

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

[Office on African Affairs]



## 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 Mayor's Office on African Affairs 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:

The Mayor's Office on African Affairs is one of 12 agencies housed in the Office of Community Affairs. The mission of the Mayor's Office on African Affairs (OAA) is to ensure that the full range of health, education, employment, social services, safety, business and economic development information, services and opportunities are accessible to the District's African community. By serving as the liaison between the District's African community, District government agencies and the Mayor, OAA aims to (1) Improve the quality of life of the District's diverse African born constituencies and their children (2) Increase civic and public engagement in the District's African community and (3) Support community development.

### 1) **Transparency**

**Describe the steps your agency has taken or plans to take to be more transparent. Please include a description of:**

**How and to what extent your agency shares information with the public, e.g. publication of information in the District register and on the agency website, press releases, and documents in the agency's FOIAXpress reading room.**

- OAA shares information with the public through its agency website [www.oaa.dc.gov](http://www.oaa.dc.gov) , biweekly newsletter, press releases, print – brochures and one-pagers and via District register.
- Among the wealth of information on OAA's website is:
  - A robust overview of OAA's services under [What We Do?](#)
  - A central carousel featuring city-wide and OAA programs, initiatives and activities
  - An [Upcoming Events](#) section which informs and invites the public to OAA events and activities.
  - An [ask the Director](#) link for public comments, feedback and queries
  - A direct link to OAA's FOIA Officer
- OAA's general **phone line 202-727-5634** routinely responds to queries from community members and the general public. Some typical request include:

- Request for access to District government services, programs and resources
  - Request for partnership and support for community organizations programs and activities
  - Community organizations and non-profits wanting OAA speakers on issues and topics related to the District's African community African community
  - Request for demographic information, studies, reports and data on the District's African community
  - Request for African Community Grant information and deadlines
- OAA's **bi-weekly newsletter** *[The African Beat](#)* provides news, information and announcements pertinent to the African community. Readers receive updates on Mayoral initiatives, employment opportunities, community events, newsworthy happenings and targeted resources for businesses, community based organizations, faith-based organizations and youth. The *Front Page* section of the newsletter provides readers with information on the OAA's programs, events, initiatives and upcoming activities. Distributed through the GovDelivery system, we currently have over 7000 subscribers.
  - **OAA's press releases**, shared through our website newsroom <http://oaa.dc.gov/newsroom> , *The African Beat* newsletter, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter \(@DCMayorOAA\)](#), contain information about OAA's upcoming programs, initiatives, events and outcomes, newsworthy local, national and international events pertinent to the District's African Diaspora community and other stakeholders.
  - OAA publishes monthly Commission on African Affairs **public meetings** and our FY14 African Community Grant Notice of Fund Availability (NOFA) in the **District register**. The FY14 NOFA was also published in the Office of Partnerships and Grants clearinghouse and [Funding Alert](#).

**How the agency meets its obligations pursuant to the District's Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act.**

- OAA meets its obligations to the District's Freedom of Information Act by making required records available to the public via our online website. These include: Public Salary Information; OAA's 2014 Budget; Performance Plan and Organizational Budget; as well as the Commission on African Affairs' Meeting Minutes.

**Steps your agency will take to increase public access to information.**

OAA will take the following steps to increase public access to information:

- Ensuring timely publication of OAA Annual Reports including OAA's first Annual Grant Report for the FY2014 African Community Grant. Make certain that these annual reports are in an open format that can be retrieved, downloaded, indexed and searched by commonly used web applications.
- Use website, Facebook, Twitter, Govdelivery and listserves to target key audiences and publish high value information i.e. demographic data, reports and policy documents for

each of those audiences, in the most accessible forms and formats. Be proactive with publishing schedule rather than wait for specific requests under FOIA.

- Aggressively pursue goal of 10,000 gov delivery subscribers, 3000 likes/followers on OAA's official Facebook Page and 1000 followers of OAA's official Twitter page by September 30<sup>th</sup> 2015.

**How your agency has taken or plans to take steps to make more of its data available to the public.**

- The Mayor's Office on African Affairs (OAA) 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 OAA 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**

**Describe the steps your agency has taken or plans to take to enhance or expand opportunities for the public to participate in agency decision-making. Please include a description of:**

**How your agency identifies stakeholders and invites their participation?**

**How your agency shares information and resources to keep the public properly informed, e.g. community meetings, public hearings, FAQs, and ways the public can provide input such as Twitter, grade.dc.gov, email contacts.**

- OAA's core stakeholder groups are as follows:
  - African residents and merchants
  - Community based organizations and faith based organizations
  - Partners and donors
  - DC Government agencies and employees
  - General public

OAA continues to identify, classify and inform our core stakeholders by:

- Collecting African residents and merchant demographic information during OAA programs, events and activities via online registration platforms and in-person registration sheets. This helps identify African residents/merchants, classify them by program area of interest and allows for recurring outreach in areas of interest.
- Holding regular community meetings and/or periodic briefings to exchange information
  - In 2014, we held informational sessions for potential community based organization applicants of OAA's African Community Grant, which included a Pre-bidders Orientation meeting and language access training for grantees.

