



# Ten Texas Traits of Good Government<sup>TM</sup>

While the nature, purpose & structure of governmental organizations vary, below is a list of characteristics that are commonly shared among those public organizations that excel in a representative democracy. To exemplify *Good Government* in Texas an entity demonstrates that the organization is:

**1. Respectful: People are treated with fairness, courtesy & professionalism.**

- Comment A. Civility & decorum are exhibited in meetings & individual interactions.
- Comment B. The public's rights are protected, including the ability to participate in governance.
- Comment C. Dissent, critiques & contrary views are welcomed.
- Comment D. Differing backgrounds & attributes are appreciated & celebrated.
- Comment E. The public & stakeholders are engaged proactively & routinely.
- Comment F. Officials are mindful that entities are comprised of humans with personal lives.

**2. Responsive: Reasonable public expectations are met in a timely manner.**

- Comment A. Officials are compelled by a duty to serve the citizenry.
- Comment B. Officials are receptive to & considerate of public input on public affairs.
- Comment C. Policies & programs reflect the public's preferences.
- Comment D. Public complaints & inquiries are responded to fully & in a timely manner.
- Comment E. Services & programs are administered with an emphasis on customer service.

**3. Effective: Productivity is evaluated to gauge performance & goal attainment.**

- Comment A. Progress on public purposes is monitored, prioritized & publicly reported.
- Comment B. Public resources are managed & expended responsibly.
- Comment C. Outputs are measured & evaluated to enhance productivity.
- Comment D. Programs & services align with publicly stated goals.
- Comment E. Programs & services are assessed to ensure they serve worthwhile objectives.

**4. Transparent: Public has access to agency data & the decision-making process.**

- Comment A. Meetings are conducted in a manner that facilitates public participation.
- Comment B. Records are archived & made available for public access.
- Comment C. The public is routinely informed of significant programs, policies & regulations.

- Comment D. Engagement of the public throughout the governing process is a priority.
- Comment E. Officials are accessible to the public, including their critics & the media.
- Comment F. Emphasis is placed on sharing factual data with the public free of advocacy.
- Comment G. Background explanations & situational context are given proactively.
- Comment H. Technology is utilized routinely to educate & engage the public.

**5. Competent: Officials are skilled, educated & dedicated to continuous improvement.**

- Comment A. Officials are gauged primarily on their capabilities to serve.
- Comment B. Abilities to make wise decisions & provide services are maintained.
- Comment C. Capacity to serve the public is expanded & refined over time.
- Comment D. Officials seek & are provided continuing education & development opportunities.
- Comment E. Schedules provide for rest, recuperation & replenishment to ensure future capacity.

**6. Ethical: Public good is paramount, self-dealing is restrained & corruption is prevented.**

- Comment A. Officials place the public's needs above their own self-interests.
- Comment B. Officials behave in a responsible, trustworthy manner.
- Comment C. Safeguards are in place to prevent all forms of misconduct.
- Comment D. Rules & procedures are in place to disclose & avoid Conflicts of Interest.
- Comment E. Officials receive periodic training & publicly commit to ethical behavior.
- Comment F. Beyond following rules, officials strive to avoid the appearance of impropriety.

**7. Lawful: Authority is exercised in accordance with established law.**

- Comment A. Officials abide by legal limitations & obligations.
- Comment B. Actions conform with constitutions, statutes, regulations & judicial rulings.
- Comment C. Local rules are adopted in accordance with established guidelines & procedures.
- Comment D. Codes are enforced objectively & consistently.
- Comment E. Institutions are structured & administered with respect for the rule of law.

**8. Innovative: Modern methods are utilized to take advantage of advancements.**

- Comment A. New solutions are explored & modern methods devised.
- Comment B. Learning atmospheres are cultivated to encourage modernization.
- Comment C. Pilot projects & beta tests are cultural norms.
- Comment D. Creativity is resourced & rewarded.

**9. Economical: Budgets are managed prudently & resources handled responsibly.**

- Comment A. Financial management is based on commonly accepted principles.
- Comment B. Standard policies & procedures are put in place to provide uniformity.
- Comment C. Contracting & debt are overseen to ensure risks are necessary & reasonable.

- Comment D. Regularly scheduled public audits tracking expenses & revenues are available.
- Comment E. Financial practices align with long range objectives.
- Comment F. Financial policies are in place to ensure long-term financial sustainability.
- Comment G. Efficiency is achieved through the mindful utilization of available resources.

#### **10. Accountable: Officials take responsibility for their decisions & actions.**

- Comment A. Decisions are made known to the public & subject to public scrutiny.
- Comment B. Decision makers acknowledge, recognize & reflect on the outcomes of their actions.
- Comment C. Procedures & sanctions are in place for misconduct & irresponsible behavior.
- Comment D. Agreements with third party providers of public services ensure public accountability.

**September 1, 2025.** This list was compiled by Alan Bojorquez. Several insightful, educated & experienced city managers & public administration professors contributed to the list. These traits were inspired by the ***Twelve Principles of Good Democratic Governance***, which were adopted by the Council of Europe in 2008. This information is offered for educational purposes, only. Alan may be contacted at: (512) 250-0411, [Alan@TexasMunicipalLawyers.com](mailto:Alan@TexasMunicipalLawyers.com), [www.TexasMunicipalLawyers.com](http://www.TexasMunicipalLawyers.com), Bojorquez Law Firm, 11675 Jollyville Road, Suite 300, Austin, Texas 78759.

