



# **Interagency Data Transparency Commission Report**

*Report presented by the Interagency Data Transparency Commission  
September 1, 2016*

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## Letter from the Interagency Data Transparency Commission Chair

The 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 1844 in 2015, establishing the Interagency Data Transparency Commission (Commission or IDTC). This law directs the IDTC to review and study the data reporting practices of Texas state agencies. The members of the Commission include representatives from several state entities: the Office of the Governor; the Office of the Lieutenant Governor; the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives; the House Committee on Government Transparency & Operation; the Senate Committee on Business & Commerce; the Texas Legislative Council; the Comptroller of Public Accounts; the Legislative Budget Board; the State Agency Coordinating Committee; and the Department of Information Resources.

During the course of the IDTC's work, it held five open meetings, in addition to numerous smaller work sessions. The Commission initiated its work by developing and implementing an online community bulletin board for Commission members to communicate and collaborate in an open and transparent forum outside of its open meetings. Thereafter, the IDTC divided into three subcommittees, which focused on studying Public Information Requests (PIRs), open data, and high-value data sets. In order to engage with agencies and receive input on data reporting practices, the Commission administered a data survey to the executive directors of all 101 Texas state agencies, of which 63 agency leaders ultimately responded. This helped the IDTC gain valuable information regarding the challenges and barriers associated with interagency and open data sharing, the identification and use of high value datasets, and the management of the large volume of PIRs. The analysis of the survey's results provides key insights as to how state agencies are currently collecting, managing, reporting and sharing their data, and drives the formulation of recommendations for improvement.

As presiding officer of the Interagency Data Transparency Commission, I am pleased to present the findings and recommendations of the Commission's study in the following report. Any related questions may be directed to my attention.

Sincerely,



Jordan Hale  
Interagency Data Transparency Commission, Presiding Officer  
Director of Administration  
Office of Governor Greg Abbott



## Executive Summary

Data is one of the most important strategic assets that a governmental entity oversees. In 2015, the State of Texas officially decreed the importance of this resource through the passage of Senate Bill 1844 (84(R)). This bill established the Interagency Data Transparency Commission (IDTC), which was directed to conduct a study of current data structure, classification, sharing, and reporting protocols for the state, and the possible collection and posting of public data in an open source format. The IDTC was asked to present the findings of its study and proposals for legislation with the goal of increasing the effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency of current data practices in Texas.

The Commission utilized several methods to undertake its study: an IDTC Community Bulletin Board, in which Commission members could post questions, ideas, and communicate in a transparent manner accessible by the public; an Executive Data Survey, which surveyed state agency leadership to assess current data sharing practices and barriers; and the formation of three subcommittees to study open data sharing practices, Public Information Requests (PIRs), and high-value data sets. The findings of the study fall into three groups: Enterprise Information Management (EIM); Open Data Sharing; and Interagency Data Sharing.

Based on the study's findings, the Commission presents a host of recommendations, listed in detail starting on page 12. In summary, these recommendations propose: establishing a focus within larger agencies that oversees EIM functions; establishing EIM best practices and training program; designating the Texas Open Data Portal as the preferred location for all public data; amending Texas Local Government Code Section 552.221 (b-1) and (b-2) to use the term "governmental body" instead of "political subdivision"; and establishing Open Data best practices and training program. The Commission also recommends: creating a centralized data-sharing portal for interagency data sharing; establishing interagency data sharing best practices and an aligned training program; establishing the practice of utilizing an online community bulletin board for all state agencies to increase transparency; and delegating the IDTC's functions to the Department of Information Resources' (DIR) Customer Advisory Council (CAC) for the further study of these issues. It should be noted that the implementation of these recommendations should be a collaborative effort among all state agencies, rather than directives mandated by the Commission or DIR. With this collaborative and inclusive approach, the IDTC believes that these recommendations will fulfill Senate Bill 1844's directive of promoting a more efficient, effective, and transparent government in Texas.

## Introduction

Senate Bill 1844 (84(R)) took effect on September 1, 2015. This bill established the Interagency Data Transparency Commission (IDTC), which was charged with the study and review of current public data structure, classification, sharing, and reporting protocols for state agencies, as well as the possible collection and posting of agency data in an open source format. Additionally, House Bill 1912 (84(R)) mandated the creation of the Statewide Data Coordinator (SWDC), who initiated the Statewide Data Program (SWDP), which aims to enable a data sharing culture throughout all levels of Texas government and education, through shared governance and secure infrastructure.

SB 1844 required the Commission to conduct a study to consider methods of improving the facilitation of the collection and maintenance of data, as well as data sharing among agencies and with constituents. Moreover, the bill tasked the IDTC with developing and presenting recommendations for effectively and efficiently solving these issues in a report to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House of Representatives by September 1, 2016. To accomplish these tasks, the Commission's members met over the course of seven months to conduct its business. The study was carried out by the IDTC and the SWDC as a joint effort, and provided valuable insights allowing for the identification of key findings and recommendations for possible legislative policy considerations and actions surrounding state information technology and security, as well as data management, sharing and use.

The IDTC's study evaluated ways to: structure, classify, and share data among state agencies; more efficiently gather and process data; standardize data across agencies; improve the coordination of interagency data sharing; reduce data collection costs and duplicative data; and increase agency accountability in sharing and reporting data. The study also examined methods to increase information security through data management and analysis, reduce agency costs, verify compliance with applicable laws, and improve overall agency efficiency and effectiveness. Finally, the IDTC's study also considered ways to post agency data online in an open source format easily accessible to the public, incorporate agency reporting practices into the open data system, and determine any other data and transparency issues encountered by Texas state agencies.

## Accomplishments

The following section describes the accomplishments of the Interagency Data Transparency Commission (IDTC). The Commission’s work is driven by its vision of collaboration, transparency, and the promotion of efficient and effective solutions for data structure, classification, sharing, and reporting issues in the State of Texas.

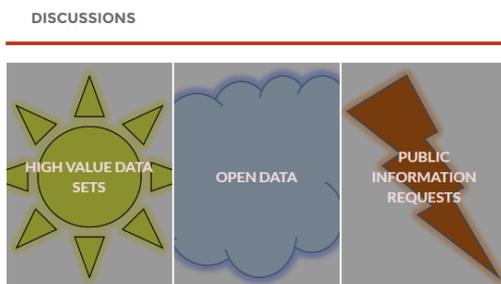
In addition, the initiatives of the Statewide Data Program (SWDP), which worked in cooperation with the IDTC, are presented in Appendix C. Though separate from the IDTC, the SWDP shares the Commission’s belief in the importance of interagency and open data sharing, as well as the development of a unified statewide structure to govern these practices.

### IDTC Community Bulletin Board

In order to facilitate communication in an open and transparent fashion, the IDTC, with support from the Department of Information Resources (DIR), created an online community bulletin board for open dialogue and information sharing among Commission members. The bulletin board, accessible at <https://dircommunity.force.com/IDTC/s/>, uses a secure and unique user ID and password for each IDTC member to post and reply to discussions related to general interagency data transparency issues, as well as topics surrounding open data, high value datasets, and PIRs. The website also provides links to the SB 1844 language, which authorized the creation of the IDTC, and to the Texas Open Data Portal, an online platform in which state agencies are encouraged to post data sets of citizen interest. The online bulletin board is open for public viewing, as a measure of fostering an open and transparent government.



