

Monday, April 8, 2024 at 10:33:35 Eastern Daylight Time

Subject: RE: Public Records Request
Date: Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 6:05:50 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rob McQuade
To: AO Records, Loree Stark
CC: Nicole Fitzgerald, Kate Lynch
Attachments: image001.jpg, PRR A050_batch_5_redacted.pdf, [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, Inc. .pdf, A050-3 - E-mails no Attachments (1)_Redacted.pdf, A050-3 - E-mails no Attachments_Redacted.pdf, Fwd_ Response to notice of demand_IDSOS HAVA G....pdf, Re_ [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, In...(1).pdf, Re_ [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, In....pdf, Re_ [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, Inc. (1).pdf, Report on 2022 HAVA grant - Opearent_Chad Houc (Final) (3)_Redacted.pdf, Report on 2022 HAVA grant - Opearent_Chad Houc (Final)_Redacted.pdf, Report on 2022 HAVA grant - Opearent_Chad Houc_Redacted.pdf

EXTERNAL SENDER

Good afternoon Loree,

Attached is the 5th and final tranche of records. Attached please find records responsive to your request. Pursuant to Idaho Code § 74-112, some of the attached records have been redacted because they contain material exempt from disclosure under Idaho Code § 74-107(11).

Under Idaho Code § 74-115, you have the right to appeal this partial denial by instituting proceedings in the District Court of the county where the records are located within one hundred eighty (180) calendar days of this denial. In accordance with Idaho Code § 74-103(5), an attorney has reviewed your public records request and this response.

Sincerely,

Rob McQuade

From: Rob McQuade
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2024 3:59 PM
To: records@americanoversight.org
Cc: Loree Stark <loree.stark@americanoversight.org>
Subject: RE: Public Records Request

Good afternoon Loree,

Attached is the 4th batch of records. There is one more batch we are working on.

Take care,

Rob

From: Rob McQuade
Sent: Friday, March 22, 2024 2:36 PM
To: records@americanoversight.org
Cc: Loree Stark <loree.stark@americanoversight.org>
Subject: RE: Public Records Request

Hi Loree,

Attached is the next batch of responsive records. We are continuing to work our way through the records and hope to be completed by the end of next week.

Thanks,

Rob McQuade

From: Rob McQuade
Sent: Friday, March 15, 2024 4:58 PM
To: records@americanoversight.org
Subject: RE: Public Records Request

Good afternoon Ms. Stark,

Attached is the second batch of records responsive to your request. There are additional records we are working our way through and plan to provide those next week and will include documents responsive to your March 4, 2024 request in PRR-17-2024.

Sincerely,

Rob McQuade

From: Rob McQuade
Sent: Thursday, March 7, 2024 5:47 PM
To: records@americanoversight.org
Subject: RE: Public Records Request

Ms. Stark,

Attached is the first tranche of records responsive to your request. We have identified additional responsive records but are nearing the statutorily allowed first two hours of free labor to process them pursuant to Idaho Code 74-102(10).

Currently, we estimate it will take approximately 4 more hours to review the responsive records. Per Idaho Code 74-102(10)(e), the rate for that employee is \$20 per hour. If the employee completes the request in a shorter amount of time, the remaining amount will be refunded and if the employee exceeds the amount of time needed, we may ask for additional funds. Please let us know if you would like us to continue to process the request and we can facilitate payment.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Rob McQuade

From: Rob McQuade <rmcquade@sos.idaho.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 5:48 PM

To: records@americanoversight.org

Subject: Re: Public Records Request

Hi Ms. Stark,

I tried calling earlier, but wanted to send an email in addition to my voicemail. Is there a time tomorrow we could touch base regarding the best way for us to share the records you requested?

All the best,

Rob McQuade

From: Rob McQuade

Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:28:38 PM

To: records@americanoversight.org <records@americanoversight.org>

Subject: Public Records Request

Dear Ms. Stark,

This email responds to your request February 21, 2024, to examine records under the Idaho Public Records Act, Idaho Code Title 74, Chapter 1. Pursuant to Idaho Code Section 74-103(2), our office has determined that more than three days is needed to locate records responsive to your request. Accordingly, we will respond to your request no later than March 6, 2024.

