

# Open Data Policies to Promote Transparency, Efficiency, and Engagement

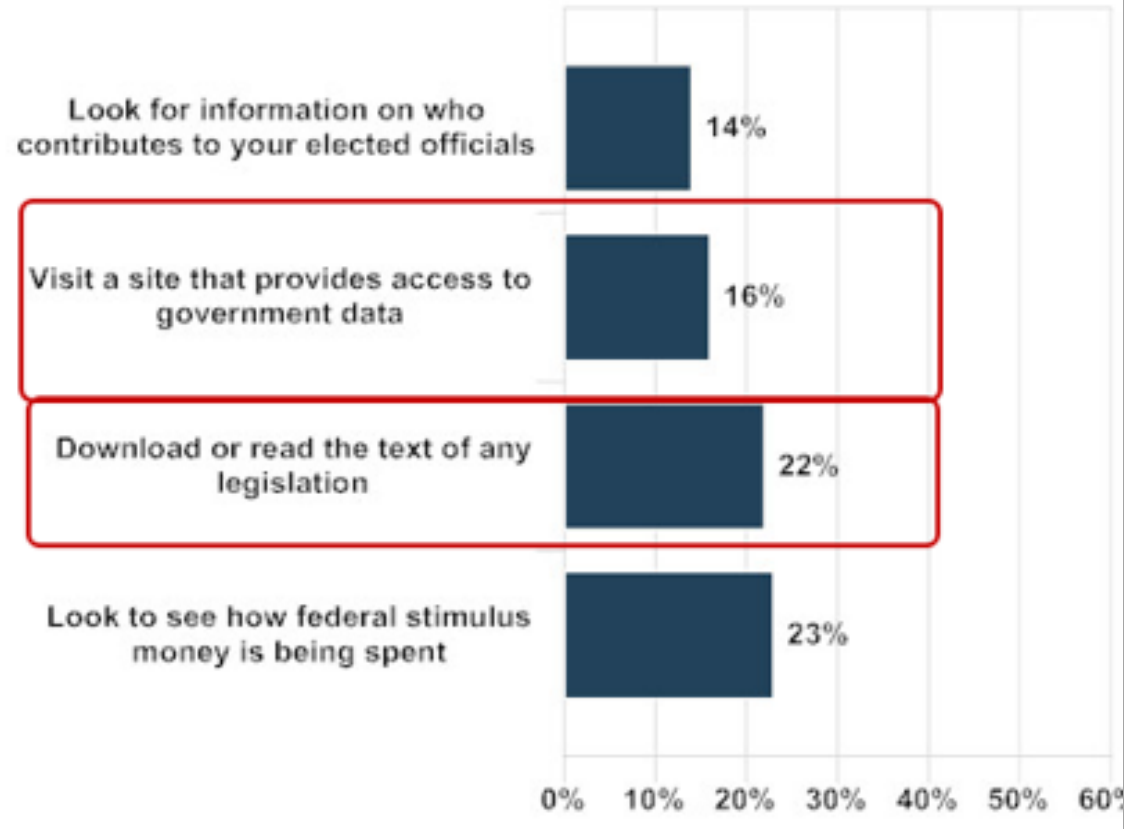
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ICMA Conference Presenter



## Online government data users

40% of internet users went online for government data or information in the preceding twelve months. These are some of the data sources they looked for.



# Where are people finding government information?

## The Internet!

People are going online to access legislative info, government data, campaign finance records, and more.



# Open data

= the right to information online

<b>Administrative</b>	<b>Technical</b>
<b>Public = online</b>	<b>Non-proprietary</b>
<b>Proactive disclosure</b>	<b>Structured</b>



# Why open data?

Benefits to government and the public include:

- Creating transparency
- Empowering accountability
- Enhancing efficiency
- Improving service quality
- Attracting commerce
- Increasing public participation



# OPEN DATA POLICY GUIDELINES

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***PDF Or ODT***

*Other Languages: [Español](#)*

*Previous Versions: [2013](#), [2012](#)*

▶ **What Data Should Be Public**

▶ **How To Make Data Public**

▶ **How To Implement Policy**

The Sunlight Foundation created this living set of open data guidelines to address: what data should be public, how to make data public, and how to implement policy. The provisions are not ranked in order of priority and do not address every question one should consider when preparing a policy, but are a guide to answer the question of what an open data policy can and should do in striving to create a government data ecosystem where open data is the default. Setting the default to open means that the government and parties acting on its behalf will make public information available proactively and that they'll put that information within reach of the public (online), without barriers for its reuse and consumption. Setting the default to open is about living up to the potential of our information, about looking at comprehensive information management and making determinations that fall in the public interest.

## What Data Should Be Public

### 1 Proactively Release Government Information Online

*See examples*

Most government information disclosure laws and systems currently in place, including right-to-know, freedom of information and public records laws, are vehicles for reactive disclosure. Reactive disclosure means that a question has to be asked before an answer is given and that public information must be requested before it is disclosed. Proactive disclosure is the opposite. Proactive disclosure is the release of public information before an individual requests it. In the 21st century that means proactively putting new information online, [where people are looking for it](#).



