

DIRECTOR OF ELECTION SERVICES

Stephanie Smith

She/Her

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📍 Irvine



Best Best & Krieger LLP (BBK) Director of Election Services Stephanie D. Smith brings a wealth of hands-on municipal government experience to her role helping cities navigate the myriad of ever-changing election laws. Throughout her career she has handled multiple initiatives, two referendums and three recalls - all reaching the signature verification stage and several reaching the ballot.

Before joining BBK, Stephanie served as city clerk for the cities of Murrieta and Lake Forest. Accredited as a Master Municipal Clerk by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, Stephanie has more than three decades of experience in municipal government.

Stephanie served on the City Clerks Association of California Executive Board, most recently as president in 2018-2019. In addition to her bachelor's degree in management, Stephanie completed the Advanced Leadership Program through Continuing Education for Public Officials and is also a graduate of the CEPO Training for Trainers Program. She shares her knowledge and know-how as a trainer for the CCAC, as well as for the Master Municipal Clerk Academy and the California Building Officials Association.

Stephanie has authored more than 100 published articles on a variety of topics, including workplace change initiatives, personnel issues, business management, work/life balance and financial planning. Her book, "Values-Based Goal Setting: How to Dream Big and Live the Life You Were Meant to Live," was an Amazon #1 bestseller in the Vocational Guidance and Business & Money Short Reads categories.

A native Californian, Stephanie is married to Jim and they have two children who followed her footsteps into public service, as well as three grandchildren.

**As director of Election Services, Stephanie Smith does not provide legal representation or advice for or to our clients.*

Accolades

- Woman of Influence, *Influential Women Magazine*, 2026
- Pat Hammers Spirit Award, City Clerks Association of California, 2021

CORE PRACTICES

California Public Records Act
Election Law
Municipal Law
Special Districts

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

Purdue University, B.S., management

Professional & Community Involvement

- City Clerks Association of California

Thought Leadership

Publications

- "The Importance of Integrity in Election Administration," *Official Word*, City Clerks Association of California, Volume 5, Issue 8, Aug. 2024

Presentations

- "Smooth Transitions: Mastering the Onboarding of New Board Members," California Special Districts Association, Board Secretary/Clerk Conference, Nov. 5, 2026
- "Best Practices for Taking & Processing Meeting Minutes," California Special Districts Association, Board Secretary/Clerk Conference, Nov. 5, 2026
- "Website Woes & Wins: A Board Secretary's Guide to Staying Compliant," California Special Districts Association, Board Secretary/Clerk Conference, Nov. 5, 2026
- "The Creativity Habit: Critical v. Creative Thinking for Problem Solving," California Special Districts Association, Board Secretary/Clerk Conference, Nov. 4, 2026
- "Campaign Season and City Hall: Staying Legal, Ethical, and Out of Trouble," League of California Cities Annual Conference, Sept. 24, 2026
- "Legislative Updates," League of California Cities, City Clerk Meeting Riverside County Division Workshop, July 23, 2026
- "Burnout-Proof Leadership," California Special Districts Association, General Manager Leadership Summit, Jun 29, 2026
- "Pre-Conference Workshop II: Crisis-Ready Leadership - Leading with Clarity, Credibility, and Calm When Everything Is On Fire (Literally or Figuratively)," California Special Districts Association, General Manager Leadership Summit, Jun 28, 2026
- "Storytelling as a Municipal Superpower: Communicate, Connect, and Influence with Impact," International Institute of Municipal Clerks Annual Conference, May 21, 2026
- "Storytelling as a Municipal Superpower: Communicate, Connect, and Influence with Impact," International Institute of Municipal Clerks Annual Conference, May 20, 2026
- "Storytelling as a Municipal Superpower: Communicate, Connect, and Influence with Impact," International Institute of Municipal Clerks Annual Conference, May 19, 2026
- "Be Our Guest: Perfecting the Art of Customer Service," California Municipal Clerks Association Annual Conference, Apr. 27, 2026
- "Graduate Seminar," University of La Verne, Masters of Public Administration Curriculum, April 13, 2026
- "Read All About It (Or Not): Legal Publication Requirements in a Digital Age," League of California Cities City Clerks New Law and Elections Seminar, Nov. 12, 2025
- "Navigating Neutrality: Political Astuteness for the Modern Board Clerk," and "Best Practices for Taking & Processing Meeting Minutes," California Special Districts Association Board Secretary/Clerk Conference, Oct. 29, 2025

