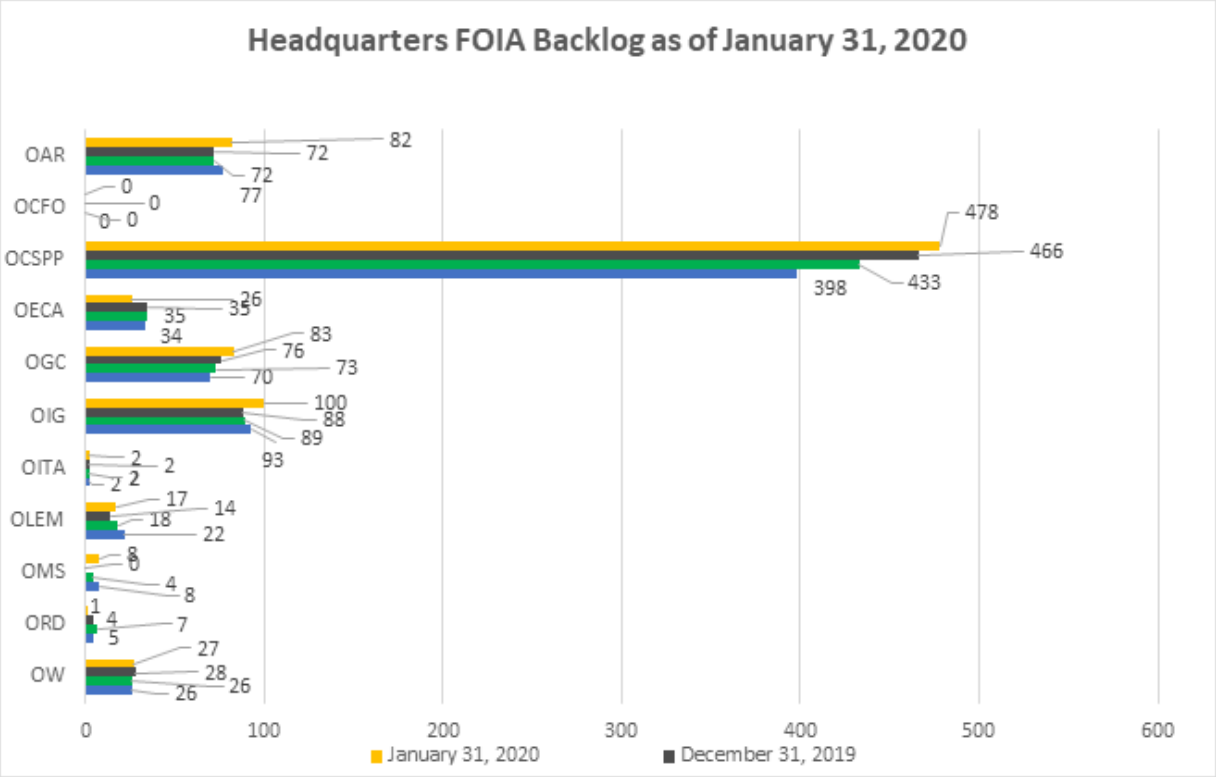
From: Epp, Timothy
To: Leadership_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Regional_Administrators; Leadership_Regional_Administrators; Regional FOIA Officers; Deputy Regional Counsels; Joffe, Brian; FOIA Coordinators, Officers, and Alternates; Regional Counsels
Cc: Brazauskas, Joseph; Grantham, Nancy; Richardson, RobinH; White, Elizabeth; Packard, Elise; Leopold, Matt (OGC); Siciliano, CarolAnn; OGC NFO; Hoverman, Taylor; Willey, Katharine; Payne, James; Grzegozewski, Nicholas; Payne, James
Subject: February 2020 EPA FOIA Backlog Report
Date: Monday, February 3, 2020 4:34:17 PM
Attachments: image002.png
image007.png

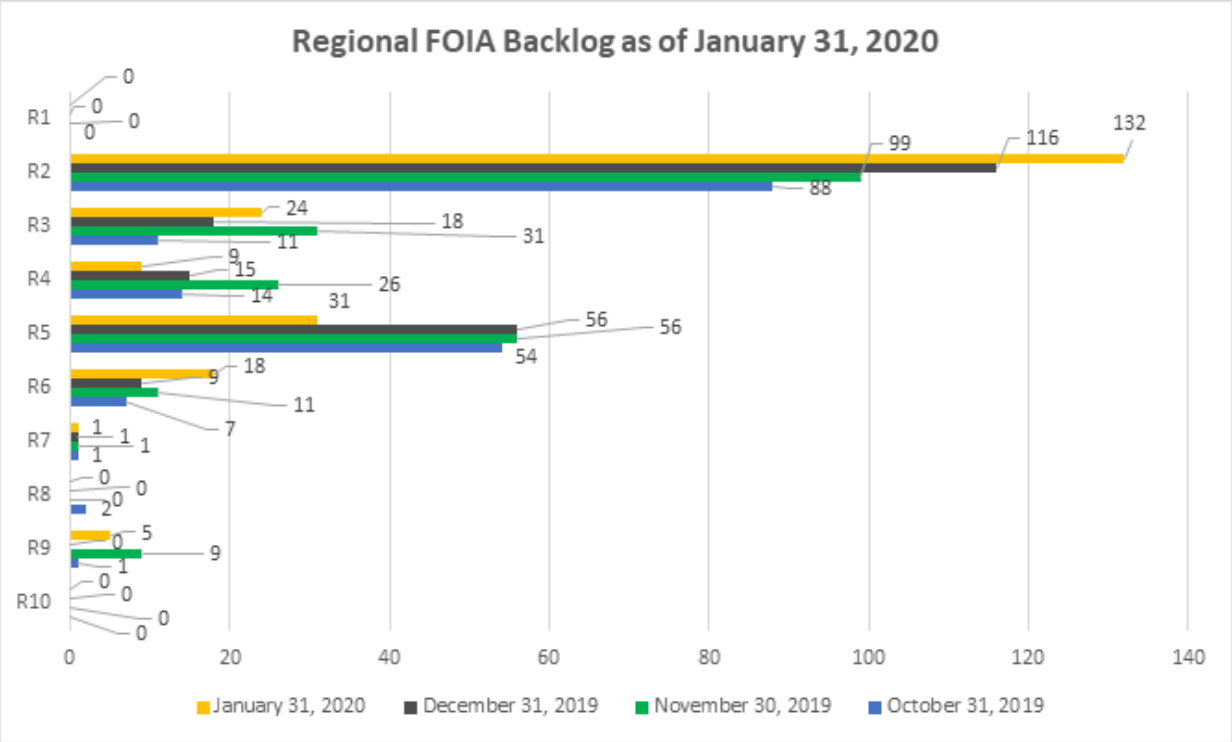
Colleagues,

The charts below show the FOIA backlog in the EPA headquarters program offices and the regions at the end of January, December, November, and October. The Agency's overall FOIA backlog increased in January to 2,236.

Congratulations to the offices with no backlog this month – OCFO and Regions 1, 8, and 10 (and congratulations to OCFO and Regions 1 and 10 for sustaining a zero backlog for five consecutive months). Congratulations to Region 5 for reducing by 43% its previous 3-month backlog average. We need all to redouble our efforts to achieve the Agency-wide and office-specific backlog reduction goals by the end of the fiscal year.

At the end of January, the Office of the Administrator had a FOIA backlog of 1,192.





For this report, backlog is defined as FOIA requests pending for more than 20 days as of the end of the month, more than 30 days for unusual circumstances, and for which there was not an agreed extension documented in the FOIAonline tracking system. Please note that this definition of the backlog is different from the definition required for the Agency's annual report to the Department of Justice, which does not take into account unusual circumstances or extensions documented in the FOIAonline tracking system. In his November 12, 2018 FOIA Memorandum, Administrator Wheeler directed the National FOIA Office to circulate monthly a report of the FOIA request backlog at EPA.

The October data in this report was generated from FOIAonline on November 4; the November data on December 2; the December data on January 2, 2020, and the January data on February 2, 2020. If you would like to discuss this data, what additional data you would like to see reported, or to discuss ideas on how we can more rapidly reduce the Agency's FOIA backlog and more effectively meet the Agency's FOIA responsibility, please contact me at epp.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 564-2830.

Tim

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EPA Office of General Counsel

From:	Epp, Timothy
To:	Leadership_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Regional_Administrators; Leadership_Regional_Administrators; Regional FOIA Officers; Deputy Regional Counsels; Joffe, Brian; FOIA Coordinators, Officers, and Alternates; Regional Counsels
Cc:	Brazauskas, Joseph; Grantham, Nancy; Richardson, RobinH; White, Elizabeth; Packard, Elise; Leopold, Matt (OGC); Siciliano, CarolAnn; OGC NFO; Hoverman, Taylor; Willey, Katharine; Payne, James; Grzegozewski, Nicholas; Payne, James
Subject:	March 2020 EPA FOIA Backlog Report
Date:	Wednesday, March 4, 2020 10:11:07 AM
Attachments:	image001.png image002.png

