

# The **Open Data Initiative** (ODI) works to ensure government finance data is consistent, transparent, and easily available.

*ODI is administered through Lincoln Network, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.*

open  
data  
initiative

It's not enough for government data to be available – it must also be published in a format that is usable and digestible. The inability to easily download data in machine-readable formats and the lack of uniformity across states, and even within them, is unacceptable. The Open Data Initiative works to reducing government bottlenecks and increases data accessibility by creating statutory changes and providing technological tools, skills, and expertise. We are leveraging our tech expertise, creating an open source community to tackle this needless problem.

***Together, we are developing low-cost or no-cost solutions – and encouraging governments to adopt them.***

## ODI seeks to achieve its objectives through:

- Statutory changes
- Better technology
- Assisting groups maintaining transparency sites
- Persistent leadership on collaboration and transparency
- Providing the infrastructure to maintain the open data community

The first phase of our project was to investigate the status quo. Our staff scoured contemporary literature on the subject and reached out to organizations with a record of working on this issue. After informing ourselves and then interacting with the individual state databases, we created our own scorecard regarding the implementation of open data practices at the state level.

This work identified a few common problems: the inability to easily download data in machine readable formats and lack of uniformity across, and even within, states.

A collaborative community is the best way to remedy these issues. Such a community allows solutions to be explored in the open. By leveraging our collective tech expertise, we can encourage governments to adopt low-cost or no-cost solutions.

## ODI MEMBERSHIP IS WORKING TOWARDS

**First**, providing an avenue for communication and collaboration between already interested parties. By connecting individuals with the relevant experience across the country, open sourced, the Open Data Initiative will be a valuable resource for policy makers and organizations alike.

**Second**, providing the tech expertise necessary to improve the system of government financial data reporting. For the next phase of our project, we plan to leverage a pilot program in our home state to further understand the problems as officials see them on the ground. Through partnerships with the [California Policy Center](#) and [The Data Coalition](#), we will be interacting with local, county, and state officials to further inform our ideas about a collection of best practices for reporting bulk financial government data. We believe we will find the same problems that plague states also plague local governments throughout the country.

**For more information on our work, upcoming events, and opportunities to get involved** please visit <http://opendatainitiative.io> or for questions email us at [join@opendatainitiative.io](mailto:join@opendatainitiative.io).



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