

Strengthening Democracy and Improving Our Communities Across All Levels of Government: The United States Experience

Actual Start Time: 5/29/2024 12:31:47

Actual Duration (minutes): 153

Question: 30

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer	Question Time	Answer Name
1	It's still unclear why there hasn't been a new plan in Austin in 2021: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/austin-united-states/ Or why there hasn't been an IRM report since 2017: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Austin_Final-Report_2017_Comments-Received.pdf I don't see a reference to OGP commitments or OGP on Austin's open government page: https://www.austintexas.gov/department/open-government-information Is there an updated list of commitments and outcomes, with feedback from civil society? Could the City of Austin share them online for #OpenGovWeek?	Alexander Howard	Hello Alexander - we're in the process of creating our third action plan; the pandemic and organizational transitions have delayed it. The IRM was dropped from the local program after the first cohort. Our OGP info is housed here (though we may be migrating it soon): https://opengovpartnership.bloomfire.com/	05/29/2024 13:19:17	Daniel Culotta
2	Really appreciate these specific examples! I'd love to hear a little more from Amber Jackson about if/how citizens were engaged in designing or feeding into some of these initiatives, especially those focused on vulnerable populations.	Allison merchant	Other than residents from historically excluded populations who are our team members, there were no residents who assisted with the design and implementation of these specific initiatives. However, the businesses featured on the Minority Business Enterprise Map have opted in.	Answered Offline	Amber Jackson
3	The AI action plan is interesting — does the City of Little Rock have an open government action plan? This document center: http://web.littlerock.state.ar.us/WebLink/Welcome.aspx?cr=1	Alexander Howard	We do not currently have an open gov action plan. This is my first time to engage with the OSTP, and I am interested in learning more about membership and sharing this information with our Chief Data Officer.	Answered Offline	Amber Jackson
4	Will the data that you gather be available to the public?	Michele Friend	Most data are available to the public through FOIA and online. Of course data released to the public do not include protected personal information.	Answered Offline	Amber Jackson
5	Thank you each for your presentations! What are the best ways any of you have identified to measure whether your specific transparency programs are achieving your jurisdiction's purposes for Open Government?	Jeff Myers	To my knowledge, we have not yet moved to the evaluation stage of development with these efforts.	Answered Offline	Amber Jackson
6	As a native of New York, I was thrilled to hear that New York City would be joining OGP. I have been unable, however, to find a press release, press conference, town hall, or other announcement that OGP accepted New York City's application to join OGP Local. Will NYC please share one during OpenGov Week and begin engaging your communities? Did the City apply to OGP with any civil society partners? When will the City begin co-creating an action plan with New Yorkers?	Alexander Howard	No answer provided at this time.	Answered Offline	N/A
7	Could you give examples of data that inform policy?	Michele Friend	No answer provided at this time.	Answered Offline	N/A

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8	I see NYC is continuing to engage New Yorkers about participatory budgeting, which is awesome, but nothing about OGP or the City's plans to co-create commitments: https://www.nyc.gov/site/mayorspeu/news/releases-advisories.page When will NYC establish a space for ongoing dialogue and collaboration & begin posting info about OGP? https://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-participation-co-creation-standards/	Alexander Howard	No answer provided at this time.	Answered Offline	N/A
9	Are you not worried that the people who feel most isolated and despondent will not provide the qualitative data that tells you How New Yorkers are doing?	Michele Friend	<p>We do a lot of partnering with community based organizations. Using the trusted messenger model, we partner with groups that have worked in communities for a long time and where folks trust them know that they can go to them for good advice and for good services and then we listen to those organizations. I think some of the best work that we've done over the last few years is with these organizations. It's a trust based philanthropy. We partner with giving based organizations funds without a million restrictions and reporting requirements and trust that they know best what to do with the money. We took this approach for benefits access. We partnered with 39 community based organizations in different communities in different parts of the city. We let these organizations tell us how they are going to use the money and report on how it went. I think if we do more partnering with community organizations, we will reach the folks that we really both want and need to reach the most.</p> <p>We also meet folks where they are by scheduling meetings within communities. We make it easy to get there, provide childcare, food, and money whenever possible. We make sure we're valuing people's time. That is super critical.</p> <p>We also make sure we're providing translation and interpretation. We often are in communities that speak multiple languages. We are super intentional about including folks who have the greatest barriers to participation.</p>	Answered Offline	Reponse Paraphrased from meeting transcript
10	@NYC Ofc of Engagement - What is the origin of your Technical Assistance? Do you use any existing standards or training by orgs like the Int'l Assn for Public Participation (IAP@.org)?	Stephen Buckley	No answer provided at this time.	Answered Offline	N/A
11	Which kinds of power will New York City share with New Yorkers, and how? Would the Mayor's Office the Council of New York empower the civilian review board to obtain and public civilian complaints and police misconduct records and publish them online to ensure that the civil liberties and rights of New Yorkers are upheld?	Alexander Howard	No answer provided at this time.	Answered Offline	N/A

