Open Data Plan

2025

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board

Chief Data Officer

Contents

Purpose

This plan satisfies requirements in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-25-05 regarding public data asset dissemination.[1]

Pursuant to the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act), the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) is committed to improving the breadth and depth of our Open Data Catalog to make the RRB's data findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable.[2]

Background

Title II of the Evidence Act, the OPEN Government Data Act, aims to enhance transparency and accessibility of government data.[3] It requires federal agencies to publish their open data information online in standardized, machine-readable formats, ensuring that metadata is included in the Federal Data Catalog, data.gov. OMB M-25-05 further defines key actions that facilitate improved governance and innovation by making data readily available and accessible to the public.

To date, the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has compiled metadata on data assets which are published at data.gov.

This Open Data Plan outlines the RRB's goals, requirements, and activities regarding open data management and publication.

Agency Data Requirements

This plan follows the structure of OMB M-25-05 section 6, Agency Data Requirements: OPEN Data Plan.

    a. Data Collection Processes for Open Formats

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[1] OMB M-25-05 provided guidance on the contents of agency Open Data Plans. See Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, OMB M-25-05 Phase 2 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Open Government Data Access and Management Guidance (2025).

[2] Public Law No. 115-435 (2019), Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, is also referred to as the Evidence Act.

[3] Title II of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 is also referred to as the Open, Public, Electronic, and Necessary Government Data Act or the OPEN Government Data Act.

b. Data Usage Information
c. Collaboration with Data Users
d. Open Data Point of Contact
e. Improvement Processes
f. Open Data Goal Requirements
g. Prioritizing Public Data Asset Review
h. Compliance Status
i. Updating the Strategic Information Resources Management Plan

The on-going activities and out-year plans described below also address requirements listed in OMB M-25-05 sections *4. Agency Requirements that Apply to All Data Assets* and *5. Requirements that Apply to All Public Data Assets*.

a. Data Collection Processes for Open Formats

The RRB has processes and procedures to ensure data is collected and maintained in open, machine-readable formats.

On-Going Activities

- Ensure that RRB public data assets are in one of the following open formats: EXCEL, PDF, XML, CSV, JSON, RDF, and HTML, or other machine-readable formats released to data.gov.

Out-Year Plans

- Establish clear rules and guidance for data collection in open formats and maintenance under an open license to maximize access, use, and reuse of public data assets.
- Review current data collection methods to identify gaps in open format usage.

b. Data Usage Information

The RRB collects and analyzes digital information on data asset usage by external and internal users.

On-Going Activities

- Continue to collect, use, and report metrics on data.gov.
- Provide a link on www.RRB.gov/data to the data.gov RRB Data Metrics that will show: Most Viewed Dataset Pages, Most Downloaded Dataset Files, and Most Clicked Outbound Links.

Out-Year Plans

- Continue to provide on RRB.gov/data the link to data.gov [RRB Data Metrics](#) which shows most viewed dataset pages, most downloaded dataset files, and most clicked outbound links.
- Strive to analyze and measure the RRB's data asset metrics by the public to gain insights.

c. Collaboration with Data Users

The RRB strives to enable transparency and fosters customer and public input via the RRB Field Offices and RRB.gov, such as the [RRB Frequently Asked Questions webpage](#).

On-Going Activities

- Improve customer experience (CX) via a new initiative, Citizen Centric Online Self Services (CCOSS) which is currently in the development stage; once operational, the RRB will gather data from the customers and utilize knowledge obtained to improve the RRB data enterprise.
- Continue to participate in government-wide forums, such as the Chief Data Officer Council, to leverage best practices from other agencies.

Out-Year Goal

- Work with the new CCOSS project to engage the public in identifying and prioritizing data for release.
- Consult with other agencies to identify usage of public data assets by non-government users in order to improve open data usage.

d. Open Data Point of Contact

The RRB published points of contact on the RRB.gov website.

On-Going Activities

- The RRB point of contact is the Chief Data Officer (CDO); requests can be sent to OpenData@rrb.gov.

Out-Year Goals

- Monitor engagement with the public and refine internal points of contact to improve answering inquiries regarding a public data asset.

e. Open Data Improvement Processes

The RRB ensures timeliness, completeness, consistency, accuracy, usefulness, and availability of open government data assets principally through data.gov. By making the

Agency's metadata publicly accessible, in compliance with the Open Data Act, the RRB continues to foster transparency, collaboration, and scientific advancement.

