Ten Texas Traits of Good Government

While the nature & 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 be recognized as exemplifying *Good Government* an entity should demonstrate that the organization is:

1. **Respectful:** **People are treated with fairness, courtesy & professionalism.**
   - Comment A. The public's rights are protected, including the ability to participate in governance.
   - Comment B. Dissent and contrary views are welcomed.
   - Comment C. Differing backgrounds and attributes are appreciated and celebrated.
   - Comment D. Civility and decorum are exhibited in meetings and individual interactions.
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 and considerate of public input on public affairs.
   - Comment C. Policies and programs reflect the public's preferences.
   - Comment D. Citizen complaints and inquiries are responded to fully and in a timely manner.
3. **Effective:** **Productivity is evaluated to gauge performance & goal attainment.**
   - Comment A. Progress on public purposes is monitored, prioritized, and publicly reported.
   - Comment B. Public resources are managed and expended responsibly.
   - Comment C. Outputs are measured and evaluated to enhance productivity.
   - Comment D. Programs and services are aligned with publicly-stated goals.
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 and made available for public inspection.
   - Comment C. The public is routinely informed of significant programs, policies and 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 and the media.
   - Comment F. An emphasis is placed on sharing factual data with the public free of advocacy.
5. **Competent:** **Officials are skilled, educated & dedicated to continuous improvement.**
   - Comment A. Officials will be gauged primarily on their capabilities to serve.

Comment B. Abilities to make wise decisions and provide services shall be maintained.

Comment C. Capacity to serve the public will be expanded and refined over time.

Comment D. Officials seek and are provided continuing education and development opportunities.

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 must behave in a responsible, trustworthy manner.

Comment C. Safeguards are in place to prevent all forms of misconduct.

Comment D. Rules and procedures are in place to disclose and avoid Conflicts of Interest.

Comment E. Officials receive periodic training and publicly commit to ethical behavior.

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

Comment A. Officials abide by legal limitations and obligations.

Comment B. Actions conform with constitutions, statutes, regulations, and judicial rulings.

Comment C. Local rules are adopted in accordance with established guidelines and procedures.

Comment D. Codes are enforced objectively and consistently.

Comment E. Institutions are structured and administered with a respect for the rule of law.

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

Comment A. New solutions will be sought and modern methods devised.

Comment B. Learning atmospheres will be cultivated to encourage modernization.

Comment C. Pilot projects and beta tests will be cultural norms.

Comment D. Creativity is resourced and rewarded.

9. Fiscally Sound: Budgets are managed prudently & resources handled responsibly.

Comment A. Financial management will be based on commonly-accepted principles.

Comment B. Standard policies and procedures will be put in place to provide uniformity.

Comment C. Contracting and debt will be overseen to ensure risks are necessary and reasonable.

Comment D. Regularly-scheduled public audits tracking expenses and revenues are available.

Comment E. Financial practices are in alignment with long range objectives.

Comment F. Financial policies are in place to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

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

Comment A. Decisions are made known to the public and subject to public scrutiny.

Comment B. Decision makers, individually and collectively, own up to their actions.

Comment C. Procedures and sanctions are in place for misconduct and irresponsible behavior.

Comment D. Agreements with third party providers of public services ensure public accountability.

This list was drafted by Alan Bojorquez, July 3, 2025. Several city managers and public administration professors contributed to the list. It was inspired by the *Twelve Principles of Good Democratic Governance* adopted by the Council of Europe in 2008. *Draft "F"*