



July 17, 2018

VIA ONLINE PORTAL

New York City Housing Authority
Law Department
250 Broadway, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007
VIA NYC Open Records Portal

Re: Freedom of Information Law Request

Dear Records Access Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law, N.Y. Pub. Off. Law §§ 84-90 (FOIL), American Oversight makes the following request for records.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) produce the following within five business days:

All records reflecting communications (including emails, email attachments, text messages, calendar invitations/entries, meeting notices, meeting agendas, informational material, talking points, any handwritten or electronic notes taken during any oral communications, summaries of any oral communications, or other materials) concerning any visit by HUD Secretary Ben Carson and exchanged between 1) NYCHA and 2) HUD Secretary Ben Carson, any representative of HUD Secretary Ben Carson, Secretary Carson's son, Benjamin Carson Jr., or Secretary Carson's daughter-in-law, Merlynn Carson.

Please provide all responsive records from March 2, 2017, through the date NYCHA conducts the search.

American Oversight seeks all responsive records regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. In conducting your search, please understand the term "record" in its broadest sense, to include any written, typed, recorded, graphic, printed, or audio material of any kind. We seek records of any kind, including electronic records, audiotapes, videotapes, and photographs, as well as letters, emails, facsimiles, telephone messages, voice mail messages and transcripts, notes, or minutes of any meetings, telephone conversations or discussions. Our request includes any attachments to these records. **No category of material should be omitted from search, collection, and production.**



In addition, American Oversight insists that NYCHA use the most up-to-date technologies to search for responsive information and take steps to ensure that the most complete repositories of information are searched. American Oversight is available to work with you to craft appropriate search terms. **However, custodian searches are still required; agencies may not have direct access to files stored in .PST files, outside of network drives, in paper format, or in personal email accounts.**

In the event some portions of the requested records are properly exempt from disclosure pursuant to N.Y. Pub. Off. Law § 87(2), please disclose any reasonably segregable non-exempt portions of the requested records. If it is your position that a document contains non-exempt segments, but that those non-exempt segments are so dispersed throughout the document as to make segregation impossible, please state what portion of the document is non-exempt, and how the material is dispersed throughout the document. If a request is denied in whole, please state specifically that it is not reasonable to segregate portions of the record for release.

You should institute a preservation hold on information responsive to this request. American Oversight intends to pursue all legal avenues to enforce its right of access under FOIL, including litigation if necessary. Accordingly, NYCHA is on notice that litigation is reasonably foreseeable.

To ensure that this request is properly construed, that searches are conducted in an adequate but efficient manner, and that extraneous costs are not incurred, American Oversight welcomes an opportunity to discuss its request with you before you undertake your search or incur search or duplication costs. By working together at the outset, American Oversight and NYCHA can decrease the likelihood of costly and time-consuming litigation in the future.

Where possible, please provide responsive material in electronic format by email or in PDF or TIF format on a USB drive. Please send any responsive material being sent by mail to American Oversight, 1030 15th Street NW, Suite B255, Washington, DC 20005. If it will accelerate release of responsive records to American Oversight, please also provide responsive material on a rolling basis. Please consult with American Oversight on any fees the agency expects it may assess.

Conclusion

American Oversight is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the mission to promote transparency in government, to educate the public about government activities, and to ensure the accountability of government officials. American Oversight uses the information gathered, and its analysis of it, to educate the public through reports, press releases, or other media. American Oversight also makes materials it gathers available on its public website and promotes their availability on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.¹

We share a common mission to promote transparency in government. American Oversight looks forward to working with NYCHA on this request. If you do not understand any part of this

¹ American Oversight currently has approximately 11,900 page likes on Facebook, and 43,900 followers on Twitter. American Oversight, FACEBOOK, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited July 17, 2018); American Oversight (@weareoversight), TWITTER, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited July 17, 2018).

request, have any questions, or foresee any problems in fully releasing the requested records, please contact Dan McGrath at foia@americanoversight.org or 202.897.4213.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Austin R. Evers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Austin R. Evers
Executive Director
American Oversight