



THE CENTER FOR
OPEN DATA ENTERPRISE

Using Data to Help Veterans and Their Families:

A Roundtable with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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FOREWORD

For decades, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been providing patient care and federal benefits to millions of Veterans who served our country and their supporters. Most Veterans truly appreciate the commitment of Department staff who work diligently to serve Veterans and their supporters. Due to the size, scope, and complexity of increasingly challenging Veterans' needs, VA has had difficulty providing Veterans, beneficiaries, and partners with a consistent, seamless experience.

VA needs an integrated, authoritative view of Veterans' and their supporters' needs to achieve the most efficient and effective delivery of benefits and services. In 2013, VA initiated a Customer Data Integration (CDI) Skunkworks project to assess current processes and initiatives in order to identify gaps and overlaps in authoritative customer data across the organization. This assessment confirmed that VA lacks updated, accurate, authoritative, and timely-delivered information. Operating in this manner places a burden on Veterans and their supporters to supply information multiple times to multiple parts of VA striving to provide the best customer service.

VA collects an increasing amount of high-value data that could be used to optimize VA's engagement with its customers: Veterans and their supporters, developers, physicians, and others who are actively pursuing information to craft effective products and services. VA is committed to creating a high level of customer engagement and transparency, while protecting sensitive information, to promote efficiency and effectiveness in its service to Veterans and their supporters.

The VA Open Data Roundtable on May 6, 2015 was a forum to gather and amplify the voice of VA's customers. It will be through this Veteran-centric perspective that VA identifies, fully considers and appropriately advances the interest of Veterans and their supporters.

By creating a dialogue between the Department of Veterans Affairs and users of VA data, including responding to Roundtable feedback, we will be able to strategically and effectively execute our mission to support Veterans and their supporters.

Dr. Tom Garin

Director, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics (NCVAS)



INTRODUCTION

On May 6, 2015, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Center for Open Data Enterprise co-hosted an Open Data Roundtable in Washington, DC. The goal of the Roundtable was to get input from internal VA stakeholders and external data users on ways to maximize the value of VA's data and further the agency's mission to support Veterans and their families. The Roundtable builds on the foundation of VA's efforts to collect and publish agency data for public consumption and advance the department's open data initiative.

Open data from government – free data, accessible online, that anyone can use and republish without restrictions – is being recognized as a major public resource. Under the federal Open Data Policy, government agencies are releasing more and more valuable datasets, fueling collaboration across the public and private sectors.

The VA Roundtable was a part of the Open Data Roundtables Series conducted by the nonprofit Center for Open Data Enterprise. The Roundtables are action-oriented dialogues that bring together government agencies and the organizations that use their data.¹ These dialogues between data experts inside and outside of government are designed to help extract the value of each agency's data reserves. This report, published by the Center, combines participant observations, feedback, and suggestions on the topics discussed at the event. It is being released as a public document to encourage further input, dialogue, and improvements in open data.

BACKGROUND

The VA Open Data Integrated Project Team (IPT) was launched by the Chief Technology Officer and the Data Governance Council. The team includes representatives of all Administrations and Staff Offices as well as Veterans and their supporters. By making the IPT part of VA's Office of Policy and Planning – rather than the Office of Information Technology, where many agencies house similar teams – VA has encouraged IPT to take on mission-driven goals rather than technology implementation. The IPT promotes collaboration between technical experts, VA's subject-matter experts, and senior leadership through quarterly one-on-one meetings.

Since May 2013, the team has focused on collecting and publishing agency data for public consumption based on mandates from the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The IPT has already made more data about the diverse Veteran population available on sites like data.gov, the home of the U.S. Government's open data, and VA's National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics.²

The open data team has also scanned public VA websites to identify high-priority datasets, with an eye to the data's value, relevance, accuracy, and accessibility. The team assesses how actionable datasets are and ensures that privacy and security are protected when data is released to the public.

The IPT has engaged external stakeholders and incorporated their feedback into VA's data publication plans, for the first time. This feedback came through surveys, requests for information from data.gov, several federal agencies and other means. With this approach, the open data team was able to grow VA's Enterprise Data Inventory fivefold in just two years, and VA was recognized as a best practice agency for the implementation of open data throughout the Federal government. This feedback is an ongoing process to enhance, enrich, and expand VA's data inventory for businesses and entrepreneurs to develop products and services that improve the lives of Veterans and their supporters.

VA manages a broad spectrum of data spanning the health, education, employment, and housing sectors.

The agency serves multiple "data customers," including other government agencies that work with Veterans, the community and organizations that help provide Veterans and their families with the services they need, and ultimately

¹ The Open Data Roundtables were originally launched as an initiative of The GovLab at New York University.

² The National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <http://www.va.gov/vetdata>.

Veterans themselves.

To better serve these constituencies, VA has been focusing on making improvements in data in a number of areas. These include:

- Managing waitlists at VA facilities to address the issue of long wait times for treatment and increased risk to patients, which has gained national attention since mid-2014.
- Updating and maintaining accuracy for Veterans' records. For example, it may take a long time to update a Veteran's name after marriage, or to note that a Veteran is deceased.
- Coordinating and reconciling data relating to the various services accessed by Veterans in health care, education, employment, and other benefits.
- Coordinating the sharing of Veteran-centric data between Department of Defense (DoD) and VA.

This report is based on discussions by Roundtable participants and does not necessarily reflect the views of Veterans Affairs or of all users of VA data. The report is designed to be used by operating administrations and offices at VA that collect, analyze, and disseminate data, officials in other government agencies, users of VA's data, and members of the media and the general public.



A USER-CENTERED APPROACH TO DATA

Veterans Affairs co-hosted the Open Data Roundtable with the Center for Open Data Enterprise as an initial step in engaging with VA's data stakeholders in and outside of government. By working with data users, VA hopes to address systematic problems in data management and design to help improve educational, employment, housing, and health services for Veterans. The Roundtable was designed to obtain input from internal VA stakeholders and external data users on ways to maximize the value of VA's data and further the agency's mission to support Veterans and their advocates.

VA employees at all levels were invited to discuss the potential of open data with data users including thought leaders from the White House, other federal agencies, companies, nonprofits, academia, and research institutions. The Roundtable centered on three high-level themes:

1. Continuous engagement with stakeholders for optimal and efficient prioritization
2. Improving data management processes and systems
3. Furthering a culture of open data

This event was the first in a series of collaborative forums to develop an agency-wide data strategy for VA that informs decision-making and long-term priorities. "Analytics Powering Outcomes for Veterans," a customer-centered analytics event from June 29 through July 1, provided VA employees and users of Veteran-related data with another opportunity to contribute analytical strategies and identify shared goals between VA administrations, and across the public and private sectors.

