

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**



Open Government Report 2014

To institutionalize a culture of transparent and open government, accountability, and to expand opportunities for resident participation and collaboration, this Report describes how Mayor Gray's Office has and will continue to develop and enhance transparency, public participation, and collaboration. In accordance with Mayor's Order 2014-170, this report addresses the following topics:

1) Transparency

Mayor Gray strongly believes in an open and transparent government. From the start of his administration, he has worked tirelessly to ensure that his administration is as transparent, collaborative, and accountable as possible. The Open Government Initiative, envisioned by Mayor Gray and led by the Executive Office of the Mayor (EOM), is a multifaceted approach to lead the District Government towards openness and transparency by using technology to make key government records easily accessible online. The overall goal is keep the public better informed about the functioning of their government.

Mayor Gray has been a leader in Open Government. At the start of his administration he issued Mayor's Memorandum 2011-01 that set the tone for open government efforts in the Gray Administration. It affirmatively set forth standards to be used in the interpretation of, and compliance with, the Freedom of Information Act and indicated the direction to be taken for further open government and transparency efforts.

In July 2014, Mayor Gray issued the Open Government and Open Data Directive, which details concrete steps the District government must take to better institutionalize a culture of transparency, accountability, and public participation in the District government. The Directive:

- Requires agencies to publish up to 15 different categories of government information online on agency open government and FOIA pages, create annual open government reports, and identify and publish datasets online
- Establishes a common web portal that will serve as the source for District-wide and agency activities related to this transparency, open government, and open data
- Convenes an Open Government Advisory Group to assist the Mayor in creating open government policy
- Designates a Chief Data Officer to coordinate implementation, compliance, and expansion of the District's Open Data Program

Since the announcement of the Directive, all agencies have created Open Government and FOIA webpages with key information on agency expenditures, organizational charts, policies, budget and more. Furthermore, the Executive Office of the Mayor partnered with Office of the Chief Technology Officer to create the new central open government website, open.dc.gov, which provides a large quantity of government information and makes it easier for the public to locate information that would otherwise be difficult to find or even know is published on individual agency webpages.

In addition, FOIAXpress, the District's first-ever city-wide FOIA processing system, successfully launched in July 2014 with over 50 District agencies using the system. Since the launch, members of the media and public have submitted over 600 FOIA requests and appeals through the online public FOIA portal. FOIAXpress has an internal component where FOIA Officers track and respond to FOIA requests and a public component that allows agencies to publish documents to a reading room for frequently requested public records. There are currently 56 frequently requested public records in the reading room. FOIA requesters also have the ability to check the status of their requests in FOIAXpress which gives them a better understanding of the workings of the government.

Also, the Executive Office of the Mayor works hard to ensure District residents are informed of key issues, projects, initiatives, and announcements of the District government. Methods the Executive Office of the Mayor uses to share information with the public include:

- The Mayor's Office of Communications published over 400 press releases in FY 2014 alone.
- The Mayor's twitter account has tweeted over 10,100 tweets and has 24,800 followers. Just a year ago, it had 18,400 followers.
- The Mayor's YouTube account, [dcmayorsoffice](https://www.youtube.com/dcmayorsoffice), has uploaded over 100 videos in FY 2014 alone.
- The Mayor's Office of Communications distributes The Mayor Gray Report, an e-newsletter summarizing Mayor Gray's announcements and activities, is distributed roughly once a week to well over 8,600 District residents, community leaders, and other key stakeholders. To date, 68 editions of the e-newsletter have been issued.
- The Executive Office of the Mayor has a new Open Government and FOIA webpage which includes information on EOM's budget, regulations, expenditures, organizational chart, employee salary information, and frequently requested public records.

- The Mayor's Office of the General Counsel has published all decisions of appeals of agency FOIA productions online and in the DC Register. The webpage on which appeals decisions are published now includes reformatted indices that make decisions more accessible and searchable.
- The Office of Documents and Administrative Issuances has entered into an MOU with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to update dcregs.org, the online portal for the DC Register, DCMR, Mayor's Orders, and Mayor's Memorandums to add functionality, searchability, and other enhancements designed to improve performance and the ability of users to conduct advanced searches.

Moving forward, the Executive Office of the Mayor will take steps to increase public access to information including:

- Publishing additional documents to our FOIAXpress reading room (there are currently ten documents published there now).
- Updating our open government and FOIA webpage regularly
- Improving the accessibility of FOIA appeals decisions by providing the public the ability to download entire years of opinions in machine readable word and text format

The Executive Office of the Mayor is also working closely with the Office of the City Administrator (OCA) and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to identify government datasets that OCA and OCTO expect to publish online later this year. In the future, requirements for open data reporting will be provided by the Chief Data Officer.

2) **Public Engagement and Participation**

In order to better capture resident feedback about District government performance, in June 2012, the Executive Office of the Mayor led the implementation and management of grade.dc.gov, an online grading tool that harnesses innovative analytical technology to improve customer care. Feedback from the public is collected from the online surveys and combined with data from comments posted on social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, Foursquare, and Yelp. This aggregated data is used by an independent company to develop a grade for each participating District government agency. The goal is to make it possible for District residents to easily offer actionable feedback and help DC government agencies improve their customer care. Grade.dc.gov has been an integral part in improving performance of District government services, and in FY 14 alone, members of the public submitted 36,445 reviews through it.

