

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Office of the Chief Technology Officer**



**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 the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) 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:

## **Transparency**

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) regularly shares press releases, announcements, public services, and other information via several agency-managed web sites including:

- OCTO Main web site [octo.dc.gov](http://octo.dc.gov)
- DC-Net sub site [dcnet.dc.gov](http://dcnet.dc.gov)
- Connect DC sub site [connect.dc.gov](http://connect.dc.gov)
- DC Data Catalog [data.dc.gov](http://data.dc.gov)
- GIS updates via GovDelivery <http://octo.dc.gov/service/dc-gis-services>

OCTO also manages several active and engaging Twitter accounts:

- Twitter [@octodc](https://twitter.com/octodc)
- Twitter [@dcgovweb](https://twitter.com/dcgovweb)
- Twitter [@connectdotdc](https://twitter.com/connectdotdc)
- Instagram [@connectdotdc](https://www.instagram.com/connectdotdc)
- YouTube [@connectdotdc](https://www.youtube.com/@connectdotdc)
- Twitter [@DCNetGov](https://twitter.com/DCNetGov)

The agency also manages several online applications that provide valuable information to the public including the [DC GIS Mapping Tool](#), [DC Public Wi-Fi Hotspot Finder](#), among many others available here: <http://octo.dc.gov/node/708212>. These applications are regularly promoted both online and through community outreach activities.

OCTO believes the vast amount of information available on [data.dc.gov](http://data.dc.gov) and [octo.dc.gov](http://octo.dc.gov) web sites contributes to the small number of FOIA requests to the agency. Information on everything from purchase card transactions, current and needed contractor support, purchase orders, etc. is all readily available.

### ***District's Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act***

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) annually receives a small number of FOIA requests for OCTO-specific information. For example, in FY 2013 the agency only received 14 requests with 4 of those were rerouted to other agencies with a 100 percent closure rate. The OCTO requests were closed within an average of 2.4 days. The preliminary FY 2014 numbers are following the same trend and will be fully reporting in early 2015.

As owner of the City-wide Messaging System for partner agencies, OCTO receives a large number of requests for specific emails to and/or from certain individuals and/or containing certain names or words. Pursuant to **Mayor's Order 2008-88**, "Access to Email Traffic of District Government Employees", OCTO is to provide the relevant emails back to partner agencies to review and provide to requestor.

In FY 2014, OCTO fulfilled 528 requests for emails from partner agencies originating from FOIA requests or litigation.

### ***FOIAXpress Support***

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) served as the technical lead and project manager for the launch of Executive Office of Mayor's (EOM) FOIAXpress system - a new online system for submitting and processing Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to District government agencies.

The new portal, powered by industry leader "FOIAXpress," is the District's first-ever citywide FOIA processing system. At its launch, more than 50 District agencies will be included. Additional agencies will be added to the system in the next fiscal year.

The new DC Government Public FOIA Portal will allow requesters to submit public records requests for any of the participating agencies to a centralized website. The requests will be assigned a unique tracking number, and users will be able to track the status of the request.

The system will also permit the District to generate reports to determine whether agencies are meeting their FOIA obligations in a timely manner. Further, it will allow agencies to publish documents to an online reading room for information that is required to be made public under FOIA and the Mayor's Open Government and Transparency Directive, including frequently requested information under FOIA.

### ***Open Meetings Act***

OCTO does not convene meeting subject to the Open Meetings Act.

### ***Increasing Public Access to Information***

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) works with District agencies to deliver transparency through our Citywide Data Warehouse and its Open Data Catalog. But this is not an agency, nor an administration, that rests on past achievements. OCTO and the City Administrator's Office are investing heavily in a next generation Data Catalog to take the city even farther than we are today in terms of transparency.

The DC Geographic Information Program (DC GIS), administered by the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO), will utilize open source technology to increase public access to the vast amount of information it creates and receives from our District agency partners.

In doing so, we hope residents can make more informed decisions about their government and our community. The new site intends to make the District's data more discoverable, explorable and transparent to foster greater participation and collaboration with all stakeholders.

The new site is expected to launch in Fall 2014.

### ***Track.DC.Gov***

Originally launched in February 2010, Track.DC.Gov was lauded by open government advocates and city fiscal watchdogs. The Sunlight Foundation even said "both substance wise and technically, it out-athletes the White House's Open Government dashboard." While it was an innovation at the time, the site had seen little change or improvements and had grown stale.

