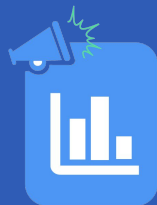




From Budgeting to Storytelling

Harish Pandian, Chief Product Officer, ClearGov



A low-angle photograph of the U.S. Capitol building, showing the grand portico with its columns and the large dome. An American flag flies on a tall pole to the right of the dome. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

120 Years of GFOA

What
changed?



Dimension	2025 Criteria	2026 Criteria
Communication formats evaluated	1	5
Total criteria categories	25 checklist items	14 categories
Scoring method	Pass / fail compliance	0 to 5 quality score
Primary lens	Reviewer	Public stakeholder
What is measured	Inclusion	Understanding
First top-weighted item	Table of contents	Community challenges
Citizen-facing questions	0	9 categories

One of the first questions...

2025

"Is a comprehensive table of contents provided for easy navigation?"

2026

"What are the major challenges facing the organization?"

Language shift / Keywords

	2025	2026
INCLUDE	33x	8x
COMMUNICATE	1x	24x

Not a refinement.

 **A redesign.** 



The World Changed.

"This is not a government change. This is **human behavior** change"

**Information used
to require effort.**



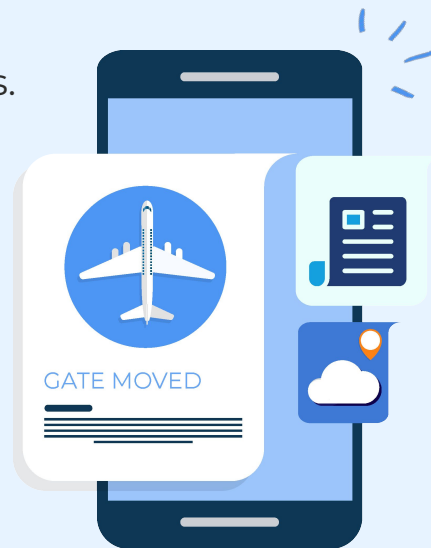
Now it finds you.

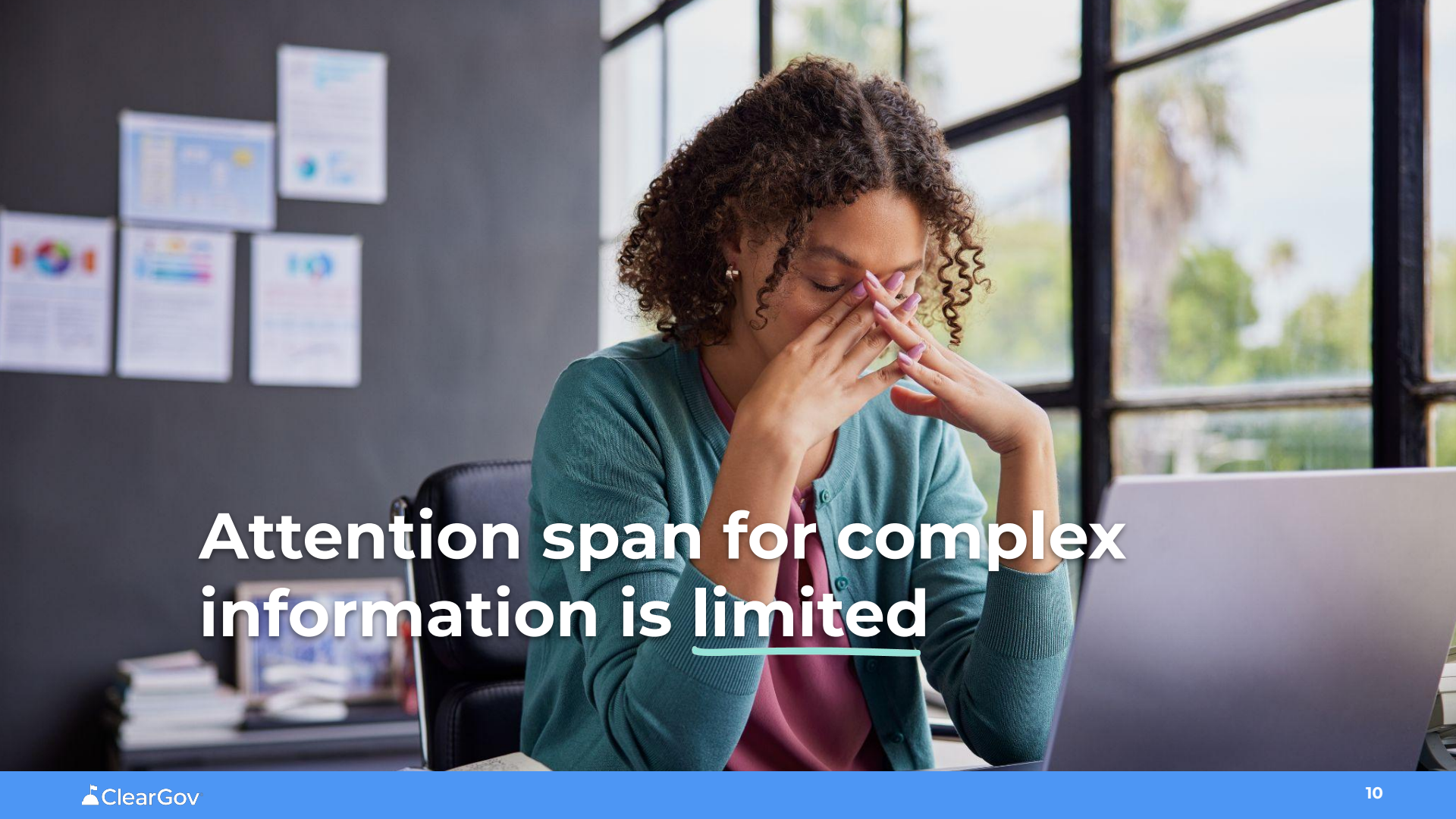


Weather alerts.