In addition, during the formulation of the Open Government Initiative, the Executive Office of the Mayor solicited public participation in the formulation of the District's

transparency and open government policies by inviting the submission of comments, ideas and proposals to increase openness and transparency in government. The Executive Office of the Mayor received approximately a dozen comments, including detailed comments from the Sunlight Foundation, DC Open Government Coalition, Socrata and Code for DC. Many of the public's suggestions have been incorporated into the Open Government Initiative. Comments can still be submitted through the open.dc.gov website.

Mayor Gray also solicits feedback and shares information through a wide variety of other platforms including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and the *Ask the Mayor* feature on the mayor.dc.gov website that allows members of the public to submit questions directly to the Mayor's Office. When correspondence is submitted through the *Ask the Mayor* feature it is entered in to the Intranet Quorum (IQ) system, a database that houses and tracks the Mayor's incoming mail to ensure that it is responded to promptly.

In addition, Mayor Gray believes there is no substitute for live public engagement and prioritizes face to face interaction with District residents and community leaders to keep them informed and engaged. Below are a few ways that Mayor Gray has engaged District residents in the past year:

- Mayor Gray holds biweekly press briefings to update the media about the District government's latest accomplishments, goals, and projects. He also takes questions from the press on any topic. In addition, every month Mayor Gray appears on NewsTalk on News Channel 8 where he discusses his administration's plans for advancing the city and takes phone calls from the public.
- Every year Mayor Gray conducts a series of Budget Town Hall Meetings, including one in every ward, to brief residents about his proposed budget. In 2014, he held 11 town hall meetings. Residents are able to provide the mayor and his cabinet with feedback in person during the town hall or through email at budgetquestions@dc.gov.
- Mayor Gray holds quarterly meetings with Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) Chairs and Boards and Commissions Chairs to keep key community leaders informed of important issues and projects in which the District government is engaged.
- Each year Mayor Gray delivers a State of the District Address to report on the status of the city and outline his agenda and priorities for the year. In 2014, Mayor Gray delivered his State of the District Address at Kelly Miller Middle School with hundreds of District residents in attendance.
- On the mayor's behalf, the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs (MOCA) shares information with the public live and through a number of ways including listservs, newsletters, community meetings, websites, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. MOCA maintains constant contact with stakeholders and invites the public to participate in government sponsored events and forums.

Perhaps most importantly, the Mayor maintains a breathtaking public schedule which includes regular participation in community meetings to keep residents informed of important issues and projects in which the District government is engaged and to listen to residents and stakeholders. Mayor Gray is dedicated to serving the residents of the District of Columbia and works hard to ensure their needs are heard and met.

3) **Collaboration**

Mayor Gray strongly believes in collaboration, and during his administration, multiagency collaborative efforts have proven to be the most effective. Mayor Gray holds monthly cabinet meetings to ensure that agency directors are aware of different agencies' projects and goals and have an opportunity to partner with other agencies. It is important to Mayor Gray to break down the silo mentality and promote agency partnerships. The Deputy Mayor structure in the Gray Administration also accomplishes this by convening cluster meetings that allow agencies with generally similar areas of focus to communicate and work together to tackle issues with the Deputy Mayors able to coordinate work across clusters.

The partnership with the Executive Office of the Mayor (EOM) and Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) has been vital to the success of the Open Government Initiative. OCTO was a key partner in helping EOM with the creation of the new central open government website, open.dc.gov, which provides a large quantity of government information and makes it easier for the public to locate information that could have otherwise been hard to find on individual agency webpages. In addition, with the help of OCTO, EOM collaborated with all district agencies to create new and uniformed agency Open Government and FOIA webpages that contain much more agency specific information than ever before.

Furthermore, Mayor Gray understands that our Open Government Initiative must solicit and incorporate feedback from the public, nonprofit entities, and private entities to reach its full potential. To aid in the advancement of the initiative, the Mayor will soon appoint an Open Government Advisory Group that includes key representatives of the District government as well as representatives of the DC Open Government Coalition, Code for DC, and the Urban Institute. He will task this group with ensuring that the District government is a leader in Open Government and Open Data and making specific recommendations for improving the openness and transparency of the District government.

Mayor Gray believes in working collaboratively—both inside and outside District government—to achieve the common goal of advancing the District of Columbia. He understands that this can only be achieved when District government leaders have the opportunity to learn from and partner with each other. The Mayor's Sustainability Challenge, a grant competition among District agencies to test forward-thinking sustainability initiatives, is one tactic Mayor Gray uses to foster agency partnerships within the District government. In FY 13, Mayor Gray allocated \$6.85 million to date to

support it. In FY 14, after a large number of collaborative projects were submitted, four District agencies and other partnering agencies were selected to receive funding totaling \$2.35 million for seven innovative projects.