

Ontario's Open Government Partnership Action Plan



OVERVIEW OF OPEN GOVERNMENT IN ONTARIO

The Open Government initiative is about creating a more open and transparent government for the people of Ontario. We are aiming to make Ontario the most open and transparent jurisdiction in Canada by creating increased opportunities for civic **dialogue**, sharing government **data**, and providing citizens with the **information** they need to better understand how their government works.

OPEN DIALOGUE

Giving people more opportunities to weigh-in on government decision making, in order to help improve the programs, policies and services that impact Ontarians.

OPEN DATA

Sharing government data online, so that app developers, non-profit organizations, researchers and others can help us solve problems that affect Ontarians every day.

OPEN INFORMATION

Providing Ontarians with the information they want and need, to help them better understand how their government works.

CULTURE CHANGE

In Ontario, we are also working hard to ingrain open government principles in the development of program and policies across the Ontario public sector. Our culture change strategy includes a comprehensive educational initiative to increase the organizational capacity, knowledge and skillsets required to make the Ontario government more open. Training will focus on developing competencies in key areas of Open Government, such as public engagement, data literacy and information and change management.

We are empowering our employees in the way they interact with the public and civil society to improve decision making, mitigate risks and to stimulate innovation.

As Canada's largest, most diverse and resourceful province, the Open Government Partnership subnational pilot program is an opportunity to advance our commitment and to collaborate more closely with the public and civil society.

ONTARIO'S OPEN GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO DATE

Ontario has a track record of upholding Open Government principles and a strategy in place to become more open, accountable and transparent to the people we serve.

Since Ontario embarked on the Open Government journey, we have been working hard to harness new perspectives and fresh ideas, starting with the appointment of Ontario's Open Government Engagement Team. This team of renowned public engagement and digital experts consulted with people across the province to determine how government can be more open, transparent and accessible. Their report and recommendations formed the foundation for Ontario's Open Government strategy and action plan.

Our Open Government plan is focused on:

- Engaging a broader range of Ontarians to inform decisions that impact their daily lives;
- Working with businesses, civil society and public sector partners to share high-value data and support innovation; and
- Ensuring Ontarians have access to government information and services through interactive digital platforms

We are undertaking projects in key priority areas that demonstrate how we're doing government differently and have developed a [project tracker](#) posted on our website that shares our progress.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- **Open Government plans developed by each Ministry**
Final plans approved by Cabinet on September 23, 2015
- **Ministry executive leads driving Open Government agenda**
Regular meetings with ministry leads to facilitate planning
- **Open Data Directive**
Came into force on April 1, 2016
- **More than 500 data sets now online and Data Inventories are being released**
10 of the top 25 most-voted data sets published
- **Public Engagement Framework developed**
Demonstration projects informed made-in-Ontario model
- **Online Consultations Directory launched**
New tool for Ontarians to access public engagement opportunities

HIGHLIGHTS

INVOLVING THE PUBLIC IN DECISION-MAKING

Ontario is creating more opportunities for the public to contribute to government decision-making, in order to achieve better policy, programs and services for Ontarians.

- [BudgetTalks](#) – For the third year in a row, Ontario has launched an online consultation tool that allows the public to help shape policies and programs that will be part of Ontario's future. Submissions are due by December 11, 2016. Last year, the government received 1,700 submissions, including the idea of replacing traditional lighting with energy-saving LED lights on provincial highway corridors. As a result, the government launched a mast lighting pilot project, starting at Renforth Drive and running west along Highway 401 for 1.1 kilometres.
- Ontario's [Public Engagement Framework](#) and online [Consultations Directory](#) are helping improve the quality of the government's public engagement and involving a more diverse range of Ontarians in the decision-making process. One way the province is using these tools is through collaboration with the public to develop a third-party accessibility certification program. This will promote greater accessibility of government services for people with disabilities and boost economic growth through enhanced access to services for all Ontarians.

SHARING DATA FOR PUBLIC USE

Ontario is regularly posting new data sets online, including as much publicly requested data as possible, so that researchers, non-profits, app developers and others can use it to create new and useful applications for Ontarians.