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12	What have the speakers learned from open government work outside of the U.S.? What else would you like to learn?	Josh Lerner	No answer provided at this time.	Answered Offline	N/A
13	It's wonderful to have Cherokee Nation participating in these discussions! I found the portal you reference: https://www.cherokee.org (Would you consider switching to a .gov, through CISA? http://get.gov) Does the Nation have a Freedom of Information law or process that enables citizens to request info, or to sue for it if their appeal is denied? Would you consider committing to enacting one as an open government commitment, if not?	Alexander Howard	Love that question! We are actually in the process of moving to .gov! Until recently, there was a requirement to have a "-nsn" identifier in Tribal .gov domains and cherokee-nsn.gov was not citizen-friendly so we didn't use it. But .gov has made significant progress and we are now able to use cherokee.gov	05/29/2024 13:39:38	Paula Starr
14	It's wonderful to have Cherokee Nation participating in these discussions! I found the portal you reference: https://www.cherokee.org (Would you consider switching to a .gov, through CISA? http://get.gov) Does the Nation have a Freedom of Information law or process that enables citizens to request info, or to sue for it if their appeal is denied? Would you consider committing to enacting one as an open government commitment, if not?	Alexander Howard	And we adhere to the Federal FOIA laws.	05/29/2024 13:39:38	Paula Starr
15	@Paula Thank you so much!! That's exciting. cherokee.gov and www.cherokee.gov aren't resolving for me, but I hope they will :) I don't see anything at cherokee.org/foia or /open — have you explored enabling people to use foia.gov to make requests?	Alexander Howard	No answer provided at this time.	Answered Offline	N/A
16	How does a local government join #OpenGovLocal? Is it open to all .. or is there an application process? If the latter, what is the eligibility criteria .. and who then makes the decision?	Stephen Buckley	The Open Government Partnership has a process for allowing sub-national governments to join the OGP-Local Program. They only admitted about 55 local governments this past year world wide. https://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-local/	05/29/2024 13:46:02	Daniel York
17	Would the Cherokee Nation considering joining OGP? I don't think any tribal nation from the USA has done so yet, but there's been real progress around the world with other First Nations and indigenous peoples — especially since OGP's founding back in 2011: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/stories/expanding-inclusion-in-open-government-for-first-nations-quilombola-and-indigenous-women/	Alexander Howard	I would love to see Tribal participation in OGP. I believe many Tribes already hold transparency and engagement goals that align with OGP.	05/29/2024 13:47:34	Paula Starr
18	Have any of your governments used collaborative drafting tools to co-create commitments, like pol.is? Have you used any ideation platforms to establish priorities specifically for government transparency and accountability — as opposed to other issue areas, like homelessness or equity?	Alexander Howard	No	Answered Offline	Amber Jackson

