

GAO@100 Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-22-104574](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

Federal agencies create and collect large amounts of data to fulfill their missions. Public access to open data—data that are free to use, modify, and share—holds great promise for promoting government transparency and engendering public trust.

The OPEN Government Data Act includes provisions for GAO to report on federal agencies' comprehensive data inventories and on the value of the data made available to the public, among other requirements.

This report examines, among other things, (1) the extent to which OMB met its statutory requirements; (2) selected agencies' progress developing comprehensive data inventories; (3) the extent to which selected agencies engage with the public; and (4) how data users value and use information made publicly available.

GAO reviewed four selected agencies' websites and related documentation, and interviewed OMB staff, General Services Administration and agency officials, and data users.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making 10 recommendations, including that OMB issue guidance on making data open by default, and that AmeriCorps, DOJ, the Department of State, and FDIC fully address the act's public engagement requirements.

GSA, the Department of State, FDIC, and AmeriCorps concurred, and OMB and DOJ neither agreed nor disagreed, with GAO's recommendations. OMB, the Department of State, DOJ, and GSA also provided technical comments, which GAO incorporated as appropriate.

View [GAO-22-104574](#). For more information, contact Michelle Sager at (202) 512-6806 or sagem@gao.gov.

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OPEN DATA

Additional Action Required for Full Public Access

What GAO Found

The Open, Public, Electronic and Necessary Government Data Act of 2018 (OPEN Government Data Act) codifies and expands on existing open data policy. It requires, among other things, agencies to publish information as open data by default, as well as develop and maintain comprehensive data inventories.

However, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has not issued statutorily-required implementation guidance to agencies on making data open by default and comprehensive data inventories. GAO previously recommended that OMB issue inventory guidance, but that recommendation has not been implemented.

Despite the lack of guidance, selected agencies—AmeriCorps, the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and State, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)—made progress developing data inventories. Specifically, DOJ, the Department of State, and FDIC are at varying stages of updating their data inventories as required under the act. Further, although AmeriCorps lacks a comprehensive data inventory of all of its data assets, it has developed a searchable open data portal.

Regarding engaging with the public, GAO found that the selected agencies had mixed results in addressing all requirements of the act (see figure below). For example, while most of the agencies were assisting the public in expanding use of data assets, none were fully addressing the requirement to publish information on such use.

Selected Agencies' Efforts to Address Requirements to Engage with the Public on Open Data

OPEN Government Data Act Requirements	 AmeriCorps	 DOJ	 Dept. of State	 FDIC
Provide opportunity for the public to request specific data to be prioritized for disclosure and make suggestions for the development of agency criteria on prioritizing data assets for disclosure				
Assist the public in expanding the use of data assets				
Host relevant challenges, competitions, events, or other open data related initiatives to create additional value from public data assets				
Publish information on the use of data assets				

 Generally addressed
  Partially addressed
  Not addressed

Source: Pub. L. No. 115-435, § 202(c), 132 Stat. 5529, 5535 (2019), codified at 44 U.S.C. § 3506(d)(6), and GAO analysis of documents and information from AmeriCorps, Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of State, and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). | [GAO-22-104574](#)

Federal data users spanning the public, private, and nonprofit sectors reported that they use and value a variety of data from across the federal government, such as demographic, spending, economic, and law enforcement data. Data users suggested that creating more comprehensive, standardized, accessible, and curated government data could increase the overall value and usefulness of open data. Full implementation of the public engagement requirements in the act could help address issues identified by federal data users.