



VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

March 19, 2020

Joseph M. Ferguson
Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
740 North Sedgwick Street, Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60654

Inspector General Ferguson,

This letter is in response to your February 14, 2020, letter and Advisory Concerning the City of Chicago Data Portal. We appreciate your efforts to call attention to the status of open data in the City of Chicago, and we take this opportunity to respond and communicate plans to broaden and enhance Chicago's position as a leader in data transparency.

As you noted, the role of Chief Data Officer (CDO) was recently filled and moved to the Office of the Mayor (Mayor's Office). This move will allow the CDO to work within the municipal executive department, allowing closer collaboration with city-wide policy and operations personnel. The CDO is now working in close conjunction with the new Department of Assets, Information and Services (AIS), where the Open Data Program Manager is located along with the rest of the former Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT).

The City of Chicago has a tremendous opportunity and duty to elevate its data efforts as data generation and collection activities are expanding not only within government, but across all aspects of commerce, mobility, and daily life. Accurate, comprehensive data provides the ability to measure operational efficacy and the impacts of policy interventions at a scale that previously would have been impossible. At the same time, the City must carefully consider its data collection and retention policies to make sure only necessary data is collected and sensitive data is secured. We plan to build on previous efforts to establish a first-class data program not only in open data but also in governance, privacy and protection, access and sharing. We achieve full transparency and accountability only when our data is accurate, comprehensive, usable, and clearly communicated.



In recent weeks, the CDO has engaged in evaluating the City's Open Data Program. The results of that evaluation are in line with your findings and recommendations. In particular, the CDO plans to revitalize the program by engaging in the following:

- Appoint Open Data Coordinators from each department to the Open Data Advisory Group
- Reconvene the Open Data Advisory Group for regular meetings
- Issue an Open Data Compliance Report for calendar year 2019
- Evaluate and update the current Open Data Executive Order
- On dataset webpages, add links to important blog communications
- Increase Open Data staff from 1 to 4 (Open Data Program Manager, Chief Data Officer, Applied Data Fellow, Project Manager) and monitor staffing adequacy
- Formalize a tracking and documentation system for storing communications regarding open dataset design and database queries
- Utilize AIS's Project Management Office to plan and track dataset launches
- Establish a written open dataset creation process, providing a clear path to open data for departments and allowing for better compliance and procedural review
- Identify and propose laws, policies, and agreements necessary to establish better data access and sharing, both internally and externally
- Increase the awareness within departments of staff roles and expectations regarding completeness, accuracy, and usability of datasets
- Increase the awareness within departments of the implications of maintaining multiple public datasets with overlapping information, and work with them to clarify and communicate the purposes of each one
- Consolidate our multiple blogs into a new, integrated change log on chicago.gov
- Integrate the results of the upcoming city-wide IT assessment
- Continue to automate dataset updates whenever possible



The steps above will implement all the recommendations in your advisory and bring the City into compliance with the Open Data Executive Order. They will also provide a foundation to expand and advance open data efforts into all city departments. In doing so, these efforts will allow us to increase the completeness, accuracy, and usability of the data portal. Once these measures are in place, the City will be able to better track reasons for data omissions and increase coordination between datasets that exist in multiple places.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Lucius', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Nick Lucius
Chief Data Officer
Office of the Mayor



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Reynolds", written in a cursive style.

David Reynolds
Commissioner
Department of Assets, Information and Services