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19	One of the panelists mentioned leveraging AI as part of their access strategy. Are there specific examples of leveraging AI for open government work from any of the panelists?	Jennifer Goode	<p>AI has been helpful. Our HR team has used AI to develop interview questions from job descriptions. That's one practical application and it can be very helpful with our grants team. For example, they can use AI when there is a large Request for Proposal (RFP) issued. AI can summarize the RFP very quickly and our team can start drafting a response to it.</p> <p>We have a lot of interest in AI at the City of Little Rock. I know from a recent employee engagement survey that employees are interested in learning more about AI. We're creating a professional development series on AI with our IT department and Chief Data Officer who recently went to a conference on AI to see what other kinds of technologies could be helpful.</p> <p>We're very excited about the language access, and how much that can open up our government to a large portion of our population. We look forward to continuing to find ways that we can make good use of AI.</p>	Answered Offline	Amber Jackson
20	This session is a great example of this happening- but I'd love to hear more about how/when/with what success some of these amazing local open government efforts here are connecting up to federal efforts and back down again. How can we better ensure learning upwards and downwards?	Blair Glencorse	In city government we're often building the plane as we're flying it. One thing we do not have time to do is to sit down and write white papers, but we do have promising practices that are worth sharing. I would love to see more partnerships with educational institutions. That could really help us make the time to document our lessons learned and promising practices.	Answered Offline	Amber Jackson
21	Did New York City talk with New Yorkers about applying to OGP before you did it? Did any civil society organizations endorse the application, as they did in Austin? https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Leadership-Austin-Endorsement_City-of-Austin-022216.pdf Who are New York City's partners? Will you create an advisory committee and multi-stakeholder network to support the co-creation process?	Alexander Howard	We were inspired by our colleagues at People Powered, including Josh Lerner, who encouraged us to apply. It felt like a good first step in our journey. We are super brand new to OGP. NYC was accepted just a few months ago, so there is a lot of work to be done to socialize the idea across the Administration. We will be partnering with organizations as we put our plan together and determine next steps. We will engage with the community on our plan, goals, and big picture vision for what we want open government in New York to look like. There has been a lot of great work done already so we will build on that work.	Answered Offline	Response Paraphrased from meeting transcript
22	Here in Washington, DC, our council created an Office of Open Government to act as an ombuds. Do any of your communities have such an institution to help nurture a culture of openness – and monitor and enforce public meetings laws, FOI laws, scientific integrity policies for open data? How are you institutionalizing open government in your agencies, so it's not just someone else's job and can survive changes in administration?	Alexander Howard	No	Answered Offline	Amber Jackson

