Open Government Action Plan

Government of Alberta

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Alberta Open Government Action Plan

The Government of Alberta is committed to transforming the way it works, with the purpose of becoming more transparent and accountable to the citizens of Alberta. It will do this by: releasing more of the information it creates, collects and manages; improving the daily interactions it has with Albertans; and encouraging and facilitating greater engagement of Albertans with their government.

Information is the greatest resource of the 21st century. Today, governments are creating and managing large and ever-growing amounts of information. Opening up access to this wealth of information so that politicians, public servants and the general public can readily view, analyze, interpret and re-use it has the potential to reduce costs, create enormous efficiencies and boost productivity both within and outside of government.

Today, our citizens and employees are comparing their experience working with, or working within government not against the province(s) next door but against their online experience. By engaging citizens differently and using information more intelligently we can create services that are responsive and effective.

Open government is about empowerment. It is about providing citizens with access to the storehouse of data and information the government creates; it is about empowering citizens and businesses to use and reuse the data and information for their own purposes, it is about empowering public servants and citizens to more effectively work with one another and it is about enabling politicians to have greater visibility into the institutions and ministries they oversee.

The Government of Alberta has committed to being more accountable and transparent to the citizens of Alberta. The following action plan outlines how the public service will transform to achieve these goals (Figure 1).
Enabling Change

In order to develop a culture of greater openness in the Alberta public service, a governance structure will be created to provide the strategic vision for the development of a more transparent and accountable government that responds quickly to the changing needs of Albertans.

The governance team will guide the organizational, operational and cultural transformation required to achieve open government:

The Open Government Program requires strong governance in order to be successful. Key among the governance structure is developing and obtaining agreement on the overall decision making structure. Service Alberta will lead the development of a single governance model, jointly created and enforced by all ministries. Whether developing strategy or communications, managing change or any other key activity, having the right people in position to guide and authorize the activities will be key to the success of the program.

A strategic plan will be prepared and presented to the Deputy Ministers’ Committee on Information Technology and Information Management for ratification. The strategic plan will articulate Alberta’s vision for Open Government and will identify priorities and obtain the necessary approvals and resources to deliver the program.

Partnership between the ministries is vital to facilitating adoption of the Open Government Program. An agreement between the partners will outline the individual goals and responsibilities of the ministries and confirm each individual ministry’s commitment to delivering on Open Government.

A cultural change plan will be developed to empower and provide direction to Government of Alberta employees on their roles and responsibilities in creating a more open, engaged and transparent government. Integrating with Reaching Our Full Potential will be crucial in transforming behaviours and developing a culture of openness.
Supporting Initiatives

The Open Government Program will leverage the work done by the Reaching our Full Potential (ROFP) initiative to change the culture of the public service by empowering its employees:

- **ROFP** - This initiative will ensure all public service members are fully empowered to make a difference in the lives of Albertans; to work with purpose and pride on significant issues facing our province; and, to learn, grow and improve so they can deliver the best possible outcomes for Albertans. We will expect public service leadership to support this intent and grow leadership capacity at all levels in the organization to enable these outcomes. We will take down the walls within government and support all employees with the tools and systems to ensure quality interactions with Albertans.
Informing Albertans

Providing the information Albertans need from their government will ensure the continuing success of the Open Government program. Being more transparent and accountable will build trust between the public service and the citizens of Alberta.

Routine Disclosure Program
Alberta Government Libraries Transformation
Open Data
Open Information Portal
App Competition

To complement and build upon the information already provided by the Government of Alberta, the Open Government program will lead the following:

- Create a portal to make it easier for Albertans to find Government of Alberta information. Making publications, forms and websites easier to find in a consistent manner will make the information a more effective resource for Albertans. The program will help create the necessary infrastructure to make the publication and location of information as intuitive as possible.

- Launch of the Open Data portal will demonstrate to Albertans that the Government of Alberta is actively moving towards a more open approach with regards to data and information.

- Innovation competitions will raise awareness of the data that the Government of Alberta is making available. By engaging the development community to transform open data into a more citizen friendly format, the program will make more information available in ways that Albertans will find useful and will demonstrate value to Albertans.

- AGL will support Open Information by developing and supporting the Open Information Portal. The internal organizational structure will be transformed to respond to the changed mandate of the library.

- Establish the processes and policies to release information on a regular basis to ensure Albertans have consistent access to the information they need. Routinely releasing information will improve transparency and demonstrate accountability to the citizens of Alberta.
Supporting Initiatives

The Government of Alberta has already moved towards providing more information to the citizens of Alberta and the Open Government Program will build upon services such as:

- **Oil Sands Information Portal (OSIP)** - The portal is a one-window, publically-available, website for individuals interested in the environmental impacts of oil sands development. This comprehensive and interactive map-based website contains reports, static images, links, graphs and tabular data with a searchable repository of various datasets behind the presented information. The portal is a joint effort of resource-based ministries and agencies.

- **GeoDiscover Alberta** - The portal includes a collection of land-based (geospatial) data from across the Government of Alberta, industry, non-governmental agencies and Albertans. Users, including the public, can view or download a variety of geospatial information and datasets.

- **Alberta Official Statistics** - This portal now includes a searchable catalogue of official statistics on Alberta’s social, economic, and environmental themes. The Alberta Official Statistics, certified for their quality, relevance and coherence, are available to the public in a variety of easy-to-use formats. The accompanying, comprehensive metadata further adds to the user-friendliness of the information.
Better Conversations

Using new methods to talk with Albertans will help the Government of Alberta to improve services and develop better policy options reflecting the needs of Albertans.

Citizen Participation Plan
Citizen Consultation Toolkit
Communications Plan

The Open Government Program will build upon the consultations and communications already taking place with the citizens of Alberta by developing the following:

The Open Government Program will require assistance from the Public Affairs Bureau and communications teams across the Government of Alberta in order to facilitate the changes necessary for Open Government to be successful. The overall communication plan will be an important communicating the goals and vision of the program; not just to the APS but to public and legislative stakeholders.

A public education toolkit will be developed to help ministries take a common approach when engaging with the public and undertaking public education campaigns with regards to open government. There will be guidelines for identifying engagement opportunities and for identifying ‘spokespeople’ at the ministry level.

A citizen participation plan will be developed outlining how the program and civil service will use new technology to communicate and build communities around the pillars of open government. Tools, processes, guidelines and standards will be provided to guide the actions of Government of Alberta employees.
Supporting Initiatives

There are already a number of consultations that have begun to change the way the Alberta Public Service engages with Albertans in developing policy and consulting on subjects of interest. The Open Government Program will leverage the experiences of these initiatives to better serve the citizens of Alberta:

- **Social Policy Framework** – Human Services undertook an aggressive strategy to engage as many Albertans as possible in developing a vision for social policy in Alberta. Through the use of modern technology to complement more traditional they were able to expand their reach to over 31,000 Albertans.

- **Collaborative Health Innovation Network** – An Alberta forum for organisations to improve the link between evidence and decision making. They are developing a framework to engage Albertans on health research and technology as a means to raise public awareness and debate on various challenges.