

COMPENSATION SURVEY OF ORANGE COUNTY WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICTS

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Santa Margarita Water District Response
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Findings

F.1: *District websites often do not provide easy public access to compensation and financial data of the district, if available at all.*

The District agrees with this finding. While posting financial statements and other information on websites is widely regarded as “transparency”, the question for purposes of providing meaningful information directed to the customer’s question or inquiry is if it is useful, understandable and responsive.

The District has found on the infrequent occasions when customers make requests for financial or compensation information, it is for very specific data or reasons that typically require discussion, explanation and in some cases the preparation of other documents or reports. For this reason, posting financial and compensation information on a website should not be regarded as the touchstone of accessibility. If the agency is responsive, open and has adopted policies and practices to pro-actively assist customers who make inquiries, this is far superior to posting prophylactic information as a surrogate for meaningful full disclosure.

F.2: *District websites were sometimes not updated to reflect public meeting changes or cancellations.*

The District wholly disagrees with this finding. The District regularly updates its website regarding public meeting changes and cancellations.

Recommendations

R.1: *Provide in an easily accessible format on the district’s website, data on compensation for the board of directors and general manager, as well as current budget and financial reports.*

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the next 60 days. The District has nearly completed a substantial revision of its website format to facilitate intuitive navigation and expand the scope of information.

R.2: *Maintain and update agendas, minutes, meeting schedules and location on the district's website.*

The recommendation has been implemented (preceding this Grand Jury Report) with respect to meeting agendas, schedules and location. Regarding meeting minutes, the recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the next 60 days in connection with posting the information addressed in R.1.above.