

Accountable Public Decisions

Eligibility, exceptions, notices, appeals, and authority in one inspectable chain

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

A calculation can be correct while the public action is still unsupported. Accountability begins when source, fact, rule, exception, constraint, reason, review, and authority remain distinct - and reconstructable when challenged.

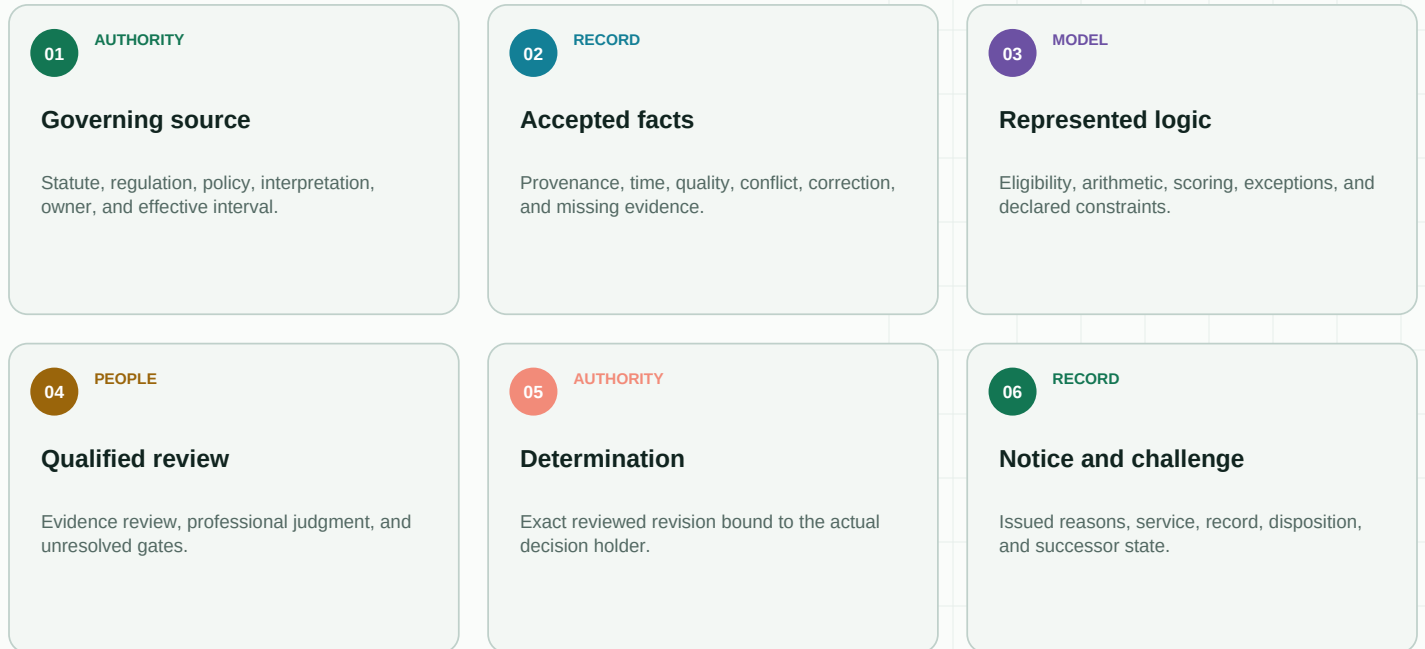
EVIDENCE BOUNDARY

Public sources establish selected institutional context. The Grid architecture, diagrams, and fictional fixtures are propositions for bounded evaluation - not evidence of deployment, legal or doctrinal sufficiency, authorization, security approval, performance, or outcome.

01 | DECISION ANATOMY

A public decision is a chain of accountable states.

The chain is useful precisely because it refuses to treat a calculation, a recommendation, an official determination, and a notice as the same act.

**BOUNDARY**

The model may calculate and explain represented policy. The responsible institution still owns interpretation, exceptions, determinations, notices, reconsideration, appeals, fiscal action, and correction.

02 | PUBLIC RECORD

The institutional controls already exist. The hard part is keeping their evidence connected.

These sources establish responsibilities and risk context. They do not endorse Grid or prescribe one technical architecture.

DATA QUALITY

A match is evidence for review, not an automatic finding.

