



Districts Make the Difference

California special districts are much more than local service providers. These local agencies are directly accountable to their residents and they are passionate about providing high-quality services and resources in the most efficient and effective manner. Find out more about the impact special districts are having and how they benefit the millions of Californians that use their services.

DISTRICT TYPES

AIRPORT DISTRICTS

CEMETERY DISTRICTS

COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICTS

FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICTS

HARBOR AND PORT DISTRICTS

HEALTHCARE DISTRICTS

IRRIGATION DISTRICTS

LIBRARY DISTRICTS

MOSQUITO AND PEST
ABATEMENT DISTRICTS

RECLAMATION AND LEVEE DISTRICTS

RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICTS

RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

SANITATION DISTRICTS

TRANSIT DISTRICTS

UTILITY DISTRICTS

VETERANS MEMORIAL DISTRICTS

WATER DISTRICTS



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California Special
Districts Association
Districts Stronger Together

A public outreach campaign supported by the California Special Districts Association.





What is a “Special District”?

Special districts are local government agencies that provide essential services to millions of Californians. Special districts are formed and governed by local residents to establish or enhance essential services and infrastructure in their communities. Each special district focuses on providing specific types of services. It is this focused service that allows for innovation and long-term planning to meet the community’s needs.

History of Special Districts

In 1887, the Legislature passed the Wright Act which allowed landowners to form local government agencies to deliver water for irrigation purposes. This ultimately led to the foundation of other special districts that now deliver a wide range of local services and infrastructure.

Independent vs. Dependent

Independent special districts are, just as they sound, independent from other governments. They are:

- Directly accountable to the people they serve.
- A local form of government.
- Governed by a board of directors elected directly by the voters or sometimes appointed by other locally elected officials to fixed terms.

Dependent special districts are governed by other governmental entities. For example:

- City councils
- County boards of supervisors
- Components of other government bodies

Governance and Accountability

PUBLICLY ACCOUNTABLE BOARDS

- Local residents who represent the community
- Open meetings and public records
- Required ethics training
- Undergo independent financial audits

Local Revenue for Local Services

Special districts are funded by local property taxes and fees for service. They keep local dollars focused on local priorities:

LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES

- Financial stability
- Infrastructure bonding capacity
- Non-enterprise services such as fire protection and parks

FEES FOR SERVICE

- Water conservation, storage, and delivery
- Trash and wastewater removal and recycling
- Medical care

What Special Districts are Not

- State government
- County or city governments
- School districts or community college districts
- “Mello-Roos” districts, community facilities districts, or benefit assessment districts
- Joint powers authorities
- Investor-owned utilities or mutual water companies

Learn More and Share!



www.DistrictsMakeTheDifference.org

- Information and background about special districts
- Descriptions about how special districts serve communities
- News and compelling videos about special districts



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