Sincerely,

Rob McQuade



Robert H. McQuade, Jr.
Assistant Chief Deputy
Office of the Idaho Secretary of State
Direct: (208) 332-2821
Email: rmcquade@sos.idaho.gov
700 W Jefferson St, Boise, ID 83720

From: [Brian Benjamin](#)
To: [Nicole Fitzgerald](#); [Phil McGrane](#)
Cc: [Rob McQuade](#)
Subject: [External] 2022 HAVA Grant to Opearent Inc. - final report
Date: Thursday, February 29, 2024 2:03:34 PM
Attachments: [Report on 2022 HAVA grant - Opearent Chad Houck.pdf](#)

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



O. 208-334-3100 **F.** 208-334-2671

E. bbenjamin@sco.idaho.gov

W. www.sco.idaho.gov

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From: [Brian Benjamin](#)
To: [Nicole Fitzgerald](#); [Rob McQuade](#)
Cc: [Phil McGrane](#)
Subject: [External] ATTORNEY INVESTIGATION AND WORK PRODUCT - Examination Report on 2022 HAVA grant
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:48:32 AM
Attachments: [Report on 2022 HAVA grant - Opearent Chad Houck.docx](#)

Nicole –

I have attached my revised report. [REDACTED]

Thanks.

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



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Cc: [Rob McQuade](#)
Subject: [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, Inc.
Date: Tuesday, February 13, 2024 4:04:25 PM
Attachments: [Report on 2022 HAVA grant - Opearent Chad Houck.docx](#)

Secretary McGrane,

I have attached a DRAFT report on my review of the HAVA grant to Opearent, Inc. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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From: [Phil McGrane](#)
To: [Nicole Fitzgerald](#)
Cc: [Rob McQuade](#)
Subject: Fwd: Response to notice of demand: IDSOS HAVA Grant
Date: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 4:06:39 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[Response to Official Notice of Demand.docx](#)

From: Brian Benjamin <BBenjamin@sco.idaho.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 9:11:45 AM
To: Phil McGrane <pmcgrane@sos.idaho.gov>
Subject: RE: Response to notice of demand: IDSOS HAVA Grant

Here is Chad's Letter. I thought he attached it in his email that you were copied on. I'm supposed to get a cashier's check today from Chad for \$21,671.26 of unspent funds.

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



O. 208-334-3100 **F.** 208-334-2671
E. bbenjamin@sco.idaho.gov
W. www.sco.idaho.gov

From: Phil McGrane <pmcgrane@sos.idaho.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 9:05 AM
To: Brian Benjamin <BBenjamin@sco.idaho.gov>
Subject: RE: Response to notice of demand: IDSOS HAVA Grant [EXTERNAL]

Good Morning Brian,

I didn't see an attachment with Chad's letter. Also, I'll try to touch base with you sometime today on all of this.

Thanks,
Phil



Phil McGrane, JD, MPA
Idaho Secretary of State

Office of the Idaho Secretary of State
Direct: (208) 332-2813
Email: pmcgrane@sos.idaho.gov
700 W Jefferson St, E205

From: Brian Benjamin <BBenjamin@sco.idaho.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 5:13 PM
To: Phil McGrane <pmcgrane@sos.idaho.gov>
Subject: RE: Response to notice of demand: IDSOS HAVA Grant

Phil – This letter from Chad is the result of my discussion with him. He wanted to tell his side of the story, so I told him to just write it up in a narrative and give it to me with the unspent \$21k. He stated he is delivering the funds (a check) to SCO tomorrow. I can walk it over once I receive it.

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



O. 208-334-3100 F. 208-334-2671
E. bbenjamin@sco.idaho.gov
W. www.sco.idaho.gov

From: Chad Houck <chad@opearent.org>
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 4:54 PM
To: Brian Benjamin <BBenjamin@sco.idaho.gov>
Cc: Phil McGrane - SOS <pmcgrane@sos.idaho.gov>
Subject: Re: Response to notice of demand: IDSOS HAVA Grant [EXTERNAL]

Sorry. Forgot to cc Secretary McGrane on the original email. Resending with cc and attachment.

