

# AG Schimel: Reports Office of Open Government performance

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MADISON, Wis. – In an effort to continue operating transparently and ensure accountability, the Office of Open Government today reported its performance statistics for the first half of 2018.

“When I took office in January 2015, I pledged to promote open government by making DOJ more responsive and accountable,” said Attorney General Schimel. “Since then, we’ve made great strides in the commitment to let more sun shine through government.”

Below is a summary of the office’s activities for the first six months of 2018.

## Completed Activities

Responded to 334 public records requests (approximately 50 to 60 per month);  
Released public records reports, video, and audio files related to 7 officer-involved critical incidents;  
Responded to 246 inquiries on its Public Records/Open Meetings Help Line (PROM);  
Issued 40 letters providing guidance concerning open government;  
Issued two advisories, one providing public records guidance to Office of School Safety grant applicants, and the other providing guidance to the public about public records fees;  
Released two updated and comprehensive open government compliance guides (Wisconsin Public Records Compliance Guide and Wisconsin Open Meetings Compliance Guide), containing updated laws, cases, and Attorney General Opinions since early 2016;  
Provided four trainings on open government matters to governmental entities; and,  
The Attorney General issued a formal opinion on public records law notice.

## Response Times for Public Records Requests

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

The office continues to increase the percentage of responses fulfilled within this ten-working-day guideline. In addition, the office’s average response times continue to decrease. During the first half of 2018, the office:

Responded to approximately 72% of public records requests within the 10-working-day guideline.

This represents an increase of approximately 13% in the number of responses processed in 10 working days, as compared to this time last year.

Responded to over half of all requests in 3 calendar days or less.

Average response time for all responses was 11 calendar days, which includes those requests that were broader in scope or required time-intensive review.

This represents a 21-day decrease in average response times for all requests, as compared to this time last year.

The office also continued the trend of decreasing response times while increasing the total number of responses handled each year.

## Continuing Efforts

In 2017, the office also took on a number of reforms to increase the public’s access to public records and will continue to do so by posting the following information on its website:

A snapshot of all public records requests pending on Monday of each week;

The average monthly response time for public records requests;

Responses to all 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 Office Involved Critical Incidents;

OOG’s internal policies and procedures; and,

“Ask the OOG” columns for frequently asked questions (FAQ’s).

The office was created in 2015 by Attorney General Brad Schimel and 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, seven DCI employees, and several other attorneys within DOJ who regularly interact with the office.

For more information, visit the office's website or contact the office at 608-267-2220.