



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-14-09
Meeting 14-09
March 26, 2014

AGENDA ITEM 7

AGENDA ITEM

Special District Leadership Foundation's District Transparency Certificate of Excellence

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff to include application to Special District Leadership Foundation's District Transparency Certificate of Excellence Program and completion of associated requirements in the District's FY2014-15 District-wide Action Plan.

SUMMARY

At its retreat on October 18, 2013, the Board received an update on staff's efforts in applying for the Special District Leadership Foundation's District Transparency Certificate of Excellence and requested staff return at a future Board meeting to provide information on specific actions to be taken to complete the application.

DISCUSSION

The Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) created the District Transparency Certificate of Excellence Program (Transparency Certificate) in an effort to promote transparency in operations and governance of special districts to the public/constituents and provide special districts with an opportunity to showcase their efforts in transparency. The program is made available to districts that apply and meet the specified requirements, which include general, website, and outreach best practices.

The Board of Directors has requested information regarding the application requirements and the associated staff resources required to complete those requirements. Staff has examined the required criteria and application process to apply for the Transparency Certificate. The process will require submission of a variety of documents and policies, Board and staff training, and completion of the application. Staff has collected the District's current policies and other documents necessary to start the application process. Some requirements, such as updating the District's financial reserve policy and creating a comprehensive reimbursement policy will need to be finalized and approved by the Board and/or General Manager as well as updating the District's website prior to completing the Transparency Certificate application.

If the Board decides to pursue the application for the Transparency Certificate and receives the award, the District will receive: a certificate for display, recognition on the SLDF website, a letter to legislators within the District's boundaries announcing the achievement, and recognition in the California Special District magazine and the CSDA eNews.

Staff evaluated the program and believes efforts to enhance transparency are important, and opportunities to demonstrate best practices are being met by the District in this area are important to furthering customer confidence. Staff therefore would like to participate in this program with the intent to review current practices and to achieve the certification.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with application for the Transparency Certificate; however, staff time will be required to be draft the required policies and update the website to include compulsory information.

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

Board Committee review is not required for this item.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This item is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

NEXT STEPS

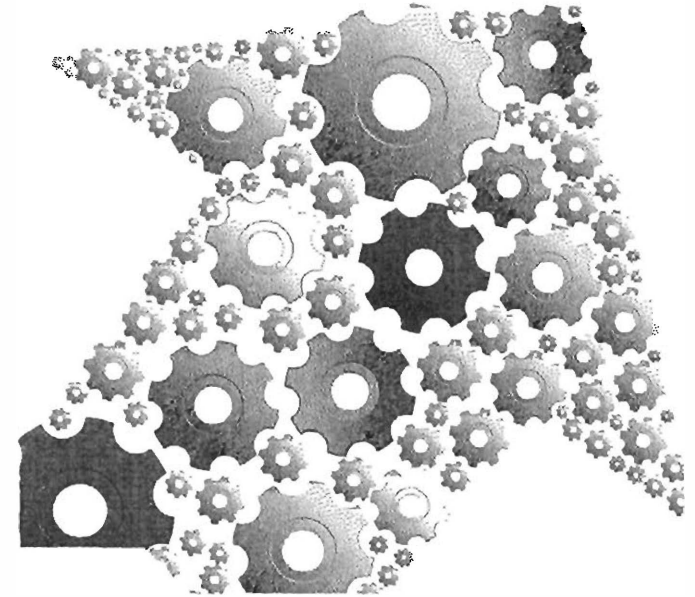
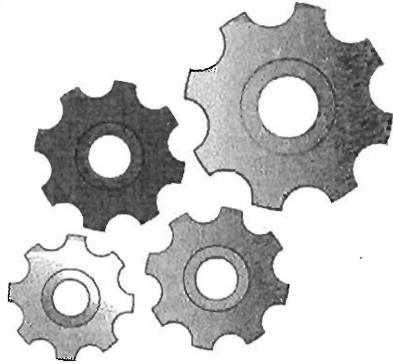
Upon Board approval, staff will include pursuit of the Special District Leadership Foundation's District Transparency Certificate of Excellence in the District-wide Action Plan for FY2014-15.

Attachments

1. District Transparency Certificate of Excellence brochure
2. District Transparency Certificate of Excellence checklist

Responsible Department Head:
Steve Abbors, General Manager

Prepared by:
Jennifer Woodworth, District Clerk



SPECIAL DISTRICT
LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

Which Program applies to you?

What is SDLF...

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 through the California Special Districts Association and Special District Risk Management Authority.

Current SDLF Programs

- Special District Administrator Certification
- District of Distinction Accreditation
- Recognition in Special District Governance
- District Transparency Certificate of Excellence

SDLF is supported by



SPECIAL DISTRICT LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION
1112 I Street, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95814

District Transparency Certificate of Excellence



SPECIAL DISTRICT
LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION



SHOWCASE YOUR DISTRICT'S COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY

This program was created by the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) in an effort to 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. There are no fees for this certificate and districts will be recognized for two full years.

Why should your district earn the District Transparency Certificate of Excellence?

1. The certificate covers all general, website, and outreach best practices and requirements regarding transparency for special districts.
2. Earning the certificate is a tangible acknowledgement of your transparency efforts.
3. Demonstrate to your constituents and other stakeholders your district's commitment to being open and accessible to them.
4. Earning the certificate demonstrates a commitment to engaging the public and creating greater awareness of your district's activities.

Three main subject areas

BASIC TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS

Some requirements include: Proof of current ethics training for all board members, timely filing of State Controller's Special Districts Financial Transactions and Compensation Report.

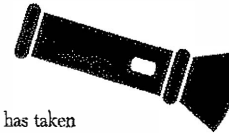
WEBSITE REQUIREMENTS

Some requirements include: display of names of board members and their terms of office, board meeting schedules, the district's mission statement.

OUTREACH REQUIREMENTS

Some requirements include: an example of a regular district newsletter or communication, an example of a 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.

These are only a sampling of all the requirements needed to complete the transparency certificate. While it takes time to compile these requirements, being able to **shine a light** on all of the efforts your district has taken to be transparent is invaluable to the public.



What the district receives

- Certificate for display (*covering 2 years*)
- Window cling to showcase your achievement
- Press release template
- Recognition on the SDLF website
- Letter to legislators within the district's boundaries announcing the achievement
- Recognition in *California Special District* magazine and the CSDA *e-News*

Questions

Please contact the SDLF office at 916.231.2939.

How do I proceed?

To get the full submission criteria and to download an application, visit www.sdlf.org.

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

SDLF



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

shine
a light
on all of your
district's efforts



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

.....

SDLF is supported by



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.