



## Preface

Government, like a car, is a complex piece of machinery. To keep both running properly requires the work of specialists as well as the attention of the owners. You take your car to a mechanic (a specialist) who maintains and repairs it. Yet you, the owner, must know what work needs to be done. In much the same way, you elect people to office (the specialists), yet you (the owners of government) must be aware of the work they do. And also like the car owner, you must understand the work in order to know if it is being done right.

This “owner’s manual” tells you how Louisiana government works. It provides tools you can use to ensure that the work is being done right and that government is responsive, efficient, and effective. The challenges of the 21st century will place great demands on our state and local governments. It is your right to enjoy the freedom that democratic government provides. But it is also your responsibility to keep this complex machinery in working order.

Dedicated

To

**Emogene Pliner**

Former Research Director of PAR  
Who Conceived  
The Idea for This Publication