



**California Special
Districts Association**
Districts Stronger Together

About Special Districts

*Addressing CA's biggest challenges—
at the local level*

January 28, 2025

A photograph of three scientists in a laboratory setting. They are wearing white lab coats and safety goggles. The scientist on the left is a man with a beard, the one in the middle is a woman, and the one on the right is a man. They are all smiling and looking towards the right. The scientist on the right is holding a test tube with a pink liquid. The scientist in the middle is holding a pen and looking at a document on the table. The scientist on the left is also looking at the document. The background is a bright, clean laboratory environment.

Local Service Specialists

- **Local:** Formed, governed, and owned by the unique community.
- **Service:** Designed to meet the essential needs of the families and businesses they serve.
- **Specialists:** Employ highly trained experts focused on a single mission.

What Special Districts Do



Employ 177,284 Front Line Workers in Highly Specialized Fields –
Focused On a Single Mission

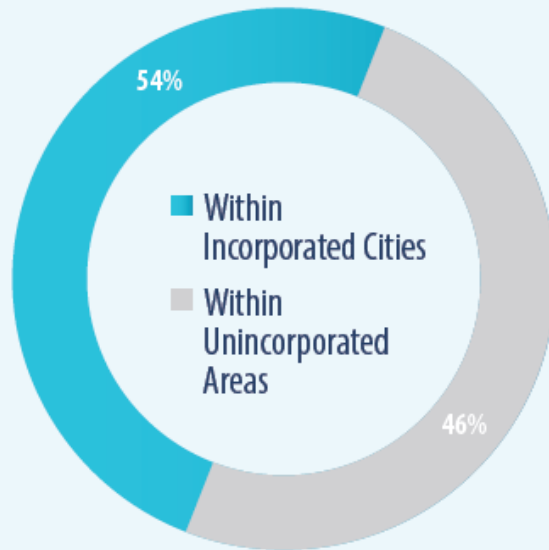
What Special Districts Are

- Local public agencies
- Created to meet a specific need
- Vital to providing services cities and counties do not
- Funded by local voters
- Accountable to the community they serve
- Flexible, adaptable, and responsive



What Special Districts Are

SPECIAL DISTRICTS SERVE COMMUNITIES STATEWIDE



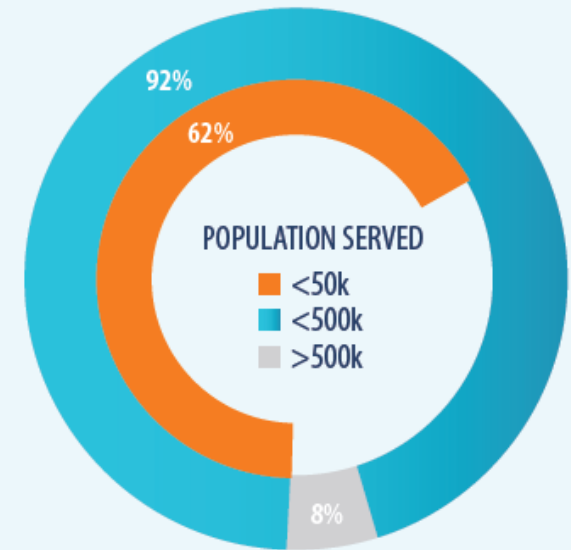
OPERATING CRITICAL FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Airport, Harbor/Port, Reclamation/Levee, Healthcare, Fire Protection, Sanitation, Utility/Energy, Water, Transit

As designated by the US Department of Homeland Security

SPECIAL DISTRICTS SERVE COMMUNITIES LARGE AND SMALL



Types of Local Government

- **Special Districts:**
 - Special-Purpose Municipal Services
- **Cities:**
 - General-Purpose Municipal Services
 - Land-Use in Incorporated Areas
- **Counties:**
 - Some Municipal Services
 - Land-Use in Unincorporated Areas
 - Health and Welfare
 - Courts and Sheriff
 - Elections and Tax Collection
 - Other State-Delegated Functions