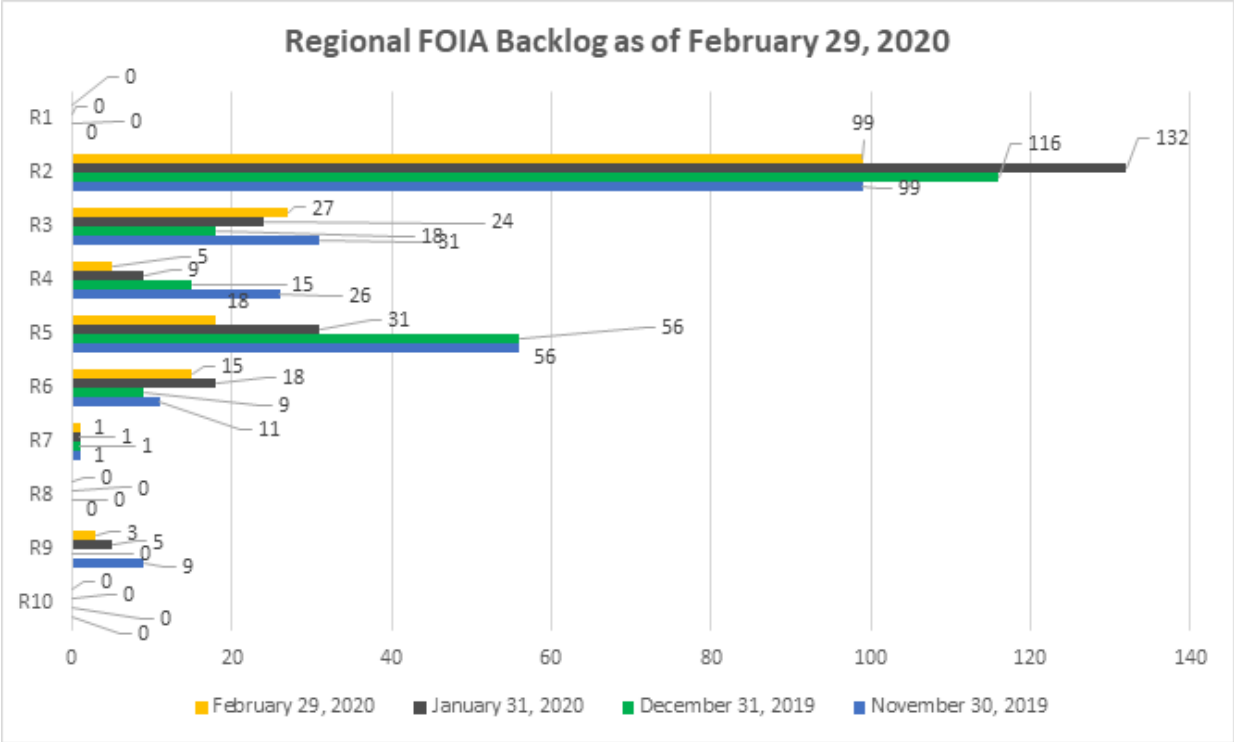
Colleagues,

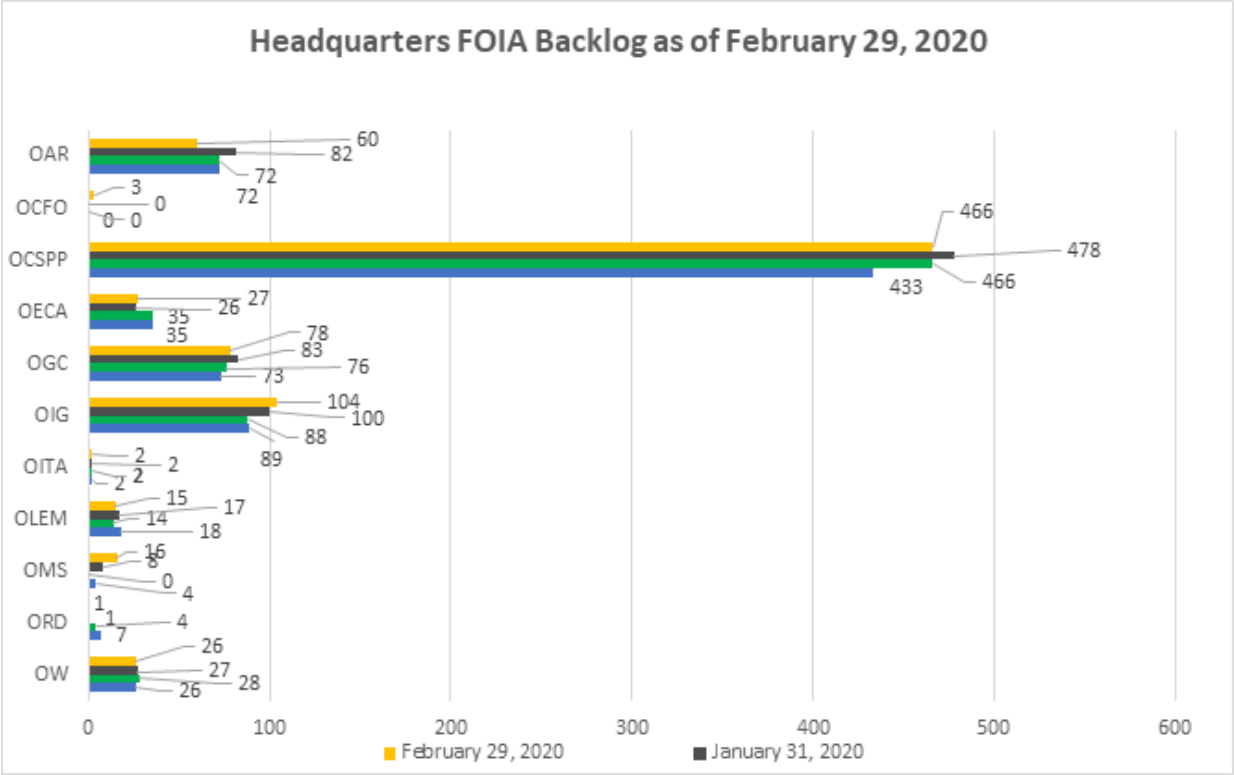
The charts below show the FOIA backlog in the EPA headquarters program offices and the regions at the end of February, January, December, and November. The Agency's overall FOIA backlog decreased in February down to 2,128.

Congratulations to the offices with no backlog this month –Regions 1, 8, and 10 (and congratulations to Regions 1 and 10 for sustaining a zero backlog for six consecutive months, and to Region 8 for five consecutive months). Congratulations to Region 5 for continuing an extraordinary backlog reduction in February – Region 5 reduced its backlog by 42% in February as compared to January, which already was a 43% reduction from its previous 3-month backlog average. Also, congratulations to OAR and Region 2 for achieving a 25% backlog reduction in February as compared to January.

At the end of February, the Office of the Administrator had a FOIA backlog of 1,162, which was down from 1,192 at the end of January.

While these successes and the overall Agency backlog reduction in February is great news, all offices need to redouble efforts to achieve the Agency-wide and office-specific backlog reduction goals by the end of the fiscal year.





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of Justice, which does not take into account unusual circumstances or extensions documented in the FOIAonline tracking system. In his November 12, 2018 FOIA Memorandum, Administrator Wheeler directed the National FOIA Office to circulate monthly a report of the FOIA request backlog at EPA.

The November data in this report was generated from FOIAonline on December 2; the December data on January 2, 2020; the January data on February 2, 2020; and the February data on March 1, 2020. If you would like to discuss this data, what additional data you would like to see reported, or to discuss ideas on how we can more rapidly reduce the Agency's FOIA backlog and more effectively meet the Agency's FOIA responsibility, please contact me at epp.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 564-2830.

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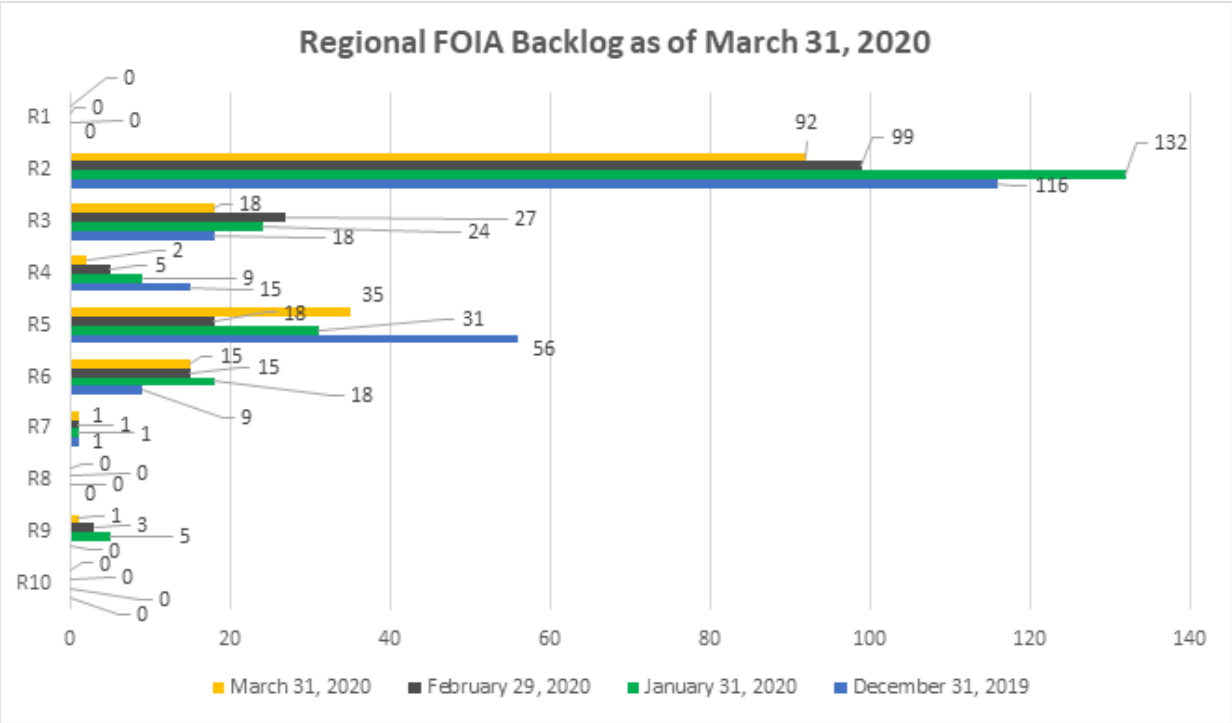
To: Leadership_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Regional_Administrators; Leadership_Regional_Administrators; Regional FOIA Officers; Deputy Regional Counsels; Joffe, Brian; FOIA Coordinators, Officers, and Alternates; Regional Counsels
Cc: Brazauskas, Joseph; Grantham, Nancy; Richardson, RobinH; White, Elizabeth; Packard, Elise; Leopold, Matt (OGC); Siciliano, CarolAnn; OGC NFO; Hoverman, Taylor; Willey, Katharine; Payne, James; Grzegozewski, Nicholas; Payne, James
Subject: April 2020 EPA FOIA Backlog Report
Date: Monday, April 6, 2020 3:17:47 PM
Attachments: image004.png
image005.png

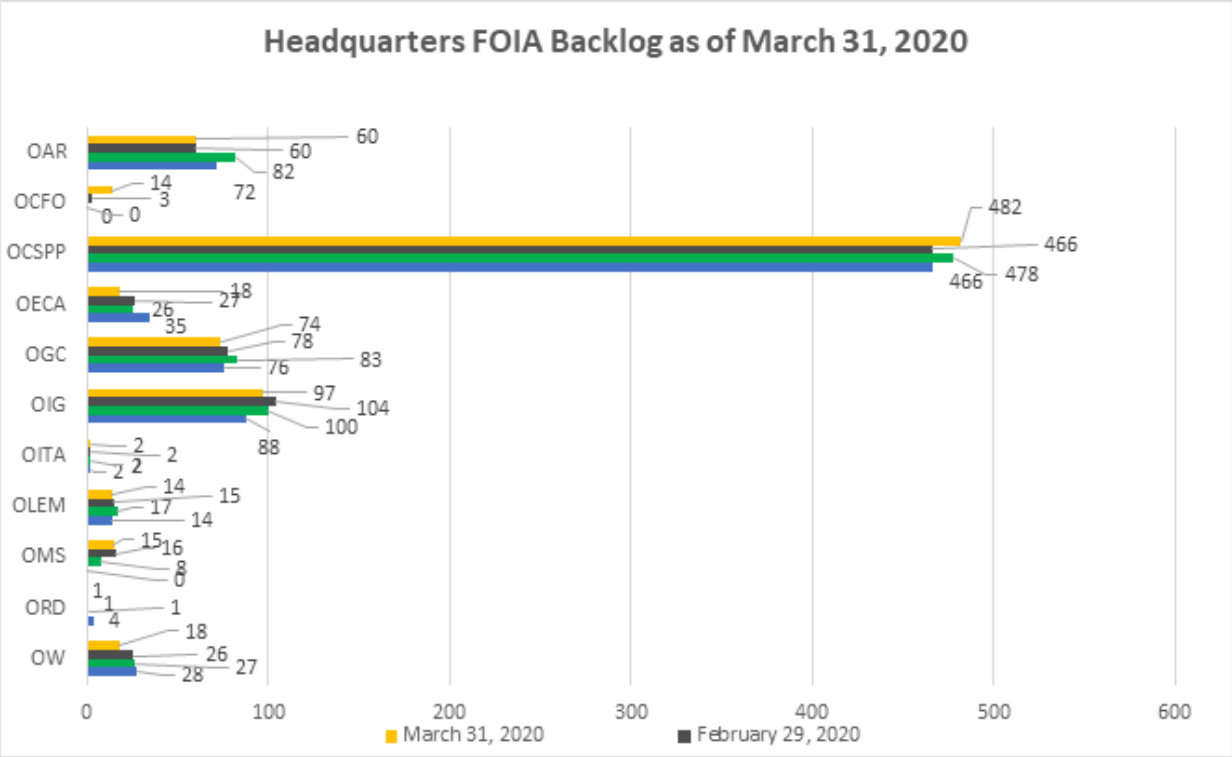
Colleagues,

The charts below show the FOIA backlog in the EPA headquarters program offices and the regions at the end of March, February, January, and December. The Agency's overall FOIA backlog decreased in March down to 2,035.

Congratulations to the offices with no backlog this month –Regions 1, 8, and 10 (and congratulations to Regions 1 and 10 for sustaining a zero backlog for seven consecutive months, and to Region 8 for six consecutive months). Also, congratulations to the Administrator's Office for reducing its backlog by 86 in March. At the end of March, the Office of the Administrator had a FOIA backlog of 1,076, which was down from 1,162 at the end of February.

While these successes and the overall Agency backlog reduction in March are great news, several offices added to their backlog in March and the Agency as a whole is behind on its targets for this fiscal year. Thus, we need continued, sustained effort over the coming months to achieve the Agency-wide and office-specific backlog reduction goals by the end of the fiscal year.





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The December data in this report was generated from FOIAonline on January 2, 2020; the January data on February 2, 2020; the February data on March 1, 2020, and the March data on April 3 (due to malfunctioning search feature on April 1 and 2). If you would like to discuss this data, what additional data you would like to see reported, or to discuss ideas on how we can more rapidly reduce the Agency's FOIA backlog and more effectively meet the Agency's FOIA responsibility, please contact me at epp.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 564-2830.

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EPA Office of General Counsel

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To:	Leadership_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Regional_Administrators; Leadership_Regional_Administrators; Regional FOIA Officers; Deputy Regional Counsels; Joffe, Brian; FOIA Coordinators, Officers, and Alternates; Regional Counsels
Cc:	Brazauskas, Joseph; Grantham, Nancy; Richardson, RobinH; White, Elizabeth; Packard, Elise; Leopold, Matt (OGC); Siciliano, CarolAnn; OGC NFO; Hoverman, Taylor; Willey, Katharine; Payne, James; Grzegozewski, Nicholas; Payne, James
Subject:	Corrected June 2020 EPA FOIA Backlog Report
Date:	Wednesday, June 3, 2020 8:57:21 AM
Attachments:	Announcing 2020 National FOIA Leadership Academy.msg image006.png image007.png

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Colleagues,

This report corrects a mistake in filters used in the data for the Regions, which caused 12 FOIA requests to be counted as backlogged when they should not have been. Although modest for the Agency's overall numbers, this is significant for a few offices that justifiably take pride in their low backlog. Thus, I am re-issuing the report to show their accomplishments.

The revised charts below show the FOIA backlog in EPA headquarters program offices and the regions at the end of May, April, March, and February 2020. The Agency's overall FOIA backlog decreased in May down to 1,767 from 1,846 at the end of April. This is down 17% from the beginning of the fiscal year, when the backlog stood at 2,128. Let's keep this trend going!