- Ontario's [Open Data Directive](#), developed in partnership with Ontarians, is helping to make government data open by default.
- We are creating an inventory of known government data. Over 1000 datasets are now available on [Ontario's Data Catalogue](#). The data listed is either opened, restricted, under review or in the process of being made open, depending on the sensitivity of the information.

Of all the datasets in the inventory, more than 500 data sets are now open and available for public access and use. This includes data on government program budgets and expenditures, traffic volumes on provincial highways, freedom of information statistics and more.

- Ontario's open data can be used to help solve problems, increase innovation and foster economic growth in the province. Businesses like MapYourProperty, GridWatch and

WaterTAP are all using the province's open data for research, to help solve problems and make better decisions.

RELEASING INFORMATION THE PUBLIC WANTS

Ontario is proactively releasing more information online while making it easier to find, use and understand so the public has the information it needs on government programs, services, operations and activities.

- Cabinet Ministers' [Mandate Letters](#) and [Response Letters](#) help the public learn about key government priorities and see the progress made.
- New digital tools show the 2015-16 [Public Accounts data](#) in innovative, visual formats. These tools make Ontario's finances easier to understand, access, and use, and are part of Ontario's commitment to Open Government.
- Ontario's new [Collective Agreement e-Library Portal](#) allows the public to search for all public and private sector collective agreements in the province, including by employer, union or location.
- An [Open Government Project Tracker](#) allows the public to view and track the progress of key government projects that are helping to improve openness, transparency and collaboration.

ONTARIO'S ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Ontario's co-creation process for the [Open Government Partnership Consultation](#) included a combination of online and in-person engagement with stakeholders.

CO-CREATION PROCESS

IDEA GENERATION

Outreach for this phase included a news release inviting Ontarians to submit ideas online in four areas: transparency, accountability, public participation, and technology and innovation. The news release was supported by internal communications to encourage Ontario public servants to participate and by direct invitation to:

23 academic institutions

95 civil society organizations

32 not for profit

42 private sector stakeholders

44 public sector organizations

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

Over 270 ideas were received through the ideation stage. The Treasury Board Secretariat, Ministries, and other internal departments assessed the appropriateness of ideas and edited for clarity and plain language prior to presentation to the public. The assessment included determining relevancy to Open Government in Ontario, criteria requirements for Open Government Partnership and a high-level assessment on achievability by 2017.

ONLINE VOTING

There were 46 ideas presented by the public that fit the action plan criteria of being relevant, achievable within a year, and a new activity or initiative. The ideas were posted online; the public voted on their favourite idea in each theme. The ideas received almost 800 votes and identified 15 top ideas.

The results and the ranking of the voting process for ideas were posted on the [Open Government Consultation](#) page for the public and civil society to review.

WORKSHOPS

To ensure in-depth participation from stakeholders, Ontario's Open Government office scheduled three workshops. Workshop locations included an in-person session in a central location, a second in-person session at a northern location and 1 online session for those who could not participate in person. The workshops were promoted on the Ontario website and through direct invitation to the over 200 participants on our original stakeholders list and to participants who had indicated an interest during the voting phase.

Approximately 100 stakeholders representing civil society (32), ministry representatives (42) and individual citizens (19) attended workshops. Many of the participants had a moderate to high level of understanding of open government and previous experience in engaging with Ontario's process.

In addition to Open Government Office staff, participants included the Deputy Minister of Treasury Board Secretariat, President of the Treasury Board and other political staff.

Workshops focused on prioritizing and refining the top voted commitments. Workshop facilitators led participants through a series of activities and provided participants with an in-depth understanding of the top voted commitments and leveraged their collective wisdom to prioritize and refine them for inclusion in the action plan.

The process was designed to engage the maximum amount of Ontarians in providing input into potential areas of commitment. The online idea generation and voting phases allowed for simultaneous engagement and awareness throughout the province, and provided opportunities for new people to engage.

Workshop participants plotted each of the top 15 voted commitments on a graph with a desirability axis and an ambition axis. They defined desirability as; 1) The commitments will have a tangible impact on Ontarians; 2) The commitments will enhance the area of my work/open government movement; 3) The commitments will enable more meaningful public participation. Participants measured ambition by potential impact on a scale of: none, minor, moderate, and transformative. Overall there were seven commitments selected and refined during the workshops. Of these three were selected and refined at two or more workshops.

