NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 31, 2022

Office of Open Government Reports
Its Year-End Performance Statistics for 2021

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 2021.

Completed Activities

- Responded to 690 public records requests (approximately 57.5 per month);
- Released public records reports, video, and audio files related to 11 officer-involved critical incidents;
- Responded to 317 inquiries on its Public Records/Open Meetings Help Line (PROM);
- Issued 2 advisories, one related to open meetings during COVID-19, and the other related to public records and Marsy’s Law;
- Issued 80 letters providing guidance concerning open government; and
- Provided 9 trainings and participated in educational presentations to governmental agencies and other outside groups on open government matters.

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 maintain a large percentage of responses fulfilled within this 10-working-day
guideline while at the same time responding to a high volume of requests. During 2021, the office:

- Responded to approximately 48% of public records requests within the 10-working-day guideline.
- Responded to approximately 29% of all requests in 3 calendar days or less and responded to approximately 41% of all requests in 7 calendar days or less.
- Mean (average) response time for all responses was 45 **calendar days**, which includes those that were broader in scope or required time-intensive review.
- Median (50th percentile) response time for all responses was 12 **calendar days**, meaning that the office responded to 50% of all requests in 12 days or less.

As seen in the two charts (below and next page), the office responded to 690 public records requests in 2021, the third highest number since at least 2014, a large number of which were complex and required time-intensive review. The office continues to respond to a high volume of requests while working remotely 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 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 opengov@widoj.gov.