



U.S. OPEN GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

YEAR ONE IN REVIEW



INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Open Government Secretariat is pleased to publish a lookback at our inaugural 2023-2024 year. This document includes an overview of our priorities and accomplishments over the past twelve months, along with an outline of our plans to build on this foundation to continue advancing open government in the coming year.

Scope and Purpose

Background

Open government principles – including public participation and community engagement – are cornerstones of democracy and the American democratic tradition. Open government allows members of the public to contribute ideas and expertise so that their government can make policies that deliver for the people. Open government collaboration also improves the effectiveness of government by encouraging partnerships and cooperation across the Federal government, between Federal and local governments, and with the American public.

Who We Are and What We Do

The United States is committed to the principles of open government. The U.S. Open Government Secretariat, housed within the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), leads Federal efforts to strengthen open government efforts across the U.S. government, bolster engagement with civil society and the American public, collaborate with state and local counterparts, and manage U.S. participation and membership in the global Open Government Partnership (OGP). The Secretariat is committed to fostering a more inclusive, responsive, and accountable government through four primary roles:

OGP Membership: Leading compliance with global OGP membership requirements, including coordinating with Federal partners to track and report on existing commitments outlined in U.S. Open Government National Action Plans (NAP).

National Action Plan Development and Implementation: In coordination with the White House and with the advice of the Open Government Federal Advisory Committee, leading Federal efforts to identify commitments for inclusion in U.S. Open Government National Action Plans

Public Engagement: Conducting engagement with U.S. civil society and with state and local governments across the country to shape U.S. OGP commitments and drive understanding of open government generally.

Federal Engagement: Facilitating dialogue and learning amongst Federal agencies on open government. Hosting and maintaining an open government public website with resources for engaging the public. Managing the Federal Open Government Community of Practice and the Federal Open Government Working Group.

Institutionalizing Open Government

U.S. Open Government Secretariat Established

In September 2023, the United States established the U.S. Open Government Secretariat under the leadership of GSA, which has provided longstanding support for domestic open government implementation. The Secretariat now oversees domestic implementation of OGP and Federal efforts to promote and mainstream open government.



Established bi-annual agency reporting on National Action Plan progress

In summer 2023, GSA launched the beta version of an online tool to track National Action Plan commitment updates. Since then, the Secretariat has successfully published three updates of the NAP 5's 36 commitments from 10 agencies and created a durable reporting process for future National Action Plan accountability.



Revitalized the Federal Community of Practice

This Federal interagency community began meeting in January 2024 and serves as a forum to share insights, experiences, and strategies around incorporating transparency, accountability, public participation, and community engagement into all aspects of the government's work.



Established an Open Government Federal Advisory Committee

A Federal Advisory Committee provides a structured and transparent framework that facilitates meaningful collaboration between government and civil society. By ensuring diverse stakeholder input and sustained engagement, this mechanism will enable the U.S. to capture the benefits of co-creation provided by a multi-stakeholder forum. The Open Government Federal Advisory Committee is a discretionary advisory committee. Its primary function is to advise GSA on initiatives to improve the public's access to data, advance equity, engage the public in the regulatory process, and improve the delivery of government services and benefits



Conducted a NAP 5 Midterm Self Assessment

At the halfway point of U.S. 5th National Action Plan's implementation, we conducted a [formal assessment](#) to review the progress made and share lessons learned and resulting recommendations.



5th National Action Plan

Implementation

In our inaugural year, the Open Government Secretariat worked with agency leads to capture updates on 5th National Action Plan commitments. We focused in particular on establishing a **systematic approach to track progress** involving coordination with Federal agency commitment leads to ensure updates are comprehensive and reflect ongoing efforts.

To enhance transparency and accessibility, we launched an **online commitment tracker** on the [Open Government Secretariat website](#), which is updated biannually. This tool provides insights into the status of each commitment, along with links to publicly-available evidence and related resources, enabling stakeholders to monitor progress and hold agencies accountable.



Open government is a practical tool to address complex challenges while fostering innovation and partnership. The principles of transparent, accountable, and participatory government are fundamental to a successful democracy and strengthening public trust in government's ability to deliver for the people we serve.

- Robin Carnahan,
Administrator of the U.S. General
Services Administration (GSA)

Additionally, the Secretariat has prioritized **engagement with civil society** by [hosting public sessions](#) where Federal agencies present their commitment updates, progress, and roadblocks. These sessions create a platform for open dialogue, allowing civil society members to provide feedback and offer suggestions for overcoming challenges.

Public Events

The Secretariat leads public engagements to strengthen open government practice. These engagements include:

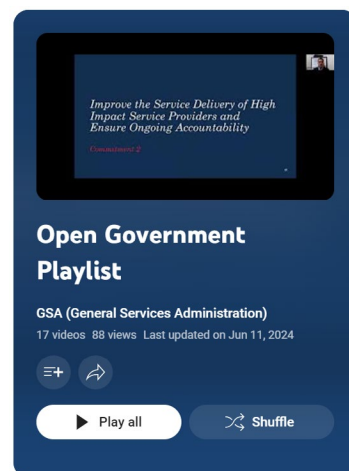
- Providing opportunities for the public to inform and shape U.S. National Action Plans;
- Supporting learning for Federal Agencies on open government topics; and
- Fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing between Federal and local governments.

