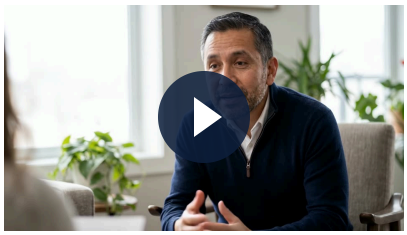
COLLECTION I — THE 12 POINTS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Effectiveness & Efficiency — Citizen's Guide

How citizens can evaluate whether their government is delivering results responsibly.

By Daniel P. Devine · Civest Sphere · November 2026



WATCH THE VIDEO

Effectiveness & Efficiency in 60 Seconds · 0:53

Watch it on American Civic Power or YouTube.

https://www.americancivicpower.com/goodgovernance#effectiveness-efficiency

What it means

Effectiveness means government actually achieves what it sets out to do. Efficiency means it does so without wasting public money, time or resources.

Why it matters

Every tax dollar spent poorly is a dollar not spent on something residents need. Effective, efficient government earns public trust and makes room for new priorities.

Signs it's working

- Programs have clear goals and report on results, not just spending.
- Big purchases go through competitive bidding.
- Services are delivered on time, and problems get fixed.
- Budgets explain what each department accomplishes.

Warning signs

- Projects that run years late and far over budget.
- Contracts that go to the same vendors without competition.
- Duplicate services between overlapping governments or special districts.
- No measurable goals, so no one can tell if anything is working.

What you can do

1. Read your local budget, and ask what each major line accomplishes. See *Understanding Your Local Budget*.
2. Look up contracts and bids. Civest Sphere's Public Records page shows how to request them.
3. Ask officials what success looks like for a program, and how they measure it.
4. Read state comptroller audits of your town, county or school district.

Related points

Accountability, Transparency, Strategic Vision.

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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