



Local Government

During the 2022 legislative session the General Assembly considered legislation related to special districts, local government administration, boards and commissions, funding, and firefighting assistance.

Special Districts

Special district legislation includes bills pertaining to retirement benefits, the dissolution of districts, and notices.

House Bill 22-1087 excludes special district directors from Public Employees' Retirement Association membership on or after July 1, 2022.

With the passage of *House Bill 22-1097*, county commissioners can request that a special district board of directors dissolve the district that is within the boundaries of the county. Two or more counties may petition the board together for the dissolution of a special district that falls within those counties.

If 85 percent of a district is within a municipality the county commissioners and municipality may agree with the special district board to the dissolution of the district as long as there are no financial obligations. A court order dissolves the district.

A bill passed during the 2021 session, *Senate Bill 21-262*, required that when selling a new home in a metropolitan district, a seller provide the buyer with an assessor-issued tax certificate.

Senate Bill 22-164 corrects the entity that must provide the certificate, since the treasurer issues tax certificates and, not the assessor.

Local Government Administration

The General Assembly passed two bills related to local government administration.

Beginning January 1, 2023, *Senate Bill 22-065* increases salaries for county coroners. Also, after the passage of *House Bill 22-1104*, recreation trails under power lines can now be created by local governments, private landowners, and transmission line providers. Local governments must coordinate with the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife to minimize impacts on species and habitats, while a transmission provider must notify the county about the option to build trails.

Boards and Commissions

Due to redistricting, *Senate Bill 22-013* updates the membership requirements for some boards and commissions. In fact, the bill makes several changes where membership is based on representation from congressional districts. Other changes apply to appointment procedures, including when the boundaries of a district change or when boards gain or lose members due to congressional redistricting, and other clarifications regarding member terms and appointment dates.

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The bill also adds seats to the University of Colorado Board of Regents and the State Board of Education to accommodate the new Eighth Congressional District.

Local Government Funding

Local governments may receive a variety of grant funding through legislation passed by the General Assembly.

While [House Bill 21-1289](#) authorized the Broadband Deployment Board to award grants for broadband access with American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funds, [House Bill 22-1306](#) updates those grant requirements. For example, grantees experiencing supply chain disruptions have an additional two years to complete grant projects.

[House Bill 22-1315](#) provides \$1 million in grants through June 30, 2022 to the Colorado 2-1-1 Collaborative for operation expenses. The collaborative provides information about and connection to essential services.

[House Bill 22-1356](#) provides \$35 million for the small community based nonprofit grant program. The Department of Local Affairs provides regional partner funding for infrastructure and capacity building grants to local nonprofits adversely affected by the COVID-19 public health emergency. Grants are awarded by December 30, 2024 and spent by December 30, 2026.

Firefighting Assistance

Several bills provide assistance to local governments to fight wild fires.

[Senate Bill 22-002](#) provides fire protection districts and volunteer fire departments with grants to support wildland fire suppression and firefighting when the department does not have the resources or funding available. Funds must

compensate volunteer firefighters according to the Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) annual wildfire preparedness plan.

In addition, preference for funding from the existing Local Firefighter Safety and Disease Prevention Fund is given to fire departments that lost funding from decreases in property value due to wildland fires; rely on volunteers to provide wildland fire support; and demonstrate the greatest need for safety equipment for volunteer and seasonal firefighters. Funds may be transferred without a grant application for equipment and training.

The bill also requires fire departments to provide for the behavioral health of firefighters by participating in a trust funded by the DFPC. The division must report to the Wildfire Matters Review Committee on behavioral health expenditures and Local Firefighter Safety and Disease Prevention Fund expenditures.

Finally, the bill allows boards of county commissioners to use county funding to reimburse volunteer fire departments for wildfire suppression.

With the passage of [House Bill 22-1132](#), local rules and policies must be followed when providing notice of a controlled burn. When no rule or policy exists, notice must be given to local dispatch, the sheriff, and, where appropriate, the fire department. The bill defines a controlled burn and provides \$100,000 to the Local Firefighter Safety and Disease Prevention Fund for grants to local fire departments.