On-Going Activities

- Standardize metadata tags and categories to enhance the searchability of public data assets.
- Define roles and responsibilities for data owners, data stewards, and data users.

Out-Year Goals

- Conduct an annual review of the RRB data assets.
- Assess metadata strategies, including quality, lineage, and classification guidance, aimed at improving the discovery, access, and use of data.

f. Open Data Goal Requirements

The RRB strives to improve workforce development, governance frameworks, and cross-agency data infrastructure to meet open data mandates.

On-Going Activities

- Clearly define RRB's data roles and responsibilities.
- Comply with current data.gov reporting requirements.

Out-Year Goals

- Identify new data sharing opportunities to increase data-driven improvements.
- Strive to facilitate staff training on open data practices.

g. Prioritizing Public Data Asset Review

The RRB evaluates public data asset value by continually monitoring and tracking activities on its websites, including page views and downloads.

On-Going Activities

- Continue to develop the RRB's internal Datapedia repository of system data.
- Analyze and measure the internal repository and identify data sets that are releasable to the public on data.gov.

Out-Year Goals

- Strive to develop processes and procedures to respond to public inquiries about quality issues, usability issues, recommendations for improvements, and complaints related to open data.

- Collaborate with RRB customers and stakeholders to integrate open data into data exchange processes to identify public data assets.

h. Compliance Status

The RRB will comply with all requirements of OMB M-25-05 and the requirements of 44 U.S.C. § 3511 when disseminating a public data asset pursuant to the Evidence Act.

On-Going Activities

- Manage the RRB's internal Datapedia repository and identify data sets that can be made public via data.gov.
- Establish processes to ensure that the RRB satisfies government standards and requirements.

Out-Year Goals

- Coordinate within the RRB to ensure that any public release of data assets is lawful, appropriate, and adheres to data privacy requirements.
- Integrate open data processes and technology internally.

i. Updating the Strategic Information Resources Management Plan

The RRB's Strategic Information Resources Management Plan is publicly posted on the RRB website and is updated every 5 years. The Open Data Plan will be updated per Federal guidance.

Appendix A: Definitions

- **Data** — recorded information, regardless of form or the media on which the data is recorded (44 U.S.C. § 3502, OMB M-25-05).
- **Data asset** — a collection of data elements or data sets that may be grouped together (44 U.S.C. § 3502, OMB M-25-05).
- **Federal Data Catalog** — a centralized public online interface dedicated to sharing U.S. government data assets with the public; maintained by GSA and available through data.gov (OMB M-25-05).
- **Machine-readable** — data in a format that can be easily processed by a computer without human intervention while ensuring no semantic meaning is lost (44 U.S.C. § 3502, OMB M-25-05).
- **Metadata** — Structural or descriptive information about data such as content, format, source, rights, accuracy, provenance, frequency, periodicity, granularity, publisher or responsible party, contact information, method of collection, and other descriptions (44 U.S.C. § 3502, OMB M-25-05).

- **Open Data** — publicly available data structured in a way that enables the data to be fully discoverable and usable by end users (OMB M-13-13).
- **Open format** — A file format for storing digital data where the format is platform independent and machine-readable and is maintained (A) at no cost to the public; and (B) with no restrictions on copying, publishing, distributing, transmitting, citing, or adapting such a format (OMB M-25-05).
- **Open Government data asset** — a public data asset that is (A) machine-readable; (B) available (or could be made available) in an open format; (C) not encumbered by restrictions, other than intellectual property rights, including under titles 17 and 35, that would impede the use or reuse of such asset; and (D) based on an underlying open standard that is maintained by a standards organization (44 U.S.C. § 3502, OMB M-25-05).
- **Open license** — A legal guarantee that a data asset is made available (A) at no cost to the public; and (B) with no restrictions on copying, publishing, distributing, transmitting, citing, or adapting such asset (44 U.S.C. § 3502, OMB M-25-05).
- **Public data asset** — a data asset, or part thereof, maintained by the Federal Government that has been, or may be, released to the public, including any data asset, or part thereof, subject to disclosure under [5 U.S.C. § 552] (OMB M-25-05).

RRB Open Data Plan