The Secretariat's virtual and hybrid events from 2023-2024 are available for viewing on the [Open Government Playlist](#) on YouTube. Events this past year included:

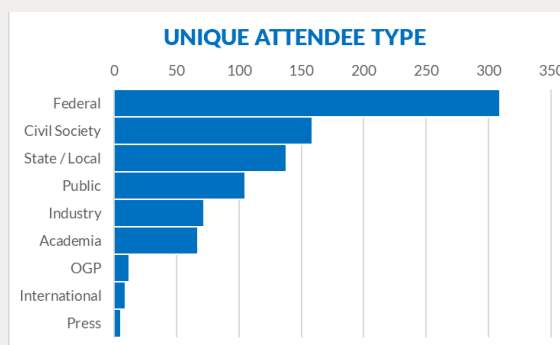
Engagement sessions featuring the 5th National Action Plan commitment owners from the White House and Federal agencies providing status updates.

Interactive workshops with the public to discuss suggestions for new features to be incorporated into the Open Government website and the 5th National Action Plan tracker.

Panels on open government efforts in the U.S. at the state, local, tribal, and territorial levels.



Year One Event Attendance Statistics



Events Around the U.S.



The Carter Center, Atlanta, GA | December 9, 2023 | Hybrid

A discussion with U.S. civil society involved in advancing open government principles.



Washington, D.C. | April 25, 2024 | Hybrid

Co-hosted with the Federal Chief Data Officers Council, the Data Foundation, and the Open Gov Hub to provide opportunities to learn and share feedback and ideas on the U.S.'s open data efforts.



Oak Harbor, WA | July 15, 2024 | Hybrid

Co-hosted with the Washington Coalition for Open Government to introduce civil society in the Pacific Northwest to open government activities at the federal level and discuss open government at the state and local level.



Upcoming Event, Austin, TX | September 17, 2024 | In-Person

Co-hosted with the City of Austin's Open Government team, focusing on Open Government Partnership activities at the local and national level.



Event Spotlight

**May 29, 2024: Open
Government Week Event**

“Strengthening Democracy and Improving Our Communities Across All Levels of Government: The United States Experience,” co-hosted by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the U.S. Open Government Secretariat, explored ways in which open government approaches are strengthening democracy and improving communities at the federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial levels across the U.S.



Federal Advisory Committee

About the Committee

Created in July 2024, the Open Government Federal Advisory Committee is a discretionary advisory committee that serves, to the extent possible within the U.S. statutory and regulatory system, as the U.S.'s multistakeholder forum for open government.

As an advisory body to GSA's Administrator, the committee plays a pivotal role in shaping open government initiatives and will actively participate in the creation and implementation of U.S. National Action Plans and agency commitments.

It serves as a collaborative platform where members with diverse perspectives share ideas and provide valuable advice to enhance open government practices while ensuring responsiveness to society's evolving needs.

The Advisory Committee's initial focus will be to provide input on the development of the U.S. 6th National Action Plan, open government policy, and public engagement. Additionally, it will advise the GSA Administrator on emerging open government issues, challenges, and opportunities to support the role of the U.S. Open Government Secretariat.



Building Partnerships

In addition to establishing relationships with U.S. civil society organizations and multiple state and local governments, the Secretariat also built relationships with other national members of the Open Government Partnership. The GSA Administrator and members of the Secretariat joined the U.S. Delegation to the Global Open Government Partnership Summit in Tallinn, Estonia, in September 2023, alongside colleagues from the White House, Department of State, and U.S. Agency for International Development, to send a strong message of U.S. support for OGP and open government values. In October 2023 and May 2024, the **Secretariat hosted delegations from Montenegro and Kenya** at the GSA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., to discuss our common priorities and challenges around open government issues.

We also had virtual conversations with our Open Government Partnership peers from:

Australia

Canada

Ireland

New Zealand

Brazil

Finland

India

United Kingdom

Looking Ahead to Year 2

Kick-Off the Open Government Federal Advisory Committee

In Fall 2024, the Secretariat will formally launch the Open Government Federal Advisory Committee and begin meetings to address key priority areas related to transparency, participation, and accountability that can shape U.S. NAP 6.

Design 6th National Action Plan

Building on relationships developed in year one, and working closely with the U.S. Federal Advisory Committee, the Secretariat will engage with Federal agencies, civil society, and the public to gather input and ideas for developing the U.S. 6th Open Government National Action Plan.

Network Expansion

Throughout Year 2, the Secretariat will prioritize continuing to grow the body of engaged stakeholders through public engagement sessions and the Interagency Community of Practice.

Get Involved

Civil society and members of the public can join the OpenGov-Civ email list to receive updates on U.S. open gov activities by emailing opengov-civ-subscribe-request@listserv.gsa.gov.

Please include “Join: OpenGov-Civ” in the subject line.

By joining this you will receive information on various open government-related announcements, activities, and opportunities to participate.

Follow the U.S. Open Government Secretariat on [LinkedIn](#) for updates and highlights.



 OpenGovernmentSecretariat@gsa.gov

 [U.S. Open Gov Website](#)