



Bill de Blasio  
 Mayor, City Hall  
 New York, New York 10007

VIA EMAIL

April 30, 2020

**Re: Please Publish the City’s COVID-19 Data as Open Data**

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

We write to ask you to publish as open data the tabular information the City has gathered about the COVID-19 emergency. This valuable public data is of great interest to researchers and journalists and will allow the informed public to contribute insights and analysis to the City’s effort to fight COVID-19.

We greatly appreciate your efforts to *tell* the public what is happening through daily press briefings, the online COVID-19 data page and social media. We also wholeheartedly agree with the language in the City’s [open data law](#), a bill you supported which states, “Making city data available online using open standards will make the operation of city government more transparent, effective and accountable to the public ... [and] permit the public to assist in identifying efficient solutions for government, promote innovative strategies for social progress, and create economic opportunities.”

Though the *COVID-19 data page* is a valuable resource for those seeking local or demographic information about the virus’s impact, none of the information is available in the City’s open data portal. While some of the data provided is useful, much of it is limited, doesn’t provide raw numbers, and is only available in PDF format. We ask that the City make COVID-19 public data available as downloadable, machine-readable open data, which will vastly expand the use and thus value of City data gathered at great public expense. Any data provided should be shared by [Neighborhood Tabulation Area](#).

We think it is reasonable to expect New York City to provide as open data information that has been provided in other public portals (see attached chart), such as the following:

- Confirmed cases by race/ethnicity
- Number of ICU patients who have tested positive for COVID-19
- Percentage of hospitals responding to COVID-19 patients

Some of this information has been provided in the Mayor's daily press conferences or on the COVID-19 page, but is not available as open data or outside of GitHub. The City can fill the gap by simply providing the information in the open data portal. We call for the City to open all COVID-19 datasets to the public by publishing them on [the NYC Open Data Portal](#).

New York City is widely lauded for being one of the most transparent cities in the country. We ask that New York continue to lead by opening all COVID-19 datasets to the public.

Sincerely,

John Kaehny  
Executive Director  
Reinvent Albany

Noel Hidalgo  
Executive Director  
BetaNYC

Betsy Gotbaum  
Executive Director  
Citizens Union

Catherine Gray  
Co-President  
League of Women Voters New York City (LWVNYC)

Daniel Bevarly  
Executive Director

National Freedom of Information Coalition

Diane Kennedy

President

New York News Publishers Association

Blair Horner

Executive Director

New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)

Julie Samuels

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