

# SUNLIGHT FOUNDATION

## Empowering Citizens through Co-production: The Case for Open Data Policy and Practice

Stephen Larrick  
Open Data Project Lead  
[slarrick@sunlightfoundation.com](mailto:slarrick@sunlightfoundation.com)



# Overview

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- Introduction/Sunlight Foundation
- What is Open Data? (and what does it mean for government?)
- Open Data in action - how Open Data benefits communities
- How an Open Data Policy can help launch open data in your community



**The Sunlight Foundation works to make government transparent and accountable.**



**SUNLIGHT  
FOUNDATION**

**We are a national, nonpartisan nonprofit organization that uses the tools of civic tech, open data, policy analysis, and journalism to advance this mission globally.**



# Sunlight goes local

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Sunlight's Local Policy team:

- Formed in 2013
- We research best practices, provide guidance, and advocate for open data policies across the US on a state, county, and municipal level
- Currently working on open data initiatives in 11+ American cities, with a goal of working with 100 cities over the next three years.



# What Is Open Data?

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Open Data (*oh-pun dey-tuh*, *oh-pun dat-uh*)

**noun**

*Data that is available online, in an open format, with no legal encumbrances on use or reuse, and is available for all to access and download in full without fees or a requirement of registration. “Legal encumbrance” includes federal copyright protections and other, non-statutory legal limitations on how or under what conditions a dataset may be used.*

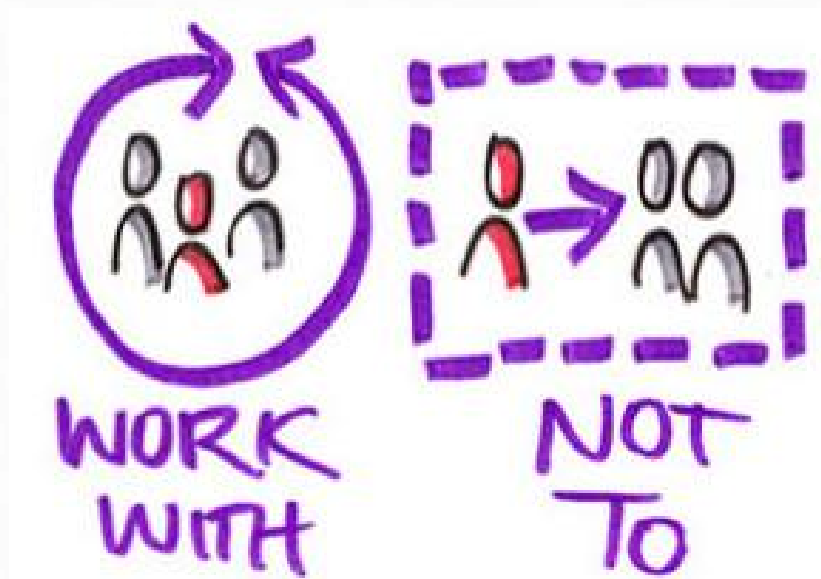


# Open Data =

*the right to information online*

<i>Administratively</i>	<i>Technically</i>
Proactively Online	Open formats
Cost-free	Machine-readable
License-free	Bulk downloads