CH

From: Chad Houck <chad@opearent.org>
Date: Monday, January 29, 2024 at 4:52 PM
To: bbenjamin@sco.idaho.gov <bbenjamin@sco.idaho.gov>
Subject: Response to notice of demand: IDSOS HAVA Grant

Mr. Benjamin,

Please see the attached response regarding your demand letter of January 24, 2024, and feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to following up with you.

Chad Houck
Opearent, Inc.

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**Examination Report on 2022 HAVA grant
to Chad Houck dba Opearent, Inc.**

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Prepared By:

Brian Benjamin, Deputy Controller & Counsel

Final draft: February 29, 2024

[REDACTED]

**Examination Report on 2022 HAVA grant
to Chad Houck dba Opearent, Inc.**

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Prepared By:

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[REDACTED]

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- [REDACTED]
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From: [Nicole Fitzgerald](#)
To: [Brian Benjamin](#); [Phil McGrane](#)
Cc: [Rob McQuade](#)
Subject: Re: [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, Inc.
Date: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:52:22 PM

Hi Brian,

Do you have time tomorrow or early next week to meet?

Thanks,
Nicole

From: Brian Benjamin <BBenjamin@sco.idaho.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 13, 2024 4:04 PM
To: Phil McGrane <pmcgrane@sos.idaho.gov>; Nicole Fitzgerald <nfitzgerald@sos.idaho.gov>
Cc: Rob McQuade <rmcquade@sos.idaho.gov>
Subject: [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, Inc.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



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To: [Nicole Fitzgerald](#); [Phil McGrane](#)
Cc: [Rob McQuade](#)
Subject: Re: [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, Inc.
Date: Thursday, February 22, 2024 5:12:33 PM

Yes- my calendar is open tomorrow. You can pick the time. Prefer morning if available. I can just walk over.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Nicole Fitzgerald <nfitzgerald@sos.idaho.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:52:17 PM
To: Brian Benjamin <BBenjamin@sco.idaho.gov>; Phil McGrane <pmcgrane@sos.idaho.gov>
Cc: Rob McQuade <rmcquade@sos.idaho.gov>
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[REDACTED]

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Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:52:17 PM
To: Brian Benjamin <BBenjamin@sco.idaho.gov>; Phil McGrane <pmcgrane@sos.idaho.gov>
Cc: Rob McQuade <rmcquade@sos.idaho.gov>
Subject: Re: [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, Inc. [EXTERNAL]

Hi Brian,

Do you have time tomorrow or early next week to meet?

Thanks,
Nicole

From: Brian Benjamin <BBenjamin@sco.idaho.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 13, 2024 4:04 PM
To: Phil McGrane <pmcgrane@sos.idaho.gov>; Nicole Fitzgerald <nfitzgerald@sos.idaho.gov>
Cc: Rob McQuade <rmcquade@sos.idaho.gov>
Subject: [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, Inc.

Secretary McGrane,

I have attached a DRAFT report on my review of the HAVA grant to Opearent, Inc. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



O. 208-334-3100 F. 208-334-2671

E. bbenjamin@sco.idaho.gov

W. www.sco.idaho.gov

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From: [Brian Benjamin](#)
To: [Nicole Fitzgerald](#); [Phil McGrane](#)
Cc: [Rob McQuade](#)
Subject: Re: [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, Inc.
Date: Thursday, February 22, 2024 5:12:33 PM

Yes- my calendar is open tomorrow. You can pick the time. Prefer morning if available. I can just walk over.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Nicole Fitzgerald <nfitzgerald@sos.idaho.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:52:17 PM
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[REDACTED]

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Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



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From: [Nicole Fitzgerald](#)
To: [Brian Benjamin](#); [Phil McGrane](#)
Cc: [Rob McQuade](#)
Subject: Re: [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, Inc.
Date: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:52:22 PM

Hi Brian,

Do you have time tomorrow or early next week to meet?

