

# District Transparency Certificate of Excellence *checklist*

Showcase your district's commitment to transparency

## BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- Current Ethics Training for all Board Members**  
(Government Code Section 53235)
  - Provide 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 Annual Audits**  
(Government Code Section 26909 and 12410.6)
  - Provide copy of most recent audit and 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
  - Code of Ethics/Values/Norms or Board Conduct
  - Financial Reserves Policy

## WEBSITE REQUIREMENTS

- Maintain a district website with the following items**  
(provide website link; all are required)
  - Names of Board Members and their terms of office
  - Name of general manager and key staff along with contact information
  - Election 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
  - List of compensation of Board Members and staff and/or link to State Controller's webpage with the data
- Website also must include at least 4 of the following items:**
  - Post Board Member ethics training certificates
  - Picture, biography and email address of board members
  - Last 3 years of audits
  - Reimbursement and Compensation Policy
  - 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)

Continued on reverse



# checklist continued

## 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 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 or county)

\* Provide proof of completion signed by individuals completing Community Transparency Review

### How do I proceed?

- Step 1: Complete the requirement checklist
- Step 2: Send checklist and all supporting materials or contact the SDLF staff on how to submit all materials electronically:
  - SDLF
  - 1112 I Street, Suite 200
  - Sacramento, CA 95814
- Step 3: Approval process review performed by SDLF staff
- Step 4: Receive your certificate and recognition

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SDRMA

The Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) is an independent, non-profit organization formed to promote good governance and best practices among California's special districts through certification, accreditation and other recognition programs. SDLF is supported through the California Special Districts Association and Special District Risk Management Authority.