Government entities and public administrators continually face increased expectations with constricted resources. Regardless of constraints, advances in software programming and information processing allow for improved efficiency and effectiveness of public programs. The catch being, these resources must be applied in a strategic and logical manner.

Governments have the choice of open or closed source software. Both options present different outcomes with varying associated costs, although fiscal constraints make particular options less viable than others. For instance, government agencies can develop in-house proprietary software that is specific to their needs but this is costly and sometimes time consuming. Software capabilities and organizational needs are changing at an increasingly rapid pace, making some proprietary programs obsolete in a short period.

Open source software presents several key characteristics that allow more flexibility to IT staff. With more organizations moving to cloud computing, open source software accommodates collaboration among staff. Team members have the ability to customize software to their specific project needs and distribute new program capabilities to other team members. Incorporating the LAMP open source software package is popular as it allows organizations to interchange software and make changes without vendor lock-in.

Altogether, as a cost-saving measure, open-source software has a minimal reduction in administrative costs according to a March 2011 report of the Court of Audit in the Netherlands. The report states that although cost-saving is important to both the government and the public, cost-saving actions should not be taken for IT needs alone. These findings affirm that open source software can be effective but also comes with limitations.