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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG Schimel Announces Record-Breaking Accomplishments & Reforms for Open Government in 2017

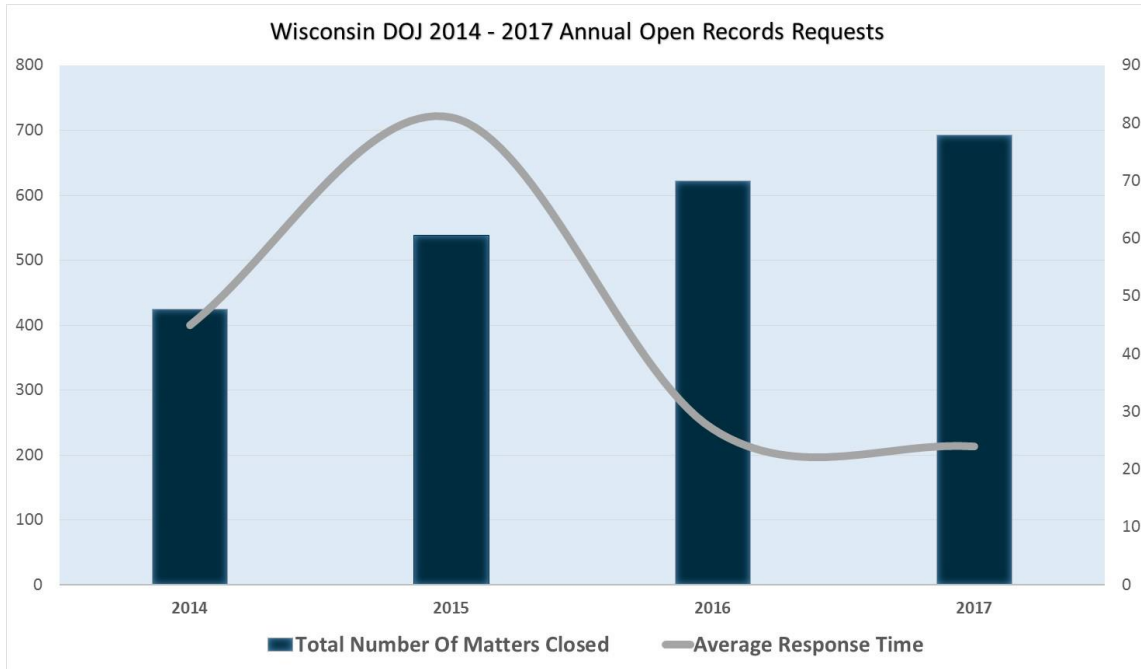
MADISON, Wis. – Today, Attorney General Brad Schimel is announcing record-breaking benchmarks and accomplishments of the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Office of Open Government (OOG) in 2017. Attorney General Schimel created OOG in 2015 and dedicated significant agency resources towards promoting open government across the state.

“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, our Office of Open Government has made great strides towards promoting open government, and serves as a statewide model and a resource to citizens and state and local government officials. All of these reforms—reducing response times, posting more public records online, and dedicating employees to open-government work—are sensible and serve the significant public interest of open government. Any agency or local unit of government that wishes to undertake similar reforms are always free to contact us for guidance and assistance.”