The findings outlined in this report are the result of a three part process, the culmination of which was the Open Data Roundtable. First, the Center and VA conducted a scoping phase to understand VA's current open data initiatives and key stakeholders. During the second phase, a questionnaire was sent to all potential participants to identify specific areas of interest and issues for discussion. Following this work, the Center and VA collaboratively developed the Roundtable agenda and tailored breakout sessions. Like previous Open Data Roundtables, this one began with presentations from government open data experts to provide a context and background for the day's discussions. It then continued with two breakout sessions. (See the Annexes for details on the pre-Roundtable survey, the agenda, and highlights of speakers' presentations.)

VA is increasingly placing an emphasis on customer-centered approaches. A number of such data-driven projects were presented at the Roundtable. This ongoing work, which set the context for the Roundtable, includes the following initiatives.

The VA Wait List Facility Portal

VA is working to decrease the wait time for Veterans to ensure they get the medical treatment they need. A next step is to develop a portal that will enable Veterans to schedule their own appointments for health care. The Wait List Facility Portal has been developed to be a public-facing tool to let users schedule appointments based on location, type, and urgency of medical need through a simple user interface. It also provides users with the average wait time by type of service (e.g. primary care, urology, podiatry, dentistry).

As of October 2015, the portal was in the process of being finalized. The public can access the current version³ that is in production. It will eventually be embedded into VA sites.

3 Wait Times for Appointments at VA Facilities - Public-facing production link, September 2015. <http://vapwt.trafficmanager.net>.

The Philanthropic Needs Assessment: Leveraging open data to help Veterans

The Center for a New American Security's program is designed to determine what Veterans' health and other needs are, what government is doing to address those needs, and where the gaps and opportunities are. The process includes gathering, analyzing, and visualizing open data. The program serves Veterans based on their:

- Demographics and geography
- Health and economic conditions
- Utilization of government services and benefits

The analysis of open data can help inform private and philanthropic action to better serve Veterans. The program is developing more granular and timely data.

MyVA

MyVA4 is designed to put Veterans in control of how, when, and where they want to be served. It measures success through Veterans' outcomes and by optimizing VA's productivity and efficiency. It strives to modernize VA's culture, processes, and capabilities to put the needs, expectations, and interest of Veterans and their families first. MyVA aims to provide a seamless, unified Veteran Experience across the entire organization and throughout the country. VA has created a Veterans Experience Office (VEO) to ensure that staff deliver excellent healthcare and benefit experiences.

The Million Records Project

Student Veterans of America (SVA), in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Student Clearinghouse, launched the Million Records Project last year. The historic research initiative will provide near real-time data that policymakers, service providers, institutions of higher learning, and the general public can act on to support student Veterans. In March 2014 the SVA released the first phase of a series of findings⁵ including the rate at which student Veterans complete college compared with traditional students; how long it takes them to complete higher education; the highest degree attained; and their degree fields.

Capitol Post

This co-working space for Veterans in the Washington, DC region offers personalized guidance through mentoring, business counseling, and access to key resources, programs, and leaders. Their mission is to establish and cultivate the top community for Veterans to start a business, grow a business, or explore a new career.

AmericaServes

The Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) based at Syracuse University in New York has established AmericaServes,⁶ a multi-state, multi-year initiative to enable communities to deliver impactful, transformative, and inclusive services to Veterans and family members through coordinated, evidence-based service delivery networks. In 2013, the IVMF launched its initial efforts to plan, design, build, and deploy a coordinated network of veteran service providers—including the VA's healthcare resources—in New York City with NYC Serves.

4 MyVA Integrated Plan (MIP), July 2015. http://www.va.gov/opa/myva/docs/myva_integrated_plan.pdf.

5 The Million Records Project. Student Veterans of America. <http://studentveterans.org/index.php/aboutus/what-we-do/million-records-project>.

6 Driving Community Impact: The case for local, evidence-based coordination in Veteran and military family services and the AmericaServes initiative, April 2015. <http://vets.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Driving-Community-Impact.pdf>.

Veteran Transition Program

The Veterans Career Transition Program, operated by the IVMF at Syracuse University, is delivered at no cost to post-9/11 Veterans, their spouses, and spouses of active duty military. It aims to translate the skills and training the Veteran received in the military to a civilian environment so that he or she can be a competitive candidate for recruitment and hiring. It also helps Veterans develop the soft skills necessary to succeed in a corporate or government environment.

Human Centered Design at VA

The VA Center for Innovation (VACI) conducted two studies of Human Centered Design (HCD) in the spring and fall of 2014. The first study⁷ explored the overall potential of applying user-driven research techniques at VA, while the second⁸ went further to examine differences in VA's customers' needs, habits, and experiences. The second study created a set of Veteran "Personas" that can help guide work across VA by giving VA staff concrete perspectives on the people they serve. VACI is currently crafting a HCD toolkit to help employees conduct research and develop strategies to apply Human-Centered Design in their work.

7 Toward a VeteranCentered VA: Piloting Tools of Human-Centered Design for America's Vets Findings Report, July 2014. http://www.innovation.va.gov/docs/Toward_A_Veteran_Centered_VA_JULY2014.pdf.

8 Voices of Veterans Introducing Personas to Better Understand Our Customers Findings Report, November 2014. http://www.innovation.va.gov/docs/Voices_Of_Veterans_11_12_4.pdf.

OPEN DATA ROUNDTABLE FINDINGS

The Center for Open Data Enterprise's Roundtables with several Federal agencies have identified a number of ways government agencies can make their open data programs more user-centered. These data users can be companies, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, or other government agencies. All of these data users face obstacles in:

- ❖ Finding and Accessing Data
- ❖ Assessing Data Quality and Relevance
- ❖ Cleaning and Combining Datasets
- ❖ Engaging with Government Data Providers

In addition to discussing these topics, both providers and users of VA's data noted the need to balance protection of Veterans' privacy with the value of making important data available for the public good.

After the opening presentations at the VA Roundtable, attendees participated in discussion groups of eight to ten people each for two breakout sessions. During the first session, participants were asked to discuss key VA data challenges, successes, and opportunities for improvement. In the second session, participants were asked to identify next steps and potential strategies for overcoming data challenges.

The following sections summarize the Roundtable participants' observations on how VA is helping their "data customers" use open data and how VA can improve its data in key ways based on user needs.

Finding and Accessing Data

Roundtable participants stated that VA open data is decentralized and difficult to find. An authoritative source of all open VA data doesn't exist. Developing a comprehensive inventory would be a helpful resource for navigating VA's data landscape. Participants highlighted the need to review VA's data assets and evaluate their value to be able to inform data priorities. The information could also be used to determine what data to add or remove from data repositories such as VA's internal Corporate Data Warehouse⁹ or data.gov. Key issues for data discovery and accessibility include:

- VA's facilities database is difficult to access. For example, va.gov/data offers a health facility file in JSON format available for download. However, it has not been updated in almost a year. In addition, the file includes location information that is manually updated by field staff and does not match the VHA Site Tracking (VAST) system.¹⁰
- Useful data can be restricted and only available to those with specific authorization, e.g. DoD Common Access Card.
- There is a lack of information and documentation on how contractors are building systems.
- There is a lack of performance information on products and systems that aren't managed by VA.
- Veterans without internet access cannot benefit from Electronic Health Records via Blue Button or online communities such as IAVA's The Wait We Carry,¹¹ which sheds light on the vast range of experiences faced while transitioning out of the military.