Participants were then guided through an activity that helped refine the selected commitments using the SMART criteria. This activity explained the commitment measurement process to stakeholders so they could assess whether the commitments were appropriate for inclusion in Ontario's action plan.

Participants put forward many suggestions for refining the ideas and ensuring they were specific and measurable. In the final workshop session, stakeholders discussed who should implement and monitor (and be responsible for) the achievement of milestones (related to being

answerable). Many of Ontario's stakeholder participants showed their commitment by signing up to remain involved in moving Ontario's OGP commitments forward.

IMPLEMENTATION FORUM

Throughout the co-creation process, Ontario has provided updates on the [Open Government website](#) to notify the public and civil society of the process, status and to actively encourage engagement. Now that the commitments for the Open Government Partnership consultation process have been completed Ontario will provide a summary report on their [consultations page](#) that will also include next steps.

To help improve our co-creation process, the Open Government office, also conducted a survey with participants from both online and in-person workshops. This feedback will be used to improve our tactics and rollout in the implementation phase.

Ontario will organize steering committees with the public, NGO's, community groups and government employees to brainstorm and provide advice to the government on how best to implement each commitment.

We will report back on our progress on our website throughout 2017, as well as on our [Open Government Project Tracker](#).

ONTARIO'S COMMITMENTS

1. STRENGTHEN ONTARIO'S COMMITMENT TO MAKING GOVERNMENT DATA OPEN BY DEFAULT BY ADOPTING THE INTERNATIONAL OPEN DATA CHARTER.

NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT/TEAM

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Open Government Office

OTHER INVOLVED ACTORS

GovernmentOntario Provincial Government:
All Ontario ministries and provincial agencies**Civil Society, Private Sector**International Open Data Charter
Civil Society organizations

Academia

Private sector including start ups

STATUS QUO OR PROBLEM/ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED

Ontario has implemented an Open Data Directive that requires all government data to be open by default, unless it is exempt for legal, privacy, security, confidentiality or commercially-sensitive reasons.

While the directive is a strong foundation, there are concrete steps to be taken to enhance accountability and ensure a more robust implementation of the Open Data Directive. The gaps that will be closed by adopting the open data charter include (1) clear time-bound actions including timing for the release of datasets and inventories as well as concrete methods to demonstrate progress towards clearly defined and communicated targets. (2) Concrete measures for proactive civil society engagement with data and (3) Engagement with domestic and international standards bodies and other standard setting initiatives to increase the interoperability and comparability of Ontario's data.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

To maximize the release of, increase access to, and promote greater impact of Ontario's data.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF COMMITMENT

The International Open Data Charter brings Ontario into an emerging body of national and subnational governments that are releasing their data in a standardized and comparable format.

The International Open Data Charter provides Ontario with a common foundation as well as continuing guidance for realizing the full potential of its open data.

RELEVANT TO FURTHER ADVANCING OGP VALUES

Adopting the International Open Data Charter will further advance OGP values and move Ontario’s data directive further by:

Increasing access to information – Enhancing Ontario’s open by default data policy which covers open and proactive release of data in an open format, and reduces the cost of access to data.

Increasing civic participation – Enhancing the “open data engagement section” of Ontario’s directive by specifying actions by ministries and provincial agencies that promote open data engagement such as partnerships with academic institutions and start-ups.

Public Accountability – The appointment of a key ministry, including a direct individual, to serve as point of contact responsible for implementing the Open Data Charter’s principles. Publically follow up on progress of the specific actions that will be taken by Ontario as it adopts the International Open Data Charter.

Technology and Innovation for openness and accountability – Enhancing ontario.ca to ensure that data is more accessible and easily discoverable. Linking the data catalogue with civic engagement initiatives, and promoting the development of new, innovative technologies and applications using open data.

AMBITION

The intended results of Ontario’s adoption of the International Open Data Charter are an increase in access to Ontario’s data, a greater economic and social impact of Ontario’s data and better consistency and comparability of Ontario’s data with other jurisdictions.

