



Take Your District to the Next Level! Is Your District a District of Distinction?

The District of Distinction is an accreditation program that enables districts to demonstrate to their communities, legislators, and other key stakeholders, 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. Showcase your district's efforts to be among the best and take your district to the next level!

SDLF's base level accreditation confirming core administration and governance best practices.

Transparency Certificate

District of Distinction



Demonstrates a district's commitment to take their district to the next level by also incorporating governance training as a core value.

Special District Governance

Transparency Certificate

District of Distinction

(Majority of Board)



Demonstrates a district's commitment to transparency, sound operating practices, and comprehensive governance training for the entire Board.

Special District Governance

Transparency Certificate

District of Distinction

(Full Board and General Manager)



SDLF's highest level of recognition for a district. Incorporates completion of all SDLF programs demonstrating a comprehensive approach to excellence in district management and governance.

Special District Governance

Transparency Certificate

Certified Special District Manager

District of Distinction

(Full Board and General Manager) (General Manager)





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. The SDLF and its activities are supported by the California Special Districts Association and the Special District Risk Management Authority.

Certificate in Special District Governance

Designed to honor special district board members and trustees that have taken the time to receive specific professional development training to include core governance curriculum through completion of the Special District Leadership Academy plus 10 hours of other related continuing education.

| PROGRAM | RECIPIENT | REQUIREMENT | RECOGNITION | RENEWAL/FEE |
|--------------------------------|--|---|-------------|---------------------|
| Special District Governance | Individual (Board Member/ Administrator/General Manager/Others) | Experience, education, professional development courses | Certificate | 1x \$65; No Renewal |

Certified Special District Manager (CSDM)

A voluntary professional designation that helps document and recognize an individual's knowledge, skills, experience, and capabilities as a special district manager.

| PROGRAM | RECIPIENT | REQUIREMENT | RECOGNITION | RENEWAL/FEE |
|---------|--|--|---------------|---|
| CSDM | Individual (Administrator/ General Manager/ Other Managers) | Experience, education, professional development courses, exam, community service | Certification | Every 4 Years \$300 App Fee \$150 Exam Fee \$50 Re- Certification Fee |

District Transparency Certificate of Excellence

Created in an effort to further promote transparency in the operations and governance of special districts to the public and to provide special districts with an opportunity to showcase their efforts in transparency.

| PROGRAM | RECIPIENT | REQUIREMENT | RECOGNITION | RENEWAL/FEE | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---|-------------|----------------------|--|
| Transparency Certificate | District | Legal, website, best practices requirements | Certificate | Every 3 Years \$0 | |

District of Distinction Accreditation (Transparency Certificate is a required component)

Designed as a way for districts to strive to be among the best through a comprehensive approach to implementing governance, management, transparency, and fiscal best practices.

| PROGRAM | RECIPIENT | REQUIREMENT | RECOGNITION | RENEWAL/FEE | |
|-------------------------|-----------|---|---|--|--|
| District of Distinction | District | Transparency certificate, policies/procedures best practices, board/staff professional development, 3+ years clean audits | Accreditation platinum, gold, silver, base levels | Every 3 Years \$125 - \$250 (initial and reaccreditation) | |



SDLF Scholarships

Annually, SDLF awards thousands of dollars in professional development scholarships to individuals (board members & staff) in districts. Visit sdlf.org to learn what is available and apply!

Contact SDLF and get involved

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