⁹ Corporate Data Warehouse. Health Services Research & Development. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. http://www.hsrp.research.va.gov/for_researchers/vinci/cdw.cfm.

¹⁰ VAST is the authoritative database source for data on the names, number, location (physical location, mailing address and latitude and longitude), site classification and leadership personnel of VHA's sites of health care delivery.

¹¹ The Wait We Carry: U.S. Veterans Share Their Experiences With V.A. Services. Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. <http://www.thewaitwecarry.org>.

VA successes

- VA has created the GI Bill Comparison Tool to make it easier to research colleges and employers approved for the GI Bill.¹²
- VA is providing access to key datasets on population demographics, education, GI Bill and health care expenditures, as well as specific important datasets such as:
 - The Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures Report for the public and all stakeholders. The report provides the estimated dollar expenditures for major VA programs at the state, county, and congressional district levels.
 - The Annual Benefits Report, a summary of benefits provided by VA to Veterans and their dependents.
- VA shared data with Student Veterans of America to produce graduation rates on 1 million student Veterans.
- Blue Button¹³ allows Veterans to download their health records.
- ASPIRE¹⁴ is a web-based dashboard that documents quality and safety goals for all VA Hospitals. ASPIRE data shows strengths and opportunities for improvement at the national, regional and local hospital level. The dashboard supports the VA's mission of providing a continuous health care improvement program to give the best possible care to Veterans. The database lists "measures," VA's goal for each measure and where they are in comparison to where they want to be.
- National Survey of Veterans is a series of comprehensive surveys designed to help VA plan its future programs and services for Veterans. The last survey was completed in 2010. VA is in the process of adding previous surveys online dating back to the 1980's.

Suggestions for data discovery and accessibility

- Ensure that data is developer-friendly, i.e. in open standard formats such as JSON and accompanied with definitions.
- Explore a public-private partnership to provide Veterans with home internet access. Offer internet access at VA hospitals so Veterans can download their medical records through BlueButton.
- Publicize successes that promote a knowledge-sharing environment. Assign VA staff to serve as liaisons to the developer community with a strong understanding of user needs and technical ability.
- Make VA.gov more like a library of datasets. Introduce a better tagging system. Determine who would be accountable for supporting the library, with centralized oversight for work across the agency.
- Document metadata, which can describe the structure, data elements, formats, context, etc, as the meaning of data can vary depending on its context.
- Ensure that open data policies support initiatives such as MyVA and Customer Data Integration.¹⁵
- Develop and establish a data governance process by which VA senior leadership approves "leads" for the Open Data IPT to identify high value datasets.
- Develop information technology infrastructure and consider offering "Technology 101" training to VA staff.
- Use new technology solutions to shorten the time from identifying data assets to developing applications.
- Secure executive support for programs to improve data discoverability and accessibility.

¹² GI Bill Comparison Tool, Veterans Benefits Administration. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/gi-bill-comparison-tool>.

¹³ VA Blue Button. Health Care. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <http://www.va.gov/bluebutton>.

¹⁴ ASPIRE Dashboard. Veterans Benefits Administration Reports. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. http://www.benefits.va.gov/reports/aspire_dashboard.asp.

¹⁵ Through Customer Data Integration, each VA business line will have a single, shared view of Veterans, regardless of where they live and no matter how many different VA facilities they've visited.

Assessing Data Quality and Relevance

Improving data quality can help VA manage services more efficiently and enable users to derive more value from the data. The accuracy of Veteran information should be a top priority. Key issues of data quality and relevance include:

- Data entered inaccurately can impact benefits paid to Veterans and to their families and can be difficult to update. Examples include: birthday entered incorrectly, multiple birthdays listed in the system, dates of death recorded inaccurately.
- It is difficult to update personal information such as a Veteran's last name when she or he gets married. Sometimes this can take years, making it challenging to access services while information is associated with another name.

VA success

VA is working to meet federal Meaningful Use¹⁶ requirements for an electronic health record. One aspect is to standardize vocabularies, which VA is doing in areas such as laboratory, pharmacy, diagnosis codes, procedure codes, and problem lists.

Suggestions to improve data quality and relevance

- Look to other agencies to learn about their data standards and find models for developing standards at VA. For example, the Office of the National Coordinator in Health and Human Services (HHS) sets standards that health care organizations must follow. VA could use a similar standard-setting process for facility identification and other types of data.
- Provide data training to ensure VA has tech-literate staff at all levels.
- Prioritize access to complementary data to support critical programs. One participant recommended that suicide prevention could be more effective by including employment status and financial information along with health information.

Cleaning and Combining Datasets

Integrating customer data between agencies is an important part of creating a holistic view of individual Veterans. Roundtable participants stressed the need to develop a data lifecycle management process for combining data across government. Sharing data across agencies will help create a comprehensive profile of Veterans at every stage of the transition from military to civilian life. Participants raised the following issues:

- DoD and VA data are housed on different platforms which cannot easily be combined. If analysts want to use both DoD and VA data, they need to look at two screens and so many datasets that the websites time out before you can use their data. This is inefficient and makes it easy to lose work.
- The need to coordinate with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services to receive health data in a timely fashion.

VA successes

- VA is reinforcing transparency and digital data sharing by hosting data assets on va.gov/data, and providing a redirect link to view more on data.gov
- VA is currently verifying Veteran income directly with IRS as part of the health care eligibility determination.
- VA is leveraging visualization tools such as Tableau and Pyramid Analytics to ensure better decision making and

¹⁶ Meaningful Use is using certified electronic health record technology to improve quality, safety, efficiency, and reduce health disparities; engage patients and families in their health care; improve care coordination; improve population and public health while maintaining privacy and security.

more impactful communication.

- VA is currently working towards launching the Enterprise Health Management Platform (eHMP), which fully integrates health data from across VA, DoD, and other third parties. VA will achieve the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act requirements for interoperability of electronic health records in partnership with DoD by December 2016.

Suggestions for cleaning and combining datasets

- Improve data sharing within all VA, in particular Veterans Benefits Administration and Veterans Health Administration. Develop centralized data systems to improve data integration and accuracy. Gain high-level support for cross-agency data sharing and move towards a more open culture.
- Explore incentives for implementing more up-to-date technology.
- Adopt open source software and secure resources to purchase third-party data. VA can refer to USDS templates for Interagency Agreements (IAAs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).
- Link and integrate data across VA and DoD, for areas beyond health.
- Leverage data from Department of Labor to help Veterans find employment opportunities.

