

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Office of Cable Television



Open Government Report 2014

To institutionalize a culture of transparent and open government, accountability, and to expand opportunities for resident participation and collaboration, this Report describes how the Office of Cable Television (“OCT”) has and will continue to develop and enhance transparency, public participation, and collaboration. In accordance with Mayor’s Order 2014-170, this report addresses the following topics:

1) **Transparency**

In attempts to ensure that OCT continues to be transparent, and becomes more so, the agency has taken several steps. OCT primarily shares the information concerning the agency, cable television, and its PEG programming via its website. OCT attempts to make as much information available via the website, focusing on that information which is commonly requested, such as programming and Council hearings, as well as information relating to the three cable franchise agreements with the District.

OCT meets its obligations pursuant the District’s Freedom of information Act and Open Meetings Act by making most of the information pertaining to the agency available to the public online. OCT also provides a page on its website where the public may contact OCT to request information, often times allowing that member to speak with a member of the OCT staff.

In attempt to increase public access to information, OCT will continue to update its website and make additional information available; particularly that information which OCT finds is frequently requested. OCT is currently in the process of updating its website so that, not only is the most up-to-date information is provided, but so that it is easier to navigate and more encouraging for the public to use.

OCT is working closely with the Office of the City Administrator (OCA) and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to identify a significant number of datasets that OCA and OCTO expect to publish online later this year. If no dataset from OCT is selected to be included in this 2014 release, we will continue to work with OCA and OCTO to identify datasets appropriate to publish in 2015. In the future, requirements for open data reporting will be provided by the Chief Data Officer.

2) **Public Engagement and Participation**

OCT believes that it is important that it facilitates public engagement and participation. With respects to proposed rules and regulations, OCT makes available the public hearings regarding such matters through its broadcast of DCC. In addition, in matters

related to its responsibilities for the District's Cable Laws OCT has conducted "needs assessments", in which members of the public are surveyed and invited to testify at a public hearing. The results of this needs assessment are posted on the OCT webpage for the public to access.

In addition to the manners noted above, OCT shares information and resources to keep the public properly informed in a variety of ways. First and foremost, OCT airs live Council hearings on the District Council Channel (DCC). In addition to those Council hearings aired on DCC, OCT also provides links, including live streaming to other Council hearings through its website. In addition, OCT airs Public Service Announcements (PSAs) regularly. These PSAs are often related to the initiatives embarked by other District agencies, as well as local community groups who would like to spread the message to District residents. In addition to interacting with the community via its programming, OCT interacts with District residents via Facebook and Twitter. Through these platforms OCT notifies residents of important information, as well as receives and answers questions and concerns posed by District residents.

OCT also participates in public engagement by directly interacting and engaging the public. OCT meets with community groups, or groups of members in the community, to engage with and educate them about the role of OCT, their rights and responsibilities with respects to cable television, and any other cable television issue that may arise during that discussion. OCT also participates in other organized public events, whether sponsored by the District or not, that involves District communities and allows an opportunity for community engagement or dissemination of information about the District community, to the District community. Finally, OCT regularly interacts with District residents who call with questions ranging from issues with cable service to requesting an explanation of how District and Federal cable laws affect them. District residents are continuously encouraged to reach out to OCT for any information regarding cable television in the District.

In identifying stakeholders, OCT takes the position that every District resident is a stakeholder. To invite the participation of District residents, OCT uses a variety of methods, such as the community outreach events earlier mentioned. Another example is in the cable needs assessment that OCT conducted. During this needs assessment, OCT held a series of public hearings in which all members of the District were invited to testify as to the importance of cable television to them, and those areas they believed OCT should pay special attention to. This needs assessment was subsequently made available on OCT's website.

OCT will continue to work to improve its public engagement and participation by continuing to build upon its social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, as well as host and participate in more community events in which OCT staff engages in informative dialogue with District residents.

3) **Collaboration**

OCT has a strong practice of collaborating and cooperating with governmental agencies, the public, non-profit and private entities in fulfilling its obligations. One example of this is collaboration with BET Centrix to create programming such as “Emancipation Day Town Hall” and “Of Thee We Sing,” two programs which detail and discuss the rich and dynamic history of the District. OCT has worked collaborated with local businesses to provide programming detailing healthy living and healthy eating, as well as District agencies and private organizations to alert senior residents to the dangers of predatory commercial practices, such as telephone lottery scams.

OCT will work to enhance such collaborations by continuing to seek out opportunities to partner with organizations affecting the lives of District residents. In addition to monitoring the feedback received on its social media platforms, OCT will continue to review reactions received by those organizations and entities OCT collaborates with.