- GAO found quality and consistency problems across reviewed federal eligibility sources.
- Case-specific evaluation remains necessary.

REASONS AND RECORDS

Notice, correction, and record duties depend on the governing program.

- 5 U.S.C. 555(e) addresses grounds in covered denials.
- The Privacy Act addresses access, amendment, and fairness-related record quality.

FISCAL CONTROL

A modeled funding line cannot create budget authority.

- Purpose and availability remain governed outside the model.
- Eligibility, ranking, selection, and obligation are separate states.

AI GOVERNANCE

Consequential AI use adds a risk-management layer, not a new source of authority.

- OMB M-25-21 addresses high-impact federal AI.
- Existing legal and policy authorities remain with agency officials.

03 | MODEL BOUNDARY

Facts, rules, and effective time need separate identities.

A policy case becomes inspectable when a reviewer can see not only the value used, but who supplied it, when it applied, which rule consumed it, and what a correction invalidated.

SOURCE PACKAGE**Governing material**

- Citation and approved interpretation
- Owner and delegation
- Effective interval and transition rule
- Superseded versions retained

CASE RECORD**Accepted factual state**

- Source and observation time
- Quality, dispute, and uncertainty
- Correction reason and actor
- Missing evidence stays visible

EXECUTABLE MODEL**Represented decision logic**

- Eligibility predicates
- Score arithmetic
- Authored exception paths
- Resource and queue constraints

DECISION RECORD**Review and official action**

- Exact model and case revision
- Material reasons and unresolved issues
- Authority evidence
- Notice, challenge, and successor state

REVISION RULE

A later fact does not silently rewrite an earlier decision. It creates a successor case state and an explicit question: which downstream calculations, drafts, reviews, notices, or actions must be reconsidered?

04 | STATE DISTINCTIONS

Six states that policy software must not collapse.

A high score can coexist with failed eligibility. Eligibility can coexist with no available funds. A notice can be deficient even when the arithmetic is reproducible.

State	Question it answers	Required evidence	It does not prove
Eligibility	Did represented hard predicates pass?	Facts, rule version, predicate trace	Selection, funding, or legal sufficiency
Score	What did authored arithmetic produce?	Components, weights, threshold, revision	Entitlement or comparative priority
Exception	Was a configured alternate path accepted?	Basis, evidence, reviewer role, scope	Authority beyond the named exception
Funding	Does the represented constraint permit an option?	Current source record and fiscal review	Availability certification or obligation
Determination	What did the authorized official decide?	Delegation, exact record, reasons, signature	Proper notice or downstream effect
Notice	What was issued to the affected party?	Content, accessibility, service, timing	That the decision was correct or final

BOUNDARY

A useful system exposes these boundaries in its state model, permissions, language, and receipts. Hiding them behind one green status turns organizational ambiguity into software behavior.

North River: a correction changes arithmetic, not authority.

The North River Public Cooling Grant is fictional. It is an evaluation oracle, not a real program, recommendation, deployment, or automated benefits workflow.

Rev	Accepted change	Represented result	Authority boundary
r17	H-18: 12 public hours	Provisional arithmetic 74; exception unresolved	No eligibility, ranking, or funding decision
r18	Steward accepts H-19: 20 hours	Provisional arithmetic 82; exception unresolved	Fact correction does not grant exception
r19	Named reviewer accepts alternate site-control evidence	Eligible under the fixture; advisory score 82	Eligibility does not select or fund
r20	\$100k remains against \$140k request; no partial awards	Funding-constrained	Model does not certify funds or obligate
r21	Official binds determination to r20	Non-selection notice issued	Only the program authority determines
r22	Applicant challenges hours and funding record	Linked review opened; prior state preserved	Authorized reviewer controls record and disposition

EVALUATION VALUE

The oracle is intentionally small: every input, expected calculation, stop state, correction, and authority gate is known before implementation. A passing run proves only behavior inside that fixture.

06 | CONTESTABILITY

A calculation trace is not yet an explanation someone can challenge.

The review design must expose consequence-bearing facts and rules, while the responsible program defines the legally sufficient procedure, scope, timing, and remedy.

