

## Call for Papers

### Symposium on Special District Management *Public Administration Quarterly*

#### Symposium Editors

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#### Symposium Overview

Special districts are a profoundly important form of government, having experienced significant growth of the last several decades (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Though generally receiving less attention than general local governments, including cities, towns, townships, or villages, special districts are often charged with providing core public services that impact the day-to-day lives of citizens (Foster, 1997). These services include common functions like education, fire protection and emergency medical services, and library, water, and sewer services. Special districts are unique in their single functional focus, potentially complex and overlapping geographical boundaries that may not be conterminous with other units of local government (Bollens, 1957), and in the churning that comes through special district creation and dissolution (Goodman & Leland, 2012). Despite the growth and prevalence of special districts, our knowledge of these units of government is still relatively limited (Goodman & Leland, 2019), and additional attention to the management, functions, and contexts of special districts will add to the growing body of information on these important service providers. This symposium will provide a venue for conceptual or empirical research that examines issues related to the management of special districts. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Management of special districts
- Design and implementation of best / better practices related to managing special districts
- Special district size, function, and interrelationships with local demographic, socioeconomic, or economic contexts
- Transparency and accountability in special districts
- Performance measurement, program evaluation, and values of efficiency, effectiveness, or equity
- Geography, local government capacity, and special district functions
- Fragmentation among units of local government and service efficiency and effectiveness
- Other topics as related to independent or dependent (subordinate) special districts

## Proposal Submission Process and Timeline

This area of inquiry is necessarily interdisciplinary, and proposals from a variety of fields and specializations are encouraged. These may include those that focus on public management, urban planning, urban affairs, economics, and others. A 500-word proposal should be submitted via email to [alexander.henderson@marist.edu](mailto:alexander.henderson@marist.edu) by November 15, 2020.

Proposals should include information on the purpose or aim of the article, a discussion of the methods or approach used, and a discussion of the fit with the symposium topic. Please also include author name(s), affiliation(s), and full contact information.

Proposal acceptance will be sent by December 1, 2020. Full manuscripts will be due by May 1, 2021 for peer review. Final decision on manuscript acceptance is anticipated by November 1, 2021, with publication in late 2021.

## References

- Bollens, J. C. (1957). *Special district governments in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Foster, K. A. (1997). *The political economy of special-purpose government*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Goodman, C. B., & Leland, S. M. (2019). Do cities and counties attempt to circumvent changes in their autonomy by creating special districts?. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 49(2), 203-217.
- Goodman, C. B., & Leland, S. M. (2012). Cost shocks and their relationship to the creation, consolidation and dissolution of US local governments. *Public Finance and Management*, 13, 58-79.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2019). *2017 census of governments, individual state descriptions*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.