FY 2011 Open Government Plan

Federal Housing Finance Agency

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Date

Contents

Introduction

The Federal Housing Finance Agency's (FHFA) mission is to provide effective supervision, regulation and housing mission oversight of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the Federal Home Loan Banks to promote their safety and soundness, support housing finance, affordable housing and to support a stable and liquid mortgage market. FHFA regulates and oversees vital components of the secondary mortgage market.

FHFA is implementing an Open Government Plan (Plan) to communicate the goals, timelines and objectives in support of the Open Government Directive (OGD), while guiding its employees to electronically publish agency information. FHFA has taken a number of steps over the past year to share information with the public by establishing the agency Open Government website at http://www.fhfa.gov/open/. FHFA's Open Government objective is to ensure that the information and data released to the public increases the regulatory transparency of the Federal Home Loan Banks, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, while supporting the stability of the mortgage market.

FHFA Goal Statement for Open Government

FHFA's goal is to serve the American public by promoting safety and soundness in the operations of the Federal Home Loan Banks, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. FHFA works with other federal financial regulators to stabilize housing finance including through the implementation of financial and economic recovery policies. FHFA also seeks to raise the standard for the protection of, access to, and disclosure of FHFA's information assets. As such, FHFA remains committed to improving the transparency and openness of government by promoting accountability and providing the public with unprecedented access to information.

Methodology

FHFA uses a team approach to Open Government, which addresses issues that cross multiple disciplines and organizational components. On a regular basis the agency examines its practices with respect to data sharing to determine if improvements can be made. To create a sustainable infrastructure for implementing Open Government and promoting greater access to its information assets, FHFA uses the Agile Implementation methodology[1].

FHFA Open Government Framework

Employee engagement contributed to the formulation of this Open Government Plan, which has led to the incorporation of relevant and useful ideas. Public engagement will be part of FHFA's periodic review, modification, and enhancement of this Plan.

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[1] Agile Implementation is based on iterative and incremental implementations, where requirements and solutions evolve through cross-functional teams.

Certain key FHFA officials serve on the project steering committee responsible for promoting Open Government at the agency. The Deputy Chief Operating Officer leads the Open Government initiative. The Chief Information Officer is the Senior Agency Official for implementing the Open Government Directive. The Chief Financial Officer serves as the Senior Accountable Official for data quality. The steering committee serves as an agency-wide working group chartered to enable FHFA to provide greater transparency, increase participation and collaboration, and to effectively oversee vital components of the secondary mortgage market through available data and resources.

The steering committee is responsible for overseeing the specific lines of activities for the agency listed below:

- Manage communications;
- Maintain and populate the Open Government website, which links to the agency's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) website;
- Create and maintain the Open Government Plan;
- Publish data and identify prospective data reporting; and
- Revise agency polices on an as needed basis.

Alignment with the FHFA Strategic Plan and Core Mission Areas

FHFA embraces the three pillars of the OGD as furthering the agency's mission, vision, values, and goals. The agency open government strategy emphasizes:

- Transparency - promotes accountability by providing the public with access to information on Government operations and activities.
- Participation - invites members of the public to contribute and influence Government policies and functions, so Government can more readily represent the voice of the people.
- Collaboration - encourages cooperation between agencies, across levels of Government and between the public and private sectors.

FHFA aligns its Open Government strategy with the agency's strategic plan, particularly with respect to FHFA's strategic goal of management and organizational excellence, including departmental FOIA liaisons. The Office of Technology and Information Management is responsible for determining the most effective use of technology for creative solutions to access information and active stakeholder engagement, including support of the Open Government webpage http://www.fhfa.gov/open.

Transparency

FHFA is committed to open and transparent government. The agency strives to ensure that the American public has access to as much information as possible while protecting personal privacy and confidential, privileged, and proprietary information. In support of this commitment, FHFA will work to reduce FOIA backlogs and improve data prioritization and release processes.

FOIA

FOIA activities should be fully integrated into the agency's Plan and FHFA is committed to continuing process improvements to eliminate the backlog of FOIA requests.