## INTERAGENCY DATA TRANSPARENCY COMMISSION COMMUNITY



In 2015 the Texas Legislature amended Subtitle B, Title 10, Government Code, by adding Chapter 2060 for the establishment of the Interagency Data Transparency Commission effective September 1, 2016. The Commission was created to study and review the current public data structure, classification, sharing, and reporting protocols for state agencies; and the possibility of collecting and posting data from state agencies online in an open source format that is machine-readable, exportable, and easily accessible by the public. Additionally, the study must consider methods to:

- Structure, classify, improve coordination and share data among state agencies
- More efficiently gather and reduce costs of collecting and processing data
- Standardize data across state agencies and reduce duplicative data and information
- Incorporate reporting practices by state agencies into the open data systems of the state
- Increase accountability and ensure state agencies share and report the data collected by the state agencies
- Improve information management and analysis to increase information security, uncover fraud and waste, improve operations performed by state agencies, verify compliance with applicable laws and determine other data and transparency issues

The bulletin board serves as an indispensable platform through which Commission members can discuss key issues and provide each other with feedback without scheduling a formal in-person IDTC meeting. The concept of an online open community bulletin board, where the public can view the Commission's work in action, also demonstrates one of the fundamental theories behind the IDTC's creation – the need for enhanced open, transparent and efficient state government operations.

## **Executive Data Survey**

The IDTC Executive Data Survey (Appendix B), administered in the spring of 2016, established a baseline measure of current data use and sharing practices among state agencies to inform policy formation. Agencies were asked to identify how they use and share data, what they perceive data sharing barriers to be, and general suggestions for successful implementation of a statewide interagency and open data sharing program. Of 101 agencies surveyed, 63 agencies completed the survey, resulting in an overall response rate of 62.4%.

The participating agencies provided the IDTC with invaluable information regarding current data sharing practices in state government, barriers to successfully executing these practices, and numerous suggestions for program improvement. The survey responses also reflected a wide range of perspectives, as some responding agencies employ as few as 10 full time employees (FTEs), while others employ over 35,000 FTEs. These agencies' work also covers a wide range of areas, including business, health and human services, public safety, judiciary, general government, and regulatory functions. Agency representatives who responded to the survey also brought a diverse variety of experiences and opinions, reflected through their various roles and department areas.

## **Subcommittees**

In order to facilitate a focused study and review of the current data uses and practices in Texas, the IDTC established subcommittees to research and report on their respectively assigned areas. The accomplishments of the three subcommittees – Open Data Sharing, Public Information Requests and High Value Data Sets – are discussed below.

### **Open Data Sharing Subcommittee**

The Open Data Sharing Subcommittee, in cooperation with DIR, primarily focused on developing the IDTC community bulletin board, which allowed Committee members to ask questions and provide input for the development of the Executive Data Survey and this report. This online tool enabled virtual communication among IDTC members without having to address open meeting quorum rules, while simultaneously promoting an open and transparent government.

### **Public Information Requests Subcommittee**

The Public Information Requests (PIRs) Subcommittee was formed to discuss trends related to PIRs in Texas, and to generate solutions for handling the large volume of requests and associated administrative costs. The subcommittee examined the benefits that political subdivisions (counties and municipalities) have under Section 552.221 (b-1) of Texas local government code, which allows the subdivisions to refer

PIRs to an Internet location or URL address. The Subcommittee contacted several political subdivisions to assess the code's effectiveness, as well as the possibility of applying this law to state agencies. All contacted agencies expressed that their ability to refer PIRs to online sources made the process more efficient and effective than individually fulfilling PIRs through traditional means. For example, one subdivision estimated that only 5 out of over 2000 PIRs were requested to be mailed. Through a review of survey responses, the Subcommittee also found that several state agencies have made significant efforts to refer PIRs to information posted on their websites, with some opportunities of referring requestors to the Open Data Portal.

### **High-Value Data Sets Subcommittee**

The High-Value Data Sets Subcommittee was formed to discuss potential methods and resources for identifying high-value data sets, so that agencies can better understand what types of data are most useful for interagency and public sharing. Senate Bill 701 (84(R)) defines "high-value data sets" as information that can be used to increase state agency accountability and responsiveness, improve public knowledge of the agency and its operations, further the core mission of the agency, create economic opportunity, or respond to need and demand as identified through public consultation. However, as agency missions and operations vary widely, the Subcommittee made efforts to begin considering how high-value data sets may be defined by different agencies. One resource identified is the Texas Legislative Council's Inventory of State Data Resources, and the Subcommittee was granted access to this information to better understand how data sets are classified and used.

## Survey Findings

The following section outlines the findings of the IDTC Executive Data Survey. Findings are categorized into three areas: Enterprise Information Management (EIM); Open Data Sharing; and Interagency Data Sharing. The survey's results suggest that overall, agencies have most interest or concerns in regard to data security and privacy, data structure and governance, and lack of data-related training.

### Enterprise Information Management (EIM)

The concept of data governance, or Enterprise Information Management (EIM), serves as the foundation for any good information management plan. It provides an organization with the framework to create, manage, secure, ensure accuracy, drive consistency, determine access, and analyze data at an enterprise-wide level. EIM helps to establish a data-driven culture at an organization, which in turn allows for more informed and intelligent business decision-making support for leadership. Over 40% of Texas state agencies agree that a lack of data standards and infrastructure are barriers to both interagency and open data sharing, indicating that adequate EIM standards do not exist. For example, the Commission on State Emergency Communications expressed through the survey the need for standardization, and to “increase awareness of the availability and types of data sources...Consider clarifying that agencies are expected to share data.”

**"Consider clarifying that agencies are expected to share data."**

In order to facilitate an EIM program at the individual agency level, a governing function or council of representatives with appropriate representation of both data owners (business) and data custodians (information technology) is needed. This group would work in partnership with executive agency leadership to implement policies and standards that support data management practices. Such policies and standards allow for the creation of procedures that channel EIM activities throughout the organization. In collaboration with the Statewide Data Coordinator (SWDC), agency and higher education representatives can provide input on policies and standards that will help shape such a program, which will in turn guide them in the development of their individual EIM programs.

### Open Data Sharing

Providing the public with access to government information has long been the responsibility and duty of a transparent government. Since the inception of the Freedom of Information Act of 1966, which clarified and protected the public right to government records, all levels of government have been providing citizens with responses to Public Information Requests (PIRs). In addition, the Texas Public Information Act of 1973 gave citizens the right to access records not confidential by law of all governmental bodies, boards, commissions and committees, as well as bodies supported by public funds.