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) has completely revamped the tool's user interface and added new data sets and subsets to give a more transparent view of each agencies performance. Data includes:

Data visualizations are now dynamic and allow more intuitive drill downs into individual data sets. The data behind each of the widgets can now be downloaded directly from the site.

The tool's accessibility has also been greatly improved with charts and graphics now also displayed in chart forms with clear text labels for those with disabilities.

The tool is expected to go live in Fall 2014.

### ***Chief Data Officer***

In response to an executive order, the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) has designated an Interim Chief Data Officer (CDO) to assist in the deployment of the near term milestones outlined in the Transparency, Open Government and Open Data Directive and to help coordinate additional open data programming. In Fall 2014, the Chief Technology Officer will identify candidates and hire a permanent CDO to lead the Open Data Program.

### ***Open Government Advisory Group***

As outlined in Mayor's Order 2014-170, "Transparency, Open Government and Open Data Directive," the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) and its Chief Data Officer will co-chair a new Open Government Advisory Group.

The group will advise the District on improving transparency and helping establish strong policies for managing data in addition to setting short and long terms goals to make the District as open as possible. The group is also charged with monitoring and evaluating the District's progress in meeting the requirements of Order 2014-170.

The group will be announced in Fall 2014 and OCTO expects meetings to begin immediately. All meetings will be open to the public and meeting time and location, minutes, decisions, etc. will also be posted to DC.gov.

### ***Open Meeting Act***

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) is not overseen or advised by a board or commission that is subject to the Open Meetings Act.

### ***Public Access to Data***

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) is working closely with the Office of the City Administrator (OCA) to identify additional datasets that OCA and OCTO expect to publish online later this year. We currently have more than 570 data sets slated to be available online on the new Open Data site, we will continue to work with OCA to identify datasets appropriate to publish in 2015 and beyond.

## **Public Engagement and Participation**

### ***Online Access to Proposed Rules and Regulations***

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) is not a regulatory agency and does propose rules and regulations.

## ***Information Sharing***

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) plays a unique role with District Government as we both provide the technology and support to our partner agencies to conduct outreach activities and implement our own outreach efforts.

For example, OCTO oversees DC.Gov, the District's web portal (see page 5 for details.) OCTO's web team assists agencies in publishing information about District agency activity.

## ***Supporting Partner Agencies***

OCTO has done a massive amount of work over the past two years to get the city closer to completion of a major, multi-year project to upgrade the city's web sites and platform to improve how the District communicates with the public. Our web team migrated some of the most complex and difficult sites during this period, they also worked with agency staff to update the content.

The DC.Gov portal's 100-plus agency and program sites generate annual traffic higher than many municipalities and counties with comparable populations (e.g. Boston and Montgomery County, Md.), with more than 14 million visitors making 29 million visits in 2013 (a 7 percent increase in visitors over 2012).

DC.Gov website won first place for city portals in e.Republic's Center for Digital Government's 2014 Best of the Web and Digital Government Achievement Awards. DC.Gov was a Top 10 finalist in 2013, and previously won Best of the Web in 2005.

Highlighted several recent upgrades to DC.gov:

- The introduction of the portal's new responsive design, which automatically adjusts to fit the screens of any tablet or mobile device, positioning DC.Gov for the explosive growth and use of mobile devices. For example, only 1% of the visitors to DC.Gov used a mobile device in 2009, while almost 30% of visitors are expected to use a mobile device in 2014;
- Migration of almost all agency sites to the open-source Drupal platform;
- Significant improvement in resident- and business-centric navigation to make information and services easier to find;
- A clean, simple design to improve visitor experience; and
- New help pages for non-English-speaking residents.

The OCTO-run [@dcmgovweb](#) has also been a major asset in distributing information and updates from all agencies to a wider audience. It also provides essential customer service to public by engaging residents with questions about the DC.gov portal or routing questions to other agency Twitter accounts or websites. The account quickly gained nearly 3,500 followers and is growing at a steady space.