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23	I love using reduced FOI requests as a measure for successful proactive disclosure! That's the State Department's goal for its "release to one, release to all" policy for FOIA. Have any of your communities adopted such a policy? For instance, is New York City connecting FOI requests: https://a860-openrecords.nyc.gov/ to its open government data disclosures? Might NYC it commit to doing so, as part of a forthcoming first opengov plan?	Alexander Howard	No answer provided at this time.	Answered Offline	N/A
24	The focus on generative AI is of the moment, but there are real risks about poor implementation, as we've seen around the world. New York City rolled out a plan for AI with a bot last October that provided wrong answers: https://themarkup.org/news/2024/03/29/nycs-ai-chatbot-tells-businesses-to-break-the-law Why didn't NYC take it down, in response to reporting from New Yorkers and the press? How will NYC use civic engagement to tap into the community as a resource to prevent similar errors?	Alexander Howard	No answer provided at this time.	Answered Offline	N/A
25	Do any of the panel have a favorite online platform for discovering what's working .. and what's not?	Stephen Buckley	We use SurveyMonkey for community surveys and collecting instant feedback by sharing QR codes from SurveyMonkey on slides during community meetings.	Answered Offline	Amber Jackson
26	Thank you for the reminder that the written comments are up on Regulations.gov and your commitment to do a readout: https://www.regulations.gov/document/OMB-2024-0005-0001/comment Will you blog about the process, like OIRA did? https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-regulatory-affairs/broadening-public-engagement-in-the-federal-regulatory-process/ What lessons learned from this effort will you apply to co-creating a 6th National Action Plan in 2025 — or co-creating additional commitments to the 5th NAP, as part of the USA leading by the power of our example, in the OpenGovChallenge in 2024?	Alexander Howard	GSA will leverage the open and transparent processes of the Open Government Federal Advisory Committee (OG FAC) to help shape the 6th U.S. Open Government National Action Plan. Once established, the OG FAC will produce commitment recommendations, based on public participation and expert speakers. The U.S. Open Government Secretariat is committed to receiving public comments on the draft plan. We will certainly review promising practices and lessons learned from the Public Participation and Community Engagement Framework initiative with the OG FAC to ensure we are following best practices for public engagement. There are not currently any plans to update the 5th U.S. Open Government National Action Plan.	Answered Offline	Daniel York
27	While it was wonderful that the White House added FOIA to the 5th NAP at the request of advocates, after it was left out of the 4th NAP, none of the three commitments you list were co-created with civil society — each existed before the consultation in 2022. Will OIP co-create additional commitments on FOIA for the 5th NAP — as part of the OpenGov Challenge — that will continue to support your valuable work in 2025 that are drawn from the FOIA Advisory Committee and co-created with the good governance community?	Alexander Howard	Thank you for your support of our current initiatives and your continued support for open government and agencies' FOIA administration. We look forward to continuing our engagement with you and civil society at large in our open government efforts to advance the purpose of the FOIA both within and outside of the Open Government Partnership National Action Plans. We will continue to leverage opportunities from the FOIA Advisory Committee and our separate work with civil society to evaluate the progress of our current commitments and the development of new commitments	Answered Offline	Bobby Talebian

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28	<p>If there is a pattern or practice of agencies intentionally evading the FOIA where officials are coaching others to do so, what commitments will the DOJ make to uphold the law, including sanctions for records destruction? https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/28/health/nih-officials-foia-hidden-emails-covid.html</p>	Alexander Howard	<p>The Department of Justice remains steadfast in its commitment to encouraging government-wide compliance with the FOIA. OIP reviews agency compliance with the FOIA and provides agencies with guidance and training. The Federal Records Act requires federal agencies to notify the Archivist of the United States of the unlawful destruction of records. See 44 U.S.C. § 3106; 36 CFR Part 1230. The National Archives & Records Administration maintains a program for handling unauthorized disposition cases and can, where appropriate, contact the Department of Justice for assistance. See Unauthorized Disposition of Federal Records, National Archives & Records Administration, available at https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/resources/unauthorizeddispositionoffederalrecords. Consistent with Department of Justice policy, the Department does not comment on confirm or deny the existence of investigations. Justice Manual § 1-7.410, available at https://www.justice.gov/jm/jm-1-7000-media-relations.</p>	Answered Offline	Bobby Talebian
29	<p>While the corporate transparency act implies open government, the beneficial ownership registry that Congress ordered Treasury to create is closed to the public, press, & watchdogs. Open beneficial ownership registries have been a feature of democracies around the world in OGP: "Publishing company beneficial ownership data that is freely downloadable, searchable, and reusable by the public, without a fee, proprietary software, or the need for registration." https://www.opengovpartnership.org/beneficial-ownership-leadership-group/ Will Treasury commit to working with Congress to make this registry open in 2025, as a challenge commitment? (Canada and the EU are ahead of us, here.)</p>	Alexander Howard	No answer provided at this time.	Answered Offline	N/A
30	<p>@Shaibya -- Would you please give us a rough timetable for "Next Steps" .. especially when you hope to publish "Key Themes" that emerged from the RFI?</p>	Stephen Buckley	<p>OMB is in the process of reviewing all the feedback provided to date through the RFI, the online form, and listening sessions. We hope to publish our analysis, including key themes and recommendations, in the next few weeks, with a draft framework to follow by late Summer for public input. Thank you for your patience and please stay tuned for next steps, including opportunities for continued engagement.</p>	Answered Offline	Shaibya Dalal