These requests take on many forms and generate reports that provide programmatic, operational, and financial data, among others. However, the process in which agencies share data with the public or with other governmental entities through PIRs is an intensive, resource-heavy effort. The table below highlights estimated costs of fulfilling PIRs for all Texas state agencies, based on the Executive Data Survey responses and 2016 salary information from the State Auditor’s Office. Based on this information, state agencies spent an estimated \$4.8 million responding to PIRs in 2016. The table below highlights the various estimated costs associated with PIRs for Texas state agencies.

| <b>State of Texas Public Information Requests (PIRs)</b>          |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <b>Public Information Request (PIR) Cost Estimates, FY16</b>      |                     |
| Avg. FTE Salary (2016)  | \$ 45,303           |
| Avg. Hourly Rate  | \$ 22               |
| Total PIRs per Month  | 55,513              |
| Total Hours Spent on PIRs per Month                               | 18,396              |
| Estimated Monthly Cost of PIR Processing                          | \$ 400,665          |
| <b>Estimated Annual Cost of PIR Processing</b>                    | <b>\$ 4,807,979</b> |
| <i>Source: Texas State Auditor’s Office, EClass System (2016)</i> |                     |

These figures represent the 63 agencies that responded to the Executive Data Survey. However, the PIR expenses of the 38 agencies that did not respond are not reflected here, making this annual estimate of \$4.8 million a conservative estimate. In addition to the large costs associated with fulfilling PIRs, the survey was able to glean other valuable information regarding open data and public information. Of the agencies surveyed, 80% agree that privacy and security concerns are a perceived barrier to sharing data through an open data portal, with 79% of agencies also agreeing that duties of confidentiality present a barrier to this type of data sharing.

**"Train the public to first reference the public database before making a request."**

The majority of agencies also feel that time and cost are potential barriers to open data sharing. Most agencies agree that competing priorities, cost, and having insufficient time to make data sets available to the public are barriers to participating in open data sharing. When asked what benefits might be associated with referring PIRs to an Open Data Portal, the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners expressed that “an open data portal would benefit agencies by reducing the amount of time spent compiling and sending responsive information for each individual request for the most frequently

requested data sets...it would also train the public to first reference the public database before making a request.”

Despite these obstacles, most agencies do not feel that lack of technical expertise, poor data quality, or lack of interest are significant hurdles to participating in open data sharing. Instead, the reoccurring themes voiced by agencies are overwhelmingly related to issues of security, confidentiality, standards, infrastructure, and understanding.

## **Interagency Data Sharing**

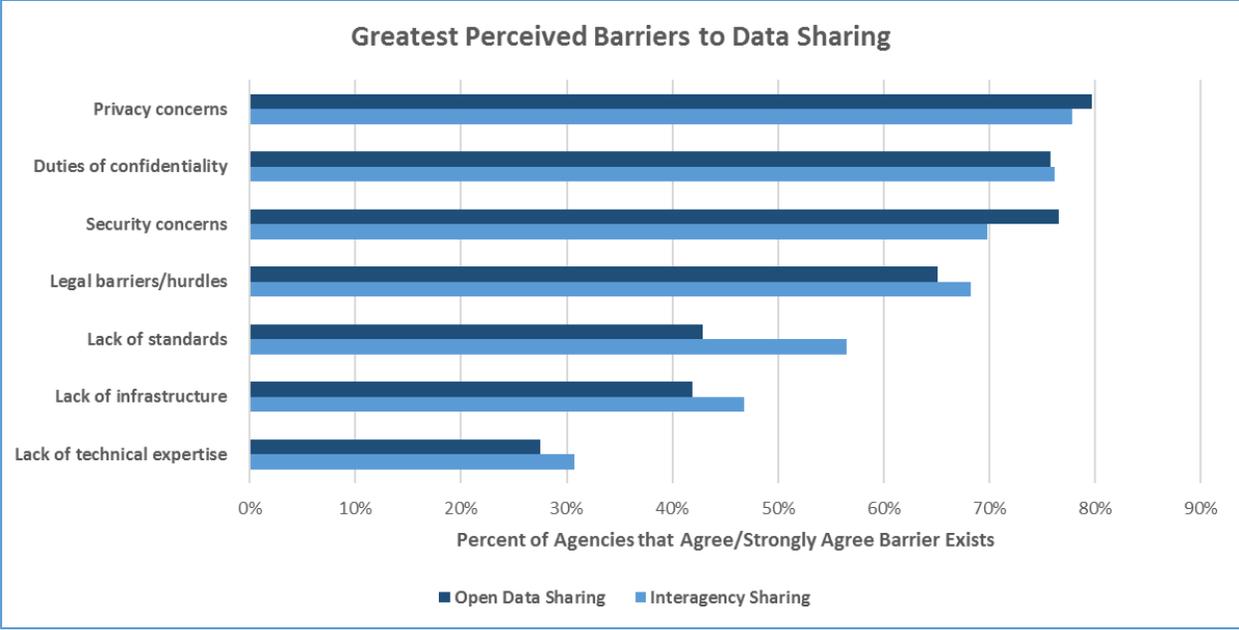
Interagency data sharing allows agencies to share knowledge and practices, reduce duplicative data gathering, and conduct business in a more efficient manner. Based on survey responses, 81% of Texas state agencies already engage in some sort of interagency data sharing. Agencies reporting that they do not currently share information are mostly small agencies, with fewer than 50 FTEs.

The type of data shared by agencies varies greatly. Agencies currently share financial and budgetary data, environmental data, licensing data (in the case of health-related agencies), licensee background check information (within banking and credit agencies), student loan default data, data on students with disabilities (visual impairments and deaf/blindness), juvenile justice data, animal and plant health inspection services data, and public pension data, among others. It is important to note that agencies not only share raw data with each other, but also reports and studies utilizing clean datasets.

## **"Standardize data sharing agreements across the State."**

While many agencies currently share data with each other, most agencies agree that concerns around security, privacy, and confidentiality are barriers to interagency data sharing. Other major concerns are lack of standards, infrastructure, and technical expertise. Approximately 53% of agencies perceive statutory concerns as limiting interagency data sharing abilities. When asked how the State of Texas might improve interagency data sharing methods, the Department of Public Safety expressed the need to “standardize data sharing agreements across the State, encapsulating data protection, loss prevention, and notification standards.”

In terms of the cost of sharing data, 92% of agencies report not charging fees to other agencies for data access. The agencies that do charge fees explain that this practice is due to contract stipulations and/or statutory requirements. For example, major Health and Human Services contractors are allowed to charge for data preparation or programming activities when costs or effort levels are high. Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Federal partners also require cost recovery practices, unless there is a mutual benefit to the program for sharing data, and some DSHS data sets have statutory requirements that require charging for data. The chart on the following page provides a visual representation of issues perceived to be barriers among state agencies to both interagency and open data sharing in the current environment, based on the Executive Data Survey results.



## Recommendations

Through its study of Texas' current public and private data structure, the Interagency Data Transparency Commission (IDTC) identified several opportunities for improving the methods and processes by which state agencies share data amongst themselves and with the public. The results from the Executive Data Survey suggest that most agencies have privacy and security concerns surrounding data sharing. Moreover, many agencies express a need for training and a more structured data governance program to increase agency efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency.

Based on these results, the Commission presents the following recommendations for efficient and effective solutions to data sharing issues in Texas, aimed at improving structures, processes, and transparency. The recommendations also identify necessary administrative changes and technologies for their successful implementation. However, it is important to note that these recommendations serve as guidelines for best practices of open and interagency data sharing, and are not IDTC or DIR mandates to be imposed on agencies. Essential to the Commission's approach is a collaboration between all state agencies, and it is only through this team effort that these recommendations will be realized.

