

Open Data Initiative - Participation Plan

Overview

With the development of new technologies and an increasingly connected and engaged population, a growing expectation has been placed on the City of Austin government leaders to adopt open government practices that will promote transparency, citizen participation, and collaboration. In order to change how government works, provide more effective government services, drive data informed decision making, promote economic development opportunities and establish a more robust democracy, all Departments and Offices within the City of Austin are required to take the following steps to participate in the **City's Open Data Initiative**.

1. Plan/Resource Department Participation

- a. Within the first 30 days, each Department and Office will identify an Open Data Liaison to represent and lead their department's participation in the City's Open Data Initiative
- b. Within the first 30 days, each Department Open Data Liaison will create an inventory of known data managed and maintained by the Department. The inventory will indicate:
 - i. If the information is publicly-accessible;
 - ii. The date of when the information was made publicly-accessible or when it is scheduled to be made public;
 - iii. The date the information was last updated or when it is scheduled to be updated;
 - iv. If the data is in a consumable format
 - v. If the information is from a primary source or has been aggregated or modified; and
 - vi. If the information is restricted by any legal, license or privacy restrictions.

2. Participate in Open Data Workshop and Speaker Series

- a. Within the first 60 days, Department Directors and Open Data Liaisons will participate in workshops designed to inform, inspire and provide pathways towards participation in the City's Open Data Initiative. CTM, PIO and the Innovation Office will plan, develop, coordinate and lead Open Data workshops.
- b. Within the first 60 days, each Data Liaison will participate in public outreach efforts to learn about public interest areas for Open Data. These outreach efforts will be coordinated by PIO, CTM and the Innovation Office.
- c. Within first 60 days, each Data Liaison will be responsible for assessing department readiness, identifying a problem statement and develop a plan/schedule to begin releasing data to the City Open Data Portal. Knowledge gained from Open Data workshops should help frame areas of focus and priority.

3. Publish Open Data Online

- a. Within the first 90 days, each Department and Office will identify at least three (3) data sets to be published on the City of Austin Data Portal. (<http://data.austintexas.gov/>)
- b. Within the first 90 days, each Department and Office will publish their plan/schedule to release additional Open Data over the next 12 months. This plan will need to be actively maintained and updated by the department Open Data Liaison. The plan will be posted on the Open Government section of AustinTexas.gov. (<http://austintexas.gov/open-government>)
- c. Publish at least 1 problem statement.
- d. Within the first 90 days, a scorecard showing the level of department participation in publishing Open Data will be posted on the Open Government section of AustinTexas.gov.
- e. Report on plan status and progress on a quarterly basis.

- f. Review performance measures and establish new measures annually.

Department Responsibilities

Owner	Responsibility	Deadline
Department Directors	Identify Departmental Open Data Liaison	Within first 30 Days
Department Open Data Liaisons	Create departmental data inventory	Within first 30 days
Department Directors & Open Data Liaisons	Participate in scheduled Open Data workshops/speaker series	Within first 60 days
Department Open Data Liaisons	Participate in public outreach efforts related to Open Data	Within first 60 days
Department Open Data Liaisons	Update data inventory and develop plan/schedule to release data including	Within first 60 days

	drafting a problem statement	
Department Open Data Liaisons	Publish at least three (3) data sets to the Austin Open Data Portal	Within first 90 days
Department Open Data Liaisons	Publish plan/schedule for data release through next 12 months and a finalized problem statement	Within first 90 days
Department Directors	Report on plan status/progress to Open Government Executive Board	Quarterly

Open Government Executive Board Responsibilities

Owner	Responsibility	Deadline
CTM/PIO/InO	Coordinate Open Data Liaison team tasks	Within first 30 Days
CTM/PIO/InO	Plan and schedule workshops and speaker series	Within first 30 days
CTM/PIO/InO	Plan and schedule public outreach	Within first 30 days
CTM/PIO/InO	Develop online portal for open posting department	Within first 60 days

	open data plans and scorecard	
CTM	Facilitate Departmental data upload to portal	Within first 90 days
CTM	Train Departmental Open Data Liaisons on how to use data portal.	Within first 90 days
Open Government Board	Review quarterly and annual report and set new performance measures annually.	Quarterly/Annually