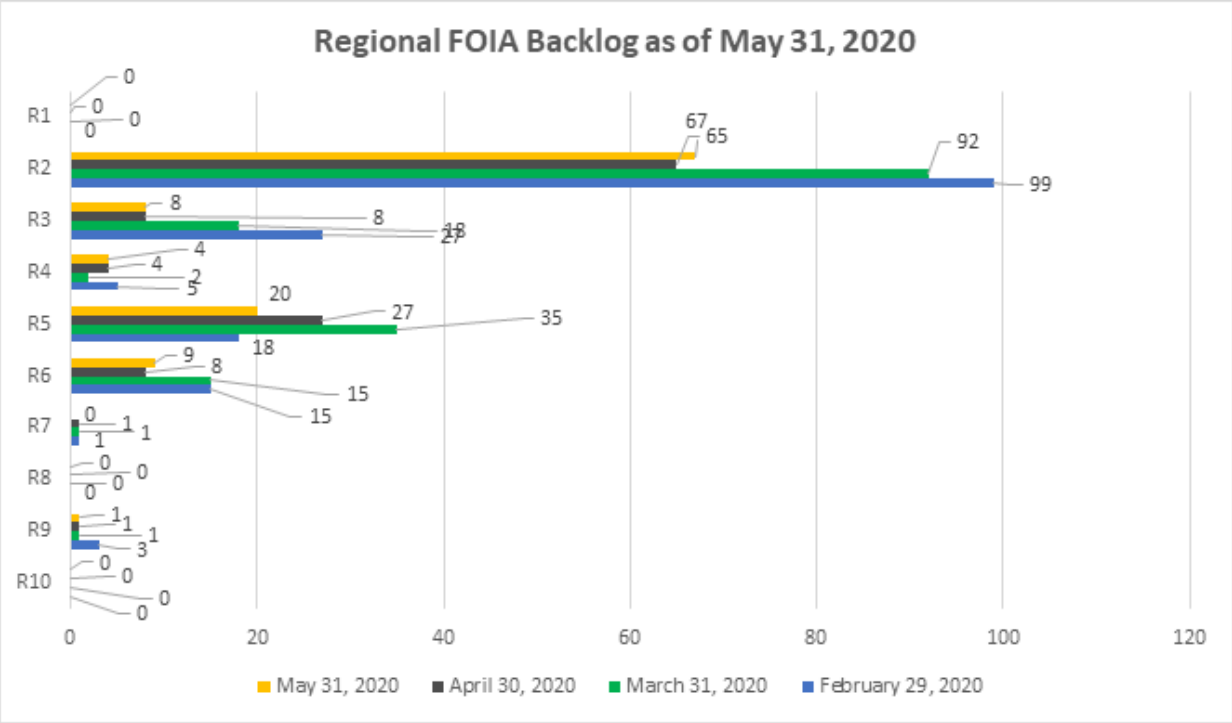
Congratulations to the offices with no backlog this month – ORD and Regions 1, 7, 8, and 10 (and congratulations to Regions 1 and 10 for sustaining a zero backlog for nine consecutive months, and Region 8 for a zero backlog for eight consecutive months). Also, congratulations to the Administrator's Office for reducing its backlog by 47 in May and 231 since February. At the end of May, the Office of the Administrator had a FOIA backlog of 931. Congratulations to OW for reducing its backlog by 75% since February and OCFO for reducing by nearly 75% this month. And, congratulations to the OIG for reducing its backlog by 25% over the last four months. OCSPP contributed by reducing its backlog by 14 this month.

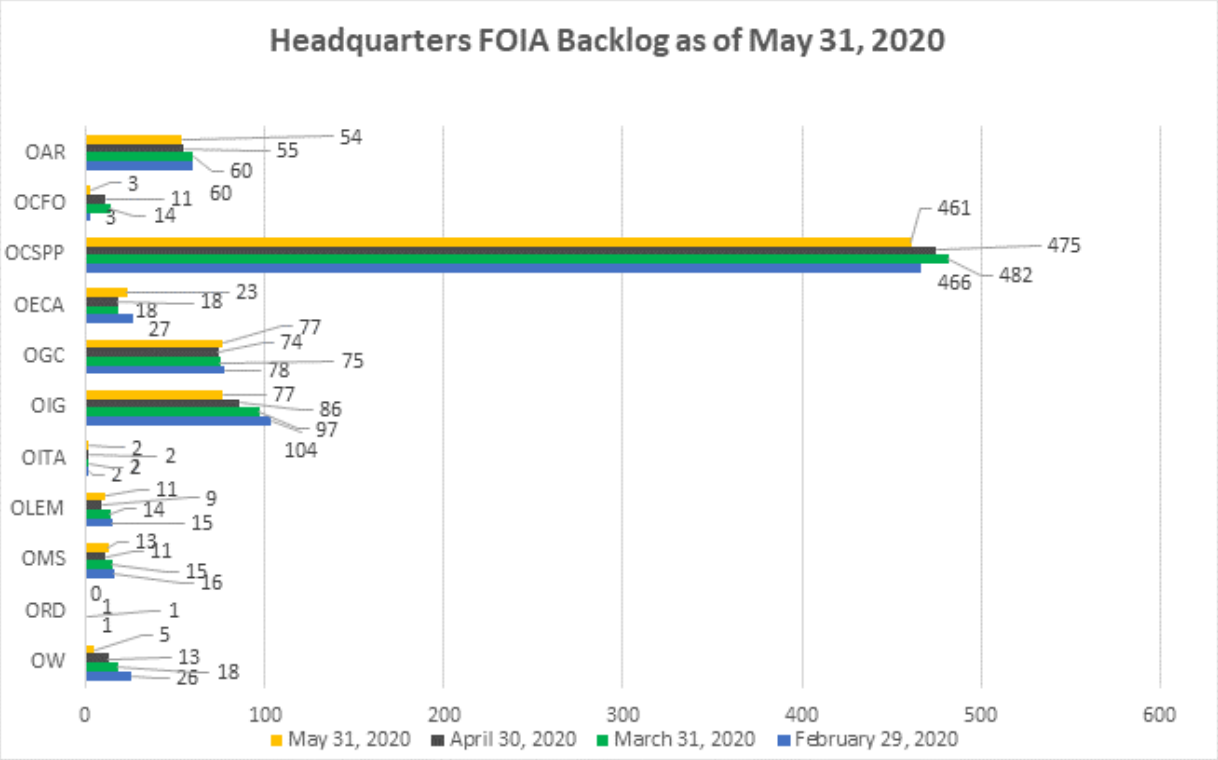
These successes and the overall Agency backlog reduction is great news and, nevertheless, we need continued, sustained effort over the coming months to achieve the Agency-wide and office-specific backlog reduction goals by the end of the fiscal year. We can do it -- keep these trends going!

2020 FOIA Leadership Academy Training Conference

Attached is the email announcing the 2020 FOIA Leadership Academy training conference to be held in September. EPA FOIA leaders will learn new developments, share best practices, and build their knowledge to manage EPA's FOIA processing, and to ensure EPA's appropriate and timely response to FOIA requests. Please support this important FOIA leadership training by ensuring nomination of your office's current and emerging FOIA leaders.

FOIA Backlog Data





For this report, backlog is defined as FOIA requests pending for more than 20 days as of the end of the month, more than 30 days for unusual circumstances, and for which there was not an agreed extension documented in the FOIAonline tracking system. Please note that this definition of the backlog is different from the definition required for the Agency's annual report to the Department of Justice, which does not take into account unusual circumstances or other extensions documented in the FOIAonline tracking system. In his November 12, 2018 FOIA Memorandum,

Administrator Wheeler directed the National FOIA Office to circulate monthly a report of the FOIA request backlog at EPA.

The February data in this report was generated from FOIAonline on March 1, 2020, the March data on April 3 (due to malfunctioning search feature on April 1 and 2), the April data on May 1, and the May data on June 1, 2020. If you would like to discuss this data, what additional data you would like to see reported, or to discuss ideas on how we can more rapidly reduce the Agency's FOIA backlog and more effectively meet the Agency's FOIA responsibility, please contact me at epp.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 564-2830.

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National FOIA Office
EPA Office of General Counsel

From:	Epp, Timothy
To:	Leadership_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Regional_Administrators; Leadership_Regional_Administrators; Regional FOIA Officers; Deputy Regional Counsels; Joffe, Brian; FOIA Coordinators, Officers, and Alternates; Regional Counsels
Cc:	Brazauskas, Joseph; Grantham, Nancy; Richardson, RobinH; White, Elizabeth; Packard, Elise; Leopold, Matt (OGC); Siciliano, CarolAnn; OGC NFO; Hoverman, Taylor; Willey, Katharine; Payne, James; Grzegozewski, Nicholas; Payne, James
Subject:	July 2020 EPA FOIA Backlog Report
Date:	Thursday, July 2, 2020 8:22:05 AM
Attachments:	image004.png image005.png

Colleagues,

Wow! You made significant progress bringing the backlog down this month. The charts below show the FOIA backlog in EPA headquarters program offices and the regions at the end of May, April, March, and February 2020. The Agency's overall FOIA backlog decreased in June down to 1,574 from 1,767 at the end of May. This is *down 26%* from the beginning of the fiscal year, when the backlog stood at 2,128. Let's keep this trend going!

The Details and successes

-

Congratulations to the offices with no backlog this month –Regions 1, 7, 8, 9 and 10. And, congratulations to Regions 1 and 10 for sustaining a zero backlog for ten consecutive months, and Region 8 for a zero backlog for nine consecutive months.

The two big movers were the Administrator's Office and OCSPP. The Administrator's Office led the Agency, reducing its backlog by 116 in June. This brought the AO's FOIA backlog down to 815, *down 31%* from 1,193 at the beginning of the year! OCSPP also made remarkable progress, bringing its backlog down by 59, from 461 at the end of May. That is a 13% reduction in just one month (although it is still higher than OCSPP's backlog of 368 at the beginning of the year). OCSPP has a comprehensive plan for its backlog. In June, OCSPP created a Tiger Team of 31 employees and six law clerks to review documents, and the NFO's FOIA Expert Assistance Team (FEAT) trained them and got them started tackling OCSPP's more than 100 Relativity workspaces of document collections.

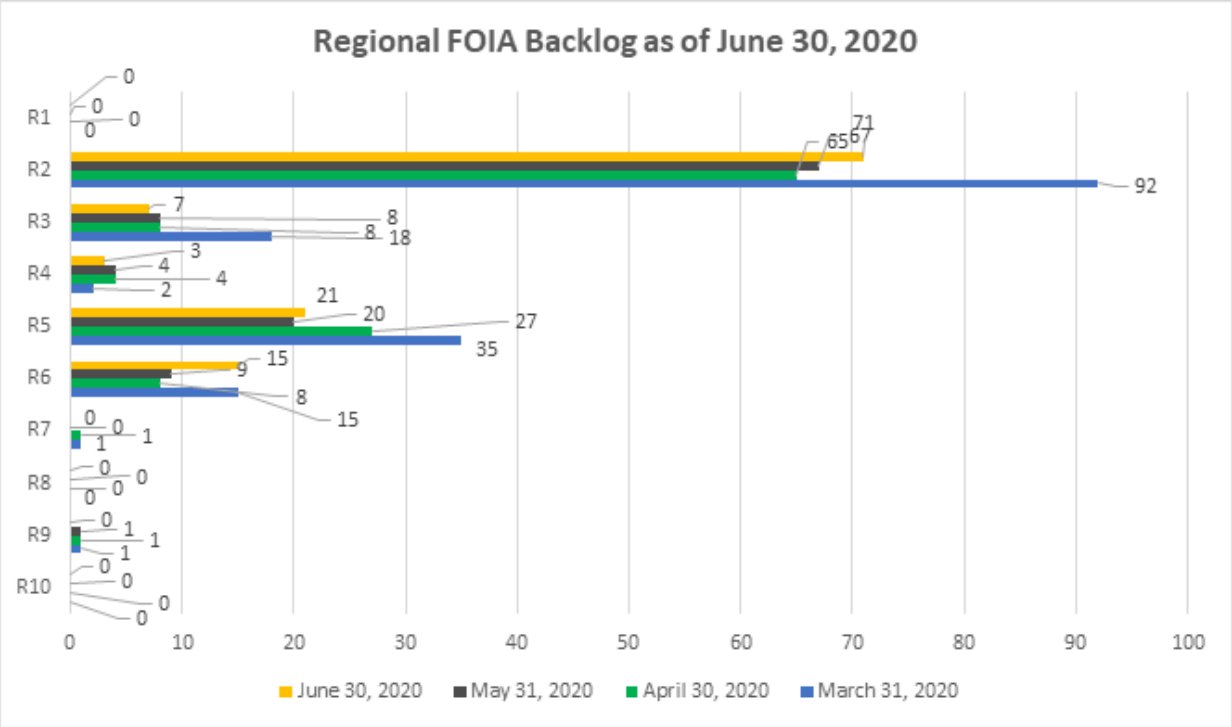
The following offices started the fiscal year with a significant backlog and have substantially reduced it: OW is down 87%; ORD is down 81%; Region 4 is down 80%; OLEM is down 67%; Region 5 is down 60%; OMS is down 50%; OAR is down 46%; Region 2 is down 37%; OIG is down 28%. Regions 7 and 9 eliminated their backlog during the fiscal year.

