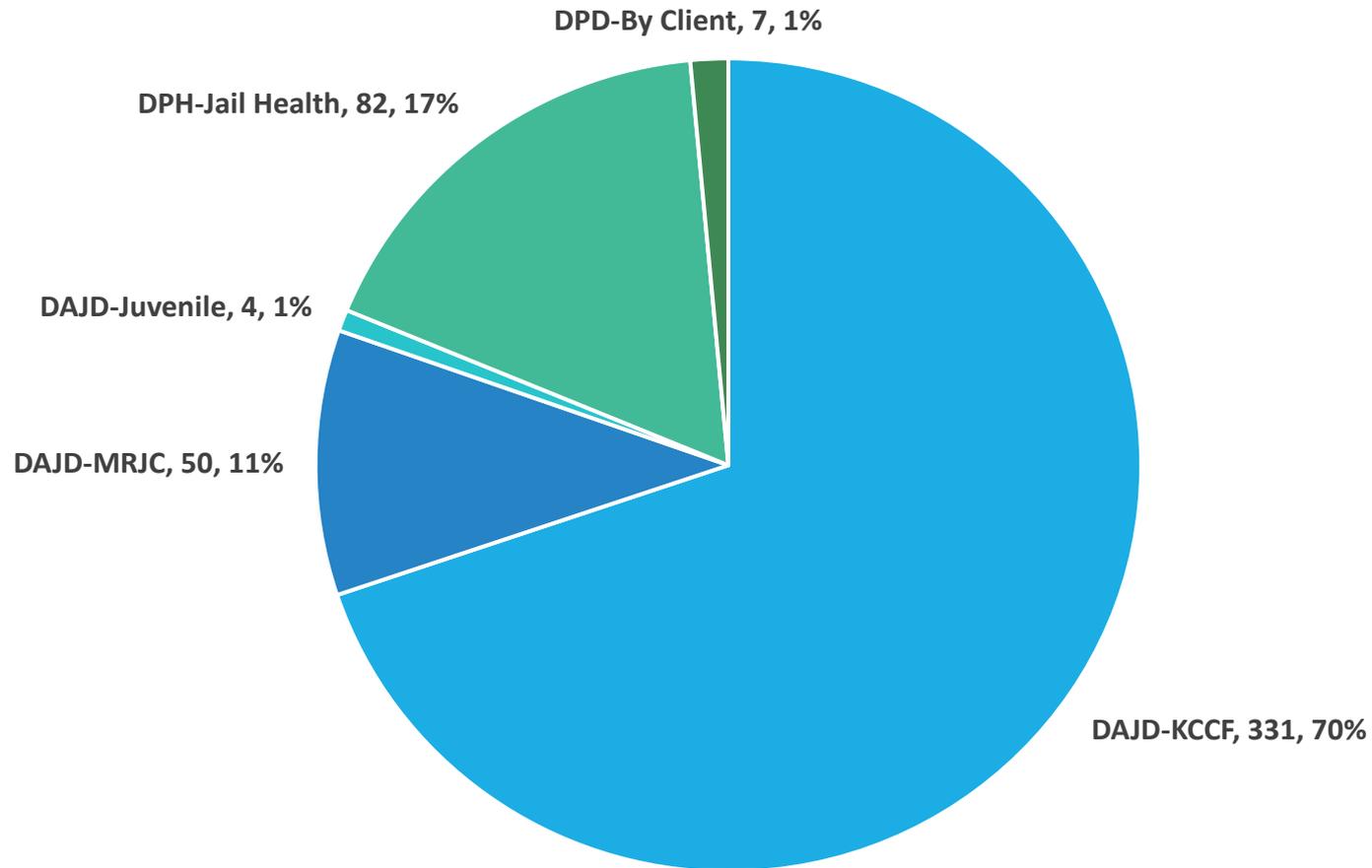
2021 Ombuds Matters by Agency

(excluding DAJD, Jail Health, and clients of DPD; total=466)



2021 Ombuds Matters From DAJD, Jail Health & DPD Clients

(Total=474)



Tax Advisor Program

Provide information regarding all aspects of the residential assessment process

Educate taxpayers on relation of assessment process to property taxes

Offer guidance to taxpayers who are considering appeal

eAppeals support

2,076 contacts logged during report period

Case Summaries

Questions?

Office of the Ombuds

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Tax Advisor Office

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