Engaging With Government Data Providers

User input is critical for ensuring that data systems will be as useful as possible for Veterans and partner organizations. Establishing feedback loops with users can strengthen employment, health, and education data, which can in turn improve access to and effectiveness of Veteran services.

VA successes

- Customer Data Integration (CDI) has been a successful new initiative designed to harmonize the use of multiple kinds of digital information within VA's computing environment. It has also improved coordination between VA and its mission partners in the delivery of benefits to Veterans.
- The Health Services Research Data (HSRData) Discussion Listserv consists of data analysts, researchers and subject matter experts. The venue serves as a community in which to discuss the technical structure of tables, domains, stop code definitions, etc.¹⁷

Suggestions for ensuring user engagement

- Develop a program to connect data experts at VA with subject matter experts, for example by providing online chat services to answer questions about data and data usage. Queries could begin with the VA National Service Desk and escalate to higher-level data stewards by email or phone as needed.
- Improve web user experience to decrease the number of questions being fielded by call centers, email recipients, snail mail recipients, etc. This could be achieved by understanding the top 10 use cases¹⁸ for visiting VA's site, and making sure users can access the most important information easily.
- Create four hackathons¹⁹ over two years that would engage students and government officials. Request feedback on what needs to be worked on. Make data available at a local level and recruit more data researchers. A proposal for the first hackathon is described in the next section.
- Expand the Walgreens partnership to companies such as CVS, grocery stores, and other national organizations that provide flu shots. Currently many Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system can get their seasonal flu shot at Walgreens. After the vaccine is administered, the immunization record is transmitted securely to

¹⁷ See Appendix C for more details and instructions to sign up.

¹⁸ Use cases describe the step by step process a user goes through to achieve a goal of a software program or website.

¹⁹ An event where software developers, designers, project managers entrepreneurs and others collaborate on projects.

the patient's VA health record. Partnerships between VA and health providers offer Veterans a valuable and convenient service.

- Make it easier for data users to give VA feedback. For example, data.gov has launched a help desk feature for feedback on its datasets. VA should have easy, real-time access to feedback about its datasets that comes through data.gov and other channels, and should also consider adding a help desk feature to its own website. Feedback can help determine the criteria for high-value datasets.

Balancing Privacy Against Data Release

It is essential that VA address privacy concerns as it moves data to the cloud. Participants raised the following issues related to protecting personally identifiable information (PII) and personal health information (PHI):

- There is a patchwork of laws and regulations (e.g. Privacy Act, HIPAA, FOIA, state laws) that makes it difficult to manage data with personally identifiable information.
- When data is aggregated to remove PII, it may no longer be granular enough to be fully useful.

Suggestions for balancing privacy against data release

- Work with other federal agencies to develop guidelines for reliably de-identifying²⁰ datasets so that they can be released without violating individuals' privacy.
- Contribute to the White House's Precision Medicine Initiative, of which a key component is open, responsible data sharing. Supporting this effort will advance scientific and medical research by analyzing individual health records and taking privacy into account.

²⁰ The process used to prevent a person's identity from being connected with information.

PROJECT PROPOSALS FROM THE ROUNDTABLE

In addition to the suggestions from participants noted above, participants in the Roundtable developed several project proposals through work in the day's breakout sessions.

Organize a “Hack for Vets” Hackathon

Roundtable participants proposed a Hackathon to help build a comprehensive list of all VA data and leverage a talent pool of technologists. The Hackathon would give hackers the opportunity to explore making VA datasets easier to search and comprehend through tagging and metadata. The proposal suggested adding “Veterans” to data.gov topics to increase VA data discoverability.

The following actions were outlined as next steps:

- Conduct an assessment of data that should be public and prioritize datasets that should be added to VA's data inventory
- Secure sponsor support and develop private-sector partnerships to increase resources
- Announce the event with support from VA's leadership
- Outreach to partners, assign tasks (e.g. using call centers to find potential participants)
- Provide necessary tech training at all levels of the VA involved in the Hackathon
- Bring in stakeholders (data users) to determine how to best implement data tagging
- Develop the app interface taking into account that the tool would need to support multiple servers

Create a holistic view of individual Veterans by exploring a data lifecycle management process

An integrated application to coordinate data across government would help the agencies manage data while soldiers are in the military and after they transition to civilian life as a Veteran. VA previously received all DoD data in paper format. Since the transition to digital format, VA only receives DoD data if a claim is filed. Participants explained that sharing data between these two agencies would improve efficiency.

A first recommendation is to provide training so analysts gain a better understanding of the various systems they use. For example, VADIR (VA/DoD Identity Repository) was referenced as “Bigfoot” by an attendee due to a lack of information on the system. Participants were interested in learning when it is refreshed and the type of data it includes. They also recommended a session with VADIR's managers on ways to update the system and overcome its current constraints.

Short term goal: Provide VA access to DoD data for retrieval on demand when needed for any Veteran.

Long term goal: Create a lifecycle management process for managing individual data across agencies. Data collection begins when the soldier joins the military and continues once he or she transitions to civilian life.

Participants noted that VA has a strict interpretation of security. Privacy concerns could make some officials hesitant to change the current system. Additionally, it would be difficult to get feedback from Veterans on how to shape the process for granting user access. VA could utilize existing technology to implement this solution.

Important partnerships to explore include DoD, Veteran advocates and academic institutions.

Create a resources portal for Veterans to access employment, health, and education services

Participants proposed building a system to recommend services based on personal information. The platform would utilize a Match.com or TurboTax model to ensure a user-friendly interface. This solution could help improve the eBenefit portal by increasing the amount of information available to benefits seekers and social workers (e.g. eligibility, application process, hours, intake process). The Roundtable participants recommended that this user-centric, dynamic portal connect Veterans to a human counselor or coordinator to help them follow up on leads from the portal.

A critical barrier is that not all Veterans have internet access, limiting the number of Veterans that would have access to the system. VA would also need to address privacy concerns and determine if users would feel comfortable using such a portal. To implement this solution, VA could request support from U.S. Digital Service and from Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program²¹ grants. Possible partnerships could include AmericaServes to build on their existing outreach program and VA hospitals/homeless shelters to reach homeless Veterans.

²¹ Homeless Veterans. Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp>.

NEXT STEPS

Over the last few years, VA has made a commitment to engage with its data users and get their feedback and input on their open data programs. The Roundtable served as an important checkpoint for VA to develop improved user-centered open data strategies. It highlighted a number of priorities that VA will continue to address, which included:

- ❖ Improving coordination between DoD and VA data
- ❖ Making the Wait List more manageable and accessible
- ❖ Making more high-value datasets publicly available
- ❖ Integrating and coordinating access to services across a Veteran's lifecycle

VA will also work to advance the department's open data programs through the following steps, which were identified during post-roundtable discussions.

