GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of Disability Rights

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Open Government Report 2014

To create a culture of transparent and open government, accountability, and to expand opportunities for resident participation and collaboration, this Report describes how the Office of Disability Rights (ODR) 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:

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.*

The Office of Disability Rights (ODR) regularly shares information with the public on our website. Shared information includes newsletters, press releases, public testimonies, DC Commission on Persons with Disabilities (DCCPD) meeting minutes, and recent agency publications.

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

To meet agency obligations pursuant to the District's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Open Meetings Act, ODR has an appointed FOIA Officer Jessica Hunt, Esq. If ODR receives a FOIA request, Ms. Hunt responds in a timely manner and within prescribed guidelines. ODR did not have any FOIA requests for FY 2014.

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

ODR will continue to post press releases, public testimonies, DCCPD meeting minutes, and agency publications under the "open government" tab on our website's homepage. ODR website is managed by FOIA Officer Jessica Hunt with assistance from the Special Assistant/Public Information Officer (PIO) Kali Wasenko.

In addition to posting information on the website, ODR is increasing its presence on social media. ODR has been increasing posts about upcoming events and communication with other agencies.

- *Steps your agency will take, including an implementation timeline, to webcast live and archive on the internet board or commission meetings. (This*

question only applies to agencies that are overseen or advised by a board or commission that is subject to the Open Meetings Act.)

DCCPD meetings are subject to Open Meetings Act. DCCPD meetings and agendas are properly posted prior to the event. Detailed minutes and recordings are taken during the meeting. The FOIA Officer and Special Assistant to the DCCPD will work together to ensure meetings and agendas are properly posted on the website within a reasonable period of time.

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

The Office of Disability Rights (ODR) 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 ODR 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. It is important to note that our largest dataset involves ADA inquires and includes confidential information. 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 provides online access to proposed rules and regulations and secures public input on them. Please list links to specific websites.*

The Office of Disability Rights (ODR) focuses on compliance based on local and federal disability rights laws. Although ODR does not have implementing regulations, it plans to promulgate regulations at a later date. During the development and publication of these regulations, ODR will certainly engage District government as well as private sector stakeholders. However, if there is a Council hearing on proposed bills or updates to important resources that affect the constituents we serve, we would post information for the hearing on our website. For example, in March 2014, the Department of Health Care Finance & Department on Disability Services revised a public notice of proposed amendments and proposed transition plan to the Home and Community-Based Waiver for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. ODR has a direct link to this notice in our "Featured News" section of our homepage (www.odr.dc.gov).

- *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.*

ODR has an "*Ask the Director*" link on our website that allows constituents to communicate questions directly to our Interim Director (http://app.dc.gov/apps/about.asp?page=atd&type=dsf&referrer=[DSF_SERVER_NAME]&agency_id=1169&odrNav=|33358|). ODR also has a list of staff members and their corresponding e-mails in our "Staff Directory" (http://odr.dc.gov/page/staff-directory-00). The public may access grade.dc.gov via a link on our homepage to provide general feedback.

ODR is active via Twitter and Facebook (@ODRDC and "DC Office of Disability Rights (ODR)" respectively). Increasing involvement in social media allows the public to engage in open conversation with ODR. Finally, for stakeholders who do not use computers or the internet, ODR has a team of knowledgeable staff members, including a receptionist who is available for extended morning hours to answer phone questions. ODR also has Video Relay Interpreting (VRI) available for members of the public who visit and require on-site American Sign Language Interpretation (SLI).

> - *How your agency identifies stakeholders and invites their participation.*

In addition to allowing constituents to sign up for our newsletter through our website, ODR utilizes several other ways of identifying stakeholders for participation. The biggest event the agency holds is the annual Disability Awareness Exposition. This year, ODR welcomed over 200 community members to this event. Furthermore, ODR set up a registration table to allow guests to identify themselves and register to receive our emails and newsletters. ODR also welcomes referrals from other agencies and communicates with constituents who visit the office. If they choose, they may be added to our listserv.

