

OGAG Transparency and Understandability of Information Subgroup

Data Stewardship Toolkit Project

How to Find Your Open Data Stakeholders (June 7, 2018)

We've seen government agencies do great technical work on making public data available using open standards and open data catalogs, like DC's Data.dc.gov. And while there's more work to do on making more data available, what if at the same time we could work to increase the community value of the data we release? The best way to do that is to identify all the Open Data Stakeholders – these are the members of the community who potentially hold a stake in the release of open data. These are the people who should be at the table (figuratively or literally) when:

- Designing data release formats
- Collecting feedback on data sharing resources (such as open data portals)
- Identifying new (potentially even undiscovered) data for release
- Prioritizing discovered data for release (e.g., via inventorying)

Through these avenues of community input, Open Data Stakeholders are the people who can be partners in sustaining a valuable open data operation.

Guides like [Sunlight Foundation's Tactical Data Engagement](#), [Open Government Data: The Book](#), the [Open Data Handbook](#), and [DataSF's Open Date Release Toolkit](#) have established general best practices for how agencies should not only format and license their data but also how to talk with data users and learn what kind of open data they need to improve their lives or inform their work. Open data practices are becoming more professional and more repeatable.

In the same spirit, and similar to [Sunlight Foundation's open data user personas](#), we set out last year to create a detailed list of specific stakeholders that all open government data publishers are likely to have. Informed by our own experiences with open data, plus interviews we held with staff from the offices of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development and Department of Energy and Environment, we found two dozen likely stakeholders that government agencies could be looking to involve in their open data efforts. For instance, both agencies had in common stakeholders such as grantees and journalists. We hope that by using this list as a checklist, agencies will discover new stakeholders they may have always had.

This post was created by the District of Columbia's Mayor's [Open Government Advisory Group](#)'s Transparency and Understandability committee (Sandra Moscoso, chair and public member; Kathy Pettit, public member; Joshua Tauberer, public member; Julie Kanzler, OCTO).

Who are your data stakeholders?

We hope that by using this list as a checklist, you will discover new stakeholders for your open data.

- Consumers of agency services
 - Consumers of your agency's services (i.e., program participants), and their guardians (if applicable), without forgetting those with the least equitable access to the service
 - Service intermediaries (e.g., permit expeditors, other community members who help consumers get access to government services)
 - People and businesses that are identified in your dataset (i.e., they are listed by name)

- Community volunteers and community groups who are grant recipients for your agency's programs
- Communities
 - Geographic and residential communities, i.e. people and businesses that live, work, or operate in the area the data is about, including their neighborhood organizations (such as DC Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, neighborhood organizations) and coalitions (such as business improvement districts and homeowner associations)
 - Economic communities, such as private sector enterprises operating in an impacted market or that are subject to regulations by your agency, contractors looking for business opportunities, permit holders, and business associations
 - School communities and associations (many DC schools are not based on geographic districts!)
 - Civic activists, nonprofits/NGOs, and subject matter experts outside of your agency who advocate for or analyze relevant policy
 - Regular attendees of your agency's open meetings and participatory events/programs
 - Anyone else with a problem that could be solved, or whose life or business would be impacted, by the application of data (inside or outside of govt) either directly or indirectly
- Information professionals
 - Journalists and other infomediaries who will analyze or transform the data to convey a story to their constituency
 - Records requestors using a Freedom of Information law
 - Data wranglers such as academic researchers, infomediaries, concerned residents, civic hackers, and entrepreneurs who will download and analyze/use the dataset
 - Organizations that create the data standards that the data conforms to
- Internal stakeholders
 - Subject matter experts, data collectors, data analysts, data consumers, and other relevant staff within your agency
 - Your agency's public information office
 - Agency staff who have oversight over your program, such as your bosses
 - Other peer agencies with similar programs, that you exchange data with, that infrastructure is shared with (e.g. a shared data catalog), or that need help using your data
 - Your data publishing partner (i.e. OCTO) and other agencies who manage your information technology resources.
- External government stakeholders and fiscal stakeholders
 - Neighboring jurisdictions (other cities, states) that have similar programs
 - Federal agencies with similar programs or that your agency reports data to
 - Government entities who have oversight over your program, such as the Mayor, the Council, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, and federal agencies, regulators, and lawmakers.
 - Organizations that fund your agency's work, such as federal government agencies, foundations/grantmakers, and corporate partners
 - Individuals that fund your agency's work, such as taxpayers, consumers of the service (if the agency's program is a fee based service), permit holders, etc.