The recommendations are divided into five categories: Enterprise Information Management (EIM); Open Data Sharing and Public Information Requests; Interagency Data Sharing; Transparency; and General recommendations.

### 1. Enterprise Information Management (EIM)

#### **Recommendation 1.1: Establish a focus within each state agency with more than 50 Full Time Employees (FTEs) that oversees EIM, and works in collaboration with the Statewide Data Program (SWDP).**

The purpose behind this recommendation is to ensure that each agency with over 50 FTEs establishes a focus on Enterprise Information Management (EIM) to standardize data use within the organization through the use of existing resources. Working collaboratively with the SWDC, each of these agencies will establish the structures, classifications, and processes needed to make data sharing a more efficient process. Furthermore, these agencies will be able to establish data sharing standards which will ensure that public data posted online and private data shared with other agencies are in an open source format that is machine-readable, exportable, and easily accessible.

#### **Recommendation 1.2: Establish EIM baseline principles to standardize data across state agencies to increase information security and improve coordination of interagency data.**

EIM standards will homogenize processes such as the classification and processing of data across agencies using open source formats, reduce duplicative data, and more efficiently update agency data. These standards must consider how to determine data sharing cost structures, data updating timelines, and privacy/security. It is important to note that while it is essential to establish EIM standards, these standards must be flexible enough to be modified based on digital advances as well as changing agency needs.

**Recommendation 1.3: Establish an EIM training program on data sharing practices and protocols for state agencies.**

This education and training program will include but is not limited to the following topics:

- Types of data available for sharing;
- Benefits of data sharing;
- Data identification and cleansing standards;
- Data-sharing protocols that mitigate security concerns; and
- Current best data-sharing practices.

The Statewide Data Coordinator (SWDC) established the Texas Enterprise Information Management (TEIM) group, which serves as a collaborative community of state agencies and higher education representatives. The Training and Education Subcommittee has already begun discussing the formation of a training program that aims to assist state agencies in multiple aspects of data management, including interagency and open data sharing. Such a training program does not currently exist in Texas.

## **2. Open Data Sharing and Public Information Requests**

**Recommendation 2.1: Designate the Texas Open Data Portal (ODP) to be the preferred location for all statewide public data.**

The purpose of this recommendation is to more efficiently collect and post data online in an open source format that is machine-readable, exportable, and easily accessible by the public. By establishing the Texas Open Data Portal as the unified public data repository for Texas, agencies will benefit from the existing digital infrastructure that the ODP provides, rather creating their own online repositories or posting on their individual websites. Moreover, constituents will benefit from having a one-stop website for all open data inquiries.

Agencies that are not currently sharing open data and have relevant data to share with the public can collaborate with the SWDP to use existing ODP infrastructure and post their data online. Agencies that currently share data with the public will also receive support and assistance from the SWDP to allow for the migration of their existing open data to the ODP. The amount of data shared by each agency with the public via the Open Data Portal will be determined at the agency's discretion.

**Recommendation 2.2: Amend Texas Government Code, Section 552.221 (b-1) and (b-2) to replace the term "political subdivision" with "governmental body".**

Under current law, political subdivisions have the authority to refer Public Information Requests (PIRs) to an Internet location or URL address. This allows subdivisions to streamline PIRs, creating a more efficient process than the fulfillment of individual PIRs through traditional means. This recommendation would allow state agencies to also utilize this method of fulfilling PIRs, overall reducing the number of PIRs they must individually assemble. By allowing state agencies to refer PIRs to the Texas Open Data Portal, agencies would experience significant cost savings.

**Recommendation 2.3: Establish Open Data best practices to gather, process, structure, classify, and share public data, as well as relevant policies that establish security and ethical best practices.**

Open Data best practices will increase efficiency for posting public data on the ODP. Through a collaborative process, agencies will identify the practices that will best serve their needs as well as the needs of their constituents. Some of the best practices to be determined center around the following areas:

- Establishing what “open data” means to Texas agencies;
- Defining “high-value data sets”, by using the Office of Management and Budget’s Open Government Directive definition of data that “increases agency accountability and responsiveness, improves public knowledge of the agency and its operations, furthers the core mission of the agency, creates economic opportunity, and responds to needs and demands identified through public consultation”<sup>1</sup> as a starting point, but also taking into account the supply and demand of requested data;
- Forming security best practices to ensure that open data is public and not private information; and
- Establishing data updating protocols.

It is important to note that although these Open Data best practices are necessary, they must also be flexible enough to be updated and modified based on digital advances and changing agency needs.

**Recommendation 2.4: Establish a formal training and education program for Open Data practices.**

The Open Data training and education program will be a component of the overall Enterprise Information Management (EIM) training program. For more information about the components of this program, refer to Recommendation 1.3. It is important to note that this program does not currently exist.

### **3. Interagency Data Sharing**

**Recommendation 3.1: Streamline interagency data sharing through the creation of a secure, centralized, data sharing portal.**

Much like the centralized Open Data Portal for public data, an interagency data sharing portal will provide agencies with the digital infrastructure needed to more efficiently and securely share data with each other. This portal can be an extension of the existing ODP with enhanced security features or a separate type of infrastructure. This portal will ensure that Personal Identifying Information (PII) is transferred securely and allows agencies to continuously update shared data securely. The portal will also reduce agency costs, as the number of data transfers will be reduced through automation.

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<sup>1</sup> OMB M-10-06, “Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, Open Government Directive,” as cited by U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, <http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1332/ML13326A503.pdf>, page 6.

**Recommendation 3.2: Establish interagency data sharing standards to improve the coordination of interagency data sharing and address security and ethical concerns.**

Similar to the Open Data Sharing standards, the purpose of this recommendation is to standardize the format and classification of data shared between agencies, as well as the gathering and sharing processes. The following recommendations are related to specific standards that have already been identified.

*Recommendation 3.2.A: Establish common shared file structure and naming conventions.*

In order to improve data sharing between agencies, it is important that all data have common file structures as well as naming conventions. Some examples of these standardizations include ensuring that all agencies catalogue data entries by official county names instead of county abbreviations, establishing an official method of recording dates, and utilizing official business names instead of abbreviations when referencing them in datasets.

*Recommendation 3.2.B: Establish a standard Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).*

To improve the coordination of interagency data sharing, a standard Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be established and utilized when agencies are sharing data with each other for the first time. The Comptroller's Office has created such documents, which could serve as a guide for the design of the interagency data sharing MOUs.

*Recommendation 3.2.C: Define cost structures to determine how agencies can charge fees to other agencies for data access.*

Currently, a small number of agencies charge fees to other agencies for access to their data. The charging rules that currently exist should be analyzed in order to standardize cost structures and remove barriers for interagency data sharing.

**Recommendation 3.3: Establish a formal training and education program for interagency data sharing practices.**

The interagency data sharing practices training and education program should be a component of the overall EIM training program. For more information about the components of the program, please refer to Recommendation 1.3. Similar to the EIM and ODP training programs, an interagency data sharing training program does not currently exist.

## **4. Transparency**

**Recommendation 4.1: Establish the practice of utilizing online community bulletin boards for state agencies to increase transparency.**

This recommendation stems from the IDTC's use of an online community bulletin board to facilitate communication. The Commission found that the online community bulletin board increased transparency by providing constituents with access to its internal communications. By adopting this practice throughout Texas, state agencies will have the opportunity to increase transparency and communicate more efficiently.

