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Contact information:
 Governor's Press Office
 NYC Press Office: 212.681.4640
 Albany Press Office: 518.474.8418
press@ny.gov



Andrew M. Cuomo - Governor

Governor Cuomo Highlights Open NY for Sunshine Week

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*Issues One-Year Report on Open NY Transparency Initiative
 Encourages New Yorkers to Engage with Open Data Online at Data.NY.Gov*

Albany, NY (March 18, 2014)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today honored Sunshine Week by issuing a one-year report on Open NY, an initiative aimed at increasing citizens' engagement with their government, and encouraging New Yorkers to visit the State's comprehensive data transparency website, Data.NY.Gov. The Open NY One-Year Report, which reviews accomplishments and sets the stage for the future of the initiative, is available on Data.NY.Gov.

"Open NY has broken down artificial barriers and used technology that has put an unprecedented amount of information at New Yorkers' fingertips," Governor Cuomo said. "This convenient and easily comparable access to the workings of state government is a testament to the work we have done to make government more accessible, more modern, and more efficient."

Open NY: Transparency in the Digital Age

The ultimate goal of the Open NY initiative is to increase public trust by leveraging the collective genius of our citizenry to increase transparency and improve government performance. The Governor signed Executive Order 95 last March, which recognized that government's responsibility to provide information to the public through affirmative disclosure has changed in the digital age. The order required for the first time that New York State agencies continually review and catalogue their data for publication in an open format online. It further required the State to create and maintain a website that provides, organizes, and makes searchable open data. That website, Data.NY.Gov, had more information than any other state data site at launch, including over 200 datasets, maps, and charts from over 30 state agencies and authorities.

Data.NY.Gov: A Year of Remarkable Growth

Data.NY.Gov marks its first anniversary during Sunshine Week, a national initiative designed to raise awareness about the importance of open government. Since its launch, the number of data catalogue items on the website has more than doubled and the number of state agencies that feed data to the site has increased by more than a third, to 45. Individuals in 135 countries and all 50 states have accessed the site, where local and federal government data is now available and searchable. Additionally, nearly 50 million records are now published to the site, with the most popular datasets including:

- Top fishing spots, featuring locations of the best rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds for fishing in New York State based on quality of fishing and public access, as determined by biologists working for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation;
- Winter farmers' markets, which are at an all-time high in New York, features 116 listings, including information detailing the hours and location of farmers' markets as well as the name and phone number of the market manager;
- Wineries, breweries, cideries, and distilleries, searchable by license type and location;
- National Register of Historic Places, featuring more than 5,600 historic and archeological resources maintained by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation;
- ReCharge NY Customers, including the number of jobs they have committed to retain or create, a condition of this New York Power Authority program that provides low-cost power to spur economic development;
- Fiscal Year 2014-2015 budget data, allowing an insider's look at the Executive Budget plan;
- Texting Zone Locations along the New York State Thruway and state highways that give motorists a pull-off area to park and use their mobile devices;
- Regulated Child Care Programs, containing a map that can be filtered by capacity for school-age children;

- Hospital-acquired infections since 2008, including central line-associated blood stream infections in intensive care units, surgical site infections following colon, hip replacement/revision, coronary artery bypass graft, and Clostridium difficile infections;
- State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA) Loans Purchased since January 2004, searchable by type of loan, loan date, county, and property type;
- Food service establishment inspections, showing violations filtered by facility, city, and county; and
- Top baby names in New York since 2007, filtered by year, gender, and count.

Open Collaboration: Encouraging Citizen Engagement

The Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) maintains and continually enhances Data.NY.Gov, aiming to usher in a new era of open collaboration and public participation in state government. This week it will introduce a new developer resource, a library of guidance materials including code samples, to facilitate the creation of successful mobile apps like the I Love NY smartphone app, which provides geographically-targeted tourism, recreation, lodging, and dining options in every region of the state. Further, New York became the first state to publish provisional open data guidelines and seek public comment on GitHub, which allows easier use of and access to data for research purposes and app development. The Open Data Handbook, available here, provides guidelines to government entities participating in Data.NY.Gov for identifying, reviewing, and prioritizing publishable data.

ITS, in partnership with the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) at the University at Albany, SUNY, will host a collaborative workshop called *Shaping Open NY: Visioning a New Transparency Hub* today, March 18, to elicit strategies to take Open NY to the next level. The State will launch a new hub in the near future, incorporating the best strategies culled from the workshop.

Experts in Transparency and Technology

ITS's Open NY team is led by top experts in transparency and technology, including Director Andrew Nicklin and advisors Dr. James Hendler of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Dr. Theresa Pardo of CTG and the University at Albany. The team coordinates with the Executive Chamber through Rachel Haot, Deputy Secretary for Technology, who leads the State's digital strategy across web, mobile, and social media with a focus on streamlining services and supporting public engagement.

A record of transparency

The remarkable growth of Open NY builds on the work to make government more transparent through technology. Examples are the creation of the CitizenConnects website to serve as an "online town hall" where New Yorkers can find the Governor's past schedules and information about meetings around the State and watch video of the Governor's events. The Tappan Zee Bridge website provides access to all prior project reports along with up-to-date construction information. TheNewNY.com website provides information on starting and maintaining a business in New York State and the Regional Councils website provides detailed information on economic development projects.

These new uses of technology build on steps taken by the Governor to open the doors of government to New Yorkers, which included, as his first act in office, opening the Capitol's second floor to the public for the first time in more than a decade, inviting the public for the first time to attend the State of the State address, and deploying the Governor's Cabinet and deputies across the state to communicate with New Yorkers through public forums. In addition, the Governor, together with the Legislature, passed ethics reform in 2011 that created the Joint Commission on Public Ethics and increased disclosure requirements for public officials.

Robert J. Freeman, Executive Director of the Committee on Open Government, said, "Governor Cuomo has made use of information technology to enable New Yorkers to gain access to more information than ever before, and to use it in ways that are creative and innovative. Pushing information out to the public, rather than requiring people to pull it out through requests made under the Freedom of Information Law, represents a positive step that will create lasting benefit for the public."

Dick Dadey, Executive Director of Citizen's Union, said, "The Governor's continuing efforts on open data are commendable and Citizens Union is pleased to work with his administration as they use technology to open up state government. Open data portals provide the public with important information for their understanding of government operations. It also allows agencies to improve internal operations and interact more productively with the public."

Waldo Jaquith, Director, Open Data Institute, nominated "Champion of Change" by President Obama in 2011, and named an "OpenGov Champion" by the Sunlight Foundation in July 2012, said, "New York State has made a remarkable commitment to open data in the past year, with its work making the state an instant role model for the rest of the nation. The breadth and depth of information provided makes it a wonderful resource for New Yorkers and, indeed, Americans."

Emily Shaw, National Policy Manager, Sunlight Foundation, said, "New York State has made significant advances in the opening of their data this year. New York's continuing open data reforms represent a strong commitment to the achievement of a state where New Yorkers' public information is proactively made available to them online."

Jeanne Holm, Evangelist for Data.gov, said, "The open data work from New York State is truly impressive and helps to set a very high bar for other state and city governments around the country. Under the leadership of Governor Cuomo, the Open NY Team has focused on transparency and worked to open up datasets ranging from agriculture to health care facilities to jobs. All of these help build collaboration between citizens and their government, and to help businesses provide more innovative services."

Ben Balter, Government Evangelist at Github said, "Using GitHub to collaborate with software developers in drafting the Open Data Handbook is a great example of the innovative thinking within New York State government. As technology allows us to reimagine the relationship between citizens and a 21st century government, Open NY is at the forefront."

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