- Supporting and implementing the recommendations identified during U.S. Digital Service's (USDS) DoD Discovery Sprint on health data exchange and usage. During the sprint, USDS looked at areas where Digital Service or executive focus would accelerate success. The recommendations to address key challenges included:
 - ▶ Making the VA claims process transparent: similar to a "FedEx package tracking"-type tool for Service Treatment Records.
 - ▶ Establishing a Health Data Exchange product team that consists of representatives from DoD, VA, and USDS. Given the political mandate for VA and DoD to have a data exchange, this cross-agency team would bring momentum and address the necessary implementation issues for data exchange within the agencies and across external partners.
 - ▶ Creating a strong internal Health Data Governance team with the authority and technical expertise to manage DoD health data in a way that supports personnel readiness, health care, and business/finance objectives.
- The VA Digital Service Health Team will continue to roll out the Enterprise Health Management Platform (eHMP), a model system for managing high volume health records and allowing user access to those records. The platform is designed to give Veterans access to their DoD health records through data from VistA.
- Developing a strategy to secure additional funding for VA's open data program. Based on discussions from the Open Data Roundtable, Analytics Summit, and other activities, the IPT estimated that \$750K additional resource requirements be considered for the FY17 budget. The team outlined their recommendations in an Open Data Program Resource Estimates Report. The summary includes the following items:
 - ▶ Projects around high value data assets, application programming interfaces (APIs), and maturity of use/impact.
 - ▶ The establishment of customer engagement and feedback processes and activities.
 - ▶ Training on Open Data technology concepts.
- Exploring the establishment of customer engagement and feedback processes and activities, such as conferences, hackathons and a customer data advisory council. The hackathon proposed in this report would be an opportunity to educate the IPT to open data technology concepts and to generate enthusiasm.
- Continuing to reference the Data Asset Collection Memo.²² This document is used as open data guidance for the IPT and the broader VA community. Highlights are presented regularly in the following forums to generate Open Data commitment, advocacy, and excellence throughout VA:
 - ▶ IPT meetings

²² U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Memorandum: Open Data - Quarterly Data Asset Collection Requirements, Project Open Data, February 2014. https://project-open-data.cio.gov/assets/docs/Data_Asset_Collection_Memo-02_21_14.pdf.

- ▶ Data Governance Council meetings
- ▶ Presentations in ongoing one-on-one meetings with administrations and staff offices.
- Referring to the U.S. Open Data National Action Plan²³ for helpful customer feedback. This feedback has been incorporated, at OSTP's direction, in meeting quarterly OMB deadlines relating to licensing requirements.
- Continuing to leverage the Open Data Community Events Template on Project Open Data,²⁴ one of the many resources shared on the government-wide Open Data Listserv. Additional resources can be found in the annex.
- Continuing to submit proposals based on user feedback. VA's open data team recently submitted the following five dataset proposals to OMB. Most of the recommendations are based on emails from data users sent to The National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics (NCVAS).²⁵
 - ▶ Update to List of Accredited Claims Agents. This dataset allows users to search accredited claims agents and is now being published as machine readable.
 - ▶ Update to List of Accredited Representatives. This dataset allows users to search Veterans Service Organizations representatives and is now being published as machine readable.
 - ▶ Update to Veterans Crisis Line. Data asset related to suicide was discovered and added to the Open Data Enterprise Data Inventory.
 - ▶ Update to VA Annual Reports. VA added the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldier Annual Reports for 1866 – 1873. Also reached out to several administrations to secure predecessor annual reports, which will be added to the site. VA leadership has approved making all predecessor annual reports available to the public.
 - ▶ Request for access to SAS Data Files for older National Survey of Veterans (NSV). VA added the National Survey of Veterans final report, a 260 page document with aggregated data showing the results of the survey. VA is in the process of digitalizing the remaining NSV surveys and other surveys it has in its possession, which will be added to the site. VA leadership has approved making all survey final reports available to the public.

This Roundtable was a collaborative forum that will help the VA develop an agency-wide data strategy to inform decision-making and long-term priorities. It was part of a united effort to create a holistic picture of Veterans that can inform the design of VA's products and services. This collaborative work will help enable VA to more effectively identify and meet the needs of its customers: Veterans and their supporters.

23 U.S. Open Data Action Plan, The White House, May 2014. https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/us_open_data_action_plan.pdf.

24 Project Open Data, The CIO Council. <https://cio.gov>.

25 The National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <http://www1.va.gov/vetdata>.

The following appendices include contextual information related to Veterans Affairs. The acronyms listed in Appendix A were referenced at the Roundtable and in this report. An overview of current Open Data Policies is listed in Appendix B. Prospective attendees received a Pre-Roundtable Questionnaire as part of the RSVP process to help shape the breakout sessions; Appendix B also includes a summary of the responses. Appendices C and D include background information on the Roundtable itself.

APPENDIX A

Acronyms

BDN	Benefits Delivery Network
CBOC	Community-Based Outpatient Clinic
CCR	Continuity of Care Record
CDI	Customer Data Integration
CDW	Corporate Data Warehouse
DoD	Department of Defense
EHR	Electronic Health Record
eHMP	Enterprise Health Management Platform
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
HAS	Health Administration Service
HCD	Human Centered Design
HHS	Health and Human Services
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
HSRData	Health Services Research Data
IAA	Interagency Agreement
IAVA	Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
IPT	Integrated Project Team
IVMF	Institute for Veterans and Military Families
MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
NSV	National Survey of Veterans
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OSDBU	Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization
PHI	Personal Health Information
PIES	Personnel Information Exchange Service
PII	Personal Identifiable Information
PHR	Personal Health Record
PMR	Private Medical Record
RMC	Records Management Center
RO	Regional Office
SSVF	Supportive Services for Veteran Families
SVA	Student Veterans of America
USDS	U.S. Digital Service
VA	Veterans Affairs
VACI	VA Center for Innovation
VADIR	VA/DoD Identity Repository
VADS	Veterans Assistance at Discharge System
VAMC	Veterans Affairs Medical Center



VAST	VHA Site Tracking
VBA	Veterans Benefits Administration
VBMS	Veterans Benefits Management System
VE	Veterans Experience
VHA	Veterans Health Administration
VIS	Veterans Information System
VISN	Veterans Integrated Service Network
VistA	Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture
VONAPP	Veterans On-Line Application
VSO	Veterans Service Organization

APPENDIX B

Implementation of VA Open Data Policies

- As of August 2015, VA had over 1,000 publicly-accessible datasets on data.gov.
- According to GSA's Project Open Data Dashboard²⁶, VA is on schedule to complete milestones on all leading indicators and automated metrics.
- On Jan 1st 2014, DoD began providing Service Treatment Records to VA electronically versus paper only.
- In July 2014, VA selected ASM Research to update the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), a part of VistA that provides a single interface for doctors and administrators who interact with a VA patient, over the next 3 years.

