



*Enhancing access to government information  
Ensuring transparency of government operations  
Promoting civic engagement*

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[Home](#) > Make D.C. more transparent in 2019

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## **Make D.C. more transparent in 2019**

December 2018

Dear Friend of Open Government:

As the New Year approaches, the D.C. Open Government Coalition (DCOGC) would like to thank you for your support and commitment to enhancing the public's access to government information and ensuring the transparency of the District of Columbia government. This past year has been both productive and frustrating; 2018 serves as a reminder that we have a lot of work to do in the coming 12 months and beyond.

Since we organized in 2009, DCOGC has consistently made a difference by influencing D.C. government policies and procedures. Over the past decade, we have enjoyed our share of successes and shown a record of remarkable accomplishments to bring more open government to the District. This year, open government in the District regrettably suffered some setbacks. This means we will need to redouble our efforts and work more creatively and collaboratively to muster additional allies in the goal of transparency and open government.

Let me briefly explain why 2018 was not the best year for open government in the District of Columbia.

- Despite our efforts, we couldn't stop the questionable treatment of Traci Hughes, who was not rehired as director of the D.C. Office of Open Government. If you want more details, please see Tom Sherwood's story in the City Paper.
- Following up Traci's departure, the D.C. Council downgraded the independence of the Office of Open Government by folding it into the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability and giving BEGA the authority to overrule OOG decisions. We opposed this change because we believe the OOG should be as free of politics and independent as possible. My Commentary in the DC Line explains our concerns.
- We struggled to make progress on policy priorities, such as an omnibus open government reform bill; we delayed but have not defeated a massive court-record expungement bill; and we have lobbied, so far unsuccessfully, for the District to procure a better online system for public records requests.

At times, we felt we were the lone voice fighting for more open government in the District. Rather

than accepting the status quo, however, we organized a work session in late November, bringing together more than two dozen advocates representing a broad cross-section of good government interests to discuss collaboration and cooperation on matters that bind us. This effort will continue in the next year. And we have begun planning for our very successful annual Open Government Summit that brings together folks from throughout the city during National Sunshine Week in March to discuss many of these critical issues.

With elected District leaders getting ready for their new terms, now is the time for additional vigilance; we cannot afford to take a breather from these important tasks. We are confident that with your help and enhanced collaboration with others in the District's watchdog community, we will meet the mounting challenges and have a productive 2019. But every member of our board is a volunteer who has a full-time day job, and we find ourselves drawn into more and more open government challenges and opportunities each year.

The D.C. Open Government Coalition takes no dues — we rely solely on the generosity of people like you. Any amount you contribute would go directly to strengthening what we do. Please consider supporting us by making a year-end donation at <http://www.dcohc.org/node/397> or via check to DCOHC, P.O. Box 73771 Washington, DC 20056.

On behalf of the Coalition, thank you for your support. Together, we can bring more transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement to the District of Columbia government. Wishing you a happy holiday season and enjoyable New Year!

With best regards,  
Tom Susman  
President

The D.C. Open Government Coalition is exempt from federal income tax as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Our EIN is 26-4520540.

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