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Civic Education

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Understand the decision. Find the records. Follow the money.

Start here to learn how to identify the responsible government or entity, understand a service, participate effectively and follow public spending.

Who did what, under what authority, and with whose money?

Explore the series through the same local framework: Appling County | Baxley | Graham | Surrency | Shared / Authorities.

This series teaches a way to investigate, not a complete current service or contact directory. Start with the eight questions in [Module 1](#). Later modules focus on the service, participation and money parts of that same checklist.

Start with the question you have

“Who is responsible?” Start with Module 1 and identify the location, issue, action and source of authority.

“Who provides this service?” Use Module 2 to trace the service area, provider, agreement, funding and records.

“How do I ask, participate or get documents?” Use Module 3 to prepare a focused inquiry or request and check the procedure for the particular meeting.

“What happened to the money?” Use Module 4 to connect the approval, financial records and evidence of the result.

1. Who Governs What?

Begin with the governmental map. Learn the difference between geographic Appling County and County government, incorporated and unincorporated areas, and the roles of municipalities and authorities. Use the jurisdiction questions to identify the decision you want to understand.

[Read Module 1: Who Governs What?](#)

2. How Services Actually Work

Follow a service from its coverage area to its provider, funding, decision-maker and records. Learn what to look for in service-delivery records and agreements when several governments or organizations are involved.

[Read Module 2: How Services Actually Work](#)

3. Citizen Toolkit

Choose the relevant meeting or office, prepare a focused records request, document what happened and follow up. The local meeting procedures covered here are specifically for Appling County Board of Commissioners meetings; other bodies and public hearings may use different procedures.

[Read Module 3: Citizen Toolkit](#)

4. Follow the Money

Trace a budget decision through its funding, commitments, payments and evidence of delivery. Practice with clearly labeled hypothetical figures and use a worksheet to keep each entity, fund and reporting period clear.

[Read Module 4: Follow the Money](#)

One issue can take you through all four

Follow the [fictional City B facility repair](#). City B and County A are invented, and the exercise is separate from the dated local examples. First identify the responsible entity. Then identify who operates the facility and the governing arrangements. Locate the relevant meeting and records. Finally, trace the authorization, payments and evidence that the repair was completed.

Where is it? Who acted? What gives them authority? Who provides the service? Who pays? Who holds the records?

Read the evidence with its limits

Follow the source links in each module. Check the document date, scope and status before applying a rule or figure to a current question. Keep documented facts, attributed statements, allegations, interpretations and unresolved questions distinct.

If an answer is not established by the records reviewed, identify what remains unconfirmed and which record could help resolve it. The exercises and templates are learning tools, not findings about a particular government or project.

Keep the written guide at the center

Use the written modules and their sources as the foundation. Read maps, graphics and other summaries alongside the explanations and limits in the relevant module.

New to the series? Begin with Who Governs What? Then follow the modules in order, or return to the one that fits your question.

Useful tools

[Find the next record](#) | [Request and follow-up templates](#) | [Fictional exercise](#)