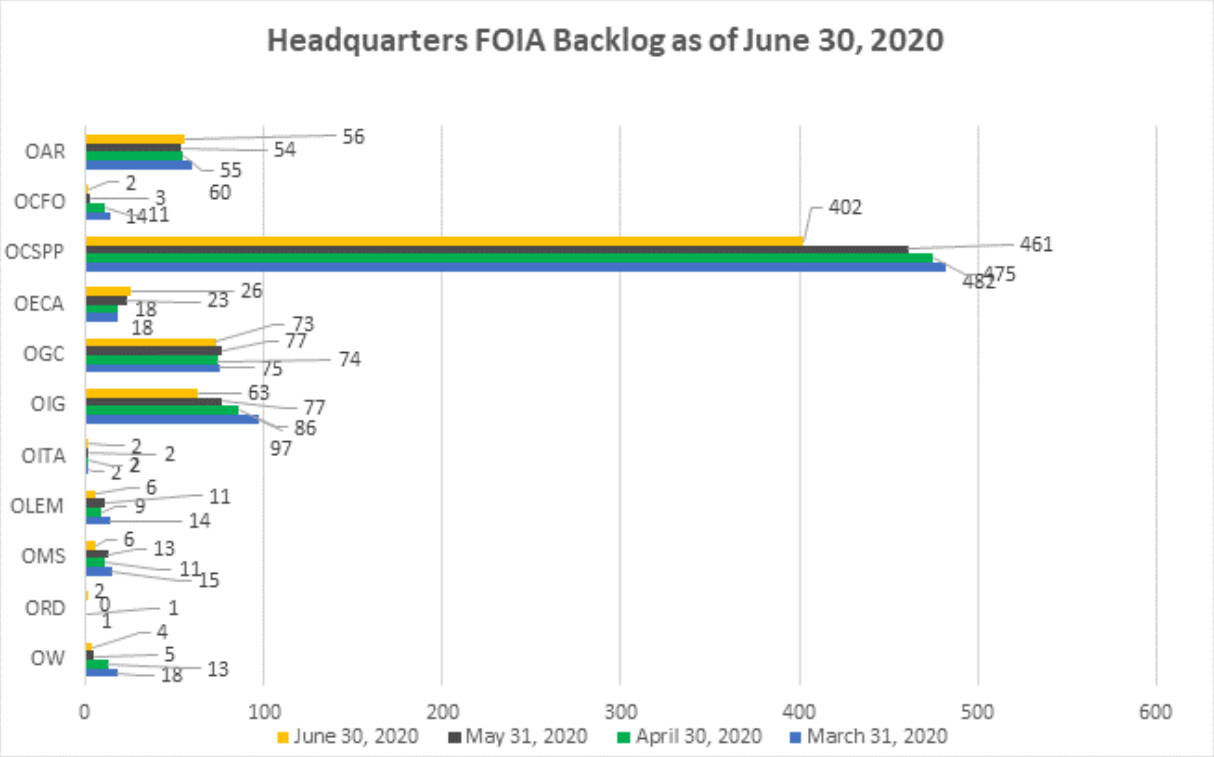
Another 305 to go this fiscal year

-

The overall Agency backlog reduction is great news. Nevertheless, the Agency's Strategic Goal set an interim target for this fiscal year for the Agency to reduce the backlog to 1,269. To achieve that target, we must reduce the backlog by an additional 305 over the next three months. Thus, we need continued, sustained effort – every backlogged FOIA request that can be closed will help. We can do it -- keep the effort going!

FOIA Backlog Data





For this report, backlog is defined as FOIA requests pending for more than 20 days as of the end of the month or more than an applicable due date extension that has been documented in FOIAonline. Please note that this definition of the backlog is different from the definition required for the Agency's annual report to the Department of Justice, which does not take into account unusual

circumstances or other extensions documented in the FOIAonline tracking system. In his November 12, 2018 FOIA Memorandum, Administrator Wheeler directed the National FOIA Office to circulate monthly a report of the FOIA request backlog at EPA.

The March data in this report was generated from FOIAonline on April 3 (due to malfunctioning search feature on April 1 and 2), the April data was generated on May 1, the May data on June 1, and the June data on July 1, 2020. If you would like to discuss this data, what additional data you would like to see reported, or to discuss ideas on how we can more rapidly reduce the Agency's FOIA backlog and more effectively meet the Agency's FOIA responsibility, please contact me at epp.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 564-2830.

Tim

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National FOIA Office
EPA Office of General Counsel

From:	Epp, Timothy
To:	Leadership Assistant Administrators; Leadership Associate Administrators; Leadership Deputy Assistant Administrators; Leadership Deputy Associate Administrators; Leadership Deputy Regional Administrators; Leadership Regional Administrators; Regional FOIA Officers; Deputy Regional Counsels; Joffe, Brian; FOIA Coordinators, Officers, and Alternates; Regional Counsels
Cc:	Brazauskas, Joseph; Grantham, Nancy; Richardson, RobinH; White, Elizabeth; Packard, Elise; Leopold, Matt (OGC); Siciliano, CarolAnn; OGC NFO; Hoverman, Taylor; Willey, Katharine; Payne, James; Grzegozewski, Nicholas; Payne, James
Subject:	RE: July 2020 EPA FOIA Backlog Report
Date:	Wednesday, August 5, 2020 5:01:20 PM
Attachments:	image001.png image002.png

Colleagues,

The Agency continued to make progress this month bringing down the backlog of overdue FOIA requests. The charts below show the number of overdue FOIA requests in EPA headquarters program offices and the regions at the end of July, June, May, and April 2020. The Agency's overall FOIA backlog decreased in July down to 1,501 from 1,574 at the end of June. This is *down 29%* from the beginning of the fiscal year, when the number of overdue FOIA requests stood at 2,128.

Key Successes

-

Congratulations to the offices with no overdue FOIA requests this month – Regions 1, 8, 9 and 10. And, congratulations to Regions 1 and 10 for sustaining a zero backlog for eleven consecutive months, and Region 8 for a zero backlog for ten consecutive months. Congratulations also to OCSPP, AO, OAR, and Region 2 all brought their overdue FOIA requests down by more than 10 this month. The AO's backlog of overdue FOIA requests now stands at 800, down 15 in July. As part of OCSPP's effort to tackle its FOIA request backlog, OCSPP's Tiger Team of Document Reviewers, working with the NFO's FOIA Expert Assistance Team, have reviewed and redacted nearly 23,400 documents in 12 workspaces since they started work at the end of May.

Another 232 to reduce this fiscal year

-

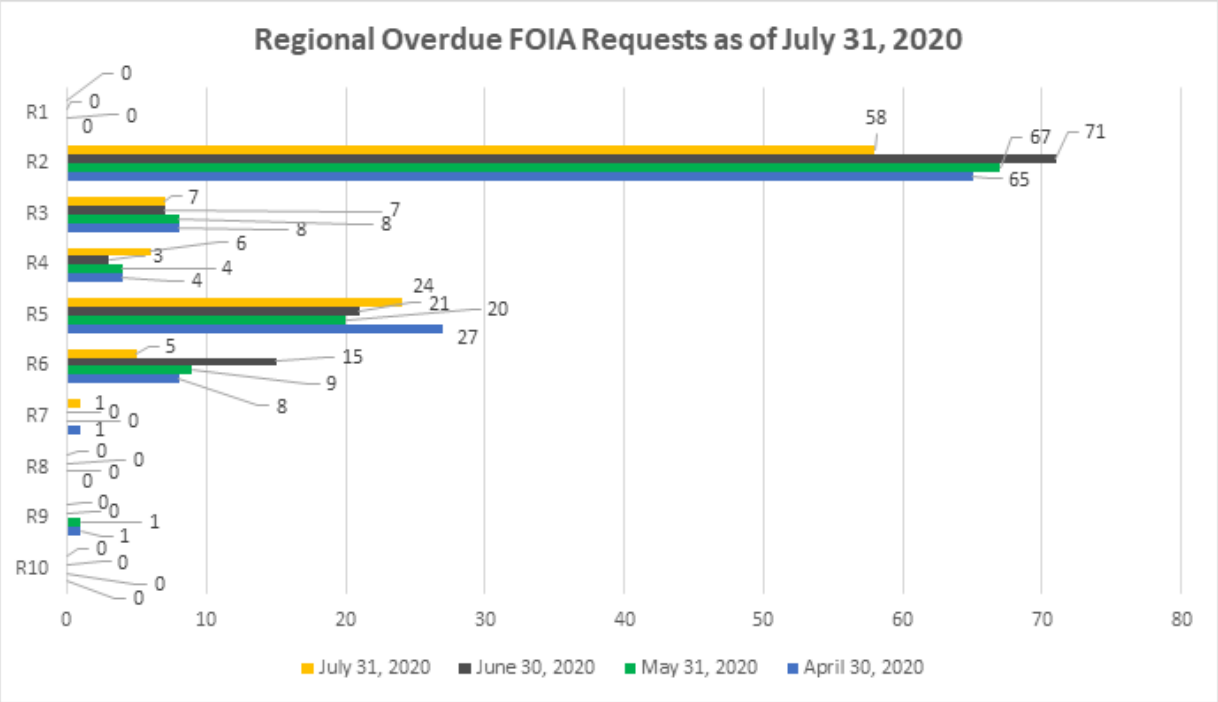
The July backlog reduction was respectable and continued to build on the stellar reduction in the 3rd quarter of FY 2020. Nevertheless, the Agency's Strategic Goal set an interim target for this fiscal year for the Agency to reduce the backlog to 1,269, which means we must reduce the backlog by an additional 232 over the next two months (August and September). Thus, we need continued, sustained effort – every backlogged FOIA request that can be closed will help. We can do it -- keep the effort going!

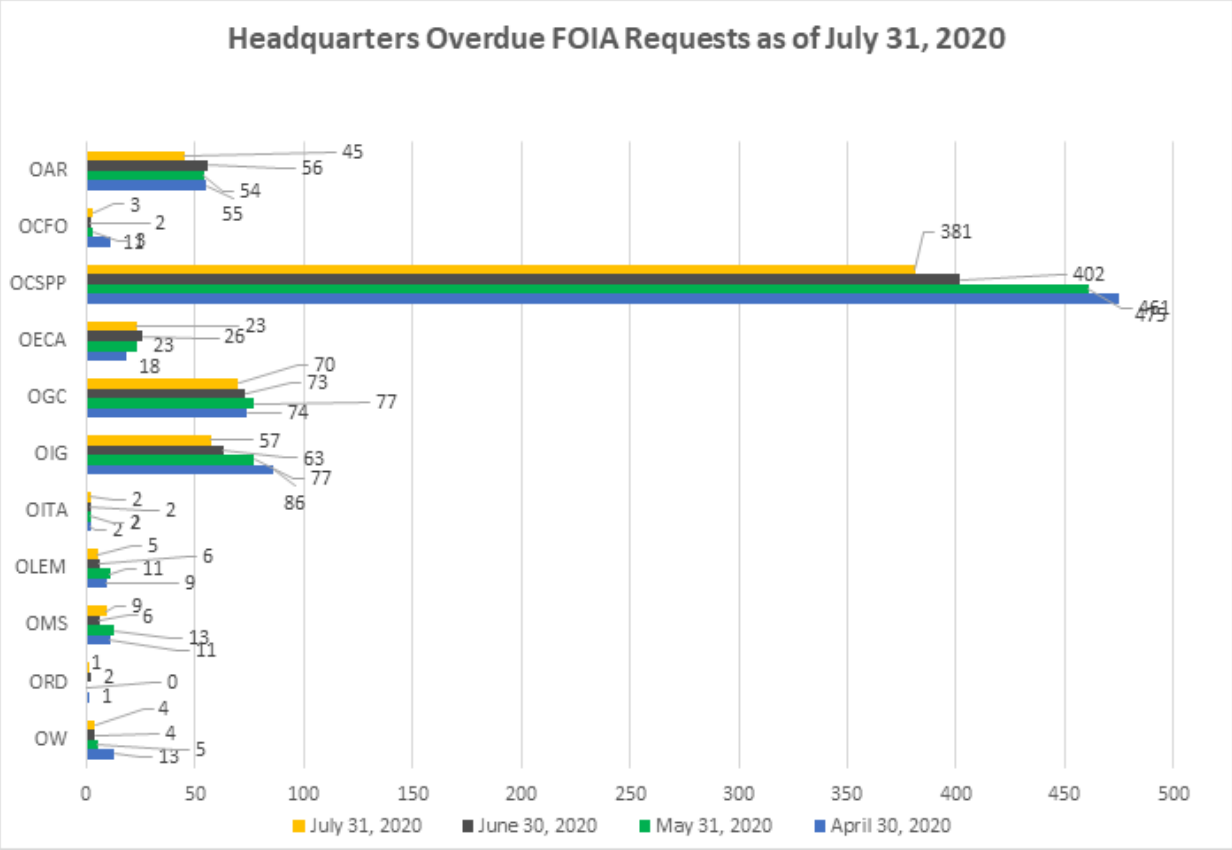
Self-Audits of Due Date Extensions

-

Agency program and regional offices have many FOIA requests with extended due dates beyond the original 20 working days the statute initially provides. Such due date extensions may have been made by agreement with the requester or by the Agency giving the requester notice when unusual circumstances exist as authorized by the statute or because the Agency needed to seek clarification or fee assurance from the requester. Thank you to the following 18 offices that have completed their self-audit of FOIAonline data to ensure their due date extensions conform to the statutory standards: Regions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, and AO, OAR, OCFO, OCSPP, OGC, OIG, OMS, ORD, and OW. The NFO will begin sampling to check the self-audits and will work with the remaining offices to ensure remaining offices complete the self-audits and to ensure the accuracy of the Agency's data for reporting purposes.