- “Smooth Transitions: Mastering the Onboarding of New Board Members,” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary/Clerk Conference, Oct. 28, 2025
- “Words That Work: Mastering the Craft of Staff Reports, Agenda Titles, and Meeting Minutes (Pre-Conference Workshop),” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary/Clerk Conference, Oct. 27, 2025
- “Challenges for Human Trust in a Connected and Technology-Driven World,” California Special Districts Association General Manager Leadership Summit, July 1, 2025
- “Clerk's Role in Elections & Ethics,” League of California Cities Riverside County Division City Clerk Workshop, Aug. 28, 2025
- “Challenges for Human Trust in a Connected and Technology-Driven World,” International Institute of Municipal Clerks Annual Conference, May 20-21, 2025
- “Lead it Like Lasso,” International Institute of Municipal Clerks Annual Conference, May 17, 2025
- “Bridging the Government Literacy Gap,” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary/Clerk Conference, Oct. 23, 2024
- “Speak Easy, Speak Well,” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary/Clerk Conference, Oct. 22, 2024
- “Best Practices for Taking & Processing Meeting Minutes,” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary/Clerk Conference, Oct. 22, 2024
- “Beyond Smart: Values-Based Goal Setting for the Public Agency,” California Special Districts Association Annual Conference, Sept. 10, 2024
- “Beyond SMART: Using Values Based Goal Setting to Achieve Success,,” International Institute of Municipal Clerks Annual Conference, May 21-22, 2024
- “Municipal Elections - The Circus Comes Back to Town,” California Lawyers Association Public Law 101 Conference, Nov. 15, 2023
- “Best Practices for Taking and Processing Meeting Minutes,” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary Clerk Conference, Nov. 8, 2023
- “Not My Job is Not Acceptable: Public Agency Customer Service,” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary Clerk Conference, Nov. 7, 2023
- “Project Management Best Practices: The Key to On-Time and Under-Budget,” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary Clerk Conference, Nov. 7, 2023
- “Are You A Destination Employer? Attract, Hire and Retain the Best,” California Special Districts Association, General Manager Leadership Summit, June 26, 2023
- “OK Boomer! Strategies for Creating Dynamic Multi-Generational Teams,” League of California Cities City Clerks New Law and Elections Seminar, Dec. 7, 2022
- “Tools and Technologies for Modern Clerk” and “Connection Conundrum — How to Re-Establish Connections in a Virtual or Hybrid Environment,” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary Clerk Conference, Nov. 9, 2022
- “Best Practices for Taking & Processing Meeting Minutes,” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary Clerk Conference, Nov. 8, 2022
- “Problem Solving for the Modern Leader — Creative vs. Critical Thinking,” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary Clerk Conference, Nov. 7, 2022
- “Lessons Learned from a Disrupted Redistricting Process” and “Seriously? Crucial Conversations in a Stressful Environment,” California Special Districts Association Annual Conference, Aug. 23, 2022
- “Vote of Confidence - Your 2022 Election Primer for Both New and Experienced Clerks,” City Clerks Association of California Annual Conference, Apr. 7, 2022

- “Navigating the Now Normal: Technology Tools for Clerks,” League of California Cities City Clerks New Law and Elections Seminar, Dec. 18, 2021
- “Leadership Lessons from John Lewis’ Memoir: ‘Walking with the Wind, a Memoir from the Movement,’” Missouri Municipal Clerks and Finance Officers Association, Athenian Dialogue, Dec. 4, 2021
- “How to Rock Your Next Performance Evaluation (Pro Tip: Treat it like a Job Interview),” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary Clerk Conference, Oct. 27, 2021
- “The Role of the Clerk and Meeting Minutes,” California Special Districts Association Board Secretary Clerk Conference, Oct. 26, 2021
- “Redistricting 101: What Cities Need to Know,” Institute for Local Government Webinar, June 30, 2021
- “Redistricting 2021 - You Can’t Explore a New World with an Old Map,” City Clerks Association of California’s Annual Conference, Apr. 20, 2021
- “Research and Prepare to Rock an Interview,” City Clerks Association of California’s Annual Conference, Apr. 12, 2021
- “Leadership Lessons from Rachel Hollis’ Book: ‘Girl Wash Your Face, Stop Believing the Lies About Who You Are So You Can Become Who You Were Meant to Be,’” Oregon Association of Municipal Records, Athenian Dialogue, Mar. 31, 2021
- “You Aren’t Lewis & Clark - You Need a Map! 2021 Public Agency Redistricting Strategies,” BBK Workshop via Webinar, Mar. 18, 2021
- “Leadership Lessons from John Lewis’ Memoir: ‘Walking with the Wind, a Memoir from the Movement,’” City Clerks Association of California, Athenian Dialogue, Feb. 6, 2021