TRACE**How did the represented value arise?**

- Inputs and source revisions
- Rule and arithmetic path
- Exceptions and constraints
- Warnings and missing states

EXPLANATION**Why did this consequence follow?**

- Material fact and governing rule
- Accepted interpretation
- Unresolved conflict
- What the model cannot conclude

NOTICE**What did the institution issue?**

- Authorized decision and reasons
- Accessible and required content
- Service and timing
- Program-defined next step

CHALLENGE**What can be contested, by whom, and how?**

- Record accepted for review
- New evidence and corrections
- Reviewer authority
- Disposition and successor state

LEGAL STOP

The software can preserve a contestable record. It cannot decide that constitutional or statutory process is sufficient, invent a remedy, judge credibility, or determine the legal consequence of error.

07 | AI ASSISTANCE

Fluent output cannot promote itself into public authority.

If AI participates, bind its permitted inputs, outputs, tools, tests, invalidation rules, and prohibited effects to the exact decision class.

01 AI

Observe

Retrieve only permitted sources, fields, times, and quality states.

02 AI

Generate

Draft language, logic, or predefined alternatives with attribution.

03 MODEL

Evaluate

Apply declared fixtures and checks without expanding scope.

04 AI

Recommend

Present an exact revision, reasons, limits, and unresolved gates.

05 PERSON

Authorize

Exercise a real legal, fiscal, program, or professional decision right.

06 SYSTEM

Execute

Cause an external effect only from the exact authorized instruction.

SYSTEM AUTHORIZATION

May the system operate here?

- Security process
- Environment and configuration

INFORMATION RELEASE

May this output cross this boundary?

- Data rights and handling
- Recipient and purpose

DECISION AUTHORITY

May this person commit the institution?

- Delegation and scope
- Exact reviewed action

BOUNDARY

Evidence for one authority is not evidence for the others. A valid credential, an ATO, or a release label does not by itself create authority to determine eligibility, select an award, or obligate funds.

Try to break the decision chain before it touches a live case.

Freeze the source, policy, fixture, expected results, authority gates, and stop conditions. Compare against the current workflow with no live public consequence.

SEED FAILURES

Cases the system must surface

- Stale or conflicting facts
- Effective-date boundary
- Unauthorized attribute
- Exception beyond delegation
- Exhausted represented funds
- Wrong revision on review

MEASURE

Evidence to retain

- Source and version integrity
- Independent calculation fidelity
- Explanation comprehension
- Authority and correction behavior
- Rights and control review
- Reconciliation effort

Acceptance question	Passing evidence	A pass still does not establish
Did the right rule version apply?	Independent expected result matches and dependencies identify the change	Legal sufficiency or policy validity
Did prohibited transitions stop?	Every seeded unauthorized act remains blocked and attributable	Security authorization or human comprehension
Can the prior action be reconstructed?	Source, model, review, notice, and correction receipts remain linked	Program effectiveness or public outcome

EVIDENCE LADDER

Advance claims one rung at a time: concept, fixture, research context, product demonstration, customer-controlled test, then independent validation. Each claim keeps its own method and boundary.

09 | LIMITS AND SOURCES

The stronger claim is answerability, not automation.

Use the canonical web paper for the full discussion, current links, and future corrections. This release is a stable circulation view.

01 GAO	Public Assistance: Additional Actions Could Improve Data Quality and Eligibility Verification www.gao.gov/products/gao-26-107466
02 U.S. CODE	5 U.S.C. 555(e), agency decisions and reasons in covered proceedings uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:5%20section:555%20edition:prelim)
03 U.S. CODE	5 U.S.C. 552a, Privacy Act records, access, and amendment uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:5%20section:552a%20edition:prelim)
04 U.S. CODE	44 U.S.C. 3101, adequate and proper documentation uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:44%20section:3101%20edition:prelim)
05 OMB	M-25-21, Federal use of AI: innovation, governance, and public trust www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/M-25-21-Accelerating-Federal-Use-of-AI-through-Innovation-Governance-and-Public-Trust.pdf
06 OMB	Circular A-123 (2026), management responsibility and internal control www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/OMB-Circular-No.-A-123-2026.pdf
07 GAO	Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government (2025 Green Book) www.gao.gov/greenbook
08 ACCESS BOARD	Revised Section 508 Standards for covered federal ICT www.access-board.gov/ict/

FINAL BOUNDARY

Grid does not establish legal sufficiency, due process, compliance, accessibility conformance, fiscal authority, AI safety, deployment readiness, or public outcome. Qualified institutions own those determinations.