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About the Panel

Annual Joint Meeting

Texas Tech University Public Administration Alumni Association
 Texas City Management Association (Panhandle & West Texas)
 McKenzie-Merket Alumni Center, Lubbock, Texas
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What's the state of our Local Gov universe?

What does life for City Officials look like from the road?

- What types of challenges are common among cities?
- How unique & isolated are governing issues?
- Are problems governing specific & individualized?
- Is there a State / National perspective?



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Why do we care about Good Government?

When we care passionately about Public Service:

- We want to better serve our communities!
- We hope to strengthen the public's trust!
- We strive for continual improvement!
- We want to know how we're doing!
- We want to govern better!
- We want to do better!



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How do we know what “*Good Government*” is?

- Can we gauge our efforts to govern well?
- By what standard is “success” measured?
- When do we know we’re doing it right?
- Is complying with “the Law” enough?



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Are there Common Principles we can utilize?

- What are the attributes we can all agree upon?
- Is there a list of aspirational goals we can embrace?
- Where can we find practical standards to implement?
- How do we structure our conversations on governing better?



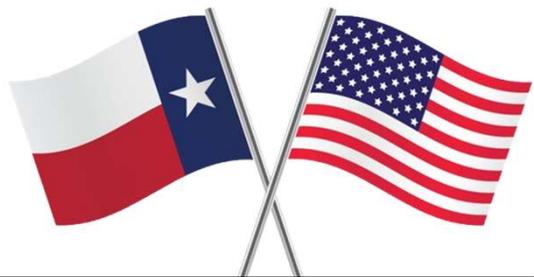
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There's No Clear Standard for Texas or U.S. Cities

Numerous annual awards & certifications from different state or national groups that highlight *some* principles

Support for certain *specific* principles can be found in:

- State Constitutions
- State Statutes
- Rules of Professional Conduct
- City Home Rule Charters
- City Codes of Ethics
- City Policies, Practices, Traditions
- Professional Association Codes of Ethics



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Sampling of City Awards in U.S.

Various accolades highlight many worthy principles

National Civic League OUR WORK ▾ EVENTS & PROGRAMS ▾
The All-America City Award recognizes communities that leverage civic engagement, collaboration, inclusiveness and innovation to successfully address local issues.

Bloomberg Philanthropies
Helping Cities Thrive With Data
Well-managed cities use data to equitably deliver services and solve problems. The What Works Cities Certification program, launched by Bloomberg Philanthropies and led by Results for America, is the first-of-its-kind standard of excellence for data-driven, well-managed local government.

AMERICAN CITY & COUNTY
Crown Communities Awards

NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
CITY CULTURAL DIVERSITY AWARDS

TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
2024 County Best Practices Awards

TML TEXAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE
MUNICIPAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

ICMA
Local Government Excellence Awards
2025 ICMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

OPENGOV
RECOGNIZING YOUR TRANSFORMATIVE WORK
High-Performance Government Awards
OpenGov's High-Performance Government Awards celebrate the most forward-thinking government agencies, higher education institutions, special districts, and other public-sector game-changers. Through the use of modern technology, these organizations are finding ways to solve problems, work smarter, and improve communities.

GOVX **gt** government technology
GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE AWARDS
GOVX SUMMIT - GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE SUMMIT & AWARDS
The Center for Digital Government (CDG) has recognized and benchmarked state and local government's online progress for over 20 years. CDG is taking this recognition to the next level with the GovX Awards. This premiere annual event showcases the latest trends, best practices and ideas around the evolving experience of government and recognizes the states, cities and counties at the forefront of the government experience movement. Top jurisdictions will be honored at this celebratory awards event.

THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS
Grant and Award Opportunities

TRANSPARENCY STARS
Texas Comptroller
RECOGNIZING LOCAL TRANSPARENCY ACHIEVEMENTS

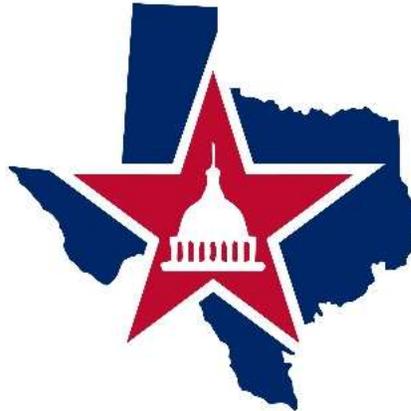
BUDGET AWARD

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Ten Texas Traits of Good Government™

Entities exemplifying these traits demonstrate that they are:

1. Respectful
2. Responsive
3. Effective
4. Transparent
5. Competent
6. Ethical
7. Lawful
8. Innovative
9. Economical
10. Accountable



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How can we factor the Ten Traits into our Cities?

Possible options for Implementation may include:

- Evaluate your organization's performance based on Ten Traits
- Inform Public about Ten Traits & encourage them to gauge your Conduct based on those attributes (*post online*)
- Engage in Regional Conversations about Ten Traits w/ your Peers
- Have a Retreat where Council can adopt as Values or Principles
- Discuss Ten Traits during your Strategic Planning Sessions
- Incorporate Ten Traits into your local rules & policies
- Approve an Ordinance or Resolution adopting Ten Traits
- Address Ten Traits as part of your Training efforts
- Create a Certification or Awards program



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1. Respectful

People are treated with fairness, courtesy & professionalism

- Civility & decorum are exhibited in meetings & individual interactions
- The public's rights are protected, including the ability to participate in governance
- Dissent, critiques & contrary views are welcomed
- Differing backgrounds & attributes are appreciated & celebrated
- The public & stakeholders are engaged proactively & routinely
- Officials remain mindful that entities are comprised of people with human challenges



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2. Responsive

Reasonable public expectations are met in a timely manner

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



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3. Effective

Productivity is evaluated to gauge performance & goal attainment

- Progress on public purposes is monitored, prioritized & publicly reported
- Public resources are managed & expended responsibly
- Outputs are measured & evaluated to enhance productivity
- Programs & services align with publicly stated goals
- Programs & services are assessed to determine if they serve worthwhile objectives



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4. Transparent

Public has access to agency data & the decision-making process

- Meetings are conducted in a manner that facilitates public participation
- Records are archived & made available for public access
- The public is routinely informed of significant programs, policies & regulations
- Engagement of the public throughout the governing process is a priority
- Officials are accessible to the public, including their critics & the media
- Emphasis is placed on sharing factual data with the public free of advocacy
- Technology is utilized routinely to educate & engage the public



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5. Competent

Officials are skilled, educated & dedicated to continuous improvement

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



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6. Ethical

Public good is paramount, self-dealing is restrained & corruption is prevented

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



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7. Lawful

Authority is exercised in accordance with established law

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



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8. Innovative

Modern methods are utilized to take advantage of advancements

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



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9. Economical

Budgets are managed prudently & resources handled responsibly

- Financial management is based on commonly accepted principles
- Standard policies & procedures are put in place to provide uniformity
- Contracting & debt are overseen to ensure risks are necessary & reasonable
- Regularly scheduled public audits tracking expenses & revenues are available
- Financial practices align with objectives
- Financial policies are in place to ensure long-term financial sustainability
- Efficiency is achieved through the mindful utilization of available resources



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10. Accountable

Officials take responsibility for their decisions & actions

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



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Resilience

Role of Ten Texas Traits of Good Government

- Might help us address issues of **Burnout**
- Relationships can be enhanced to improve Collegiality
- **Trait 1. Respectful:** touches upon Civility & Decorum
 - Reminds us entities are made up of humans w/ personal lives
- **Trait 5. Competent:** addresses Training & Development
 - References a need for Rest, Recouperation & Replenishment

For more info on Good Government go to [TexasMunicipalLawyers.com](https://www.texasmunicipallawyers.com) (Resources)



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