Resources

The following is a list of helpful resources for individuals in government interested in open data.

18F is a team of top-notch designers, developers, and product specialists inside the General Services Administration (GSA), built in the spirit of America's top tech startups. It is a civic consultancy for the government, inside the government, enabling agencies to rapidly deploy tools and services that are easy to operate, cost efficient, and reusable.²⁷

HSRData-L is a virtual community of VA researchers. The listserv is open to anyone with a va.gov e-mail addresses. Researchers with VA network access can access information on joining and using the listserv by copying and pasting the following URL: <http://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/Support/HSRData-L.htm>.

The Open Data Listserv, hosted by GSA, is designed to connect people who are tackling data innovation. Anyone with a .gov or .mil email address can join by emailing listserv@listserv.gsa.gov. Leave the subject line blank and include "subscribe open-data" in the body of the email.

The Presidential Innovation Fellows (PIF) program pairs talented, diverse technologists and innovators with top civil-servants and change-makers working at the highest levels of the federal government to tackle some of our nation's biggest challenges. It is a highly-competitive opportunity to serve for 12 months, during which fellows will collaborate with each other and federal agency partners on high-profile initiatives aimed at saving lives, saving taxpayer money, fueling job creation, and building the culture of entrepreneurship and innovation within government.²⁸

The U.S. Digital Service consists of teams of problem solvers making government services simple, effective, and efficient. USDS is using the best of product design and engineering practices to transform the way government works for the American people. They join forces with passionate and talented tech professionals within agencies to tackle critical challenges.²⁹

The Digital Service at VA is a new team that consists of digital service experts dedicated to redesigning tools Veterans use to interact with VA. The Department of Veterans Affairs provides Veterans and their families' extensive programs and services, but too often the process of obtaining them can be long, complex, and confusing. Alongside leaders at VA, the Digital Service at VA is working toward a more efficient and effective VA that delivers more for America's Veterans with initiatives such as a simple and easy-to-navigate VA website, to an improved benefits claims experience.³⁰

26 Project Open Data Dashboard. Data.gov. <http://labs.data.gov/dashboard/offices>.

27 18F, U.S. General Services Administration. <https://18f.gsa.gov>.

28 Presidential Innovation Fellows, The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/innovationfellows>.

29 U.S. Digital Service, The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/digital/united-states-digital-service>.

30 Digital Service at VA, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <http://www.va.gov/ds>.

APPENDIX C

The Open Data Roundtable with the Department of Veterans Affairs was held on May 6, 2015. The following sections include information pertaining to the structure of the day, attendees, sponsors and an overview on the Open Data Roundtable Series and the Center for Open Data Enterprise.

Agenda

9:00 AM	Registration, Coffee and Refreshments
9:30 AM	Welcome <i>Dat Tran</i> - Deputy Assistant Secretary for Data Governance & Analysis, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs <i>Rachel Harrison-Gordon</i> - Presidential Innovation Fellow, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
9:40 AM	Structure of the Day <i>Joel Gurin</i> - President, Center for Open Data Enterprise
9:50 AM	Lightning Talks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs-Based Designing: Wait List Facility Portal: <i>Jack Bates</i> - Director, Business Intelligence Service Line, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Leveraging Open VA Data: <i>Phillip Carter</i> - Senior Fellow, Counsel and Director of the Military, Veterans, and Society Program at the Center for a New American Security
10:05 AM	Open Data Plan for OSTP: Private Sector and Public Sector Customer Needs <i>Dr. DJ Patil</i> - U.S. Chief Data Scientist, U.S. White House Office of Science and Technology Policy
10:15 AM	Break
10:30 AM	Breakout Session 1
11:45 AM	Break
12:00 PM	Breakout Session 2
12:50 PM	Transforming Opportunities into Action <i>Erie Meyer</i> - U.S. Digital Services
1:00 PM	Open Health Care Data and the Power of Transparency <i>Ryan Panchadsaram</i> - Deputy Chief Technology Officer, U.S. White House Office of Science and Technology Policy
1:10 PM	Closing <i>Joel Gurin</i> - President, Center for Open Data Enterprise
1:15 PM	Networking Lunch at Tonic
3:00 PM	Adjourn

Roundtable Presentations

Throughout the day, White House and VA open data leaders, partner organizations, and senior officials spoke about their efforts related to the Department's data. They included:

- Dat Tran, VA's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Data Governance and Analysis, presented current strategies to implement Customer Data Integration (CDI) across all agency business lines, encompassing all services Veter-

ans and their families access throughout their lifetimes.

- Jack Bates, Director of VA's Business Intelligence Service Line, provided an overview of VA's Wait List Facility Portal.
- Phillip Carter, Senior Fellow, Counsel and Director of the Military, Veterans, and Society Program at the Center for a New American Security, spoke about new opportunities to use open data to address Veterans' needs.
- Megan Smith, U.S. Chief Technology Officer, described the diverse efforts to make entrepreneurship and tech accessible to all, highlighted The Bunker – an organization that empowers Veterans to be entrepreneurs, helping them start a business, grow a business, or explore a new career.
- Dr. DJ Patil, U.S. Chief Data Scientist in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, discussed how employment data can help identify military skills that Veterans can leverage in the civilian job market.
- Erie Meyer of the U.S. Digital Service, described ways to transform opportunities into action and the resources available to assist with implementing new technical approaches.
- Ryan Panchadsaram, Deputy Chief Technology Officer, spoke about open health care data and the power of transparency.

Summary of Pre-Roundtable Questionnaire Responses

Key issues identified by VA personnel

- Opportunities to integrate data between existing systems at VA
- Interoperability and opportunities to integrate VA data with data from other government agencies and external partners
- Processes and authority for sharing data on health care, benefits, and other data with external stakeholders
- Ways to ensure privacy protection in data sharing, drawing on experience of other agencies
- Customer data integration – applying standard rules for handling Veterans' data from different sources
- Access to community data regarding health status and local services for Veterans
- Ways to include Veterans in setting requirements for data availability and access
- Establishing and using data standards in key areas
- Establishing measures of data quality
- Ways to work with external partners using innovative approaches to collaboration such as Fast
- Identifying areas for Congressional action

Key issues for discussion from VA data users

- Faster release of VA data of all kinds.
- More release of data in machine-readable formats, Public Use Files, APIs.
- Better directories of datasets.
- Regular engagement sessions for people who use VA open data.
- Publication of data on VA services in a format that referral providers can use nationwide.
- Better communication between VA and VSOs.
- A Veteran-focused approach to “MyVA” data to access information better.