FOIA Overdue Data





For this report, overdue FOIA request is defined as a FOIA request pending for the later of more than 20 days as of the end of the month or beyond an applicable due date extension that has been documented in FOIAonline (by agreement, notice of unusual circumstances, or notice of clock stoppage for

clarification or fee assurances). Please note that this definition of the backlog is different from the definition required for the Agency's annual report to the Department of Justice, which does not take into account unusual circumstances or other extensions documented in the FOIAonline tracking system. In his November 12, 2018 FOIA Memorandum, Administrator Wheeler directed the National FOIA Office to circulate monthly a report of the FOIA request backlog at EPA.

The April data in this report was generated from FOIAonline on May 1, the May data was generated on June 1, the June data on July 1, and the July data on August 3, 2020. If you would like to discuss this data, what additional data you would like to see reported, or to discuss ideas on how we can more rapidly reduce the Agency's FOIA backlog and more effectively meet the Agency's FOIA responsibility, please contact me at epp.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 564-2830.

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Subject:	RE: July 2020 EPA FOIA Backlog Report
Date:	Thursday, September 3, 2020 9:29:52 AM
Attachments:	image004.png image006.png

Colleagues,

The Agency continued to make progress this month bringing down the backlog of overdue FOIA requests. Overall, The Agency brought down the backlog of overdue requests in August by 77, down to 1,424, from 1,501 at the end of July. This is *down 33%* from the beginning of the fiscal year, when the number of overdue FOIA requests stood at 2,128. Congratulations, and thank you!

Next Steps in the Glide Path to Eliminate the Backlog by End of FY 2022

The Agency's goal is to bring the overall backlog down to 1,269 by the end of September 2020, and then to bring the backlog down to 635 by the end of FY 2021. These are the yearly milestones along the way to EPA's Strategic Goal of eliminating the backlog of overdue FOIA requests by the end of fiscal year 2022. While the Agency has made substantial progress towards this year's milestone, we must reduce the backlog by another 155 to meet this year's goal. Several offices have told me that they are working hard to do more than usual to help achieve this goal. We need everyone's similar effort this month to do it, and we can achieve it!

Turning to next fiscal year, the NFO will send out to offices within the next week proposals for your glide path to achieve the Agency's goal of reducing the backlog of overdue FOIA requests to 635 by the end of September 2021. To achieve this goal, the agency must reduce the backlog by 61 each month from the end of August 2020 through the end of September 2021. We will propose office- and region-specific goals the same way as last year: the glide path will be monthly targets along a straight line showing what each office needs to accomplish to help the Agency achieve its monthly targets. Last year, several offices chose to nuance their own glide paths by anticipating lower backlog reduction in certain months and making up for it in other months. In addition, just as we did last year, all offices with a current backlog of 10 or less will be asked to consider setting their own goal of eliminating their backlog by September 2021.

Key Successes in August

-

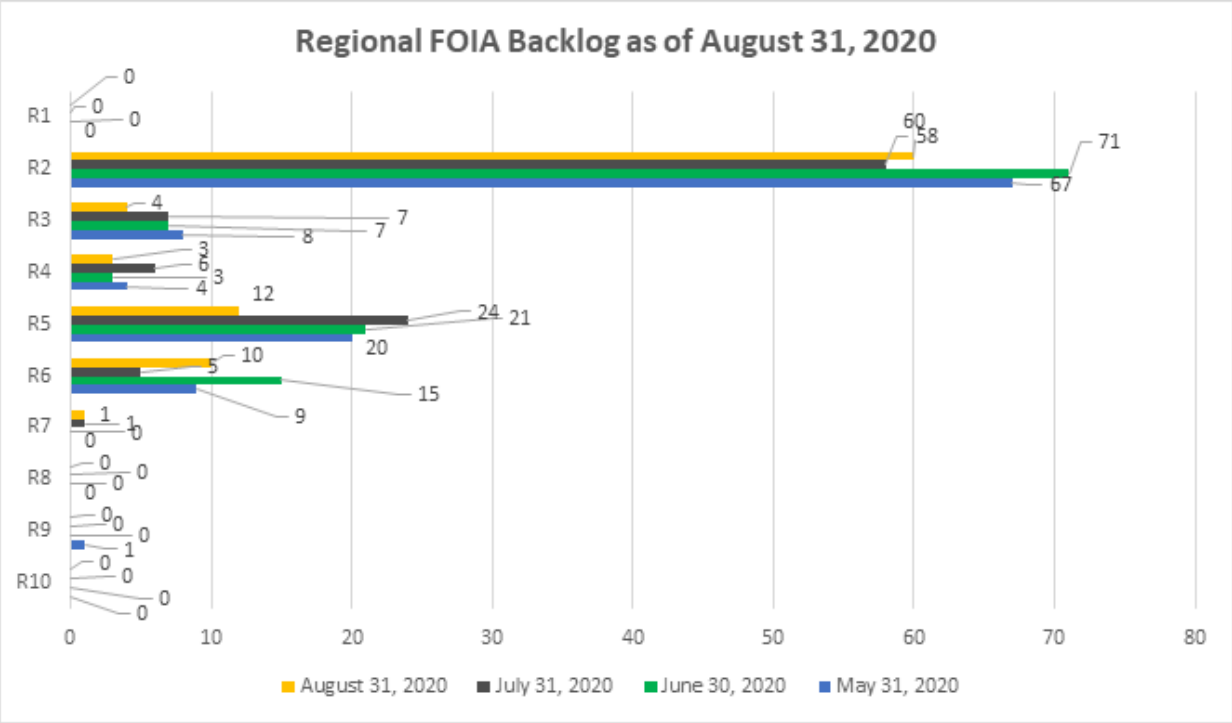
The charts below show the number of overdue FOIA requests in EPA headquarters program offices and the regions at the end of the most recent four months: August, July, June, and May 2020. Congratulations to the Administrator's Office for achieving 44% of the agency-wide reduction this month. The AO brought its backlog down by 34 in August to 766, from 800 at the end of July.

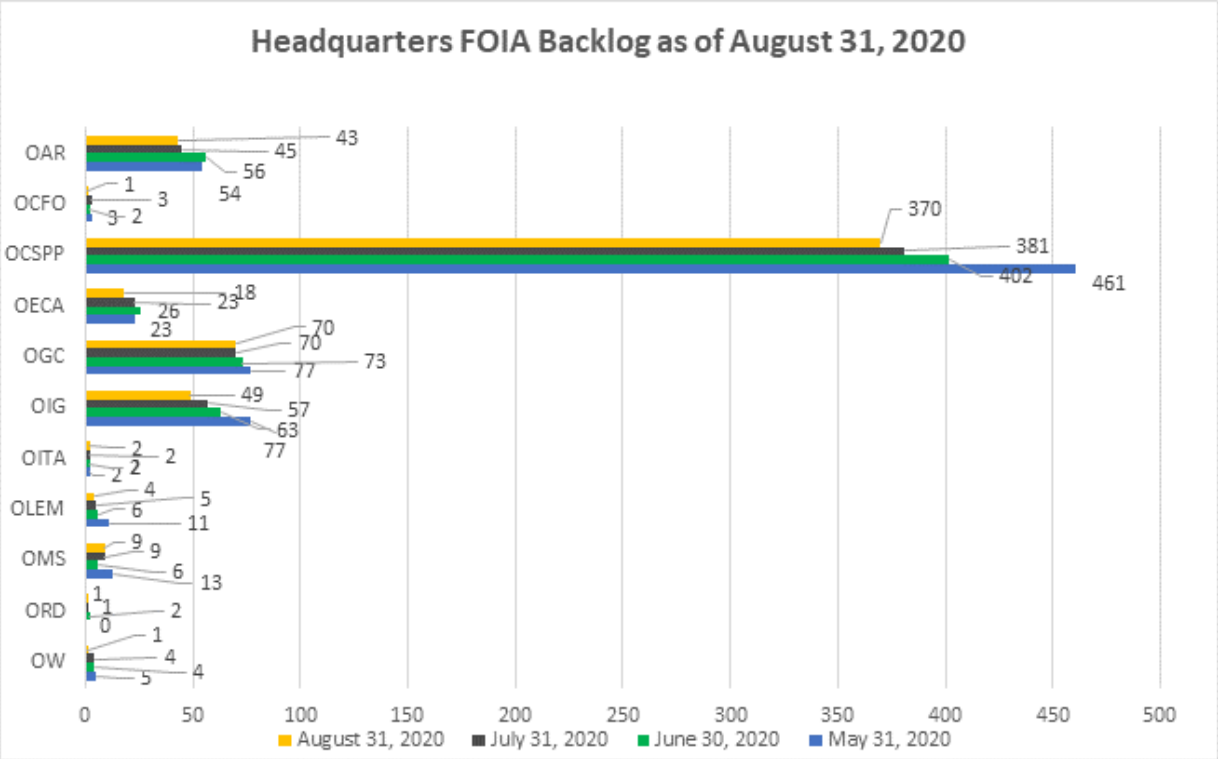
Congratulations and thank you to Region 5 for cutting its backlog down by 12 this month.

Region 5 has been a powerhouse of success this past year. At the end of August 2019, Region 5's backlog of overdue FOIA requests stood at 101. Now, its backlog is only 12, down 88%! OCSPP also contributed significantly to the agency-wide reduction this month. OCSPP reduced its backlog by 11. These three offices – AO, R5, and OCSPP – contributed the most this month, but every reduction helps: reductions in other offices accounted for 26% of the overall reduction this month.

Also, congratulations and thank you to the offices with no overdue FOIA requests this month – Regions 1, 8, 9 and 10. Regions 1 and 10 have sustained a zero backlog for twelve consecutive months, and Region 8 has done so for eleven months! Many offices are also maintaining a low backlog of only one to three – including Regions 4 and 7, OCFO, OITA, ORD, and OW. The agency would not be as successful without these offices' continuous work at sustaining a zero or very low backlog. Everyone's effort counts and is meaningful.

<u>End of August Overdue FOIA Data</u>





For this report, overdue FOIA request is defined as a FOIA request pending for more than 20 working days as of the end of the month or beyond an applicable due date extension that has been documented in FOIAonline (by agreement, proper notice of unusual circumstances, or notice of clock stoppage for clarification or fee assurances that is recorded as a due date extension). Please note that this definition of the backlog is different from the definition required for the Agency's annual report to the Department of Justice, which does not take into account unusual circumstances or other statutorily authorized due date extensions documented in the FOIAonline tracking system. In his November 12, 2018 FOIA Memorandum, Administrator Wheeler directed the National FOIA Office to circulate monthly this report of the FOIA request backlog at EPA.

The May data in this report was generated from FOIAonline on June 1; the June data was generated on July 1; the July data on August 3; and the August data on September 1, 2020. If you would like to discuss the data, what additional data you would like to see reported, or to discuss ideas on how we can more rapidly reduce the Agency's FOIA backlog and more effectively meet the Agency's FOIA responsibility, please contact me at epp.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 564-2830.

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EPA Office of General Counsel

From:	Epp, Timothy
To:	Leadership_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Regional_Administrators; Leadership_Regional_Administrators; Regional FOIA Officers; Deputy Regional Counsels; Joffe, Brian; FOIA Coordinators, Officers, and Alternates; Regional Counsels
Cc:	Brazauskas, Joseph; Grantham, Nancy; Richardson, RobinH; White, Elizabeth; Packard, Elise; Siciliano, CarolAnn; OGC NFO; Hoverman, Taylor; Willey, Katharine; Grzegozewski, Nicholas; Payne, James (Jim); Fotouhi, David
Subject:	End of FY 2020 EPA FOIA Backlog Report
Date:	Friday, October 9, 2020 3:12:10 PM
Attachments:	image001.png image002.png

Colleagues,

The Agency continued to make progress in September bringing down the backlog of overdue FOIA requests. Overall, The Agency brought down the backlog of overdue FOIA requests to 1,396 at the end of September, from 1,424 at the end of August. This is *down 732 or 34%* from the beginning of the fiscal year, when the number of overdue FOIA requests stood at 2,128. Congratulations, and thank you!

Note regarding possible data adjustments because of FOIAonline problems: At the end of the fiscal year, FOIAonline was completely offline for significant blocks of time and interruptions continued into this week. Please notify the NFO if any cases were closed (or due dates properly extended) prior to the end of the fiscal year but the data was not yet entered in FOIAonline when the NFO pulled the data for this report on October 2.

Key Successes in FY 2020, including Communication with Requesters

-

We have celebrated many offices' success throughout the year for backlog reduction achieved in particular months. Here, we highlight the accomplishments measured for the full fiscal year from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020.