# Open Data = Govern **WITH**



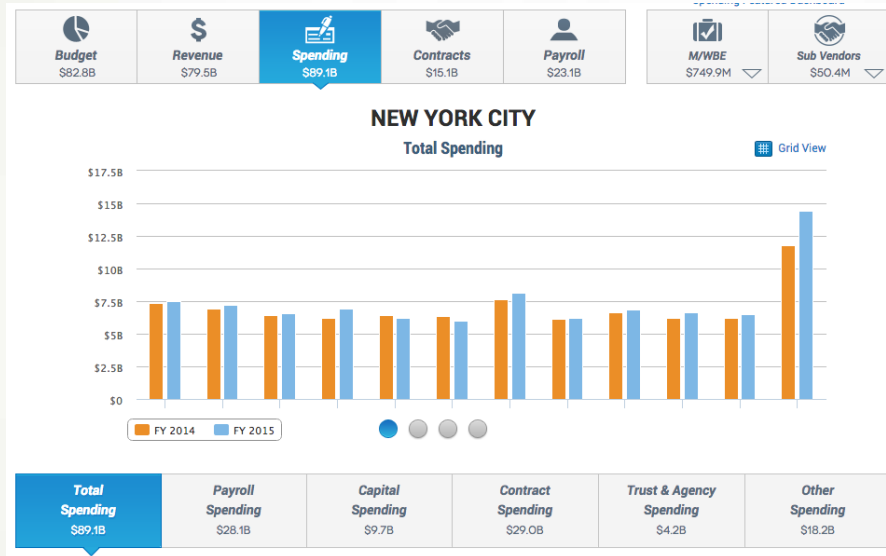
# Open Data =





# Benefits Open Data

- Accountability and performance – accessible metrics to assess and analyze performance of public agencies and progress of public goals.



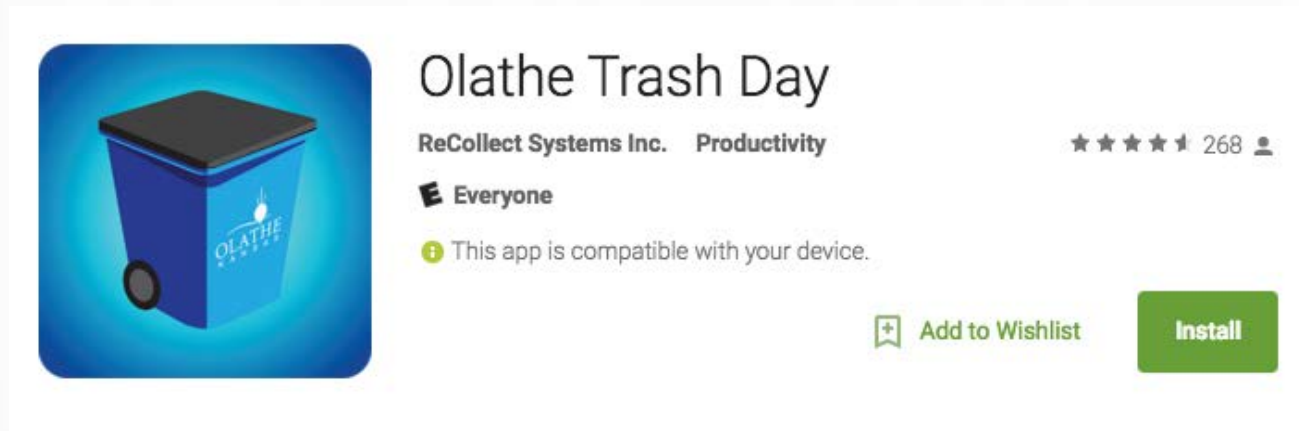
## Checkbook NYC

- City's day-to-day spending
- User-friendly graphs and tables
- Access to contract data

# Benefits Open Data

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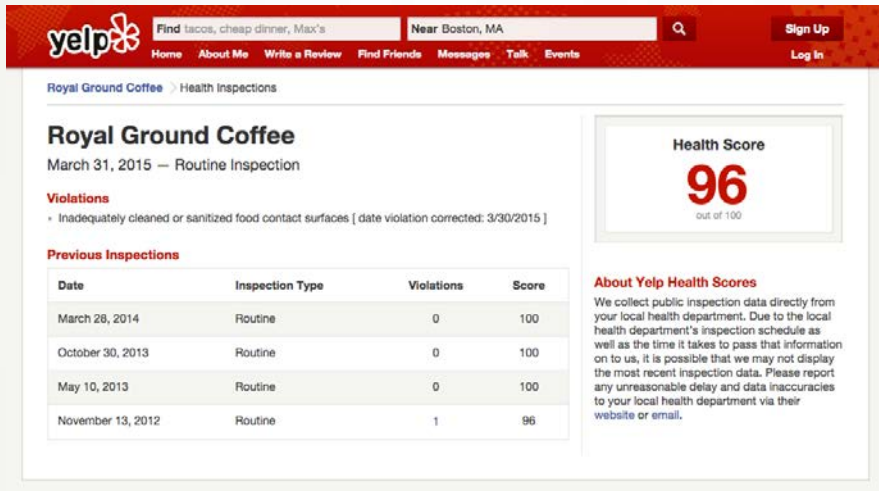
- More effective service delivery – apps and other software products developed using open data often improve upon delivery of public services in a way that improves quality of life for residents.