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

To improve public engagement and participation, ODR will continue to utilize multiple means of communication, including social media, website resources, telephone availability, and VRI capabilities. ODR is in the process of renovating the suite to allow for better, more effective engagement with constituents in DC government as well as in the private sector. We are constantly looking for more innovative ways to serve the public.

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 your agency currently collaborates with the above parties. Please list links to specific websites if appropriate.*

Through our newsletter, ODR links to other agency events and provides updates on developments in the field of disability rights to our stakeholders. We share relevant press releases and documents created in partnership with other agencies on our website. For example,

ODR collaborated with the Office of Human Rights on the Accessible Restaurant initiative *(http://odr.dc.gov/release/ohr-and-partners-ask-restaurants-take-accessibility-pledge-0).* For the Disability Awareness Exposition, ODR collaborated with DC Public Library, DC Department on Disability Services, DC Office on Aging, DC Healthcare Finance and the Office of Consumer and Family Affairs. Guests could learn about the event and register through an online registration page (*www.disabilityawarenessexpo.eventbrite.com).* ODR also collaborated with Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind, the American Council of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind for the Blind Awareness Day Celebration in October 2014. Community leaders were identified by the partners and invited to the reception individually through e-mail and phone calls. There was also a rally walk component that was open to the public. Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind distributed a press release co-authored by the planning team (see attached).

In addition to special events, ODR contributes to a variety of projects. For example, ODR advises the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) as they develop a plan for accessible Red Top parking meters. ODR staff members also serve on the District of Columbia Taxicab Commission Accessibility Advisory Committee regarding improving accessible taxicab services.

Metropolitan Council of Government (COG) is lead of the Access for All (AFA) Advisory Council. ODR collaborates with the AFA ensures accessibility for people with disabilities as well as improvements in transportation including bus rides and bus stop accessibility, Metro rail and MetroAccess improvements; outreach and education on transportation services to limited-English speaking communities; oversight on accessible taxi service across the region; oversight over projected long-range transportation plan; and general concerns related to transportation in the District, Maryland and Virginia. Our main focus is ensuring accessibility in all program planning and development for people with disabilities as regulated in ADA Title II.

ODR has been a member of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) since 2008. The TPB is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region, and is responsible for the regional forum for transportation planning. The TPB prepares plans and programs that the federal government must approve in order for federal-aid transportation funds to flow to the Washington region. The TPB uses its fund to test pilot programs such as the DC Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Pilot program of which ODR was a group member.

- *Steps your agency will take to improve collaboration with the above parties including any new feedback tools or mechanisms the agency is considering, e.g. prizes, competitions, and other innovative methods.*

ODR plans to collaborate with the listed partners for future Disability Awareness Expositions and Blind Awareness Day Celebrations. ODR would welcome new partners for future public awareness events. To continue to encourage a strong working relationship, ODR will organize post-mortem event meetings to gather feedback for improved community outreach.

COLUMBIA
LIGHTHOUSE
for the BLIND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **Contact:**   **Jocelyn Hunter**
October 7, 2014   **202-454-6422, office**
                                                                                 jhunter@clb.org

MEDIA ADVISORY

Blind Awareness Day
Wednesday, October 15th, 2014

WHAT: A collaboration of blindness organizations in DC in conjunction with the DC's Office of Disability Rights will host a **Blind Awareness Day** celebration**,** a **community** event organized to highlight a national day to recognize persons who are blind and visually impaired who travel independently with the use of long canes.

WHO: Adults who are blind and visually impaired & Invited DC Elected Officials

WHEN: Wednesday, **October 15**, 2014, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

              Event Schedule
              2:30 p.m.   **Walk from the Wilson Building located at 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW**
              4:00 p.m.   **Reception**
              4:45 p.m.   Program to Begin including **Mayoral Proclamation**

WHERE: **1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room G-9**

Contact: To coordinate interviews or photo/broadcast opportunities, contact Jocelyn Hunter: 202-454-6422, jhunter@clb.org.