Administrator's Office. A huge congratulations and thank you to the Administrator's Office for achieving 61% of the agency-wide reduction in FY 2020. The AO brought its backlog down by 447, or 37%, at the end of September to 746, from 1,193 at the beginning of FY 2020.

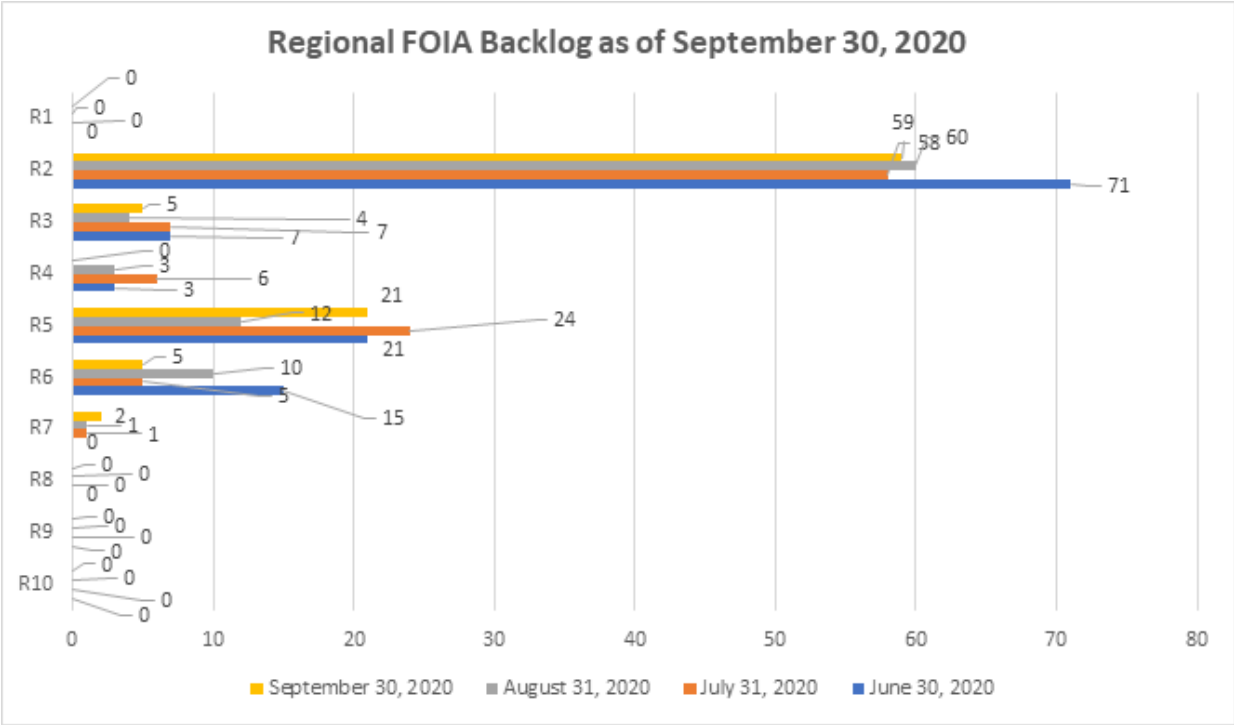
Regions. Congratulations and thank you to Regions 1, 4, 8, 9 and 10 for having no backlog of overdue FOIA requests at the end of FY 2020! Regions 1 and 10 have sustained a zero backlog for 13 consecutive months, and Region 8 has done so for 12 months – the whole fiscal year! Region 9 sustained a zero backlog for the last four months of the fiscal year and Region 4 achieved a zero backlog in September. Regions 5 and 2 also significantly lowered their backlog of overdue FOIA requests within this fiscal year: Region 5 by 60% and Region 2 by 48%.

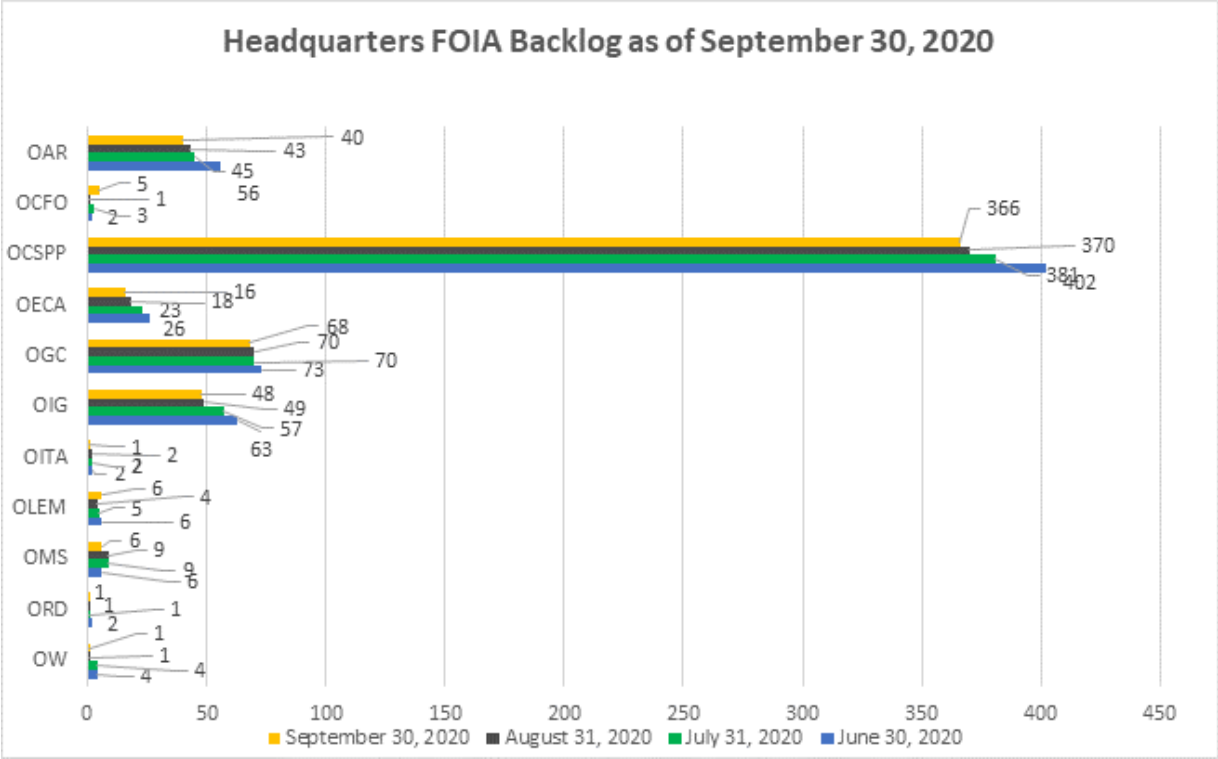
Headquarters Offices. OW, ORD, and OITA reduced their backlog of overdue FOIA requests to only 1 in each office by the end of the fiscal year. For OW, this is a 97% reduction from the beginning of the fiscal year, and it is a 91% reduction for ORD, and a 50% reduction for OITA. The following offices also significantly reduced their backlog of overdue FOIA requests by this fiscal year: OLEM by 67%; OAR by 62%; OIG by 45%; and OECA by 43%. Congratulations and thank you!

Communication with requesters is an Agency accomplishments this year. Centralizing intake enabled the NFO to establish a best practice of sending an early, substantive communication to every requester in just a few days. By year's end, requesters were receiving a letter within 5 business days and most letters were sent in two days or less. NFO also provided training to strengthen the Agency's communication with requesters regarding expected processing times, including on how to negotiate due date extensions and to narrow the scope of requested records. The NFO also provided guidance on communicating with requesters and working with them to provide electronic records during the global COVID-19 pandemic while the Agency was not able to immediately produce hard-copy records.

End of September Overdue FOIA Data

The charts below show the number of overdue FOIA requests in EPA headquarters program offices and the regions at the end of the most recent four months: September, August, July, and June, 2020.





For this report, overdue FOIA request is defined as a FOIA request pending for more than 20 working days as of the end of the month or beyond an applicable due date extension that has been documented in FOIAonline (by agreement, proper notice of unusual circumstances, or notice of clock stoppage for clarification or fee assurances that is recorded as a due date extension). Please note that this definition of the backlog is different from the definition required for the Agency's annual report to the Department of Justice, which does not take into account unusual circumstances or other statutorily authorized due date extensions documented in the FOIAonline tracking system. In his November 12, 2018 FOIA Memorandum, Administrator Wheeler directed the National FOIA Office to circulate monthly this report of the FOIA request backlog at EPA.

The June data in this report was generated from FOIAonline on July 1; the July data on August 3; and the August data on September 1; and the September data on October 2, 2020. If you would like to discuss the data, what additional data you would like to see reported, or to discuss ideas on how we can more rapidly reduce the Agency's FOIA backlog and more effectively meet the Agency's FOIA responsibility, please contact me at epp.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 564-2830.

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EPA Office of General Counsel

From:	Epp, Timothy
To:	Leadership_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Regional_Administrators; Leadership_Regional_Administrators; Regional FOIA Officers; Deputy Regional Counsels; Joffe, Brian; FOIA Coordinators, Officers, and Alternates; Regional Counsels
Cc:	Brazauskas, Joseph; Grantham, Nancy; Richardson, RobinH; White, Elizabeth; Packard, Elise; Siciliano, CarolAnn; OGC NFO; Hoverman, Taylor; Willey, Katharine; Grzegozewski, Nicholas; Payne, James (Jim); Fotouhi, David; Gross, Louann; Vendinello, Lynn
Subject:	November 2020 EPA FOIA Backlog Report
Date:	Wednesday, November 4, 2020 11:40:01 AM
Attachments:	image005.png image007.png

Colleagues,

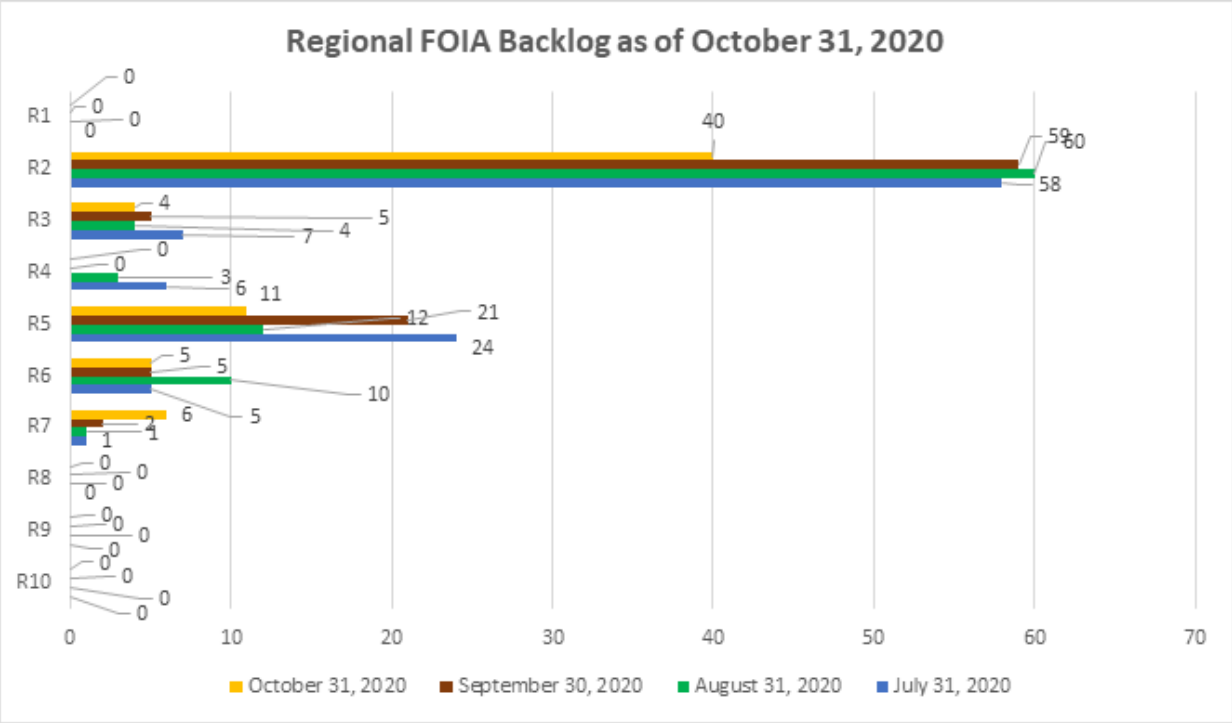
The Agency continued to make progress in October bringing down the backlog of overdue FOIA requests. Overall, the Agency brought down the backlog to 1,348 at the end of October from 1,395 at the end of September.

