



United States Department of Agriculture

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of the Chief
Information Officer

1400 Independence
Avenue SW
Washington, DC
20250

September 6, 2019

Delivered via Electronic Mail

Austin R. Evers
American Oversight
1030 15th Street NW
Suite B255
Washington, DC 20005
foia@americanoversight.org

Re: Final Response for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request No. 2019-DA-05967-F

Dear Mr. Evers:

This is the Departmental FOIA Office's (DFO) final response to the above-referenced FOIA request. The request sought the following records, from January 1, 2018, to the date of the search:

All communications (including emails, email attachments, text messages, calendar invitations, letters, memoranda, or other communications) between (a) any of the Department of Agriculture officials listed in Column A below and (b) any of the individuals listed in Column B below:

Column A: USDA Officials	Column B: OVP Officials
• Mike Beatty, Director, Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships • Torey Ian Powell, Program Manager, Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships • White House Liaison, or any individual serving in this capacity • Anyone communicating on behalf of any of the above officials, such as an administrative assistant or scheduler	• Marc Short, Chief of Staff to Vice President Mike Pence • Nick Ayers, Former Chief of Staff to Vice President Mike Pence • Jarrod Agen, Deputy Chief of Staff and Director of Communications to Vice President Mike Pence • Marty Obst, Senior Advisor to the Vice President • Sarah Makin, Director of Public Liaison and Intergovernmental Affairs for the Vice President

Your request was processed under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

Searches for responsive records were conducted by the Office of the Chief Information Officer's (OCIO) telecommunications provider, the Client Experience Center (CEC). The CEC provides comprehensive, fee-for-service information technology (IT) associated operations, security, and technical support services to USDA end users. The CEC also implements and manages enterprise IT solutions for users Department-wide. The email accounts associated

Austin Evers
2019-DA-05967-F

with the following individuals were searched for communications with any of the individuals listed under Column B of the request, from January 1, 2018, to August 16, 2019, the date the search was conducted and the cut-off for responsive records:

- Mike Beatty, Director, Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Policies
- Torey Ian Powell, Program Manager, Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Policies (formerly, through August 4, 2019)
- Carly Miller, White House Liaison (formerly, until on or about April 11, 2019)
- Ashton Saunders, Confidential Assistant and Point of Contact for White House Liaison matters as of April 12, 2019

No responsive records were identified as a result of the CEC searches.

In addition to the CEC searches, Mr. Beatty, Ms. Saunders (as the point of contact for the White House Liaison following Ms. Miller's departure), and Alex Cordova, whom succeeded Mr. Powell in the role of Program Manager, conducted manual searches for any responsive agency records maintained in paper files, computer files (local and shared drives), and text messages. They advised the DFO that they identified no records responsive to the request.

You may appeal the adequacy of the search by email at USDAFOIA@ocio.usda.gov, or by mail to the Assistant Secretary for Administration at 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Whitten Building, Room 209-A, Washington, D.C. 20250-0103. Your appeal must be in writing, and it must be received no later than 90 calendar days from the date of this letter. The DFO will not consider appeals received after the 90 calendar-day limit. Appeals received after 5:00 p.m. EST will be considered received the next business day. The appeal letter should include the FOIA tracking number listed above, a copy of the original request, the DFO's response to your original request, and a statement explaining the basis of your appeal. For quickest possible handling, the subject line of your email, the appeal letter, and its envelope, if applicable, should be marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal."

You may seek dispute resolution services from the DFO's FOIA Public Liaison, Ms. Ravoyne Payton at USDAFOIA@ocio.usda.gov.

You also have the option to seek assistance from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). Please visit <https://ogis.archives.gov/mediation-program/request-assistance.htm> for information about how to request OGIS assistance in relation to a FOIA request.

Provisions of the FOIA allow us to recover part of the cost of processing your request. In this instance, no fees will be charged.

Austin Evers
2019-DA-05967-F

If you have any questions regarding the processing of this request, please contact me at (202) 694-5260, or electronically at Camille.Aponte@usda.gov or USDAFOIA@ocio.usda.gov.

For additional information regarding USDA FOIA regulations and processes, please refer to the information available online at www.dm.usda.gov/foia.

The DFO Team appreciates the opportunity to assist you with this matter.

Sincerely,

Camille C. Aponte-Rossini
Government Information Specialist
Departmental FOIA Office
Office of the Chief Information Officer