OCTO also led the District's first All-Hands Twitter Townhall - using [#dcmgovwebchat](#) and moderated by [@octodc](#) and [@dcmgovweb](#) - to highlight District government services and improvements. There were then 62 users, 235 tweets and over a million impressions on 140,000 timelines. A number of agencies participated including DPR, DCRA, DDOT, HSEMA and the Executive Office of the Mayor (EOM).

### ***Grade.dc.gov***

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) worked closely with the Mayor's Office to design, develop and deploy [grade.dc.gov](#) in June 2012 to provide the public with an easy, accessible way to provide feedback on agency performance. Originally piloted with just 5 District agencies, [grade.dc.gov](#) now provides monthly grades on 15 agencies. In January 2014, OCTO made the site responsive, making access to the information, as well as the ability to provide input for grades much easier for residents and visitors.

### ***Our Communications Efforts***

OCTO's Digital Inclusion Initiative (DII), branded as OCTO Connect.DC, functions as an effective outreach entity and sponsor of community events and partnerships with local partners, targeting specific neighborhoods to find ways to impact technology adoption and deliver computer training, broadband access, and technology outreach to underserved communities.

Outreach activities include:

- Partner with local service entities like Byte Back and the Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC) to provide computer training to additional District residents, bringing OCTO's grant to date total to about 8,000;
- Deployed more than 170 computers for public use in District-owned recreation centers, senior wellness centers, American Job Centers, and a returning citizen resource center;
- Held numerous Mobile Technology Lab events, including 10 Smart911 sign-up events in support of an effort by our friends at OUC;
- Went on the road with our technology lab in November 2013 with the DCHBX team to help them with health insurance enrollment;
- Hosted Community Broadband Summits to promote broadband adoption and engage community groups in our broadband outreach; and

- Deployed a text messaging platform to improve and enhance our reach to specific groups of DC residents.

While the grant funding is expired, we will continue to fund our digital divide outreach activities with OCTO's local budget to ensure that these important efforts continue.

### ***DC GIS Steering Committee (GISSC)***

The GISSC fosters communication and cooperation amongst the DC GIS stakeholder community including District agencies, federal agencies, non-profit, and private sector GIS users in the District of Columbia. It serves as the primary decision-making body to establish and implement DC GIS policies and standards.

The Committee takes into account needs and resources while seeking multilateral input, participation and support in defining and approving GIS projects, setting priorities and working through timelines. The GISSC meets quarterly and the meetings are open to the public, meeting agenda, minutes and presentations are posted online at: <http://octo.dc.gov/node/702452> .

### ***Stakeholder Identification***

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) not only provides IT services to District and federal agencies and community organizations, we are also active members of the local, regional and national IT community. Our staff regularly attends and speaks at formal conferences, public meet-ups, summits, community meetings and other events.

We want feedback on everything we do. We actively identify and engage key stakeholders who can help us discover best practices, provide feedback on services and products, etc. We believe that by being available, open and active stakeholders will also come to us - and they have.

### ***Improving Public Engagement and Participation***

In addition to the accomplishments and plans listed in other sections, OCTO is currently reviewing and revising its communications strategy for both internal and external stakeholders.

OCTO is taking a data-driven approach to review web, social media and community relations to identify gaps in communications and identify any potential stakeholders or partners that can help us meet our objectives.

Highlights include:

- OCTO is currently researching and testing an online forum feature that would allow threaded, date-stamped conversations to be captured. This would allow for longer-term and more technical conversations to take place online.
- OCTO is also dedicating additional resources to:
  - Improve social engagement online
  - Increase direct-to-public “in real life” engagement for digital inclusion project
  - Streamline web presence
  - Engage developer community around new [opendata.dc.gov](https://opendata.dc.gov) site
  - Launch [@opendatadc](https://twitter.com/opendatadc) Twitter account to handle customer service support for new [opendata.dc.gov](https://opendata.dc.gov) site

## **Collaboration**

OCTO’s web team manages several cross agency websites that require collaboration among agencies in providing information and services to the public. For example, [snow.dc.gov](https://snow.dc.gov) is a website that provides up-to-date information on snow events in the winter, including preparation for a snow event and monitoring of snowplow locations during an event. This information is provided by several agencies including DPW, DDOT and HSEMA.

OCTO’s web team also creates temporary websites during emergency situations, such as Hurricane Sandy. These pages consolidate all information about District services and assistance from various agencies during these situations, enabling the public to come to a single website, rather than search for information on multiple websites.