- Training for researchers on how to ask for, access, and use protected data. For instance, ways to work with actuaries on research needs and how to meet them without violating PII.
- From Congress: Updates to the Privacy Act of 1974 allowing more access to data.
- Additional datasets and data analyses:
 - ▶ Electronic medical records linked to death records
 - ▶ Records of calls to VA crisis lines linked to death records, and a centralized database for suicide research
 - ▶ VA contracts designated for Veteran Owned Businesses or Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses

Most valuable Veteran-related data based on the Pre-Roundtable Questionnaire responses from VA data users:

- Population data³¹
- Health/benefits utilization³²
- VA expenditures³³
- Medical and pharmacy claims³⁴
- Mortality data³⁵
- The Annual Benefits Report³⁶
- VA contracts for SDVOBs or Veteran Owned Geographic Information³⁷
- Veterans' academic progress³⁸
- Retention, achievement, use of education benefits³⁹
- VBA data of all kinds – all information about benefits paid
- VHA data of all kinds

31 The Veteran Population Projection 2014, Data.gov. <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/the-veteran-population-projection-2014>.

32 A Benefits & Health Care Utilization, Data.gov. <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/va-benefits-health-care-utilization>.

33 Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures State Map, Data.gov. <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/geographic-distribution-of-v-a-expenditures-state-map>.

34 VA Pharmacy Benefits Management Services, Data.gov. <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/va-pharmacy-benefits-management-services>.

35 Veterans Health Administration 2010 Facility Quality and Safety Report - Morbidity and Mortality, Data.gov. <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/veterans-health-administration-2010-facility-quality-and-safety-report-morbidity>.

36 Veterans Benefits Administration Reports, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. http://www.benefits.va.gov/reports/annual_performance_reports.asp.

37 Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization's Vendor Information Pages, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.vip.vetbiz.gov>.

38 The National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <http://www.va.gov/vetdata>.

39 Educational Attainment of Veterans: 2000 to 2009, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, January 2011. http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/education_FINAL.pdf.

List of Participants

Government Agencies and Offices

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

The mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs is to serve America's Veterans and their families with dignity and compassion, and to be their principal advocate in ensuring that they receive medical care, benefits, social support, and lasting memorials promoting the health, welfare, and dignity of all Veterans in recognition of their service to this Nation.

Office of the Secretary

The Office of the Secretary is led by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (SECVA), who is appointed by the President, by and with, the advice and consent of the Senate. The SECVA is responsible for the proper execution and administration of all laws administered by the Department and for the control, direction, and management of the Department.

Col Erik Peterson

Board of Veterans Appeals

The Board of Veterans' Appeals is a part of the VA, located in Washington, D.C. Members of the Board review benefit claims determinations made by local VA offices and issue decision on appeals.

*Lee Becker
Barbara Morton
Margaret Peak*

Office of the Congressional Legislative Affairs (OCLA)

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs is the focal point for Department management and coordination of all matters involving the Congress.

Ronald Maurer

Office of Information and Technology (OI&T)

The Office of Information and Technology provides strategic and technical direction, guidance, and policy to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs' IT resources are acquired and managed in a manner that abides by Federal laws and regulations.

*Deeneen Akeo
Jack Bates
Laurie Karnay*

Office of Management (OM)

VA's Office of Management is responsible for directing the Department's budgetary, financial, capital asset management, performance management, risk management, and business oversight functions.

Margaret Cook

VA Digital Service

A team of seasoned engineers, designers, and product managers from some of the best-known companies in the private sector.

Emily Tavoulaareas

Office of Policy & Planning (OPP)

The Office of Policy and Planning serves as the principal advisor to VA leaders on all matters of policy and organizational strategy.

*Tom Garin
Lisa Mavrogianis
Dat Tran*

VA Center for Innovation

The VA Center for Innovation identifies, tests, and evaluates new approaches to efficiently and effectively meet the current and future needs of Veterans through innovations rooted in data, design-thinking, and agile development.

*Rachel Harrison-Gordon
Andrea Ippolito*

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) provides a variety of benefits and services to Service members, Veterans, and their families.

Ayotunde Babajide
Jerry Baird
Kenneth Smith
Robert Sosinski

Veterans Health Administration

The Veterans Health Administration is home to the United States' largest integrated health care system consisting of 150 medical centers, nearly 1,400 community-based outpatient clinics, community living centers, Vet Centers and Domiciliary.

Dr. Jim Breeling
Dr. Theresa Cullen
Neil Evans
DeAnn Farr
Duane Flemming
Joe Francis
Gail Graham
Brendan Keegan
Joshua Robinson
Julia Winn

General Services Administration (GSA)

The mission of GSA is to deliver the best value in real estate, acquisition, and technology services to government and the American people.

Rebecca Williams

National Library of Medicine (NLM)

The world's largest biomedical library, NLM maintains and makes available a vast print collection and produces electronic information resources on a wide range of topics that are searched billions of times each year by millions of people around the globe.

Dave Hale

Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)

The mission of the Office of Science and Technology Policy is threefold; first, to provide the President and his senior staff with accurate, relevant, and timely scientific and technical advice on all matters of consequence; second, to ensure that the policies of the Executive Branch are informed by sound science; and third, to ensure that the scientific and technical work of the Executive Branch is properly coordinated so as to provide the greatest benefit to society.

Ryan Panchadsaram
Dr. DJ Patil

Social Security Administration (SSA)

The mission of the Social Security Administration is to deliver Social Security services that meet the changing needs of the public.

Linda McCaw

U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)

The Department of Defense is America's oldest and largest government agency. Today, the Department, headed by Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, is not only in charge of the military, but it also employs a civilian force of thousands.

Chris Holmes
Olga Kripmer

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

The mission of the Energy Department is to ensure America's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology solutions.

Michael Baskin

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is the U.S. government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves.

Gaj Sunthara

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)

The mission of the Department of Labor is to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights.

*Scott Gibbons
Dr. Tyrone Grandison
Malissa McLean*

U.S. Digital Service

The U.S. Digital Service is using the best of product design and engineering practices to transform the way government works for the American people. In every corner of government, we join forces with the many passionate and talented tech professionals within agencies who are dedicated to public service.

Erie Meyer

Companies, Nonprofit, Academic and Research Organizations

Amazon Web Services (AWS)

Amazon provides cloud computing services through Amazon Web Services to a range of clients.

Ariel Gold

Capitol Post

A place where Veterans can access the resources and receive the support they need to succeed in business. Capitol Post offers personalized guidance through mentoring, business counseling, and access to key business resources, programs and leaders.

Krista M. Ludwig

Center for a New American Security (CNAS)

The mission of the Center for a New American Security is to develop strong, pragmatic and principled national security and defense policies.

Phillip Carter

Center for Open Data Enterprise

The Center for Open Data Enterprise is an independent nonprofit organization that develops smarter open data strategies for governments, businesses, and other nonprofits by focusing on data users.

*Audrey Ariss
Katherine Garcia
Joel Gurin
Laura Manley
Julia McCarthy
Tobias Thorsted*

DC Open 211

The mission of Open211 is to make information about health, human, and social services easier to find, use, and evaluate. A pilot project of the Open Referral initiative, it is also known as DC Community Resource Data.