- Conducting proactive one-on one discussions, exploratory meetings, and physically attending Africa(n)- related events in and around the city to explore new partnership opportunities and intersections.
- Conducting cultural competency training targeting service oriented District government agencies and employees who have heightened public contact with the District's African community.
- Providing FAQs on our website (as needed) to inform the public of details on OAA programs and resources
- Soliciting public input via OAA's social media outlets – Facebook and Twitter
- Providing print brochures in three languages (Amharic, English and French) and distribute them at all OAA events. Brochures contain information on OAA programs and initiatives as well as the agency's mission and facts about African residents in the District.

**Steps your agency will take to improve public engagement and participation including any new feedback tools or mechanisms the agency is considering.**

- ***DC Mayor's Commission on African Affairs:*** The Commission on African Affairs was created in 2006 along with the OAA as mandated by DC Law 16-313. [The commission is composed of fifteen \(15\) members appointed by the Mayor with consent of the Council.](#) Members of the Commission on African Affairs who have shown dedication to, and knowledge of the African community, are appointed with due consideration for representation from established public, nonprofit and volunteer community organizations concerned with the African community, and members of the public. The commission meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month and there is a standing section on the agenda for members of the public to share their concerns and needs. In FY 15, OAA will work with the [Office of Boards and Commissions](#) (OBC) to fill 3 vacant seats on the Commission.
- ***E-Integrated Management System:*** OAA has begun work with OCTO to improve public engagement through an Integrated Management System that will have internal and outward-facing components. This will improve the accessibility of OAA's existing database and streamline our efforts to collect new data. The project is slated to be complete in FY15.
- ***Interactive African Business Directory:*** OAA had a successful soft launch of its first-ever African Business Directory at its 5<sup>th</sup> Annual DC Africa Festival on 3 August 2014. We introduced a limited number of paper copies of this Directory and have an online version available for download. OAA will work with OCTO to create an interactive online version of the Directory that will better serve the African business community, researchers, and District agencies interested in conducting targeted outreach to the District's African business community.
- ***OAA's Internship & Volunteering Program:*** District residents have ongoing opportunities to get involved and join OAA in serving people in need in our community. OAA's internship and volunteer program offers hands-on experience and learning

opportunities to members of the public, of all ages, seeking to engage in public service, while primarily serving the District's African community. OAA interns are actively involved in many aspects of the agency's day-to-day work, participate in the implementation of program activities, and provide support to the staff, while learning about the District's African community. In FY 15, OAA looks forward to welcoming at least 5 interns per quarter and recruit sufficient volunteers to support OAA's recurring programmatic activities.

### 3) Collaboration

**Describe the steps your agency has taken or plans to take to enhance or expand cooperation among departments, other governmental agencies, the public, and non-profit and private entities in fulfilling its obligations. Please include a description of? How does your agency currently collaborates these parties. Please list links to specific websites if appropriate.**

- **Office of Human Rights Language Access Program:** OAA works in collaboration with the Office of Human Rights, the Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA), the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs (OLA), and DC Language Access Coalition to carry out the mission and goals on the city's Language Access Program – to ensure District residents who are limited or non-English proficient are afforded equal access to information and services provided by the District. Residents who speak little English must be offered interpretation services and/or translated documents when obtaining government services, as required by the Language Access Act of 2004.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual DC to Africa Growing Local Going Global Business Symposium:** On Monday, November 25, 2013, Mayor Vincent C. Gray and OAA hosted a highly successful and well-received 2nd Annual DC to Africa: 'Growing Local, Going Global' Business Symposium. This all-day symposium brought together over 300 local business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs in direct contact with more than 20 business resource providers from District, federal and nonprofit agencies. **Coordinated in partnership with** the US Department of Commerce, Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD), the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), the and the Office of Community Affairs, the DC to Africa business symposium aimed, first and foremost, to advance the Mayor's top priority of growing and diversifying the District's economy as a vehicle for expanding the tax base and employment opportunities for District residents.
- **5<sup>th</sup> Annual DC Africa Festival:** On Sunday, August 3, 2014, Mayor Vincent C. Gray and his Office on African Affairs (OAA) held its 5<sup>th</sup> Annual DC Africa Festival at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. The event coincided with President Barack Obama's historic US-Africa Leaders Summit and served as a welcome to the 50 African leaders being hosted in our nation's capital. Over 1,000 attendees joined Mayor Gray and OAA for the festivities, held outdoors in the Reagan Building's adjoining Moynihan and Woodrow Wilson Plazas. **Major partners:** Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, DC Mayor's Office of Community Affairs, DC Commission on the Arts and

Humanities, DC Office of the Secretary, DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, DC Office of Human Rights, the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute, and AmeriHealth. **Corporate donors:** Capital Petroleum Group, LLC, Ethiopian Airlines, and Safeway. Incredible team of **50+ volunteers!**

Other ways that OAA collaborates with District agencies, Federal agencies, faith-based and community-based organizations as well as private organizations to in fulfilling its obligations include:

- OAA consults with and advises these entities on targeted outreach strategies
- OAA directly supports their outreach efforts by disseminating information through our networks and social media platforms
- OAA supports District agencies by providing quality control on translated documents in compliance with the District's Language Access Act of 2004.
- As needed, OAA partners with organizations by facilitating discussions, providing advice on program content and structure and support in securing venues for program activities.

OAA is committed to strengthening the African community, through partnerships and meaningful collaborations, which increase community access to District agency services and programs.