[sunlightfoundation.com/open-data-guidelines/](http://sunlightfoundation.com/open-data-guidelines/)

# Open Data Policy Guidelines

## 1. What data should be public

- Proactively release information online
- Build on precedent
- Address all government information
- Create a data inventory and prioritize release
- Appropriately safeguard sensitive information



# Open Data Policy Guidelines

## 2. How to make data public

- Use open formats and varied formats
- Allow for bulk download
- Create a central location for data
- Remove barriers to access and reuse
- Mandate electronic filing



# Open Data Policy Guidelines

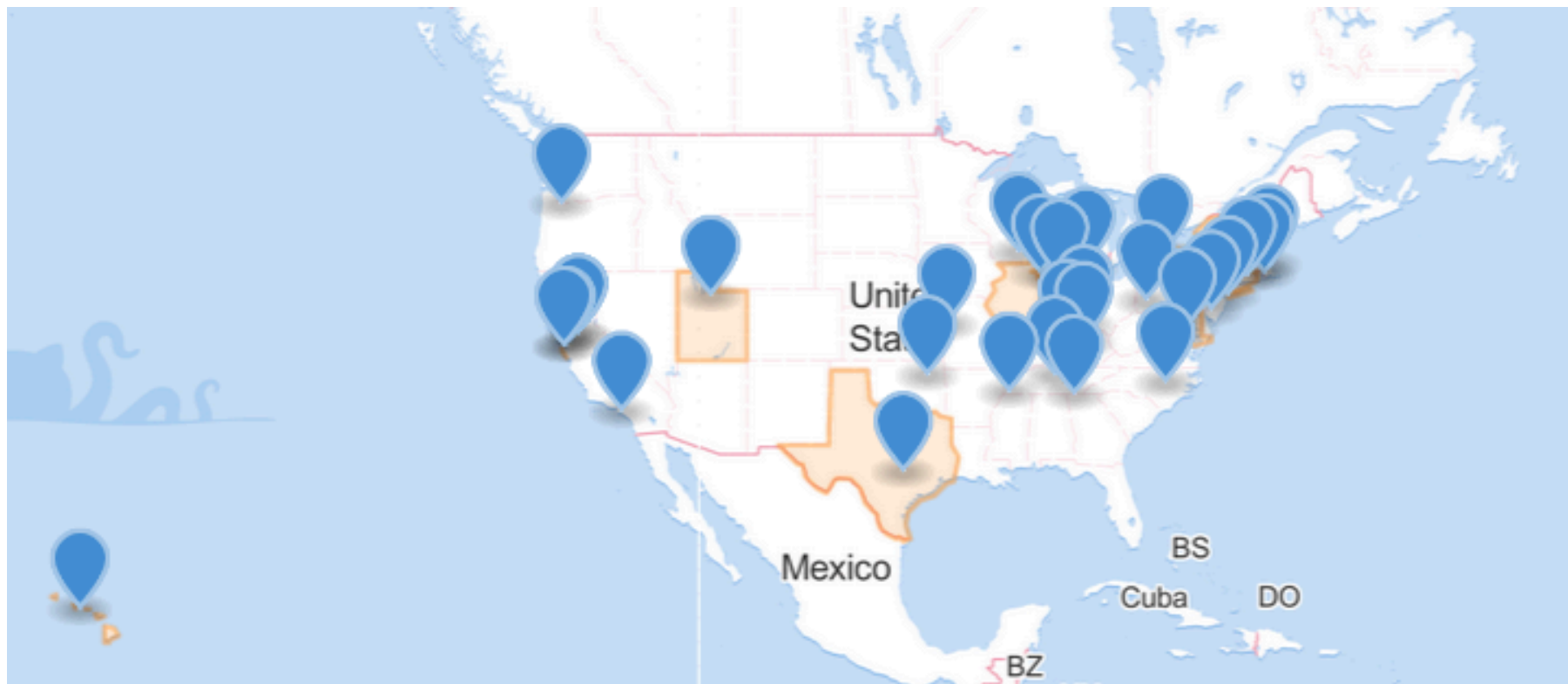
## 3. How to implement policy

- Establish guidance and oversight
- Set clear timelines
- Mandate future review
- Include public perspectives





# Open Data Policies in the U.S.



# OPEN DATA POLICY EXAMPLES

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## *Refer To Our Open Data Policy Guidelines*

- ▶ **What Data Should Be Public**
- ▶ **How To Make Data Public**
- ▶ **How To Implement Policy**

These examples highlight ways to implement the provisions in our [Open Data Policy Guidelines](#). We have curated these to help inspire ideas for new and revised open data policies. The examples are not exhaustive, but reflect what we believe to be ideas and language worth emulating.

## What Data Should Be Public

### 1 Proactively Release Government Information Online

*Read the guideline*

#### Example Language

##### **New York City, Technical Standards Manual, City Policies, 2012**

“Open By Default. All public data sets must be considered open unless they contain information designated as sensitive, private, or confidential as defined by the Citywide Data Classification Policy or information that is exempt pursuant to the Public Officers Law, or any other provision of a federal or state law, rule or regulation or local law. The Agency submitting the data set is required to review its status and maintain currency with public disclosure requirements.”

<http://cityofnewyork.github.io/opendatatasm/citypolicies.html>

# Lessons Learned

- Customize for your community
- Plan for the long term
- Create actionable guidance
- Include the public



# Opportunities

## The most successful policies ...

- Set the default to open
- Build on precedent
- Create a data inventory and prioritize release
- Use innovative public inclusion
- Mandate regular future review



# Questions/Comments?

Contact us any time at [local@sunlightfoundation.com](mailto:local@sunlightfoundation.com)





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**Charlotte**  
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