

Since the March Quarterly Newsletter, CALAFCO has stayed busy on the work that matters most to members: education and training, legislative advocacy, communications improvements, governance implementation, and day-to-day support for LAFCOs of every size and region.

One thing has become especially clear this year: members truly value staying connected with colleagues across California. Workshops, trainings, and committee discussions give commissioners, staff, and partners, whether you are new to LAFCO work or have decades of experience, the chance to share ideas, learn from one another, and build lasting relationships.

HERE'S WHERE THAT STANDS.

Board Governance and Strategic Planning:

Following the Special Membership Meeting in February, the Board has been putting into place the governance changes the membership approved earlier this year.

Those changes take effect with the 2026 election cycle.

In February, the Board also held a full-day strategic planning workshop focused on governance, communications, education, and strengthening member involvement and statewide coordination.

Staff will begin distributing election materials this summer as CALAFCO prepares for the 2026 Board election cycle under the newly adopted governance structure.

Educational Programs Continue to Grow:

Interest in CALAFCO's education and training programs keeps growing.

In February, CALAFCO-U hosted LAFCO 101 with more than 100 registrants, and in April, LAFCO 201 drew another 100-plus participants for a deeper look at governance, legal, and operational topics. It is great to see so many members learning side by side.

CALAFCO also launched free, on-demand SB 827 ethics compliance training in partnership with BBK and Regional Government Services. The training is available to every member through December 31, 2026. If your team hasn't completed it yet, there is still plenty of time.

Staff Workshop in Pismo Beach: The 2026 CALAFCO Staff Workshop was held May 6-8 in Pismo Beach with approximately 85 attendees from throughout California, and was a huge success!

The workshop centered on practical, hands-on discussions and peer learning, giving LAFCO staff from large multi-county offices to single-staff LAFCOs time to connect and work through the day-to-day challenges so many of us share.

A special thank you again to San Luis Obispo LAFCO for serving as the host LAFCO and helping make the workshop a success.

2026 Biennial Survey: CALAFCO also completed its 2026 Biennial Survey of California LAFCOs, with 51 LAFCOs participating.

The survey offers valuable statewide insight into staffing models, budgets, workloads, shared services, and operational trends. LAFCOs of all sizes use the results for benchmarking, organizational planning, budget development, and compensation discussions.

Legislative Engagement Remains Strong: CALAFCO’s Legislative Committee is actively reviewing legislation that affects LAFCOs and the local government services communities rely on across California. This work draws on the combined efforts of CALAFCO staff, Board members, Executive Officers, and our lobbying team. There is always room for more members to weigh in, and we welcome your input.

The CALAFCO Legislative Committee also formally opposed AB 2083 (Jackson, 2026) due to concerns regarding consistency with existing Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg processes and the broader precedent the legislation could create for future LAFCO proceedings statewide.

Membership and Organizational Sustainability: At the May Board meeting, the Board approved CALAFCO’s FY 2026-27 operating budget and approved moving forward with additional discussions regarding CALAFCO’s long-term dues and membership structure.

The Board also approved the creation of a Membership and Dues Review Committee, with appointments expected later this summer. The review will look closely at CALAFCO’s membership and dues structure with fairness, predictability, member value, and long-term financial stability all on the table. We especially want to hear from LAFCOs of every size as this work moves forward, and there will be several opportunities for members to share their perspectives.

Communications and Website Improvements: Staff have also started implementing several practical website and communications improvements in response to member feedback. Current efforts are focused on simplifying key pages, improving the visibility of events and updates, and organizing information more clearly to make the website easier for members to navigate and use.

Planning Ahead: The Board also approved the locations for the 2027-2029 Staff Workshops and Annual Conferences, allowing staff to continue long-range planning for future events and contracts. Planning is also underway for the 2026 CALAFCO Annual Conference in Sacramento, October 21-23. The Board approved updated Achievement Award nomination materials, including several new categories that recognize emerging leaders, creative partnerships, and project-based work across the LAFCO community. We encourage every LAFCO to consider nominating a colleague. Great work happens at organizations of all sizes. Nomination materials will be distributed in June.

SO, WHAT’S NEXT:

Between now and the Annual Conference, CALAFCO’s focus remains straightforward:

- 1) Put the membership-approved governance changes fully into effect.
- 2) Keep improving our communications and website so information is easy to find.
- 3) Strengthen financial reporting and day-to-day operations.
- 4) Expand practical education and training opportunities for members at every level.
- 5) Prepare for the 2026 Annual Conference and 2026 Board election cycle.

CALAFCO There’s still important work ahead, but CALAFCO is clearly moving in a positive direction. Our focus remains on doing the work well, communicating openly, following through, and delivering practical support and real value to LAFCOs of every size across California.

What makes CALAFCO valuable is the willingness of commissioners, staff, and partners throughout California to stay involved, share ideas, and support one another. Whether your LAFCO is large or small, urban or rural, your voice and participation strengthen the whole community.

As always, I’m grateful for the support, participation, and engagement of LAFCOs across California. I warmly welcome those of you who are newer to CALAFCO or simply looking for ways to get more involved.

Michelle McIntyre