



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.

Valid

3 Years from date of award

Application Cost

FREE

Electronic Filing is preferable

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

Current Harassment Prevention Training for Supervisory and Non-Supervisory Employees

(Government Code section 12950.1; 53237.1)

- Provide training log or certificates confirming completion along with dates 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 <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/disclosure-of-reimbursements>

Timely Annual Filing of State Controller's Special Districts Financial Transactions Report and Compensation Report

(Government Code Section 53891, 53892)

- Provide copy of most recent filings

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 <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/2024-08-21-board-regular-meeting>

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
- Records Retention 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 <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/board-of-directors>
- Name of general manager and key staff along with contact information <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/administration-79d1b95>
- Election/appointment procedure and deadlines <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/election-procedures>
- Board meeting schedule <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/files/5eedd8274/20230522+Annual+Meeting+Schedule.pdf>
(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)*) <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/board-meetings>
- District's mission statement <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/kfpd-mission-statement>
- Description of district's services/functions and service area <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/services>
- Authorizing statute/Enabling Act (Principle Act or Special Act) <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/fire-protection-districts-principle-enabling-act>
- Current district budget https://www.kensingtonfire.org/files/eb3ff581b/20240619+Preliminary+FY2024-2025+Budget_adopted.pdf
- Most recent financial audit https://www.kensingtonfire.org/files/930abb22a/20230621_04j+FY+2021-22+Annual+Audit.pdf
- Archive of Board meeting minutes for at least the last 6 months <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/board-meetings>
- 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 <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/files/f3222c125/reimbursement+policy-08012017110911.pdf>
- Home page link to agendas/board packets (*Government Code Section 54957.5*) <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/board-meetings>
- SB 272 compliance-enterprise catalogs (*Government Code Section 6270.5*) <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/sb-272-enterprise-system-catalog>

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

- Post board member ethics training certificates <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/board-member-ethics-certificates>
- Picture, biography and e-mail address of board members <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/board-of-directors>
- Last (3) years of audits <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/kensington-fire-district-financial-audits>
- Financial Reserves Policy https://www.kensingtonfire.org/files/648176606/10_Policy+1170+Financial+Reserves.pdf
- Online/downloadable public records act request form <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/public-records-request-policy-of-kensington-fire-protection-district>
- Audio or video recordings of board meetings <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/board-meetings>
- Map of district boundaries/service area <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/service-area-map>
- Link to California Special Districts Association mapping program <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/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 site or a general description of what a special district is https://www.contracostalafco.org/municipal_service_reviews/fire_and_emergency_medical_services/CoCo%20Fire%20MSR%20Master%20-%20FINAL.pdf
- Link to most recently filed FPPC forms <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/board-member-ethics-certificates>

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) <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/the-fire-plug-spring-2023-issue>

- 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
- President of local Special Districts Chapter or the Chapter designee

- 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*
- President of local Special Districts Chapter or the Chapter designee

DISTRICT TRANSPARENCY CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE APPLICATION

SHOWCASE YOUR DISTRICT'S COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY

District Transparency Certificate of Excellence

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*



SHOWCASE YOUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

District of Distinction Application

The District of Distinction is an accreditation program that enables districts to demonstrate to their communities, the media and legislators their commitment to operate in a sound, responsible manner. Districts apply for designation as a District of Distinction by submitting financial audits, policies and procedures and proof of training received by directors and executive staff.

Requirements:

FINANCIAL AUDITS

Districts must demonstrate they undergo regular financial audits, have no major deficiencies and apply any recommendations to future years.

What to submit:

- Copies of the three most recent district audits, including financial statements (3 letters) SAS 114 - *The Auditor's Communication with Those Charged with Governance*, SAS 115 - *The Auditor's Communications on Internal Control Related Matters*, and management letter. Each audit, including findings and recommendations, will be reviewed by a member of the Certification & Audit Review Advisory Committee. Committee members are volunteers from the special district community, including district controllers, directors of finance and CSDM certified general managers.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Districts must demonstrate that their operations conform to all statutes and regulations under state law as reflected in a policies and procedures manual. Policies and procedures should focus on governance, ethics, board conduct, district finances, reserves, reimbursement/compensation, etc.

What to submit:

- Copy of your district's current approved policies and procedures manual.
- Copy of your district's Board minute action adopting and/or having reviewed the policies and procedures manual within the past year.

TRAINING

What to submit:

Documentation showing class attendance, such as certificate of completion for each board member, general manager and other executive staff members (as identified by the board) in the following areas:

- Governance Training:** Six hours of basic governance training. (New board members and executive staff must complete within the past 5 years) *Governance Foundations*, offered by CSDA's Special District Leadership Academy, satisfies this requirement. Other courses may qualify as well, however will need to be submitted for review by SDLF. Also, *Board Member Best Practices* (3 hours) plus 2 approved webinars will satisfy that requirement. Approved webinars are: *Board Member and District Liability Issues*, and *Who Does What? Best Practices in Board Staff Relations*.
*Districts with boards larger than 7 need at least a majority of total board members completing this training requirement.
- Ethics Training:** Documentation verifying completion of AB 1234 ethics compliance training within the last two years.
- Harassment Prevention Training:** Documentation verifying completion of AB 1825 harassment prevention training within the last two years.

OTHER

Districts must also include the following items with the accreditation/re-accreditation application:

What to submit:

- Board of Directors roster
- List of executive staff, including titles
- Completed application for accreditation/re-accreditation
- Accreditation/re-accreditation application fee
- Completed SDLF District Transparency Certificate of Excellence

Who should apply to be a District of Distinction?

Any California special district that wants to demonstrate publicly the effectiveness of its operations. Applying for this designation shows that your district understands and respects the responsibilities inherent to providing essential public services in a fiscally responsible manner.

What does a district receive for completing the program?

Districts of Distinction earn the right to use the program’s seal on district materials and a plaque honoring their accomplishment. SDLF will also send a letter to a local publication and notify legislators on a district’s behalf.

How does a district apply?

Districts interested in earning the Districts of Distinction designation must complete the application and submit it along with the required documentation. Applications must also be accompanied by an application fee.

If my district is a member of the Special District Risk Management Authority (SDRMA), will getting a District of Distinction accreditation save me money on my premiums?

Yes. SDRMA offers Credit Incentive Points (CIPs) if your district earns the District of Distinction accreditation which can provide significant premium discounts. For more information, contact SDRMA at 800.537.7790 or visit www.sdrma.org.

RE-ACCREDITATION

How long is the designation valid?

The Districts of Distinction designation is valid for three years and a district may be re-accredited by submitting the application and all current required documents for review along with the re-accreditation fee.

Fees

The fees are on a sliding scale, based on a district’s budget:

INITIAL ACCREDITATION & RE-ACCREDITATION

Annual operating budget	Fee
\$0-299,999	\$175
\$300,000-749,999	\$200
\$750,000-999,999	\$225
\$1,000,000--2,999,999	\$300
\$3,000,000 or more	\$450

Submit this application along with all required documentation and payment to:

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

Electronic filing is preferable.

info@sdlf.org.

District:		
Mailing Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Contact Name:	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:

SILVER, GOLD OR PLATINUM RECOGNITION

Board Members who have received Certificate in Special District Governance: (attach additional pages if necessary)

	Date:
	Date:
	Date:

General Manager:

Has completed Certificate in Special District Governance

Has completed Certified Special District Manager (CSDM)

PAYMENT

Total: \$ Check Visa Mastercard Discover American Express

Acct. Name: Acct. Number:

Expiration Date: Authorized Signature: