



PARTNER

Nicholaus W. Norvell

He/Him

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📍 San Diego



Nicholaus W. Norvell is an attorney in Best Best & Krieger LLP's (BBK) Special Districts and Municipal Law practice groups. Nick's practice involves general counsel and special counsel with a particular focus on joint powers agencies and special districts providing water, wastewater, and energy. He regularly advises governing boards and senior management on governance, open meeting laws, contracts and procurement, interagency agreements, real estate matters and other issues affecting public agencies. As general counsel, he advises governing bodies during public meetings and closed sessions, helps agencies navigate sensitive and complex matters, and provides practical counsel to legislative bodies and agency staff.

Nick serves as general counsel to the Encina Wastewater Authority in North San Diego County and as interim general counsel to the East County Advanced Water Purification Joint Powers Authority. He also serves as general counsel to the Orange County Power Authority and as assistant general counsel to a number of water and wastewater agencies in San Diego and Riverside counties. Prior to joining BBK, Nick worked as a municipal and special district law attorney in Sacramento.

Outside his practice, Nick serves as co-chair of the firm's Open Government and Ethics Group, which provides counsel to public entities, officials, and agency managers on conflicts of interest, public integrity, and the Brown Act. He is also the office managing partner of the firm's San Diego office.

During law school, Nick worked as a law clerk at the U.S. Office of Government Ethics in Washington, D.C. and as a judicial extern to the Honorable Thomas J. Whelan of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California. He also served as the editor-in-chief of the *San Diego Law Review*.

Nick grew up in Lemon Grove and is a third-generation San Diegan. Before attending law school, Nick worked as staff for a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, serving in both the Washington, D.C. and San Diego offices, and he is grateful to have a legal career dedicated to serving the public. In his spare time, Nick enjoys cycling, film and science fiction.

CORE PRACTICES

Open Government & Ethics
Municipal Law
Public Infrastructure
Special Districts
California Public Records Act

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

University of San Diego School of Law, J.D., magna cum laude, Order of the Coif

Wesleyan University, B.A., government, with honors

Bar Admissions

California

Notable Experience

- Represents East County Advanced Water Purification Joint Powers Authority on implementation of a \$900 million program to produce 30% of East San Diego County's drinking water by purifying recycled water. Nick also serves as general counsel to the Orange County Power Authority, as assistant general counsel to a number of water and wastewater agencies in San Diego and Riverside counties.
- Advises clients regarding the establishment and implementation of joint powers agreements, negotiating complex interagency water and wastewater agreements, handling complex public records matters, and advising on utility billing and payment issues.

Accolades

- LGBTQ+ Leaders of Influence, *San Diego Business Journal*, 2026
- The Best Lawyers in America®, Up & Coming, Commercial Litigation, 2025
- The Best Lawyers in America®, Up & Coming, Municipal Law, 2025
- The Best Lawyers in America®, Municipal Law, "One to Watch", 2022–2024
- Top 40 Under 40, *San Diego Daily Transcript*, 2020
- Top Lawyer in State, Local & Municipal Law, *Sacramento Magazine*, 2016

Professional & Community Involvement

- California Special District Association, Legal Advisory Working Group, Member
- California Association of Sanitation Agencies, Attorneys Committee, Member
- California Lawyers Association, Public Law Executive Committee, Former Member

Thought Leadership

Publications

- "SB 1187 Repeals Portions of Recent Brown Act Updates," *PublicCEO*, Sept. 30, 2026
- "Ethics, Fiscal and Harassment Prevention, OH MY! – Elected and Appointed Officeholders' Requisite Trainings," *PublicCEO*, May 28, 2026
- "2026 New Laws Series, Part 8: New Mandatory Trainings for Local Government Board Members and Staff (SB 827)," *California Special Districts Association*, Dec. 9, 2025
- "Major Brown Act Updates Under SB 707," *PublicCEO*, Oct. 22, 2025

Presentations

- "Expanding Public Access: SB 707's Updates to the Brown Act," Municipal Management Association of Southern California Annual Conference, Oct. 29, 2026
- "Expanding Public Access: SB 707's Updates to the Brown Act," League of California Cities Annual Conference, Sept. 23, 2026
- "Expanding Public Access: SB 707's Updates to the Brown Act," Institute for Local Government Webinar, Aug. 3, 2026

- “Understanding Board Member & District Liability Issues,” California Special Districts Association, Board Secretary/Clerk Conference, Nov. 5, 2026
- "Expanding Public Access: SB 707's Updates to the Brown Act," League of California Cities Annual Conference, Sept. 23, 2026
- "District Policies: From Ideas to Execution," California Special Districts Association, Leadership Academy, July 21, 2026
- “Expanding Public Access: SB 707 Updates to the Brown Act ,” County Counsels' Association of California, Spring 2026, Land Use Study Section Meeting, May 1, 2026
- “Expanding Public Access: SB 707's Updates to the Brown Act,” Institute for Local Government Lunch & Learn Webinar, Jan. 29, 2026
- “Understanding and Navigating the Brown Act and the Conflict-of-Interest Code,” California Association of Sanitation Agencies Winter Conference, Jan. 14, 2026
- “Thriving Together: Navigating Community Engagement in the Fast Lane,” California Special Districts Association General Manager Leadership Summit, June 24, 2024
- “The More You Know: A Public Service Announcement on California’s New Governance and Ethics Laws,” Association of California Water Agencies Spring Conference & Expo, May 9, 2024
- “AB 1234 - Practical Ethical Issues for County Counsels, Conflicts of Interest, 1090 Liability,” County Counsels’ Association of California Spring Land Use Study Section Conference, May 5, 2022
- “Understanding Public Service Ethics Laws and Principles (AB 1234),” League of California Cities Planning Commissioners Academy, Mar. 16, 2022
- “2020 Legal and Legislative Update,” CSDA Special District Leadership Academy Conference, California Special Districts Association, Sept. 28, 2021
- “New State Assistance Program for Unpaid Water and Wastewater Bills Due to COVID-19,” California Special Districts Association Annual Conference , Aug. 31, 2021
- “2020 Legal and Legislative Update,” CSDA Special District Leadership Academy Conference, California Special Districts Association, Apr. 13, 2021