Saskia DeVries

Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

Made up exclusively of Veterans injured in our nation's defense, the Disabled American Veterans is dedicated to one mission – fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served.

Scott Trimarchi

The George Washington University Office of Military and Veteran Student Services

The George Washington University Office of Military and Veteran Student Services is committed to providing our student Veterans, dependents, and military personnel with both student support services and student administrative services.

Victoria Pridemore

Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University (IVMF)

The institute develops education and employment-focused programs in collaboration with industry, government, NGOs and the Veteran community, to address the primary economic and public policy concerns of our nation's servicemen and women, and their families.

Dr. Nicholas Armstrong

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)

IAVA's mission is to connect, unite and empower post-9/11 Veterans. They address critical issues facing new Veterans and their families, including mental health injuries, a stretched VA system, inadequate health care for female Veterans and GI Bill educational benefits.

Bill Rausch

Microsoft

Microsoft develops, manufactures, licenses, supports and sells computer software, services, devices and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

*Geary Brummell
Gurujet Khalsa*

Oracle

Oracle is shifting the complexity from IT, moving it out of the enterprise by engineering hardware and software to work together—in the cloud and in the data center. By eliminating complexity and simplifying IT, Oracle enables its customers to accelerate innovation and create added value for their customers.

Robert Lindsley

PricewaterhouseCoopers

PricewaterhouseCoopers is a network of firms in 158 countries that delivers quality in assurance, tax and advisory services.

Mike Willis

The Social and Decision Analytics Laboratory in the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute at Virginia Tech

The Social and Decision Analytics Laboratory addresses social science issues using traditional and novel sources of data to inform policy.

Stephanie Shipp

Socrata

Socrata's mission is to unleash the power of data to improve the world around us. Since 2007, they have focused exclusively on democratizing access to the vast troves of data held by government institutions around the world, and making that data useful to people in their daily lives.

*Joe Pringle
Amy Yeung*

Student Veterans of America (SVA)

SVA is a 501(c)(3) coalition of student Veterans groups on college campuses across the globe. These member chapters are the "boots on the ground" that help Veterans reintegrate into campus life and succeed academically.

*Dr. Chris Cate
D. Wayne Robinson*

Unite US

Unite US is a free platform connecting current military service members, Veterans and their families to transformative resources and opportunities in their local communities. These opportunities include networking outlets with Veterans' organizations, peers and civilian supporters.

Taylor Justice

Sponsors

The Center for Open Data Enterprise thanks its sponsors for their support of the Open Data Roundtables.



Open Data Partner

Microsoft is a worldwide supplier of devices and services that help people and businesses realize their full potential. Customers use Microsoft's products to find creative solutions to business problems, develop breakthrough ideas, and stay connected to what's most important to them. For more information, see www.microsoft.com.

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PricewaterhouseCoopers is a network of firms in 158 countries that delivers quality in assurance, tax and advisory services. PwC helps federal agencies meet the challenge of integrating financial and performance systems to help make decisions and improve accountability. Clients look to the PricewaterhouseCoopers Public Sector Practice to bring direct hands-on knowledge of federal standards for systems, internal controls, and financial reporting. The Practice assists clients through creating interactive data, developing an agile reporting and analytic framework, and identifying and implementing improvements to the data and information supply chain. To find out more, visit www.pwc.com/publicsector.

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Socrata is focused on democratizing access to government data. Its solutions help government leaders improve transparency, modernize citizen access to information and bring facts into every decision, with unprecedented speed and cost savings. Delivered as turnkey cloud services, Socrata's data consumerization products unlock data in enterprise data silos and transform it into useful information that everyone can easily access, visualize, share and reuse. For more information, visit www.socrata.com.

APPENDIX D: About the Center

The **Center for Open Data Enterprise** is an independent nonprofit organization that develops smarter open data strategies for governments, businesses, and nonprofits by focusing on data users. Our mission is to maximize the value of open data as a public resource that anyone can use. We work to unleash this value through a better understanding of open data users and greater engagement of stakeholders.

What We Do

Our user-centered approach aims to improving the open data ecosystem in three ways. We **map** the uses of open data from around the world; **convene** data users and providers to identify challenges and opportunities; and **implement** solutions driven by user input.

We MAP.



The first global view of the uses of open data.

The Open Data Impact Map is a searchable, sortable database of the uses of open data, providing a deeper understanding of the demand for this resource.

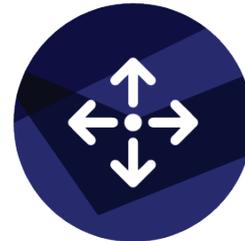
We CONVENE.



Action-oriented dialogues for government agencies & their data users.

Our Open Data Roundtables in the U.S. and abroad help identify high-value datasets, find solutions to data problems, and establish new collaborations.

We IMPLEMENT.



Improving the management & quality of open data.

We work with public and private sector partners to develop solutions to key data challenges informed by user feedback.

Contact Us

For general inquiries, contact Katherine Garcia at katherine@odenterprise.org.

For partnership opportunities, contact Laura Manley at laura@odenterprise.org.

Learn more at opendataenterprise.org.

U.S. Open Data Roundtables

Description

The Open Data Roundtables (opendataenterprise.org/convene) are action-oriented dialogues that bring together government agencies and the organizations that use their data. By hosting the Roundtables, we offer a low-tech solution to a high-tech problem. The Roundtables are designed to:

- **Identify high-value datasets** so agencies can address them as a priority;
- **Develop solutions** to make data more accurate, complete, and easy to work with; and
- **Connect data providers** and users for ongoing collaboration

The Center for Open Data Enterprise develops the Roundtable agenda in collaboration with the agency. Preparation includes research and questionnaires to stakeholders inside and outside government. Each Roundtable combines presentations from agency officials and staff with breakout sessions that bring government and data customers together in groups of eight to ten.

After each Roundtable, the Center for Open Data Enterprise issues a public report summarizing the participants' discussion of data challenges and opportunities, their proposals for solutions, and agencies' commitments to action. The Open Data Roundtables were originally launched as an initiative of the GovLab at NYU and are now run by the Center for Open Data Enterprise.

Previous Roundtables

U.S. Department of Commerce and White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

U.S. Department of Agriculture and the White House Climate Data Initiative

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

U.S. Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Energy

Participants

The Roundtable aims to bring together the agency's key data stakeholders, including representatives from companies, nonprofits, academic institutions, other government agencies using their data. Representatives include decision-makers with technical and/or business understanding of how the organizations use government data.

The Center for Open Data Enterprise is an independent nonprofit organization, based in Washington DC that develops smarter open data strategies for governments, businesses. Our mission is to maximize the value of open data as a public resource that anyone can use. Learn more at opendataenterprise.org.