



Governor Kathy Hochul
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

VIA EMAIL

September 7, 2021

Re: Fundamental to a New Era of Transparency is Publishing State COVID-19 Data as Open Data

Dear Governor Hochul,

Congratulations on becoming the 57th Governor of New York. Thank you for swiftly acknowledging that New York suffered nearly 12,000 more COVID-19 deaths than the official count used by the Cuomo administration. We appreciate your rapid action, and in the interest of full transparency urge you to quickly publish the state’s COVID-19 datasets as open data.

Publishing COVID data in a tabular, downloadable, machine-readable format would help restore trust in state government and help researchers, journalists and the public to better understand the dire pandemic that has cost us loved ones and continues to upend everyday life.

In the attached [March 2021 letter, our groups asked state leaders](#) to publish 121 COVID datasets – all of which are public records subject to disclosure under FOIL.¹ We ask you as Governor to publish this state data without delay. The datasets we urge you to publish are just a start. All COVID-19 data subject to disclosure under FOIL should be published

¹ The current list has 123 datasets.

online, not kept locked away from the public. Of the 121 datasets we identified, the state has published only 14 as open data, with 64 others provided in a format that cannot be easily used or analyzed.

We emphasize that this public health data is owned and paid for by the public and should be published as a matter of course. Many of the missing datasets can be published quickly and are already provided by other states and localities. [New York City's COVID-19 portal](#) allows the public to view datasets in easy-to-understand charts and provides a quick download link to the data beneath each graphic. [California's open data portal](#) also includes a diverse range of COVID-19 datasets on topics ranging from vaccine progress to PPE logistics.

The past year has greatly tested New Yorkers' faith in our state government. We believe that publishing COVID-19 data in an easily findable and usable form would be a very public way for you to underline your commitment to transparency and rebuild trust.

Sincerely,

John Kaehny
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Noel Hidalgo
Executive Director
BetaNYC

Betsy Gotbaum
Executive Director
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