Concrete steps taken by FHFA to reduce FOIA backlogs and to improve timeliness in responding to requests include:

- Conducting a systemic review of the entire FOIA process within the agency to identify roadblocks and to improve timeliness;
- Analyzing the workload involved in responding to FOIA requests;
- Determining the appropriate resource levels;
- Ensuring an appropriate allocation of resources; and
- Holding regular meetings between FOIA professionals and the FHFA's Chief FOIA Officer to establish dialogue among those officials, so that the agency's Chief FOIA Officer can more effectively troubleshoot problems and facilitate timely responses.

In addition to FOIA personnel, FHFA relies on a broad range of senior-level agency personnel, including personnel from the Office of Congressional Affairs and Communications the Office of the General Counsel, the Officer of Policy Analysis and Research, and other relevant FHFA subject-matter experts, to identify information assets that can and should be released to the public.

FHFA will continue to focus on process improvement, achieving greater operational efficiency, and improving customer service. FHFA will elicit public feedback via the agency FOIA website to identify additional opportunities to improve customer service. The site will also be used to assess FHFA's capacity to analyze, coordinate, and respond to FOIA requests in a timely manner and strengthen the FOIA program.

Data Prioritization and Release Process

FHFA is committed to implementing a permanent process for identifying, preparing, and releasing data on an ongoing basis and incorporating Open Government initiatives into agency strategic planning, IT planning, and budget formulation processes. In so doing, however, FHFA continues to develop a data release process that clearly outlines how security, privacy, quality, and confidentiality risks will be managed before release.

Prior to the publication of this Plan, FHFA posted four datasets on Data.gov and the FHFA Open Government websites:

- Monthly House Price Indexes for Census Divisions and U.S. January 1991 to Latest (Purchase-Only Index (Only Index available with Monthly Frequency)
- Monthly Price Change Estimates for U.S. and Census Divisions; Purchase-Only Index, Seasonally Adjusted
- Monthly Price Change Estimates for U.S. and Census Divisions; Purchase-Only Index, Not Seasonally Adjusted

- Federal Home Loan Bank Membership Data

FHFA has also provided links directly from the www.fhfa.gov/open website under "FHFA Datasets."

As the FHFA implements its Open Government framework, it will seek to identify additional opportunities to increase transparent and open operations. Feedback and input from the public will be incorporated to help determine the most high-value options and desired services.

Participation and FHFA Website

FHFA encourages public participation and engagement through the use of its website www.fhfa.gov. FHFA uses its public internet home page for public communication, feedback, and input.

Regardless of the method or technology used to gather input, FHFA will continue to enhance its efforts to ensure security, privacy, and confidentiality risks are identified and mitigation strategies followed. Part of the strategy for each method must include how FHFA will provide feedback to the public regarding how public input is evaluated and incorporated into FHFA open government initiatives.

Records Management Program

FHFA has provided links directly from the www.fhfa.gov website under "Public Information" and "Records Management" to show how the agency is meeting its existing records management requirements. These requirements serve as the foundation for the agency's records management program, which includes such activities as identifying and scheduling all electronic records, and ensuring the timely transfer of all permanently valuable records to the National Archives. The agency will post its Comprehensive Records Retention and Disposition Schedules on its www.fhfa.gov.

References

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3. Attorney General's guidelines for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 3/19/09, http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/foia-memo-march2009.pdf.

4. OMB Memorandum M-10-06, "Open Government Directive", http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda_2010/m10-06.pdf

5. White House Open Government Initiative Home Page, http://www.whitehouse.gov/open

6. OMB Circular A-130, "Management of Federal Information Resources", http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a130_a130trans4/

7. Information Quality Act, Pub. L. No. 106-554, section 515, http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=106_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ554.106.pdf

8. "Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated by Federal Agencies", 67 FR 8452, http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/reproducible2.pdf

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10. Paperwork Reduction Act, Pub. L. No. 104-13, section 3506(d), http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=104_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ13.pdf

11. 36 CFR Subchapter B – Records Management, http://www.archives.gov/about/regulations/subchapter/b.html

12. E-Government Act of 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-347, section 207(e), http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ347.pdf