COLLECTION I — THE 12 POINTS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

The 12 Points of Good Governance — Overview Guide

A short introduction to all twelve principles, for general audiences and community presentations.

By Daniel P. Devine · Civest Sphere · November 2026



WATCH THE VIDEO

The 12 Points in 60 Seconds: the full video series

Watch all twelve 60-second videos on American Civic Power or the YouTube channel.

https://www.americancivicpower.com/goodgovernance

A common language for good government

Most of us can describe bad government in detail. Fewer of us can say what good government looks like. The 12 Points of Good Governance give citizens a shared, nonpartisan vocabulary for judging the institutions that shape their lives, from a village board to Congress.

The 12 Points aren't a party platform or a policy agenda. They're standards anyone can apply, whatever their politics.

The 12 Points

1. **Rule of Law.** The same rules apply to everyone, including the people in charge.
2. **Transparency.** Decisions, spending and records are open to the public.

3. **Accountability.** Officials answer for their choices, and there are real consequences.
4. **Participation.** Every resident has a meaningful way to be heard.
5. **Consensus Orientation.** Government works to find common ground among competing interests.
6. **Equity & Inclusiveness.** Everyone has a fair stake and a fair share of attention.
7. **Effectiveness & Efficiency.** Public money and effort produce real results.
8. **Responsiveness.** Institutions act on what residents need, in reasonable time.
9. **Strategic Vision.** Leaders plan for the long term, not just the next election.
10. **Ethical Leadership.** Officials act with integrity and avoid conflicts of interest.
11. **Separation of Powers.** No single office or branch holds unchecked power.
12. **Local Power.** Decisions are made as close to the people affected as possible.

How to use them

Pick one institution you deal with, such as your town board, school board or county legislature. Go through the 12 Points one at a time and ask: is this happening here? Where's the evidence? You'll quickly see where your government is strong and where it needs pressure.

The **12 Points Self-Assessment Scorecard** in the Civic Library turns this into a one-page worksheet. Each point also has its own Citizen's Guide with signs to look for and actions you can take.

Using the 12 Points in a group

- **Civic groups and clubs:** take one point per meeting and discuss how your local government measures up.
- **Classrooms:** have students score a real institution and present their evidence.
- **Candidate forums:** ask candidates how they'd improve a specific point.

Last reviewed November 2026. This guide is general information, not legal advice. Laws, deadlines and procedures change, so confirm details with the official source before you act.

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