The screenshot shows the app listing for "Olathe Trash Day" by ReCollect Systems Inc. The app icon is a blue trash bin with "OLATHE" written on it. The listing includes the developer name "ReCollect Systems Inc.", the category "Productivity", a 5-star rating with 268 reviews, and an age rating of "Everyone". A compatibility message states "This app is compatible with your device." At the bottom, there are two buttons: "Add to Wishlist" and "Install".

# Benefits Open Data

- Economic development – civic tech and other private sector actors use open data to improve products or develop new products.



The screenshot shows the Yelp profile for Royal Ground Coffee. At the top, there's a search bar with "Near Boston, MA" and a "Sign Up" button. Below the search bar, there are navigation links: Home, About Me, Write a Review, Find Friends, Messages, Talk, Events. The main content area shows the restaurant name "Royal Ground Coffee" and the date "March 31, 2015 — Routine Inspection". A "Violations" section lists one violation: "Inadequately cleaned or sanitized food contact surfaces [ date violation corrected: 3/30/2015 ]". A "Previous Inspections" table is shown below, with columns for Date, Inspection Type, Violations, and Score. To the right of the table, there's a "Health Score" of 96 out of 100, and a section titled "About Yelp Health Scores" explaining that the data is collected from local health departments.

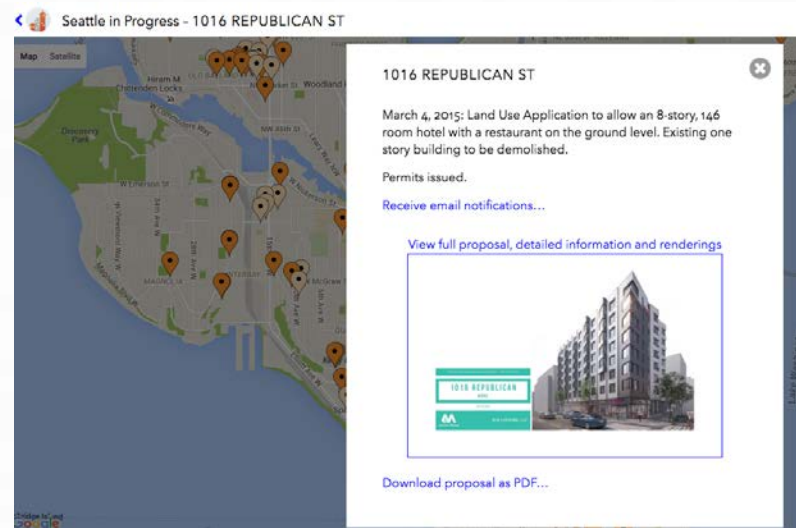
Date	Inspection Type	Violations	Score
March 28, 2014	Routine	0	100
October 30, 2013	Routine	0	100
May 10, 2013	Routine	0	100
November 13, 2012	Routine	1	96


## Local Inspector Value-Entry Specification (LIVES)

In 2012, Yelp partnered with the City of San Francisco and City of New York to develop the Local Inspector Value-Entry Specification (LIVES). LIVES is an open data standard which allows municipalities to publish restaurant inspection information to Yelp.

# Benefits Open Data

- Greater transparency and engagement – information shared directly with the press and public to encourage the dialogue and discourse needed for an effective and responsive democracy.





# Costs of Open Data? (you can do it on any budget)

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- Open data programs can have real costs associated with them, but are typically not expensive relative to other kinds of public sector costs.
- Cost varies widely across open data programs in different cities
- Improvement performance on programs that are now able to be measured, and less staff time spent on public records requests can actually reduce costs.
- There are ways to further open data at *any* price point

....For instance, OPEN DATA POLICY!

