

Josh Kaul
Wisconsin Attorney General



P.O. Box 7857
Madison, WI 53707-7857

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 4, 2021

Office of Open Government Reports Its Year-End Performance Statistics for 2020

MADISON, Wis. - In an effort to continue operating transparently and ensure accountability, the Office of Open Government today reported its year-end performance statistics for January through December 2020.

Completed Activities

- Responded to **628** public records requests (approximately 52 per month);
- Released public records reports, video, and audio files related to **17** officer-involved critical incidents;
- Responded to **438** inquiries on its Public Records/Open Meetings Help Line (PROM). During COVID-19, the office also responded to record-breaking numbers of calls for two consecutive months (**88** calls answered in March, **77** calls answered in April), a large majority of which were related to the application of the open meetings law during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Issued **2** advisories and other website guidance related to the application of the open meetings law during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Issued **58** letters providing guidance concerning open government; and
- Provided **13** trainings and participated in educational presentations to governmental agencies and other outside groups on open government matters, 10 of which were provided in a virtual (remote) setting.

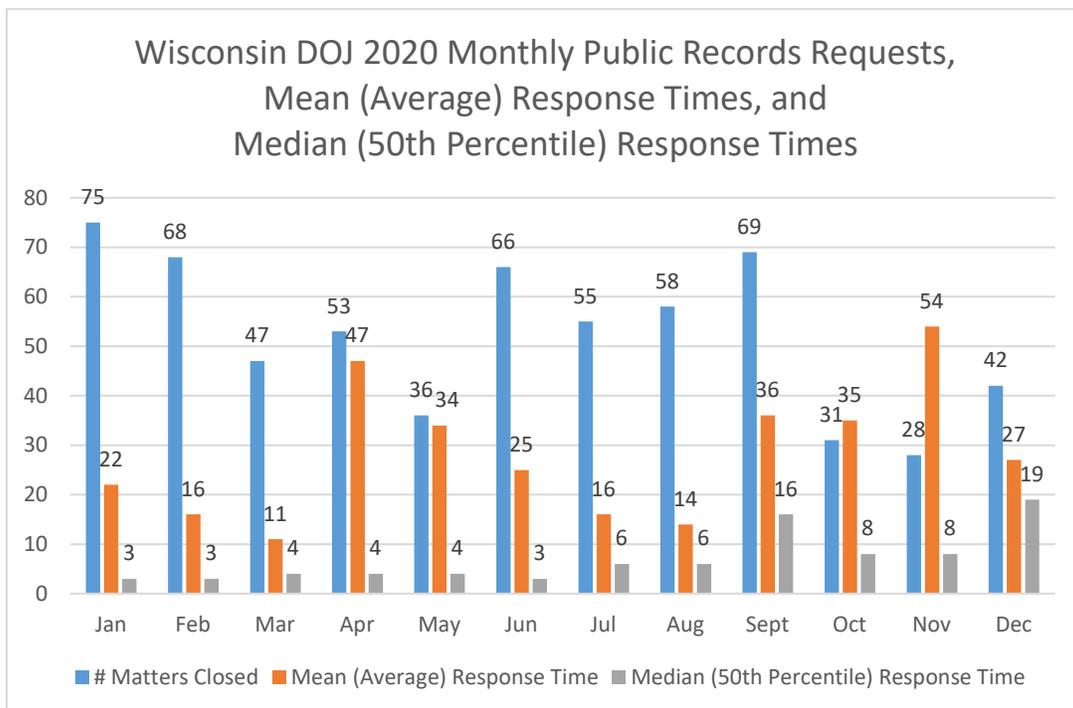
Response Times for Public Records Requests