About Open Data - General Principles

- a. Presumption of Openness:** With respect to information, the presumption shall be in favor of openness and publication (to the extent permitted by law and subject to valid privacy, confidentiality, security, or other restrictions). Where practicable, Departments shall publish all data that is not subject to valid privacy, security, or privilege limitations.^{[2][3]}
- b. Timing and Consistency:** Timely and consistent publication of information is an essential component of open government. As such, Departments shall develop schedules for making information available to the public and indicating when information is updated.^[1]
- c. Online and Open:** Departments should publish information online and, when practicable, in an open format that can be retrieved, downloaded, indexed, sorted, searched, and reused by commonly used Web search applications and commonly used software.^[4]

- d. Public Feedback:** The Open Government Web page will include a mechanism for the public to:
- a. Give feedback on and assess the quality of published information;
and
 - b. Provide input about which information to prioritize for publication.
- e. Response to Public Feedback:** Each Department shall respond to public feedback received through the Open Government Web page on a regular, timely basis. Responses shall include descriptions of actions taken or reasons for not taking action based on public input.
- f. Licenses:** The City shall not assert any copyright, patent, trademark, or other restriction on government information. However, such restrictions may be applied to information shared by the City that was compiled or modified by non-governmental entities or individuals.^[6]

Notes:

[1] The timely and consistent publication of government information is of critical importance to the use of that information. Adherence to a publication schedule is critical to the success of this open government mandate. It is not enough to simply publish information without managing that information. Therefore, it is important that the executive leadership to review the resources necessary to manage the on-going publication effort, but the directive should not eliminate the schedule as part of a publication plan.

[2] Paragraph c is intended to embody the underlying intent of Freedom of Information/Open Records laws in that information held and maintained by the government is public information. As such, the default setting must be to release information and publication should only be withheld if a valid privacy, security, or privilege exists. A valid privacy, security, or privilege concerns include, but are not limited to, personal identifying information, critical infrastructure information, information related to an on-going criminal investigation, or any publication that may breach an individual or groups legal rights. If the local government chooses to

withhold information from publication that government entity should provide the public with a reasonably detailed explanation for withholding the information. Such explanation should be created to foster trust and instill transparency in the publication process.

[3] One of the greatest strains on government resources is compliance with open records requests. As such, local governments should use the open government directive as an opportunity to preemptively publish government information before an open records request is received. Furthermore, the local government should publish information if such information is frequently requested or if the information is a data set.

[4] Paragraph d is intended to result in the maximum use of government information. Governments must publish information that is machine-readable as well as human-readable. Although maximum openness is achieved through publication in open formats, City's should take steps to publish what information they have in whatever format they have and then take steps to convert that information into open formats.

[5] Government information includes data sets collected and maintained by the local government. Dissemination of these data sets is as important as all other forms of publication. Therefore, local government should actively release this data to the public for use and re-use. It is again critical that data be released in an open format that is machine readable and accessible.

[6] Unlike US Federal Government information, state and local government information is not in the public domain as a matter of law unless the state or local law dictates otherwise. Some local governments can and do exercise copy, trade, and intellectual property rights over government information. This practice significantly impacts the use of government information by the public and hinders open government efforts. Local governments should, therefore, release all government information free of any such right and should not exercise these rights after release. However, the City may reserve the right to enforce reasonable privacy, security, and privilege rights on government information. Finally, if license or restrictions are asserted then the license and restriction should be minimally restrictive so that they do not significantly impugn the use and derivative use of the information.

Reference Material:

Please refer to the Open Data Handbook (<http://opendatahandbook.org/en/>) for more information about government Open Data.

Learn more about Austin's Data Portal:

- <http://Data.austintexas.gov>
- Socrata (The host of the City's Portal): <http://www.socrata.com/blog/>
- Spotlight on Austin: <http://www.socrata.com/customer-spotlight/city-of-austin/>