# What makes a good policy?

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The Sunlight Foundation has analyzed the 50+ open data policies that have been adopted at the American municipal, state and county level.

- Best practices have begun to emerge.
- Sunlight identifies 31 of these best practices in our Open Data Policy Guidelines.

Good Open Data Policies - Structure:

- Set a purpose and define important terms.
- Commit to open: mandate what data should be public or how to determine what data should be public.
- Spell out processes for making data public & set technical standards (formats, metadata, etc.)
- Set up mechanisms for accountability and enforcement  
*Including an oversight authority.*

# Local Open Data Policies in the U.S.



- Sunlight Local researches sub-national open data policies in the US.
- 50+ Open Data Policies at the State, County, and City level.
- Still, most mid-sized American Cities do NOT have an Open Data policy.

Open Data Policy Guidelines

sunlightfoundation.com/opendataguidelines/

Reader Impression Pin It + Pocket Ingredients Chartbeat - sunlight Muniland State Resources Personal Music Misc TCamp Femme

# OPEN DATA POLICY GUIDELINES

Tweet 74

*Download As  
PDF Or ODT*

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

The Sunlight Foundation created this living document to present a broad vision of the kinds of challenges that open data policies can actively address.

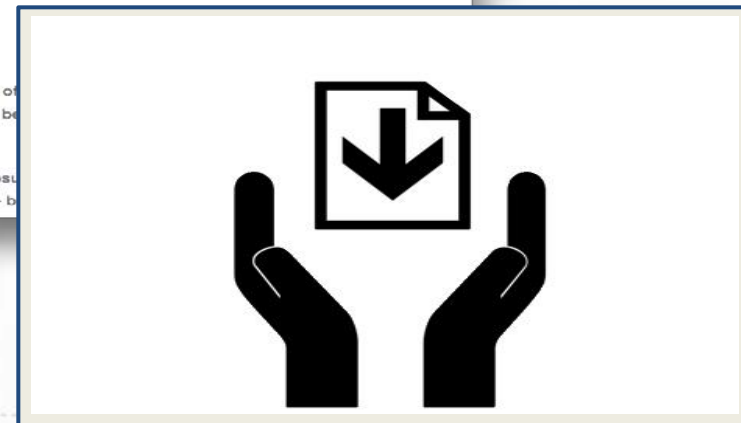
A few general notes: Although some provisions may carry more importance or heft than others, these Guidelines are not ranked in order of priority, but organized to help define What Data Should be Public, How to Make Data Public, and How to Implement Policy -- three key elements of any legislation, executive order, or other policy seeking to include language about open data. Further, it's worth repeating that these provisions are only a guide. As such, they do not address every question one should consider in preparing a policy. Instead, these provisions attempt to answer the specific question: What can or should an open data policy do?

## What Data Should Be Public

### 1 Set The Default To Open

Most public records systems, including the Freedom of Information Act, are reactive disclosure -- meaning that a question has to be asked, and information requested, before it is disclosed.

Proactive disclosure is the opposite. Proactive disclosure means that information is made available online and in open formats (see Provisions 8 and 9) -- before a question is asked.





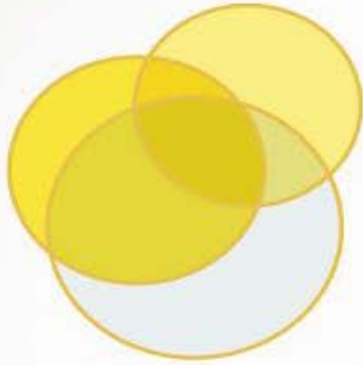
# Sunlight Local Policy Approach

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- Model policy
  - Based on our research analysis of best practices
  - Crowdsourced feedback from Open Gov community and Open Data experts in the US
- Model policy creates high level policy commits to:
  - Moving city toward broad, proactive data release
  - Assigning roles and responsibilities
  - Publishing data to a central online location (portal)
  - Regular review of progress on publication goals

# Next Steps

- Establish Goals
- Guide Data Release with a Strong Policy
- Implement Best Practices: Inventory, Oversight, & Review!



# SUNLIGHT FOUNDATION

Questions / Comments

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