To: Ms. Clare Martorana, Federal Chief Information Officer, White House Office Management and Budget (OMB)
cc: Ms. Maria Roat, Deputy Federal Chief Information Officer; Mr. Jordan Burris, Chief of Staff to the Federal Chief Information Officer; Mr. Eric Mill, Senior Advisor on Technology and Cybersecurity to the Federal Chief Information Officer
Date: May 17, 2021

Dear Ms. Martorana,

We the undersigned believe that public stakeholders must be full partners in efforts to improve the quality, usefulness, and shareability of Federal data and information. Meaningful public engagement will be critical to the success of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (Evidence Act), the Federal Data Strategy (FDS), and other Federal data programs.

Beyond having input into the policies themselves, public stakeholders require a formal, ongoing, and effective mechanism for ensuring that Federal programs meet public needs through the data they provide. The American people who ultimately support these Federal data programs, and the organizations that represent them, must be able to help shape Federal data priorities, ensure that Federal data is fit for use, and ask agencies to improve the collection, quality, and availability of specific datasets when necessary. The major issues of our time - including efforts to control the COVID-19 pandemic, achieve racial equity, fight climate change, and ensure a strong and equitable economy - all depend in large part on public access to high-quality Federal data that is suited to public purposes.

To ensure that public data has maximum public value, we believe that OMB, which has leadership authority for the Evidence Act and the FDS, must ensure ongoing stakeholder engagement and meaningful input into the content of Federal data programs. To that end, OMB or agencies or offices it designates should:

1. Identify gaps and challenges in Federal data resources that are not meeting public needs.
2. Identify needs for Federal data from state and local governments.
3. Support individual agencies in engagement to identify and meet public needs for their data.
4. Coordinate and support cross-agency efforts to address public data needs.
5. Organize and publicize use cases on the public application of Federal data.
6. Establish a permanent Advisory Council on Public Engagement to represent public needs for Federal data.
7. Coordinate with other Federal offices and committees whose work relates to the goals outlined here.

The Center for Open Data Enterprise (CODE) has proposed establishing an Office of Public Data Engagement, to be housed within OMB, as one possible mechanism to carry out these

functions.[1] We urge OMB to establish processes, resources, and accountability for meeting these stakeholder engagement goals, whether through the new office proposed by CODE or other means. A commitment from OMB to ensure meaningful stakeholder engagement will produce higher-quality Federal data that is leveraged as a strategic asset, both within and outside of the Federal government.

Thank you for considering our proposal. Please contact Matt Rumsey, Research and Communications Manager at the Center for Open Data Enterprise (CODE) at matthew@odenterprise.org, if you would like to respond to this letter or have any questions.

Sincerely,

ACT | The App Association
Beeck Center for Social Impact + Innovation, Georgetown University
Center for Data Innovation
Center for Open Data Enterprise (CODE)
Center for Technology in Government, University at Albany, SUNY
Coforma
DataKind
Demand Progress
Digital Democracy Project
Government Accountability Project
MetroLab Network
mySidewalk
National Conference on Citizenship
Open Data Watch
Open The Government
Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC)

Individuals (organizational affiliations listed for identification purposes only):

- Misha Belkindas, President Elect, International Statistical Association (IAOS)
- Marc DaCosta, Co-founder, Enigma Technologies
- Carol A. Flannagan, Ph.D., Research Professor, University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute
- Teresa M. Harrison, Research Professor, Department of Communication, University at Albany, SUNY
- Laura Manley, Director, Technology and Public Purpose Project, Harvard Kennedy School

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[1] This proposal is described in detail in CODE's comments to the Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building, which are available at: http://reports.opendataenterprise.org/OPDE-Comments-2021.pdf. For more information on CODE's proposal, please contact Joel Gurin, President of the Center for Open Data Enterprise, at joel@odenterprise.org.

- Elizabeth Moses-Mullard, Founding Director, AlphaZULU Advocates
- Miriam Nisbet, Founding Director, Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)
- Theresa A. Pardo, Associate Vice President for Research and Special Assistant to the President, University at Albany, SUNY
- Kathy Stack, CEO, KB Stack Consulting LLC; Former Deputy Associate Director for Education, Income Maintenance and Labor, OMB
- Fred Trotter, Editor in Chief, CareSet Journal
- Stacy Whittle, Chief Creative Officer, Front Page Live