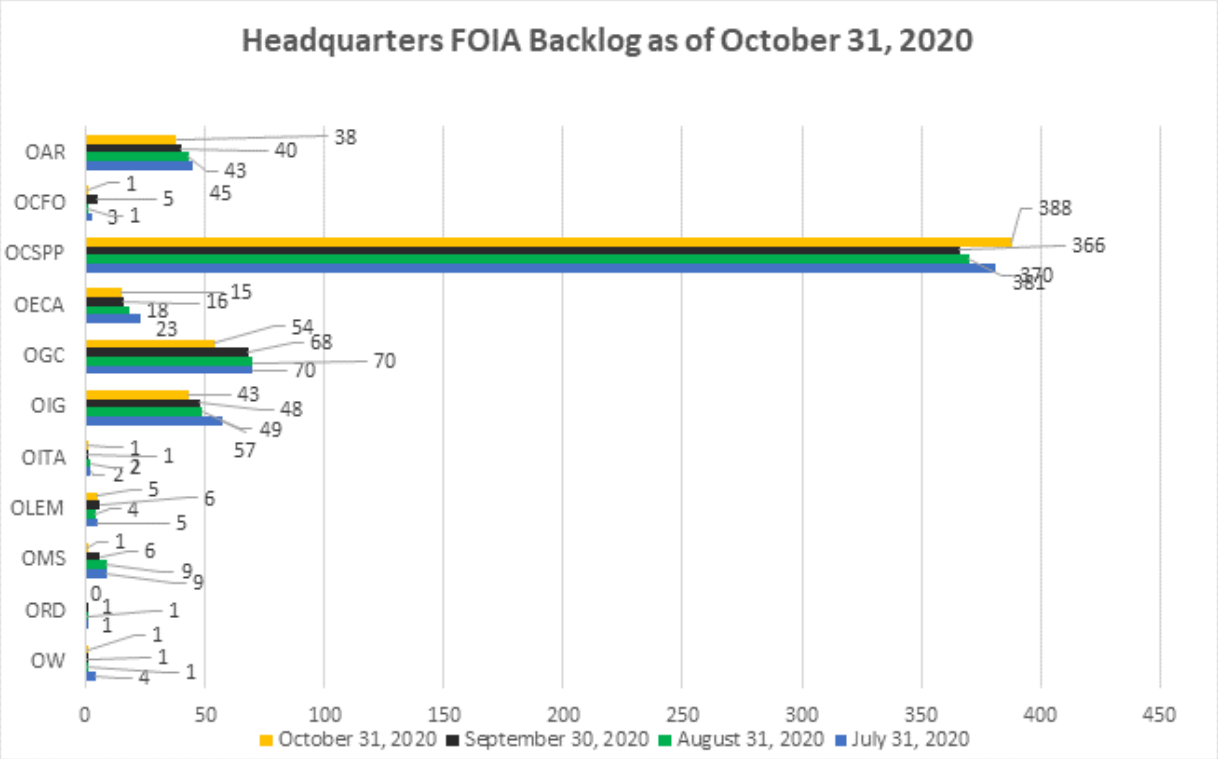
-

Congratulations to Region 2 for bringing its backlog down by 19; OGC for bringing its backlog down by 14; the AO for bringing its backlog down by 11, and Region 5 for bringing its backlog down by 10. We also congratulate ORD and Regions 1, 4, 8, 9, and 10 for having no backlog of overdue requests.

End of October Overdue FOIA Data

The charts below show the number of overdue FOIA requests in EPA headquarters program offices and the regions at the end of the most recent four months: October, September, August, and July, 2020. The Office of the Administrator reduced its backlog by 11, down to 735 at the end of October.





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The July data in this report was generated from FOIAonline on August 3; and the August data on September 1; the September data on October 2, 2020, and the October data on November 2. If you would like to discuss the data, what additional data you would like to see reported, or to discuss ideas on how we can more rapidly reduce the Agency's FOIA backlog and more effectively meet the Agency's FOIA responsibility, please contact me at epp.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 564-2830.

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From: Epp, Timothy
To: Leadership_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Regional_Administrators; Leadership_Regional_Administrators; Regional FOIA Officers; Deputy Regional Counsels; Joffe, Brian; FOIA Coordinators, Officers, and Alternates; Regional Counsels
Cc: Brazauskas, Joseph; Grantham, Nancy; Richardson, RobinH; White, Elizabeth; Packard, Elise; Siciliano, CarolAnn; OGC NFO; Hoverman, Taylor; Willey, Katharine; Grzegozewski, Nicholas; Payne, James (Jim); Fotouhi, David; Gross, Louann; Vendinello, Lynn
Subject: December 2020 EPA FOIA Backlog Report
Date: Friday, December 4, 2020 11:41:33 AM
Attachments: image002.png
image005.png

Colleagues,

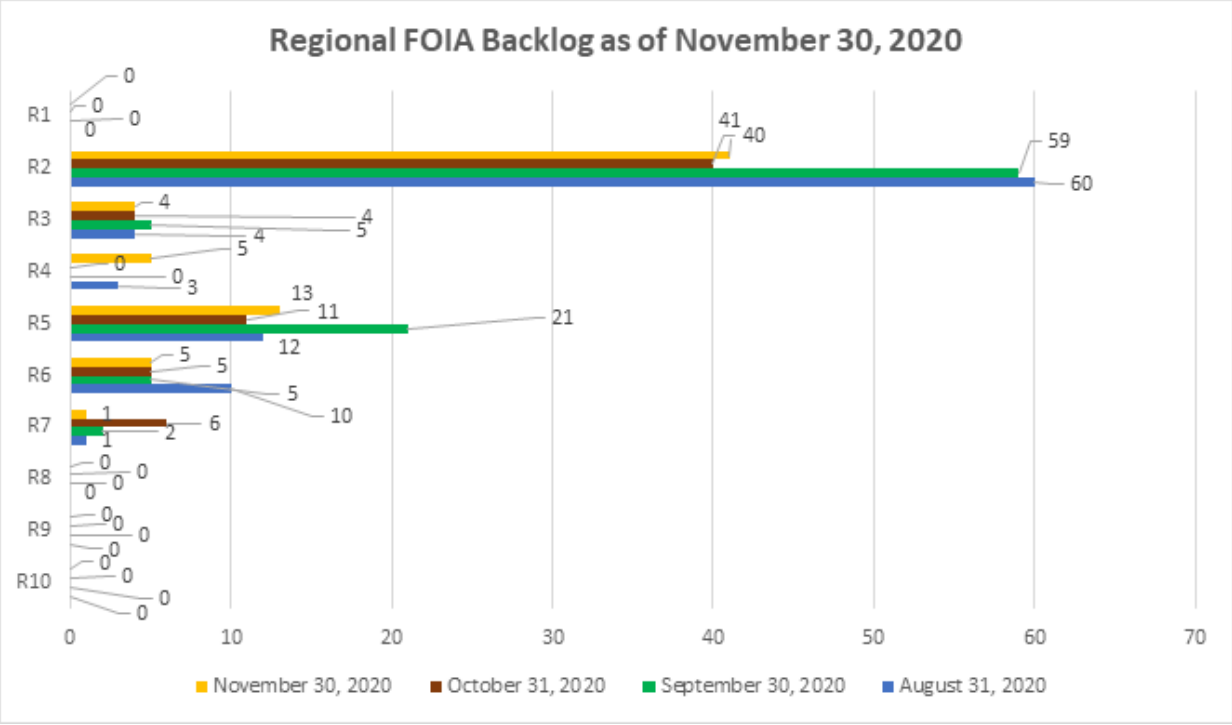
The Agency's backlog of overdue FOIA requests went up significantly in November. Overall, the Agency's backlog of overdue FOIA requests went up to 1,427 at the end of November from 1,348 at the end of October. This increase represents a challenge that we must tackle.

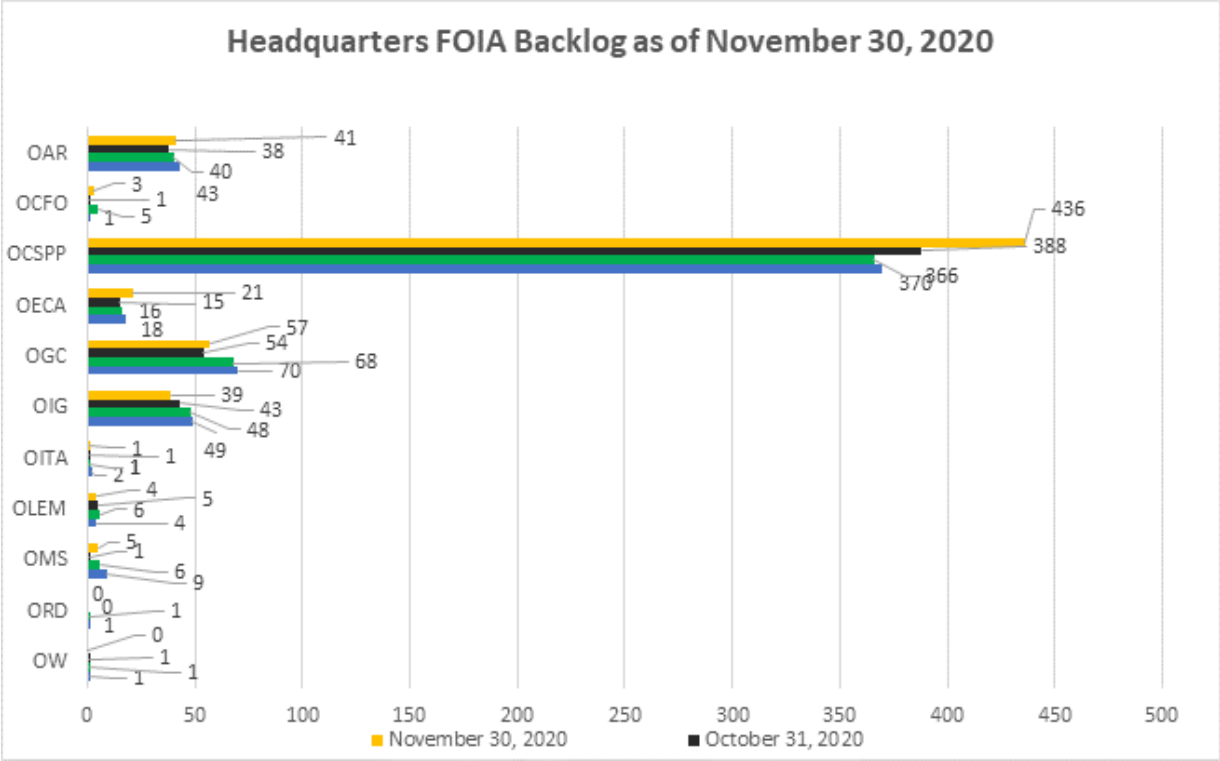
-

Congratulations to ORD and Regions 1, 8, 9, and 10, who have continued to maintain no backlog of overdue FOIA requests, and congratulations to OW for achieving a zero backlog of overdue FOIA requests.

<u>End of November Overdue FOIA Data</u>

The charts below show the number of overdue FOIA requests in EPA headquarters program offices and the regions at the end of the most recent four months: November, October, September, and August, 2020. The Office of the Administrator's backlog went up to 751 at the end of November from 735 at the end of October.





For this report, overdue FOIA request is defined as a FOIA request pending for more than 20 working days as of the end of the month or beyond an applicable due date extension that has been documented in FOIAonline (by agreement, proper notice of unusual circumstances, or notice of clock stoppage for clarification or fee assurances that is recorded as a due date extension). Please note that this definition of the backlog is different from the definition required for the Agency's annual report to the Department of Justice, which does not take into account unusual circumstances or other statutorily authorized due date extensions documented in the FOIAonline tracking system.

The August data in this report was generated from FOIAonline on September 1; the September data on October 2, 2020, and the October data on November 2, and the November data on December 1. If you would like to discuss the data, what additional data you would like to see reported, or to discuss ideas on how we can more rapidly reduce the Agency's FOIA backlog and more effectively meet the Agency's FOIA responsibility, please contact me at epp.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 564-2830.

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From:	Epp, Timothy
To:	Leadership_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Regional_Administrators; Leadership_Regional_Administrators; Regional FOIA Officers; Deputy Regional Counsels; Joffe, Brian; FOIA Coordinators, Officers, and Alternates; Regional Counsels
Cc:	Brazauskas, Joseph; Grantham, Nancy; Richardson, RobinH; White, Elizabeth; Packard, Elise; Siciliano, CarolAnn; OGC NFO; Hoverman, Taylor; Willey, Katharine; Grzegozewski, Nicholas; Payne, James (Jim); Fotouhi, David; Gross, Louann; Vendinello, Lynn
Subject:	January 2021 EPA FOIA Backlog Report
Date:	Thursday, January 7, 2021 7:04:56 AM
Attachments:	image002.png image005.png

Happy New Year, Colleagues!