Thanks,
Nicole

From: Brian Benjamin <BBenjamin@sco.idaho.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 13, 2024 4:04 PM
To: Phil McGrane <pmcgrane@sos.idaho.gov>; Nicole Fitzgerald <nfitzgerald@sos.idaho.gov>
Cc: Rob McQuade <rmcquade@sos.idaho.gov>
Subject: [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, Inc.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



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From: [Brian Benjamin](#)
To: [Nicole Fitzgerald](#)
Subject: RE: [External] Opearent Inc.
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:57:47 AM

Got it. Thanks Nicole.
BB

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



O. 208-334-3100 **F.** 208-334-2671
E. bbenjamin@sco.idaho.gov
W. www.sco.idaho.gov

From: Nicole Fitzgerald <nfitzgerald@sos.idaho.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:50 AM
To: Brian Benjamin <BBenjamin@sco.idaho.gov>
Subject: RE: [External] Opearent Inc. [EXTERNAL]

Hi Brian,

I just forwarded you the email string with Chad. After the last email exchange, Chad called me and requested an in-person meeting to discuss.

Chad's daughter's business is called [IdeeuH](#). They produce videos and other collateral materials. The examples of their work on the website is ID SOS.

Let me know if you need anything else!
Nicole

From: Brian Benjamin <BBenjamin@sco.idaho.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 9:23 AM
To: Nicole Fitzgerald <nfitzgerald@sos.idaho.gov>
Subject: [External] Opearent Inc.

Good morning Nicole – You had mentioned an email you sent to Mr. Houck in October 2023 asking for receipts, etc. on how that grant money may have been spent, and then heard nothing until December. Could you please provide me that email? I am updating my report based on our discussions Friday.

Also, how would you describe Mr. Houck's daughter's video business that he was helping her promote at the Summer NAAS Conference? Just refer to it as "his student daughter's video business?" Or is there a better description? I didn't catch the name of it (Ideeah?).

Thanks.

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



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From: [Nicole Fitzgerald](#)
To: [Brian Benjamin](#)
Subject: RE: [External] Opearent Inc.
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:50:00 AM

Hi Brian,

I just forwarded you the email string with Chad. After the last email exchange, Chad called me and requested an in-person meeting to discuss.

Chad's daughter's business is called [IdeeuH](#). They produce videos and other collateral materials. The examples of their work on the website is ID SOS.

Let me know if you need anything else!
Nicole

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Thanks.

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From: [Brian Benjamin](#)
To: [Phil McGrane](#); [Nicole Fitzgerald](#)
Cc: [Rob McQuade](#)
Subject: [External] HAVA grant review - Opearent, Inc.
Date: Tuesday, February 13, 2024 4:04:25 PM
Attachments: [Report on 2022 HAVA grant - Opearent Chad Houck.docx](#)

Secretary McGrane,

I have attached a DRAFT report on my review of the HAVA grant to Opearent, Inc. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



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From: [Brian Benjamin](#)
To: [Nicole Fitzgerald](#); [Phil McGrane](#)
Cc: [Rob McQuade](#)
Subject: [External] RE: 2022 HAVA Grant to Opearent Inc. - final report
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 9:19:48 AM

I also wanted to add that I would be happy to assist and attend when you meet with the AG's office, if you wanted.

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



O. 208-334-3100 F. 208-334-2671

E. bbenjamin@sco.idaho.gov

W. www.sco.idaho.gov

From: Brian Benjamin
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 2:01 PM
To: 'Nicole Fitzgerald' <nfitzgerald@sos.idaho.gov>; Phil McGrane - SOS <pmcgrane@sos.idaho.gov>
Cc: 'Rob McQuade' <rmcquade@sos.idaho.gov>
Subject: 2022 HAVA Grant to Opearent Inc. - final report

Brian Benjamin - Deputy Chief of Staff



O. 208-334-3100 F. 208-334-2671

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Subject: 2022 HAVA Grant to Opearent Inc. - final report

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