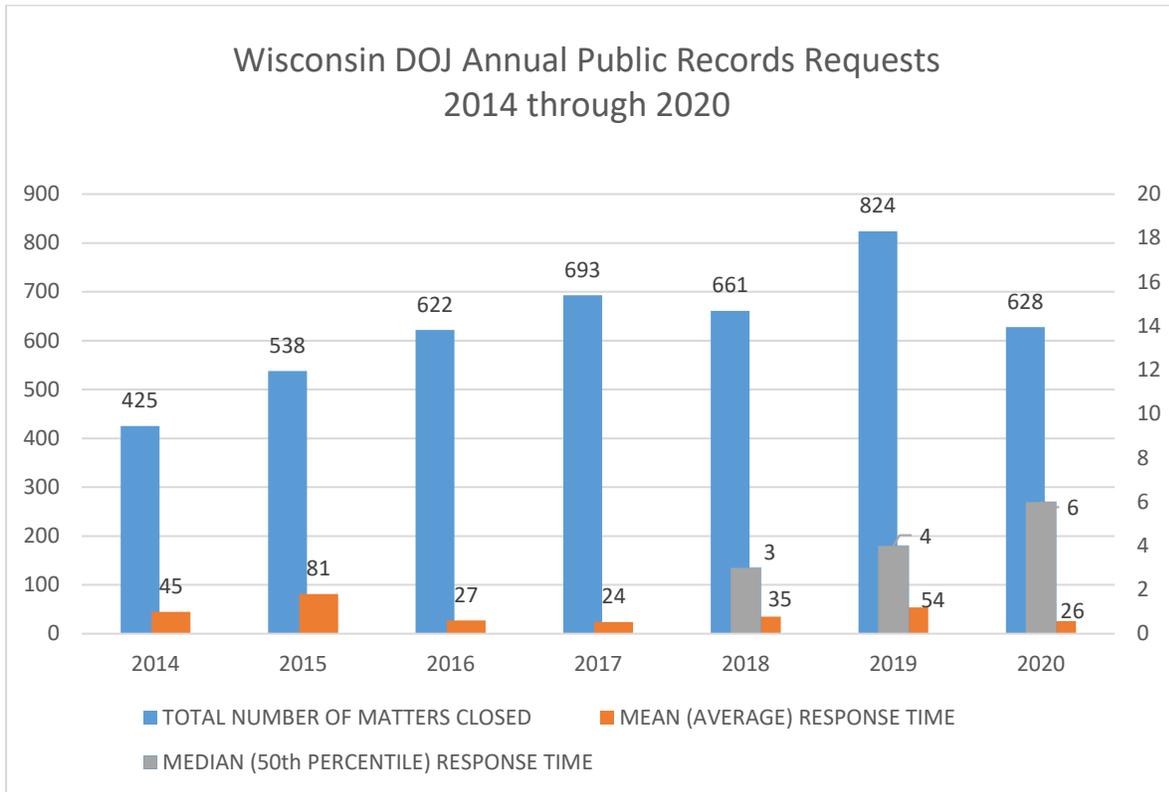
According to the Wisconsin Public Records Law Compliance Guide, “DOJ policy is that 10 working days is generally a reasonable time for responding to a simple [public records] request for a limited number of easily identifiable records.”

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire OOG office staff and most DOJ personnel transitioned to remote working environments. Even so, the office continues to respond to a large percentage of requests within this 10-working-day guideline while at the same time processing a high volume of requests, including a considerable number of complex requests. During 2020, the office:

- Responded to approximately **64%** of public records requests within the 10-working-day guideline.
- Responded to **48%** of all requests in 5 calendar days or less and responded to **75%** of all requests in 28 calendar days or less.
- Mean (average) response time for all responses was **26 calendar days**, which includes those that were broader in scope or required time-intensive review.
- Median (50th percentile) response time for all responses was **6 calendar days**, meaning that the office responded to 50% of requests in 6 days or less.

As seen in the following two charts (below and next page), the office responded to **628** public records requests in 2020, a large number of which were complex and required time-intensive review, and responded to over 50% of all requests within **6 calendar days** while transitioning to, and maintaining, a remote work environment during the COVID-19 pandemic.





Continuing Efforts

The office will continue to increase the public’s access to public records by posting the following information on its [website](#):

- A snapshot of public records requests pending on Monday of each week;
- The average and median monthly response times for public records requests;
- Responses to citizen correspondence, posted quarterly;
- Specific responses to public records requests that may be of particular public interest or may be the subject of multiple requests for the same records;
- Records related to Officer-Involved Critical Incidents;
- “Ask the OOG” columns for frequently asked questions (FAQ’s); and
- Other open government information and resources.

The office reports directly to the Office of Attorney General. The office is headed by Assistant Attorney General Paul Ferguson, and is supported by Assistant Attorney General Sarah Larson, two paralegals, one program and policy analyst, and several other attorneys and DCI employees within DOJ who regularly interact with the office.

For more information, visit the office’s [website](#) or contact the office at 608-267-2220.