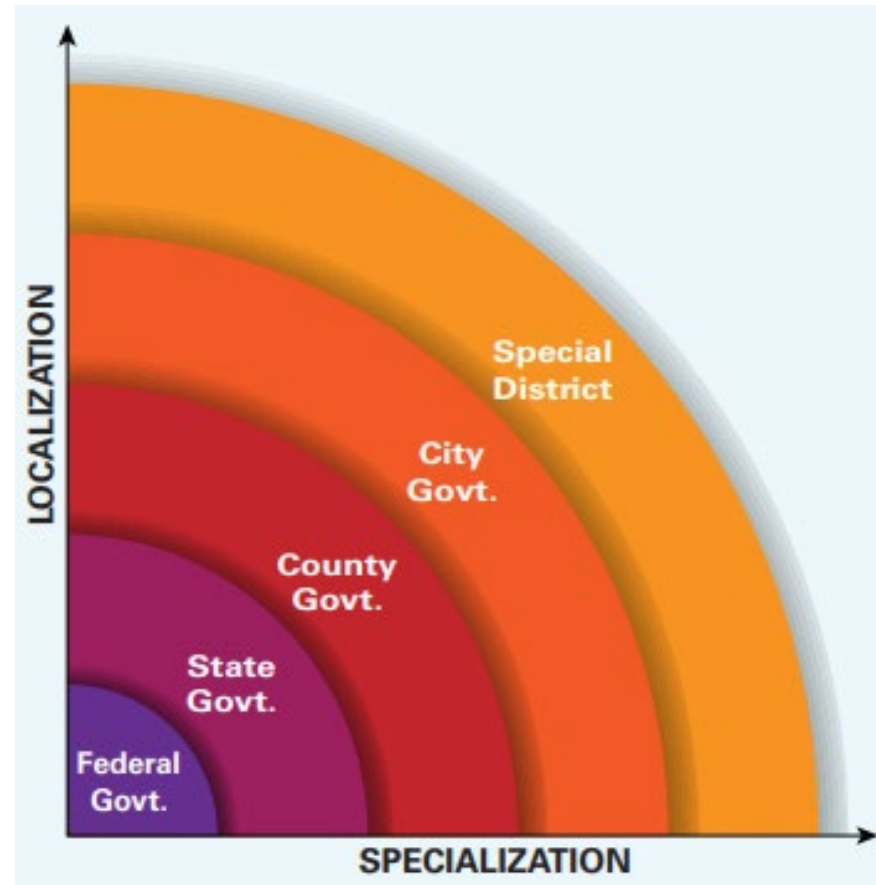
Types of Local Government



Why Special Districts?

1. Community or region has a need that is simply not being met
2. Desire to elevate the level of service or respond to a challenge in a specific community
3. Potential to achieve economies of scale through regional service provision across other municipal boundaries
4. Need to custom-tailor services, funding, and governance to be responsive to specific circumstances of the community
5. Opportunity to achieve more efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, and sustainability through focused service provision

Why Special Districts?



Why Communities Specialize Services



Why Communities Specialize Services



Why Communities Specialize Services



Formation and Governance

- Voter-driven public process – formed to meet local needs
- Statutory authority and enabling legislation
- Typically elected, sometimes appointed board members
- Subject to California’s Sunshine Laws
- Regular audits and regulatory compliance
- Voters decide when to form, dissolve, or consolidate districts

How Special Districts Are Funded

- Little to no funding from state or federal government
- Local property taxes (about 8% share of statewide collections)
- Assessments
- Service fees
- Developer impact fees
- Grants
- Enterprise vs. non-enterprise revenues

Special Districts: Doing More With Less

17.5%



Special districts account for 17.5 percent of all local government revenue generated nationwide, while special districts' tax revenue makes up 7.72 percent of all tax revenue received by local governments.² Compared to other local governments that provide the same services, special districts nationally are responsible for the following share of expenditures in the vital sectors³ shown.

PROVIDING A LARGE SHARE OF THE NATION'S ESSENTIAL SERVICES



HEALTHCARE
33.6%



FIRE PROTECTION
15%



ROADS
7.2%



WASTEWATER
23.4%



PARKS & RECREATION
14.4%



PROVIDING 41.1% OF UTILITIES

- Water supply: 30.5%
- Electric power: 36.8%
- Gas supply: 26.9%
- Transit: 60%



Five Things About Special Districts

1. Addressing California's biggest challenges – At the local level
2. Critical to our infrastructure, economy, and resilience
3. Specialization leads to efficiency, effectiveness, and innovation
4. Rooted in community and tailored to affordability
5. Improving public services in ways people can see and feel

Video – Community Driven and Future Focused



The **FUTURE** of Transit:
AC Transit's Zero Emissions
Bus Fleet

The Keys To A Better Future

- Partnerships
- Resources
- Infrastructure



Let us be a Resource

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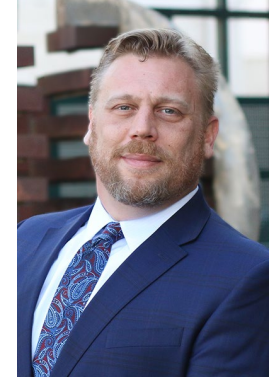
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Policy Areas

- Environment and Disaster Preparedness
- Human Resources & Personnel

Policy Areas

- Governance
- Local Revenue

Policy Areas

- Public Works & Facilities
- State Infrastructure Investment & Partnership

Thank You

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CSDA

**California Special
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Districts Stronger Together

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MAKE
THE **DIFFERENCE**

www.DistrictsMakeTheDifference.org

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