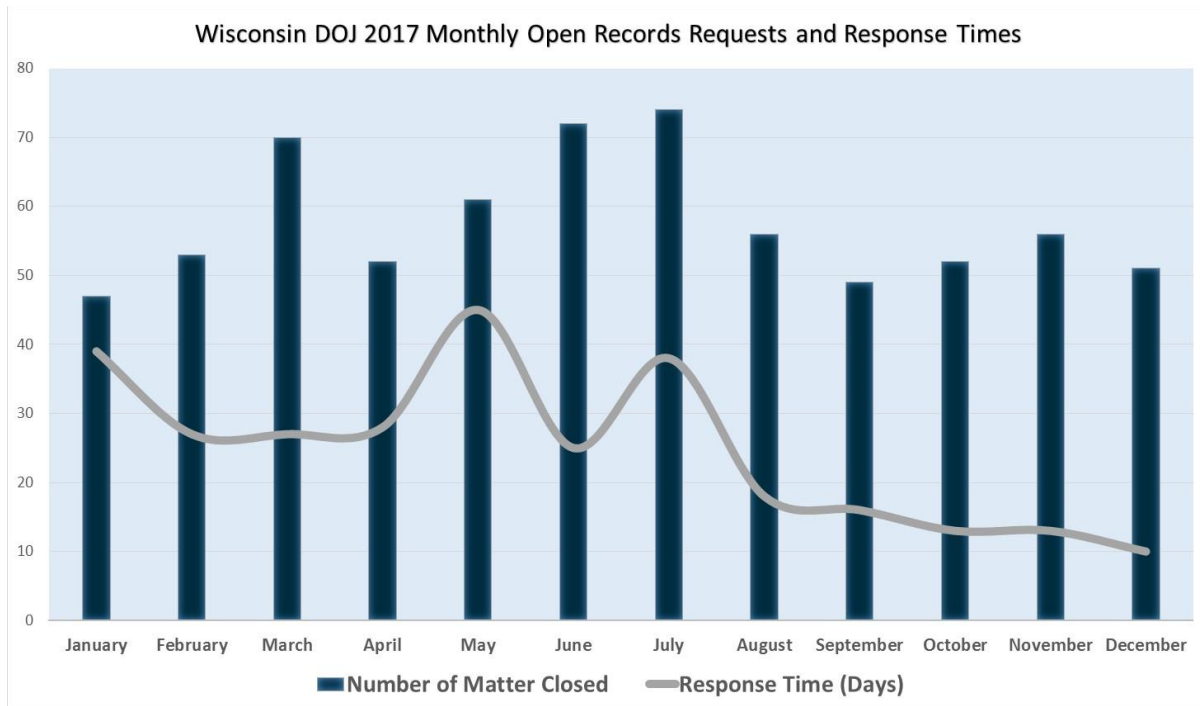
As seen in the chart below, members of the press, public interest groups, and other members of the public have made significantly more public requests year over year. Before Attorney General Schimel took office, the agency received about 400 requests per year. In 2017, the agency broke all previous records by responding to nearly 700 public records requests, **an increase of over 60% since Attorney General Schimel took office.**

In response to the increase of requests made, Attorney General Schimel has dramatically decreased response times, from an average of over 80 calendar days in

2015 to 24 calendar days in 2017. This represents a decrease in response times of nearly 70%.



In 2017, OOG’s performance continued this trend by lowering average response times to between 10 and 13 calendar days in both November and December 2017.



The Office of Open Government also instituted two new reforms not seen anywhere yet at any level of Wisconsin government: posting a weekly description of all public records requests and posting significant public records responses.

Every Tuesday on the [office's website](#), staff post a record of all pending public records requests, along with the requesters' names (when appropriate and available).

Second, in the interest of transparency and efficiency, the office posts 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. The office has posted records concerning the crime lab and sexual assault test kits, promotional items and coins, body cameras, redistricting litigation costs, the John Doe leak investigation, and environmental litigation involving the Department of Natural Resources. As seen from this list, the office does not discriminate in favor of or against any categories of public-records responses.

Moreover, DOJ has been the first state agency to publicly post a spreadsheet containing all of the salaries and pay rates of agency employees from 2009 to 2017 (excluding certain Division of Criminal Investigation special agents, for public safety purposes).

Finally, in 2017, Attorney General Schimel increased the number of employees dedicated to open government. The Office of Open Government now includes two attorneys, two paralegals, and one legal associate. This is in addition to the seven DCI employees, and other assistant attorneys general who regularly support the office.

Summary of Notable Accomplishments in 2017

- Reduced average response times to approximately 10 calendar days;
- Responded to a record number of public records requests – 693;
- Increased dedicated open-government staff size by 66%;
- Released public-records reports, video, and audio files related to 14 officer-involved shootings or deaths;
- Responded to 523 requests on its Open Government Hotline (PROM);
- Issued 54 letters providing guidance concerning open government.