



**Testimony to the NYC Council
for Preliminary Budget Hearing - Technology**

*Council Should Fund 11 Full-Time Open Data Staff,
Hold Regular Oversight Hearing on Open Data Compliance*

March 18, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the Preliminary Budget as concerns funding for the Office of Technology and Innovation. This testimony is being submitted on behalf of Reinvent Albany and BetaNYC.

Thanks to the leadership of the City Council, New York City passed the world's first open data law, and our successes and failures are closely watched by governments everywhere. Unfortunately, a lack of staff – especially developers – continues to undermine the effectiveness of NYC's open data program, including the crucial, money-saving task of automating agency datasets. This was highlighted by Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI) staff, [Reinvent Albany](#), and [BetaNYC testimony](#) at the Council's last [Open Data Compliance hearing in February 2024](#).

To ensure that the New York City's Open Data efforts remain strong, we ask the City Council to do the following:

- 1. The Council's Preliminary Budget response should bring the Open Data Team up to 11 full-time staff members, including at least three software developers.** This would bring them back to pre-COVID levels.
- 2. The City Council should hold another oversight hearing on Open Data Compliance, as it did last in February 2024.**

Currently, the NYC Open Data Team consists of four data analysts/coordinators from the Office of Data Analytics. They are supported by one CUNY TEC fellow working on the team as part of a three-year training program, and a data engineering CUNY TEC fellow that mostly works on open data. This is a relatively small number for a world-leading program with such a huge area of responsibility. Pre-COVID, there were

five *additional* New York City staffers working on Open Data, either full- or part-time: one director of open data, one director of civic engagement, one open data project manager, and two additional data engineers.

Additional funding for the Open Data Team will strengthen NYC's Open Data Program in the following ways:

1. More staff for data management and coordination, including data quality review, automation, documentation, and responses to the open data help desk.¹
2. More staff for engagement programs, including open data ambassadors² to train the general public, and for open data week coordination.³ Staffing in this area will help agencies meet their civic engagement mandate, which is part of the technical standards manual.
3. More staff to ensure that data sharing and analytics practices are shared across agencies, and ensure that global best practices are baked into municipal operations.⁴

Currently, of the 978 datasets that have been established as eligible for automation per the [public data asset inventory dataset](#) on the open data portal, 581 have been automated to date, and there are 353 in the backlog to automate. More staff for OTI would help facilitate this automation, and an oversight hearing by the City Council would help you better understand the obstacles to these datasets being made more current, efficient, and useful.

We thank you for your consideration.

¹ <https://opendata.cityofnewyork.us/engage/>

² <https://opendata.cityofnewyork.us/open-data-ambassadors/>

³ <https://opendata.cityofnewyork.us/open-data-coordinators/>

⁴ <https://www.nyc.gov/content/oti/pages/data-analytics/analytics-exchange>