## 5. General

**Recommendation 5.1: Delegate the IDTC’s purpose of studying current government data sharing and transparency issues to the Department of Information Resources’ (DIR) Customer Advisory Council (CAC).**

The IDTC’s study of data sharing practices and transparency in Texas has been extremely valuable and benefits all types of agencies. This important work should be continued through the DIR Customer Advisory Council (CAC) to continue the discovery process of what the data and transparency needs of Texas are. The continued review of EIM, along with interagency and open data sharing practices, will allow for the fulfillment of the IDTC’s mission of increasing government efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency.



1 by the public;

2 (4) standardize data across state agencies;

3 (5) incorporate reporting practices by state agencies  
4 into the open data systems of the state;

5 (6) improve coordination of interagency data;

6 (7) improve sharing of data between state agencies;

7 (8) reduce the costs of collecting data;

8 (9) reduce duplicative data and information;

9 (10) increase accountability and ensure state  
10 agencies share and report the data collected by the state agencies;

11 (11) improve information management and analysis to:

12 (A) increase information security;

13 (B) uncover fraud and waste;

14 (C) reduce costs incurred by state agencies;

15 (D) improve operations performed by state  
16 agencies; and

17 (E) verify compliance with applicable laws; and

18 (12) determine other data and transparency issues.

19 Sec. 2060.004. REPORT. (a) Not later than September 1,  
20 2016, the commission shall provide to the governor, lieutenant  
21 governor, and speaker of the house of representatives a final  
22 report on data reporting practices by state agencies. The report  
23 must include:

24 (1) recommendations for efficient and effective  
25 solutions under the commission's charge under Section 2060.003, in  
26 addition to solutions to other data and transparency issues  
27 identified by the commission;

1           (2) proposals for legislation necessary to implement  
2 the recommendations described by Subdivision (1);  
3           (3) administrative recommendations; and  
4           (4) a complete explanation of each of the commission's  
5 recommendations.

6           (b) The commission shall provide any additional reports  
7 requested by the governor, lieutenant governor, or speaker of the  
8 house of representatives.

9           Sec. 2060.005. MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION.       (a) The  
10 commission is composed of the following members:

11           (1) two representatives from the Department of  
12 Information Resources, appointed by the executive director of the  
13 department;

14           (2) a representative of the Texas Legislative Council,  
15 appointed by the executive director of the council;

16           (3) a representative of the Legislative Budget Board,  
17 appointed by the director of the board;

18           (4) a member of each committee of the house of  
19 representatives and the senate with primary jurisdiction over  
20 information resources, appointed by the chair of each committee;

21           (5) the chair of the State Agency Coordinating  
22 Committee established by the Department of Information Resources,  
23 or a member of the committee appointed by the chair;

24           (6) a representative of the comptroller, appointed by  
25 the comptroller;

26           (7) a representative appointed by the governor, who  
27 serves as the presiding officer of the commission;

1           (8) a representative appointed by the lieutenant  
2 governor; and

3           (9) a representative appointed by the speaker of the  
4 house of representatives.

5           (b) A commission member is not entitled to reimbursement of  
6 expenses or to compensation.

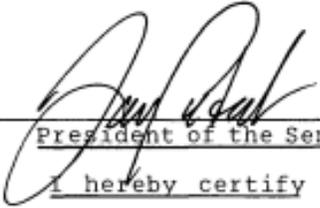
7           (c) A vacancy on the commission shall be filled as soon as  
8 practicable in the same manner as the original appointment.

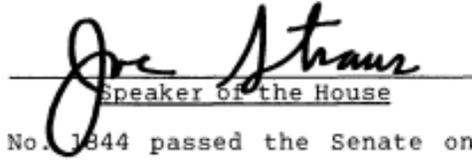
9           Sec. 2060.006. ASSISTANCE BY STATE AGENCIES. The  
10 comptroller or a state agency with a representative on the  
11 commission shall provide any assistance the commission requires to  
12 perform the commission's duties.

13           SECTION 2. (a) Each appointing official shall appoint  
14 members to the Interagency Data Transparency Commission not later  
15 than December 31, 2015.

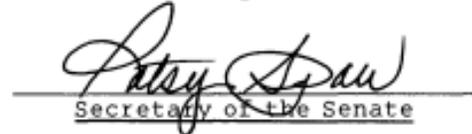
16           (b) The Interagency Data Transparency Commission shall meet  
17 not later than the 30th day after the date the final initial  
18 appointment is made under Section 2060.005, Government Code, as  
19 added by this Act, and shall meet regularly as necessary at the call  
20 of the presiding officer.

21           SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

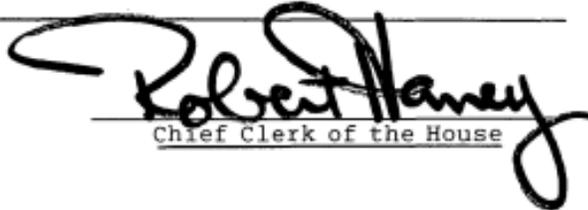
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 1844 passed the Senate on April 30, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0. \_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 1844 passed the House on May 22, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 130, Nays 10, two present not voting. \_\_\_\_\_

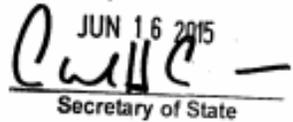
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

6-8-2015  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
4:50 pm O'CLOCK

JUN 16 2015  
  
Secretary of State

## Appendix B: Executive Data Survey

### Contact Information

- Please enter your contact information:

|               |
|---------------|
| Agency        |
| Name          |
| Title         |
| Email Address |

### Interagency Data Sharing

- To what extent do you agree that the following are barriers to interagency data sharing?

|                                     | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Cost                                |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Lack of technical expertise         |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Competing priorities                |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Lack of infrastructure              |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Lack of perceived interest          |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Privacy concerns                    |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Security concerns                   |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Lack of standards                   |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Insufficient time to make available |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Resistance from data owners         |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Poor data quality/integrity         |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Legal barriers/hurdles              |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Duties of confidentiality           |                   |          |         |       |                |

- Are there statutory or rule conflicts preventing your agency from sharing data?
- Please provide a brief description of the conflicts, and the specific rules or statutes involved.
- Is your agency currently sharing data with another governmental entity?
- Please briefly list the agencies or governmental entities with whom your agency shares data, and for what purpose the data is shared.
- Does your agency charge other agencies for access to your data?
- Please briefly explain the rationale for charging agencies.

9. Mark the following categories of data according to the selection that best represents your agency.

|                                     | Currently Using | Interested in Using | Not Interested in Using |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Business Data                       |                 |                     |                         |
| Crime and Justice Data              |                 |                     |                         |
| Education and Skills Data           |                 |                     |                         |
| Environment and Weather Data        |                 |                     |                         |
| Health and Disability Data          |                 |                     |                         |
| Housing Data                        |                 |                     |                         |
| Government Income and Spending Data |                 |                     |                         |
| Labor Market Data                   |                 |                     |                         |
| Population Data                     |                 |                     |                         |
| Transportation Data                 |                 |                     |                         |
| Web Analytics Data                  |                 |                     |                         |
| Legal and Administrative Data       |                 |                     |                         |
| Economy and Trade Data              |                 |                     |                         |
| Geographic Data                     |                 |                     |                         |
| Political Data                      |                 |                     |                         |
| None of the Above                   |                 |                     |                         |

10. What recommendations or suggestions do you have regarding the improvement of interagency data sharing in the State of Texas?