News.

Flight gates
changes.





**Attention span for complex
information is limited**

The Budget Book

Built for

- Auditors
- Bond raters
- Oversight bodies

What residents want to know



Examples

- **Budget Website:**
 - Can members of the public sign up to be notified of additional information?
 - Are members of the public able to ask questions on the website or through other online communication channels (example: social media)?
 - Can the public find information on how to engage with the budget process?
- **Video:** The budget video reflects priorities, preferences, or characteristics of local community
- **Other:**
 - What other creative tools or strategies were used to communicate the budget?
 - Did the strategy include a broader marketing campaign?
 - Were other creative outreach methods used to generate engagement?
- **Value:** How are public benefits communicated from the perspective of a public stakeholder?



New Skills



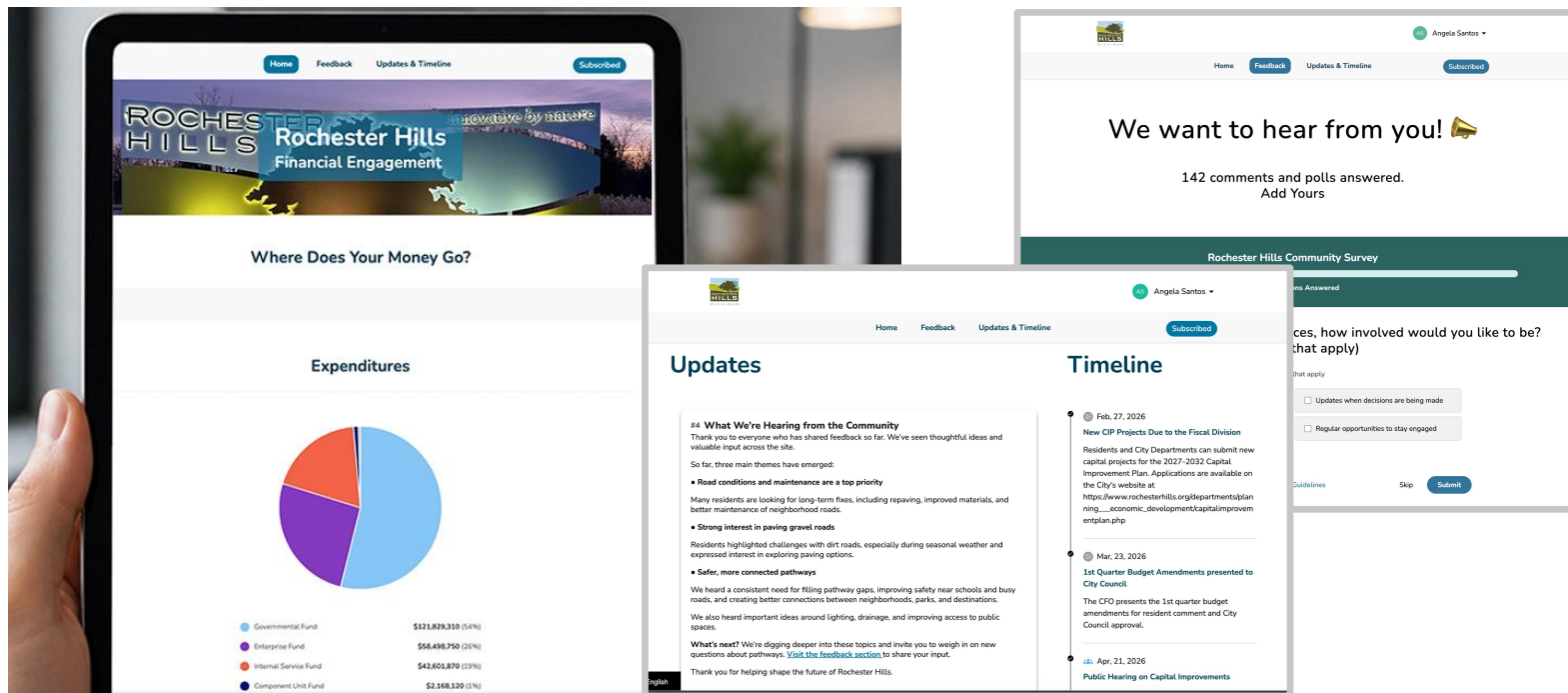
**Job Description
Expanding**



Same rigour

What **good** looks like?

Rochester Hills, Michigan



If a resident read
your budget book
tonight, **would they
understand** what
your government
stands for?





You already have
what it takes.

**Let's create a
new front door!** 🌟

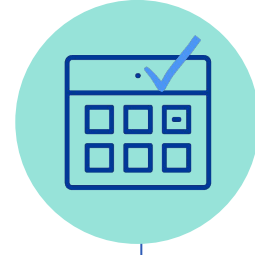
Where to start?



Who is most underserved by your current budget book?



Who owns the narrative?



What is one thing you can do before next cycle?

Thank You

