



SHOWCASE YOUR DISTRICT'S COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY

## District Transparency Certificate of Excellence

### Purpose

To promote transparency in the operations and governance of special districts to the public/constituents and provide special districts with an opportunity to showcase their efforts in transparency.

### Duration

3 Years

### Application Cost

FREE

### Electronic filing is preferable.

[info@sdlf.org](mailto:info@sdlf.org)

### District Receives

- Certificate for display (covering 3 years)
- Press release template
- Recognition on the SDLF website
- Letter to legislators within the district's boundaries announcing the achievement
- Recognition in social media, and the CSDA eNews
- Window cling

### Basic Requirements

#### Current Ethics Training for All Board Members *(Government Code Section 53235)*

- Provide names of board members and copies of training certificates along with date completed

#### Compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act *(Government Code Section 54950 et. al )*

- Provide copy of current policy related to Brown Act compliance
- Provide copy of a current meeting agenda (including opportunity for public comment)

#### Adoption of Policy Related to Handling Public Records Act Requests

- Provide copy of current policy

#### Adoption of Reimbursement Policy, If District Provides Any Reimbursement of Actual and Necessary Expenses

*(Government Code Section 53232.2 (b))*

- Provide copy of current policy

#### Annual disclosure of board member or employee reimbursements for individual charges over \$100 for services or products. This information is to be made available for public inspection. "Individual charge" includes, but is not limited to: one meal, lodging for one day, or transportation. *(Government Code Section 53065.5)*

- Provide copy of the most recent document and how it is accessible.

#### Timely Filing of State Controller's Special Districts Financial Transactions Report -

**Includes Compensation Disclosure.** *(Government Code Section 53891)*

- Provide copy of most recent filing.

*SDLF staff will verify that district is not listed on the State Controller's 'non-compliance list'*

#### Conduct Audits As Required By Law *(Government Code Section 26909 and 12410.6)*

- Provide copy of most recent audit, management letter, and a description of how/where documents were made available to the public

#### Other Policies – Have Current Policies Addressing the Following Areas

*Provide copies of each:*

- Conflict of Interest
- Provide copies of Form 700 cover sheet for board members and general manager
- Code of Ethics/Values/Norms or Board Conduct
- Financial Reserves Policy

**Website Requirements**

**Maintain a district website with the following items Required.** (provide direct website links for each item) - Required items available to the public:

- Names of board members and their full terms of office to include start and end date
- Name of general manager and key staff along with contact information
- Election/appointment procedure and deadlines
- Board meeting schedule  
(Regular meeting agendas must be posted 72 hours in advance pursuant to *Government Code Section 54954.2 (a)(1)* and *Government Code Section 54956 (a)*)
- District's mission statement
- Description of district's services/functions and service area
- Authorizing statute/Enabling Act (Principle Act or Special Act)
- Current District budget
- Most recent financial audit
- Archive of Board meeting minutes for at least the last 6 months
- Link to State Controller's webpages for district's reported board member and staff compensation (*Government Code Section 53908*)
- Link to State Controller's webpages for district's reported Financial Transaction Report (*Government Code Section 53891 (a)*)
- Reimbursement and Compensation Policy
- Home page link to agendas/board packets (*Government Code Section 54957.5*)
- SB 272 compliance-enterprise catalogs (*Government Code Section 6270.5*)
- Machine readable/searchable agendas

**Additional items – website also must include at least 4 of the following items:**

- Post board member ethics training certificates
- Picture, biography and e-mail address of board members
- Last (3) years of audits
- Financial Reserves Policy
- Online/downloadable public records act request form
- Audio or video recordings of board meetings
- Map of district boundaries/service area
- Link to California Special Districts Association mapping program
- Most recent Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) studies (full document or link to document on another site)
- Link to [www.districtsmakethedifference.org](http://www.districtsmakethedifference.org) site or a general description of what a special district is
- Link most recently filed to FPPC forms

**Outreach/Best Practices Requirements - (Must complete at least 2 of the following items)**

**Regular district newsletter or communication (printed and/or electronic) that keeps the public, constituents and elected officials up-to-date on district activities (at least twice annually)**

- Provide copy of most recent communication and short description on the frequency of the communication, how it's distributed and to whom.

**Community notification through press release to local media outlet announcing upcoming filing deadline for election or Appointment and process for seeking a position on the district board, prior to that election (or prior to the most recent deadline For consideration of new appointments for those districts with board members appointed to fixed-terms).**

- Provide copy of the press release (and the printed article if available)

**Complete salary comparison/benchmarking for district staff positions using a reputable salary survey (at least every 5 years)**

- Provide brief description of the survey and process used as well as the general results

**Special Community Engagement Project**

Designed and completed a special project promoting community engagement with the district (potential projects may be broad in nature or focus on specific issues such as rate-setting, recycled water, identifying community needs, etc.)

- Submit an overview of the community engagement project reviewing the process undertaken and results achieved

**Hold annual informational public budget hearings that engage the public (outreach, workshops, etc.) Prior to adopting the budget**

- Provide copy of most recent public budget hearing notice and agenda.

**Community Transparency Review**

The district would be required to obtain a completed overview checklist from at least 2 of the following individuals (the district may choose to conduct the overview with these individuals simultaneously or separately):

- Chair of the County Civil Grand Jury
- Editor of a reputable local print newspaper (only one may count toward requirement)
- LAFCO Executive Officer
- County Auditor-Controller
- Local Legislator (only one may count toward requirement)
- Executive Director or President of local Chamber of Commerce
- General Manager of a peer agency (special district, city, county, neighborhood association, community organization or county administrative officer)

- Provide proof of completion signed by individuals completing Community Transparency Review



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### Submit Application

Submit this application along with all required documentation to:

Special District Leadership Foundation  
1112 I Street, Suite 200  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone: 916-231-2909 • Fax: 916-442-7889

**Electronic filing is preferable.**

*info@sdlf.org*

District:		
Mailing Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Contact Name:		
Contact Title:		
Phone:	Fax:	
Email:	Website:	
Assembly Member(s)*:		
Senator*:		
Local Newspaper(s):		
I certify that the information submitted is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.	Signature:	

*\*include all state legislators representing the district's area of operation*