**Open and Public Data**

11. To what extent do you agree that the following are barriers to opening your data for public use and consumption?

|                                     | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Cost                                |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Lack of technical expertise         |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Competing priorities                |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Lack of infrastructure              |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Lack of perceived interest          |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Privacy concerns                    |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Security concerns                   |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Lack of standards                   |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Insufficient time to make available |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Resistance from data owners         |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Poor data quality/integrity         |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Legal barriers/hurdles              |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Duties of confidentiality           |                   |          |         |       |                |

12. Which of the following categories of data does your agency currently provide to the public?

| Choose all that apply               |                               |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Business Data                       | Population Data               |
| Crime and Justice Data              | Transportation Data           |
| Education and Skills Data           | Web Analytics Data            |
| Environment and Weather Data        | Legal and Administrative Data |
| Health and Disability Data          | Economy and Trade Data        |
| Housing Data                        | Geographic Data               |
| Government Income and Spending Data | Political Data                |
| Labor Market Data                   | None of the Above             |

13. Approximately, how many public information requests does your agency receive in a given month?
14. Approximately, how many staff hours are dedicated to public information request responses in a given month?
15. Would the ability to refer public information requests to your agency’s website or the Texas Open Data Portal benefit your agency and the requestors?
16. Please briefly explain the benefits of referring information requests to public datasets.
17. Approximately, how many high-value datasets has your agency made available to the public?
18. Do you track the usage of your high-value datasets?
19. Does your agency provide public access to any agency data?
20. If some or all of your data are available to others, these data are available:

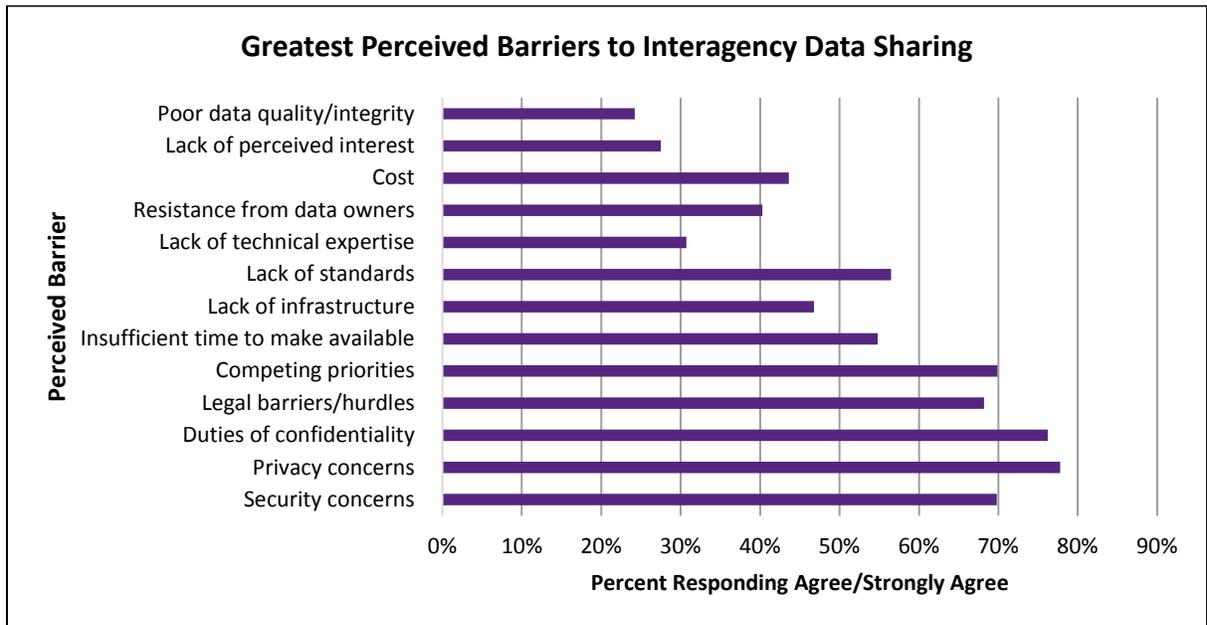
|                               | None | Some | Most | All |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|-----|
| On my agency’s website        |      |      |      |     |
| On the Texas Open Data Portal |      |      |      |     |
| Through a regional network    |      |      |      |     |
| Through a national network    |      |      |      |     |

21. Please briefly explain the agency’s rationale for abstaining from open data contribution.
22. What recommendations or suggestions do you have regarding the improvement of open and public data in the State of Texas?

## Appendix C: Executive Data Survey Results

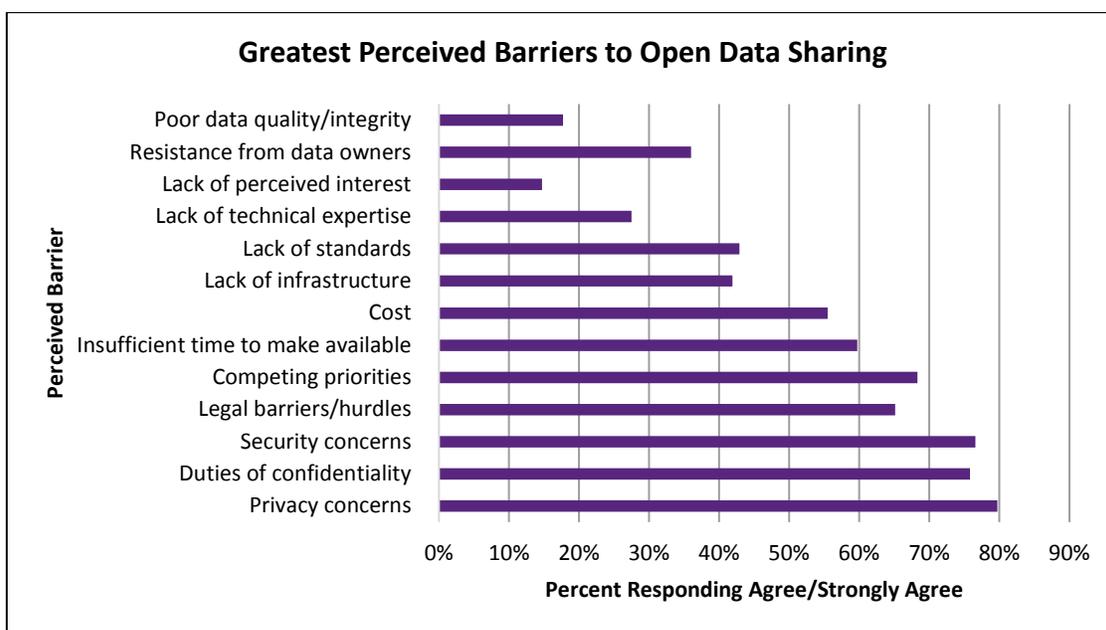
### Perceived Barriers to Interagency Data Sharing