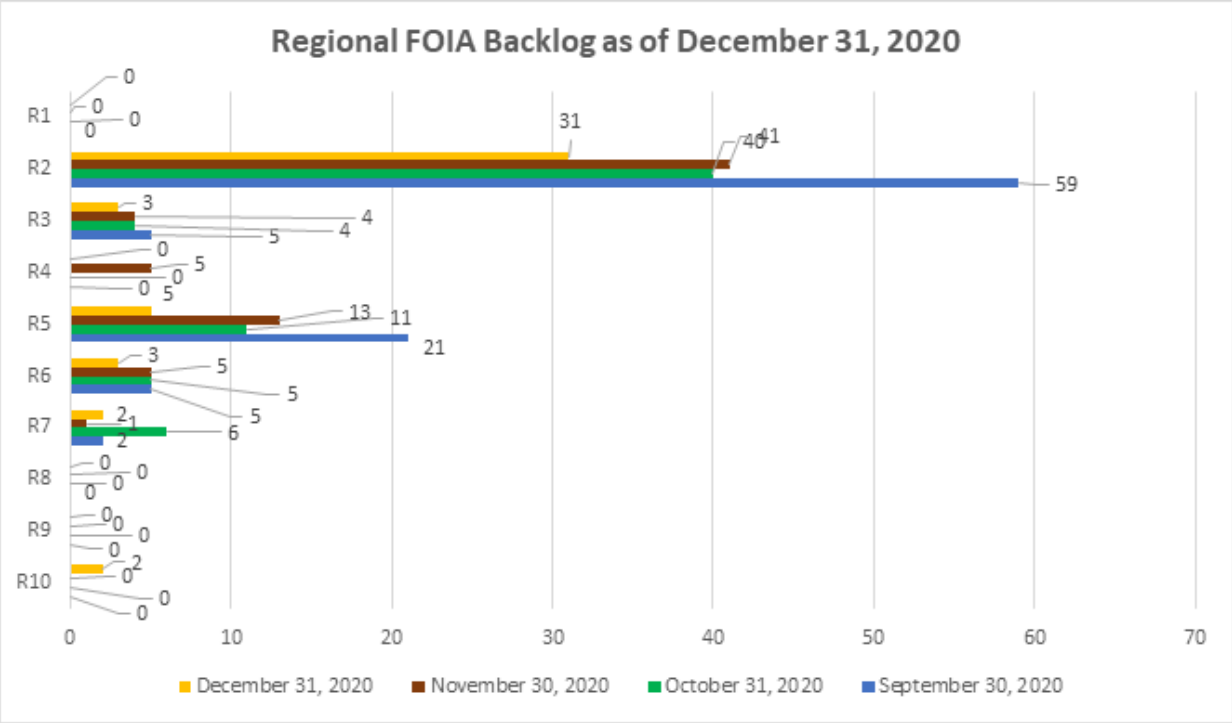
The Agency's backlog of overdue FOIA requests went down slightly in December 2020. Overall, the Agency's backlog of overdue FOIA requests dropped to 1,409 at the end of December down from 1,427 at the end of November. This one month decrease is positive news, although it did not erase the prior two month's increases. Thus, the backlog went up in the first quarter of this fiscal year.

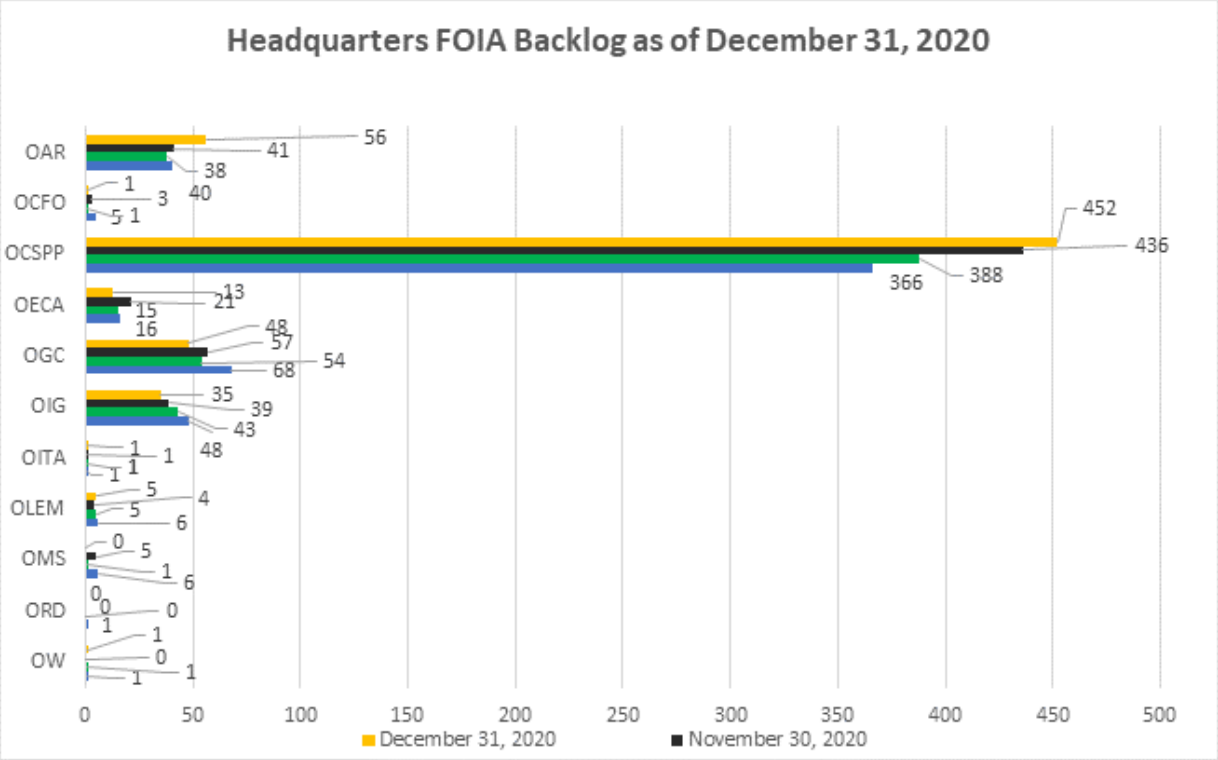
-

Congratulations to ORD, OMS and Regions 1, 4, 8, and 9, who had no backlog of overdue FOIA requests at the end of December 2020. Also, congratulations to Regions 2 and 5, and OGC, who reduced their backlog the most this month.

End of November Overdue FOIA Data

The charts below show the number of overdue FOIA requests in EPA headquarters program offices and the regions at the end of the most recent four months: December, November, October, and September 2020. The Office of the Administrator's backlog stayed the same – 751 – at the end of December as it was at the end of November 2020.





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other statutorily authorized due date extensions documented in the FOIAonline tracking system.

The September data in this report was generated from FOIAonline on October 2, 2020, and the October data on November 2, and the November data on December 1, and the December data on January 4, 2021. If you would like to discuss the data, what additional data you would like to see reported, or to discuss ideas on how we can more rapidly reduce the Agency's FOIA backlog and more effectively meet the Agency's FOIA responsibility, please contact me at epp.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 564-2830.

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From:	Epp, Timothy
To:	Career Deputy Assistant Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Assistant_Administrators; Leadership_Regional_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Regional_Administrators; Leadership_Associate_Administrators; Leadership_Deputy_Assistant_Administrators; Deputy Regional Counsels; Regional Counsels; Regional FOIA Officers; FOIA Coordinators, Officers, and Alternates
Cc:	Chaudhary, Dimple; Hope, Brian; Siciliano, CarolAnn; Joffe, Brian; OGC NFO; Vendinello, Lynn
Subject:	February 2021 EPA FOIA Backlog Report
Date:	Saturday, February 6, 2021 8:00:07 AM
Attachments:	image004.png image003.png

Colleagues,

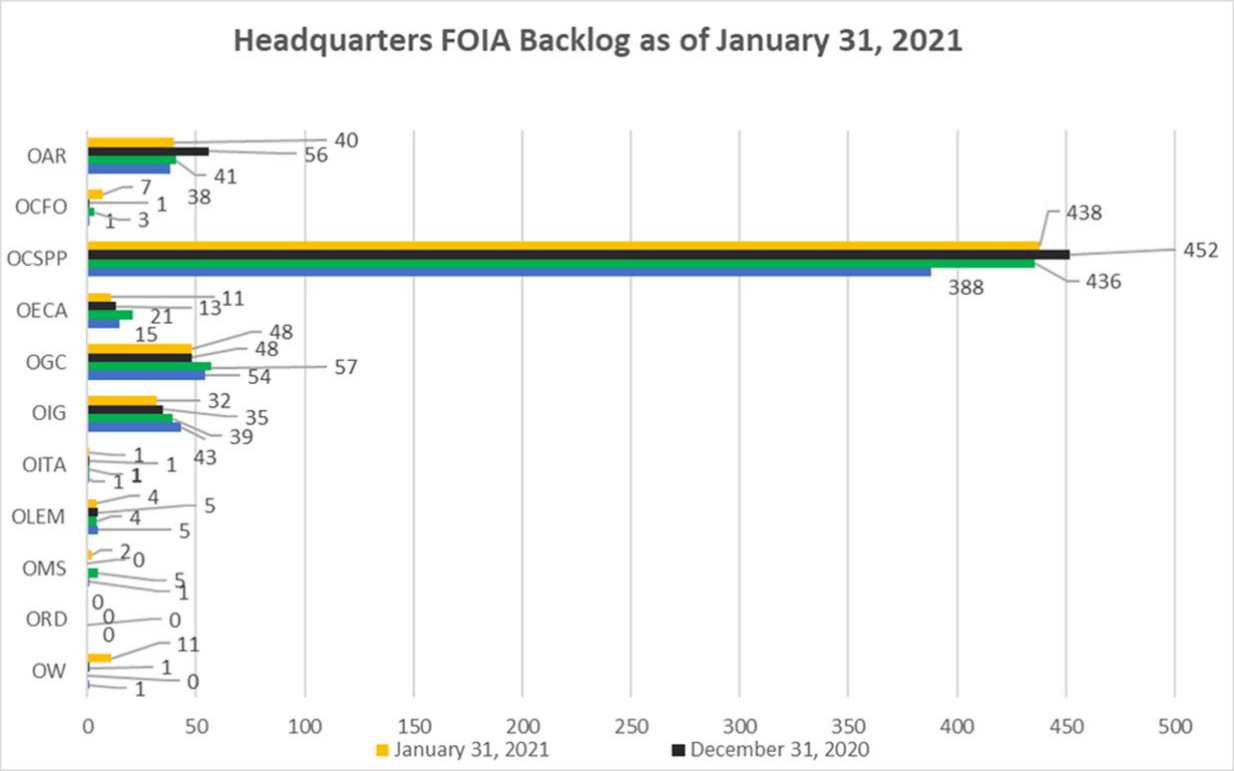
The Agency's backlog of overdue FOIA requests went down in January 2021. Overall, the Agency's backlog of overdue FOIA requests dropped to 1,386 at the end of January, down from 1,409 at the end of December. This backlog decrease is positive news, although it was not enough to achieve the monthly target for meeting the Agency's annual goal.

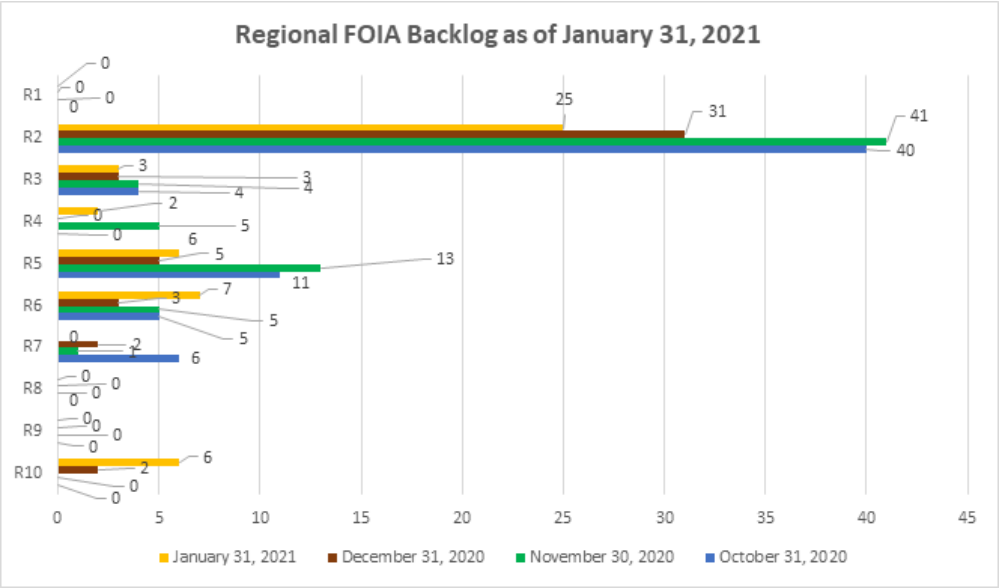
-

Congratulations to ORD and Regions 1, 8, and 9, who had no backlog of overdue FOIA requests at the end of January 2021.

End of January Overdue FOIA Data

The charts below show the number of overdue FOIA requests in EPA headquarters program offices and the regions at the end of the most recent four months: January 2021, and December, November, and October 2020. The Office of the Administrator's backlog dropped to 743 at the end of January, down from 751 at the end of December.





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The October data in this report was generated from FOIAonline on November 2; and the November data on December 1; the December data on January 4, 2021; and the January data on February 1, 2021. If you would like to discuss the data, what additional data you would like to see reported, or to discuss ideas on how we can more rapidly reduce the Agency's FOIA backlog and more effectively meet the Agency's FOIA responsibility, please contact me at epp.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 564-2830.

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