MILESTONES

Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfill the commitment	New or ongoing commitment	Start Date:	End Date:
1. Provincial announcement of the adoption of the International Data Charter	NEW	January 2017	

2. Develop strategy for Ontario to further align its Open Data Directive with the Charter principles	NEW	January 2017	
3. Publish Implementation Schedule and Plan	NEW	January 2017	
4. Provide updated tools and guidance (Open data guidebook) for ministries and provincial agencies	NEW	January 2017	

2. GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES BY WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUTH TO IMPLEMENT A DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT TOOL.

NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT/TEAM

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OTHER INVOLVED ACTORS

Government

Ministries of Education, Advanced Education and Skills Development, Tourism, Culture and Sport, Citizenship and Immigration, Health, Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities

Civil Society, Private Sector

Youth and Youth leaders

Youth-led and youth-serving organizations

Universities and colleges

School boards / School Councils

STATUS QUO OR PROBLEM/ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED

Youth are digitally connected like never before and have the skill sets and passion to solve problems affecting them locally and globally. Unfortunately, they are not engaged to civic processes in the same way as previous generations so the methods to engage them need to evolve.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

To engage youth on implementing a digital engagement platform that harnesses their collective energy and existing ways of connecting (e.g. social media, mobile-focused, digitally) to

contribute to government policy and program development processes on an ongoing basis.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF COMMITMENT

Ontario will engage youth on how they currently participate civically, how they want to be engaged and how digital tool(s) would support that.

RELEVANT TO FURTHER ADVANCING OGP VALUES

Public Participation – Engaging youth to understand where they are interested and how best to engage them in decisions that impact their lives.

Technology and Innovation – Through a collaborative process, a digital engagement tool will be implemented and tested with youth to measure its impact on reaching underrepresented youth populations.

AMBITION

Engaging youth in the design and implementation of a new digital access tool is a significant undertaking with the benefit to have substantial impact on the next generation of voters.

MILESTONES

Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfill the commitment	New or ongoing commitment	Start Date:	End Date:
1. Engage the Premier’s Council on Youth Opportunities and their youth networks on how young people currently engage in civic participation through digital means, as well as in-person, to develop insight on how they want to engage government.	NEW	January 2017	
2. Host design lab(s) with the Premier’s Council on Youth Opportunities and their youth networks to inform the implementation of a digital engagement tool in a beta phase, for testing and evaluation.	NEW	January 2017	
3. Beta-launch a digital engagement tool and establish a baseline for evaluating digital youth civic engagement, and identifying opportunities for improvements.	NEW	January 2017	

4. Use feedback from beta testing to launch an updated version of the digital engagement tool and test/measure its impact on digital youth civic engagement, with concurrent evaluation.	NEW	January 2017	
5. Continue making updates to the digital engagement tool with the Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities and their youth networks through design lab(s) or other open government tools (e.g. PoliHack).	NEW	January 2017	

3. FURTHER EMBED OPEN GOVERNMENT PRINCIPLES IN THE DAY-TO-DAY WORK OF THE ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW GUIDE AND TRAINING.

NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT/TEAM

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OTHER INVOLVED ACTORS

Government

Treasury Board Secretariat
Other ministries and agencies

Civil Society, Private Sector

Civil society, private sector

STATUS QUO OR PROBLEM/ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED

OPS staff has differing levels of understanding and capacity to embed open government principles (regarding data, info and public engagement) in their daily tasks.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

To create an Open Government literate OPS with common principles embedded into daily responsibilities that promote accountability, transparency and public participation

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF COMMITMENT

As open government increases in prominence it will change the way that public-sector employees engage with their responsibilities.

RELEVANT TO FURTHER ADVANCING OGP VALUES

Technology and Innovation for openness and accountability- OPS staff will have a better understanding of how to open information and engage public in decision-making

AMBITION

Develop an Open Government guide and training in collaboration with other levels of government that offers clear and tangible ways for public servants to align their daily work with the principles of open government.

MILESTONES

Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfill the commitment	New or ongoing commitment	Start Date:	End Date:
1. Develop (draft) guide with input from government ministries and agencies	NEW		
2. Establish a community of practice	NEW		
3. Undertake pilots	NEW		
4. Training of Trainers	NEW		

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