| Inter-Agency Data Sharing Barriers  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Security concerns                   | 0%                | 13%      | 18%     | 32%   | 38%            |
| Privacy concerns                    | 2%                | 13%      | 8%      | 41%   | 37%            |
| Duties of confidentiality           | 2%                | 8%       | 14%     | 40%   | 37%            |
| Legal barriers/hurdles              | 2%                | 13%      | 18%     | 48%   | 21%            |
| Competing priorities                | 5%                | 13%      | 13%     | 52%   | 18%            |
| Insufficient time to make available | 5%                | 16%      | 24%     | 40%   | 15%            |
| Lack of infrastructure              | 3%                | 27%      | 23%     | 34%   | 13%            |
| Lack of standards                   | 3%                | 8%       | 32%     | 45%   | 11%            |
| Lack of technical expertise         | 13%               | 40%      | 16%     | 21%   | 10%            |
| Resistance from data owners         | 5%                | 29%      | 26%     | 31%   | 10%            |
| Cost                                | 7%                | 23%      | 27%     | 36%   | 8%             |
| Lack of perceived interest          | 18%               | 26%      | 29%     | 21%   | 7%             |
| Poor data quality/integrity         | 7%                | 26%      | 44%     | 23%   | 2%             |



### Perceived Barriers to Open Data Sharing

| Open Data Sharing Barriers          | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Privacy concerns                    | 3%                | 9%       | 8%      | 34%   | 45%            |
| Duties of confidentiality           | 2%                | 3%       | 19%     | 37%   | 39%            |
| Security concerns                   | 5%                | 8%       | 11%     | 39%   | 38%            |
| Legal barriers/hurdles              | 2%                | 6%       | 27%     | 35%   | 30%            |
| Competing priorities                | 2%                | 14%      | 16%     | 40%   | 29%            |
| Insufficient time to make available | 5%                | 13%      | 23%     | 34%   | 26%            |
| Cost                                | 3%                | 18%      | 24%     | 35%   | 21%            |
| Lack of infrastructure              | 5%                | 27%      | 26%     | 26%   | 16%            |
| Lack of standards                   | 2%                | 21%      | 35%     | 29%   | 14%            |
| Lack of technical expertise         | 13%               | 40%      | 19%     | 19%   | 8%             |
| Lack of perceived interest          | 13%               | 34%      | 38%     | 10%   | 5%             |
| Resistance from data owners         | 5%                | 25%      | 34%     | 31%   | 5%             |
| Poor data quality/integrity         | 7%                | 40%      | 36%     | 16%   | 2%             |



## **Appendix D: Statewide Data Program**

In 2015, the Texas Legislature passed HB 1912, which created the position of Statewide Data Coordinator (SWDC) under the Department of Information Resources (DIR). The role of the SWDC is to collaborate with Texas state agencies and institutions of higher education to determine best practices; develop data policies and standards surrounding data collection, use, storage, and analysis; and to improve data governance and integrity statewide. Other responsibilities of the SWDC include seeking opportunities for data sharing across government agencies, reducing duplicative datasets, increasing agency accountability for open data sharing, and identifying future cost-saving opportunities.

The position was filled in September 2015, and the Statewide Data Program (SWDP) was established. The mission of the program is to enable a data sharing culture throughout all levels of Texas government and educational institutions, allowing for increased transparency, efficiency and information security at a reduced cost, while simultaneously providing the citizen with the most positive and user-friendly services possible. The vision and accomplishments of the Statewide Data Program, in cooperation with DIR and other state agencies, are described below.

### **SWDP Vision**

Imagine a digital portal in which citizens can access a wide array of public information and independently make changes to personal records in one central location, meanwhile interacting with individual state agencies by updating information in their back office systems. This vision, dubbed “My Government, My Way”, is founded in the belief of the importance of fostering excellence in interagency and open data sharing and management across all state agencies, increasing government efficiency and transparency, and overall improving the citizen-government interactive experience. This vision hopes to be realized through the creation of an environment that promotes mutual trust and collaboration among all stakeholders in state government, and has worked in cooperation with the Department of Information Resources (DIR) Statewide Data Program (SWDP) to develop these goals.

This vision supports the development of new data sharing partnerships among state agencies, the exchange of innovative practices and emerging opportunities, and the improvement of constituent services – the ultimate goal of effective government. The State of Texas should be able to deliver information and services to its constituents at any time, from anywhere, and from any type of online platform, in a way that is controlled and managed by the citizen.

“My Government, My Way” is a strategic vision that transforms Texas into a truly digital state, unifying all agencies to provide a centralized online portal where citizens can access all government services in a seamless, user-friendly process. The program’s core goal is to enhance the technology and communication systems of all state entities in a unified manner, rather than having agencies make individual improvements on their own. In order to carry out this vision, the State of Texas should shift its service delivery paradigm to focus on how its services are consumed, rather than delivered. The citizen’s perspective should be the focal consideration for how agencies carry out their respective missions and provide services. As agencies are both providers and consumers of these services, the government can tap into the knowledge and resources of its own employees in order to construct and implement this

model. In effect, the end product of citizen services would be delivered through one unified and streamlined digital portal.

Texas has always been a leader when it comes to government initiatives. The collaboration and sharing of data across state agencies and with the public can be the next great opportunity for our state government and the constituents that it serves.

## **SWDP Accomplishments**

### **Texas Enterprise Information Management Community Group**

In January of 2016, the Statewide Data Coordinator created the Texas Enterprise Information Management (TEIM) Community Group. The TEIM group represents a diverse assembly of talented professionals in Texas state government and higher education who use or are interested in using some aspect of data governance, data sharing, open data, business intelligence, or business analytics in their respective agencies. The TEIM group provides an excellent opportunity for sharing innovative methodologies to describe, contextualize, and manage data, as well as develop data governance and management policies that each organization can adopt.

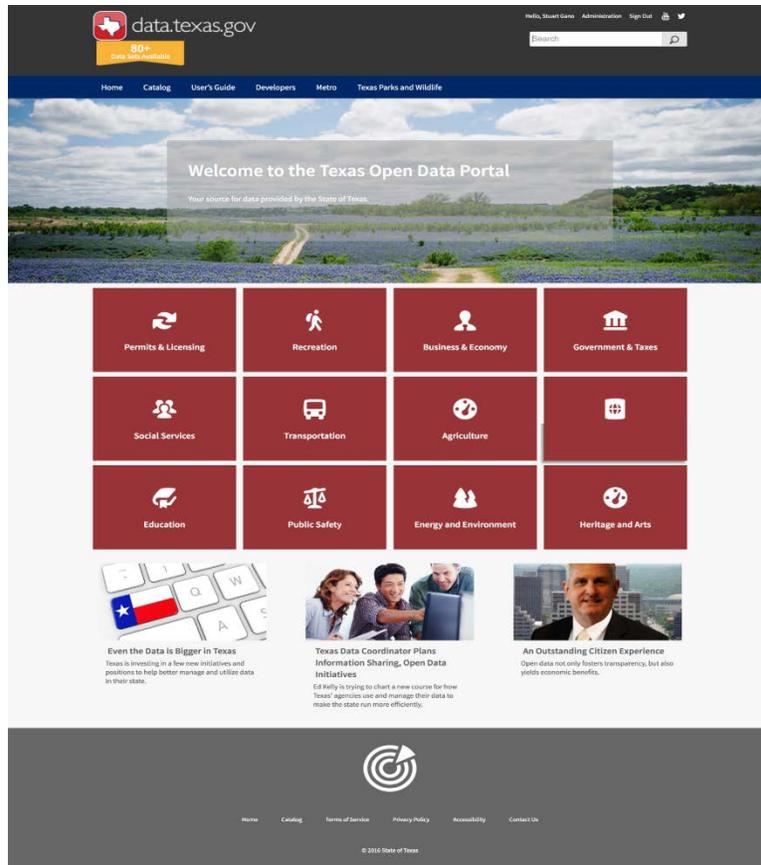
The TEIM Community Group facilitates building and growing relationships among state government and higher education agencies, expanding their knowledge base of data use and governance best practices, and assisting each organization reach its core mission. Since its inception eight months ago, TEIM's monthly meetings have seen consistent participation. Currently, 27 state agencies and institutions of higher education are represented in TEIM's membership.

It is TEIM Community Group's goal—through discussion and sharing between agency representatives, particularly those from agencies with more mature data management experience—that all members can benefit from the collective knowledge experiences and practices.

### **Open Data Portal**

The State of Texas Open Data Portal, located at <https://data.texas.gov/>, was launched by DIR in 2014 to provide state agencies with a common platform to present agency public data for citizen consumption. Today, the portal has over 100 datasets from six different agencies that are available for public search, download, and manipulation. This initiative is driven by the SWDP's focus of increasing both agency participation and dataset submission to the portal.

The Statewide Data Program is actively working with several agencies—including the Office of the Governor, Department of Agriculture, Veterans Commission, Comptroller of Public Accounts, and the Health and Human Commission—to add to existing datasets by loading new data into the portal. By utilizing this free alternative, state agencies can provide their constituency with access to information that will keep them informed, and lessen administrative burdens by reducing the number of Public Information Requests (PIRs).



In addition to increasing agency collaboration, an effort is underway to redesign the Open Data Portal. The new portal, as shown in the above image, will provide a cleaner, more intuitive design with greater search and filter capabilities, more advanced analytic functions, and specific site areas that highlight high-value Texas data-related stories to public and private site visitors. Through its redesigned format and continued discussion with state agencies, the Texas Open Data Portal could gradually evolve to become the source for all state government public data.

### **Interagency Data Sharing**

In the area of interagency data sharing, the SWDP program continues to look for use case opportunities to broker discussions that will help solve real business challenges. These use cases are just the beginning; there are many untapped opportunities for data sharing across Texas government that can provide new insight and assist agencies in support of their core missions.

### **Closer Look: Interagency Data Sharing Example #1**

---

**Who:** HHSC 2-1-1 and Texas A&M Health Science Center TexVet Program

**What:** 2-1-1 call veteran-related data

**Details:** Through an agreement between the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and Texas A&M Health Science Center, the TexVet Program can now access the reporting features of the HHSC 2-1-1 call tracking site for veteran-related data in a real time basis. This data helps the TexVet respond more efficiently to Texas veterans' requests for services.

TexVet is also made possible through the coordination and communication of various organizations, including the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services and the Meadows Foundation's Texas State of Mind initiative. Additionally, TexVet serves as a resource for many of the 2,000+ organizations that support Texas veterans statewide. Access and use of the 2-1-1 HHSC data comes at no cost to TexVet, and the real time access will greatly improve the downstream coordination process and the overall response time in addressing Texas veteran needs.

### **Closer Look: Interagency Data Sharing Example #2**

---

**Who:** Texas Natural Resources Information System (TNRIS) and the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI)

**What:** TNRIS Geospatial Emergency Management Support System (GEMSS) data

**Details:** This data system provides TDI with detailed Geographic Information Systems (GIS) storm tracking and potential damage locations, which allows TDI fraud inspectors to respond more quickly and accurately to post-storm fraud related issues, often involving unscrupulous contractors that descend upon Texas citizens at their greatest time of need to commit insurance based fraud activity.

This ongoing effort provides the TDI Fraud Unit with access to valuable information and a new tool to assist with managing the state's insurance business. Access and use of the TNRIS application data is free to TDI, and the GIS information will help the agency to better support its constituents and improve reporting.

### **Geographic Information Systems Solutions Group**

As the geographic data needs of the state become more complex, the establishment of a governing entity of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is needed in order to address related issues and help make decisions that are in the best interest of the state. In January of 2015, the Texas Natural Resources Information System (TNRIS) and the Department of Information Resources (DIR) established the GIS

Solutions Group to provide an environment for sharing vital GIS data and making unified decisions that will allow state agencies to more effectively utilize GIS services and data. The group is co-chaired by the TNRIS Geographic Information Officer (GIO) and the DIR Statewide Data Coordinator (SWDC). Similar to the TEIM community group, the GIS Solutions Group provides a forum for state agencies to share innovative practices and assess new GIS technologies and current services provided by vendor partners.

An example of data sharing for GIS was the Texas Imagery Service initiative which was a collaboration between the State of Texas and Google to provide high quality, continuous 6-inch natural color imagery resolution for the entire state. The pilot project was led by TNRIS and DIR leadership in partnership with nine other state agencies. The on-demand mapping service is available to all public organizations (i.e. state, regional, and local governments) and provides a current and consistent data source while offering the highest resolution imagery available for any statewide program. A significant benefit beyond the quality of the resolution is the cost of storage, which is hosted by the vendor resulting in no need to pay large storage costs for serving terabytes of data. By using a distributive cost model, public organizations can recognize the benefits of the latest imagery technology at an affordable cost to all participants.

## **Appendix E: Acknowledgements**

The Interagency Data Transparency Commission (IDTC) appreciates the valuable input provided by agency executives and their management team in the development of this report. The IDTC also thanks the DIR and Governor's office program staff for their support, expertise and contribution.

### **Interagency Data Transparency Commission**

The IDTC report was approved by the Commission on August 5, 2016. Thank you to the Commission members for their leadership, time and commitment to this effort.

#### **Jordan Hale, Chair**

Director of Administration, Office of the Governor

#### **Allen Ambuhl**

Supervisor, Computing Services, Network Services, Legislative Budget Board

#### **Rob Coleman**

Director, Fiscal Management Division, Comptroller of Public Accounts

#### **John Gibbs**

Advisor, Office of the Lieutenant Governor

#### **Jon Heining**

General Counsel, Texas Legislative Council

#### **John Hoffman**

Chief Technology Officer, Department of Information Resources

#### **Jarrel Jimmerson**

Chief Data Officer, Health and Human Services Commission, State Agency Coordinating Committee

#### **Ed Kelly**

Statewide Data Coordinator, Department of Information Resources

#### **Representative Armando Walle**

Vice Chair, GT&O Committee, House Committee on Government Transparency & Operation

#### **Senator Kirk Watson**

Member, Senate Business & Commerce Committee, Senate Committee on Business & Commerce

#### **Allison Winney**

Senior Policy Analyst, Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives