

# The Adopt-A-Highway Program



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Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) participants help to maintain and beautify sections of roadside within California's State Highway System. The AAH Program saves California taxpayers millions of dollars every year and provides a great opportunity to promote civic responsibility and community pride.

## What Kind of Work Can Adopters Perform?

There are five different types of adoptions:

- Litter Removal
- Vegetation Control
- Tree and Shrub Planting
- Wildflower Planting
- Graffiti Removal

An adoption site usually spans a two-mile stretch of roadside, but park and ride lots, vista points, and other areas of the State right-of-way are also considered for adoption. AAH permits are issued for a period of five years. Groups in good standing may apply for additional five-year permits.

## Who Can Participate?

Individuals, organizations, businesses, and government agencies may participate as volunteers or as sponsors. A volunteer adopter performs its own adoption work. A sponsor hires an AAH service contractor to perform the work on its behalf. Minors, aged 16 and older, may participate in a volunteer group, but the group's leaders must be at least 21.

## Safety Is Our Number One Concern

Participants must realize that they will be working in a potentially hazardous environment and must agree to diligently follow all safety requirements. Failure to comply with safety requirements could result in an adoption's cancellation. Each volunteer group must designate a safety leader and an alternate safety leader. Unless otherwise notified, Caltrans considers the safety leaders to be the individuals who are listed on the adopter's AAH Program Application. Each sponsor's contractor must appoint a crew leader. Volunteer group leaders or a contractor's crew leader must schedule and attend a safety orientation at Caltrans before beginning work.

## What if the Site I Want Is Already Adopted?

AAH sites are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. If the site you want is currently adopted, you can submit an AAH Program Application to be placed on the site's waiting list. When an existing adopter gives up a site, it is offered to the first group on the waiting list. Applicants may be placed on the waiting list for more than one site.

## How Much Does It Cost?

A volunteer adopter who performs litter removal and chooses a standard recognition panel will incur no costs. However, most supplies needed for other adoption types must be purchased by the adopter. Artwork for non-standard recognition panels must be purchased by the adopter (see AAH Signs next page).



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A sponsor must make financial arrangements with an AAH service contractor for services to be provided. A contractor's fee is dependent upon the size of the adoption site, the type of work required, and the work frequency. All monies paid to the contractor remain with the contractor. AAH coordinators maintain a list of contractors who have met the AAH Program's license and insurance requirements. Sponsors are encouraged to obtain quotes from more than one contractor.

## Adopt-A-Highway Signs

Caltrans places an AAH sign at each adoption site. When the site is adopted, a "recognition panel," displaying the adopter's name, is attached to the sign. Because it is against the law to advertise on State right-of-way, only the adopter's name and/or logo may be displayed on a recognition panel. Words that are not part of an adopter's legal business name are considered to be advertising and may not be displayed, even if the words usually appear in the adopter's logo. There are three types of recognition panels:

**Standard:** The panel is manufactured by Caltrans and displays the adopter's name in black, standard highway lettering.

**Standard Panel with Logo:** The adopter must provide to Caltrans an adhesive-backed logo at their own cost. The panel is manufactured by Caltrans and displays the provided logo along with the adopter's name in black, standard highway lettering.

**Custom Panel:** If all panel elements are supplied by the adopter, the panel is called a "custom" panel. Custom panels can be created in two ways. Adhesive-backed elements (purchased by the adopter) can be delivered to Caltrans for application onto a blank panel. Caltrans does not charge a fee for placing panel elements onto a panel. Or, a completed panel can be delivered. Caltrans will supply blank recognition panels at no cost to participants who choose the latter option. Either way, there is no fee charged for installation of custom panels.

## How Do I Get Started?

Before submitting an application, please visit the AAH Program's website, [adopt-a-highway.dot.ca.gov](http://adopt-a-highway.dot.ca.gov), and take the time to read some of the informational handouts available. All prospective participants should read "Adopt-A-Highway Recognition Panel Design Guidelines." This document contains rules for designing custom panels, explains AAH Program policy regarding the use of logos, and includes instructions for preparing a panel design proof. If a group is considering a vegetation control or planting adoption, instructions for preparing plans and schedules are available. Volunteer groups should read the "Permit Special Provisions." This document lists rules that participants are required to follow. Sponsors should read "Adopt-A-Highway Sponsor FAQs." This document explains the relationship between Caltrans, a sponsor, and its contractor. Sponsors may also obtain a list of AAH service contractors from the website.



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## The Application Process

- Choose a type of adoption and general location.
- Call your local AAH coordinator to discuss your future adoption. The coordinator can give you the exact “post mile” location of the site you wish to adopt (needed to complete a Program Application) and can tell you if there is a waiting list for the site. Even though panel-related documentation is not needed until a requested site becomes available, discuss your panel’s design with the coordinator during this initial contact.
- Obtain and submit a completed AAH Program Application. Applications are available on the AAH Program’s website and from the AAH coordinator.
- Wait for notification from your AAH coordinator explaining the status of each requested site.
- Once a requested site becomes available, the AAH coordinator will send you an AAH Permit Application and a list of any other documentation required. Return the signed Permit Application and other requested documents by the deadline given.
- Wait for your AAH Encroachment Permit to arrive in the mail. This may take several weeks.
- Both the volunteer safety leader and alternate safety leader or, if a sponsored adoption, the contractor’s crew leader, must schedule and attend a safety orientation at Caltrans before beginning work. Volunteer leaders are issued safety-training materials and safety equipment for their group during the orientation.

## Additional Responsibilities for Volunteer Group Leaders

Once adoption work begins, it is the legal responsibility of the safety leaders to ensure that all members of the group are able to work safely on any given day. Therefore, safety leaders must make sure that they and each member of their group understand and can conform to all the requirements listed in the AAH Permit Special Provisions.

### The safety leaders must:

- Provide a comprehensive safety training session for all group members prior to their working on the highway.
- Repeat the group safety training session each year.
- Conduct a brief safety review each time the group goes out to work at the site.
- Provide Caltrans with at least five days notice prior to each work event.
- Begin work within 30 calendar days of the permit’s start date.
- Ensure that the tasks listed in the encroachment permit package are completed as scheduled.
- Ensure that participants follow safety procedures while working.
- Notify Caltrans if there is a change of group leader or contact information.
- Notify Caltrans if you wish to cancel your adoption.

# The Adopt-A-Highway Program

## Local Adopt-A-Highway Coordinators

**District 1:**  
(707) 441-5761

**District 2:**  
(530) 225-3277

**District 3:**  
(530) 741-4002

**District 4:**  
(510) 286-4433

**District 5:**  
San Luis Obispo  
& Santa Barbara:  
(805) 542-4755

Santa Cruz,  
San Benito, &  
Monterey:  
(831)-372-1132

**District 6:**  
Kings, Madera,  
& North Fresno:  
(559) 445-5394

Kern, Tulare, &  
South Fresno:  
(559) 488-4022

**District 7:**  
Ventura, North & West Los Angeles:  
(213) 897-4273

South & East Los Angeles:  
(213) 897-3871

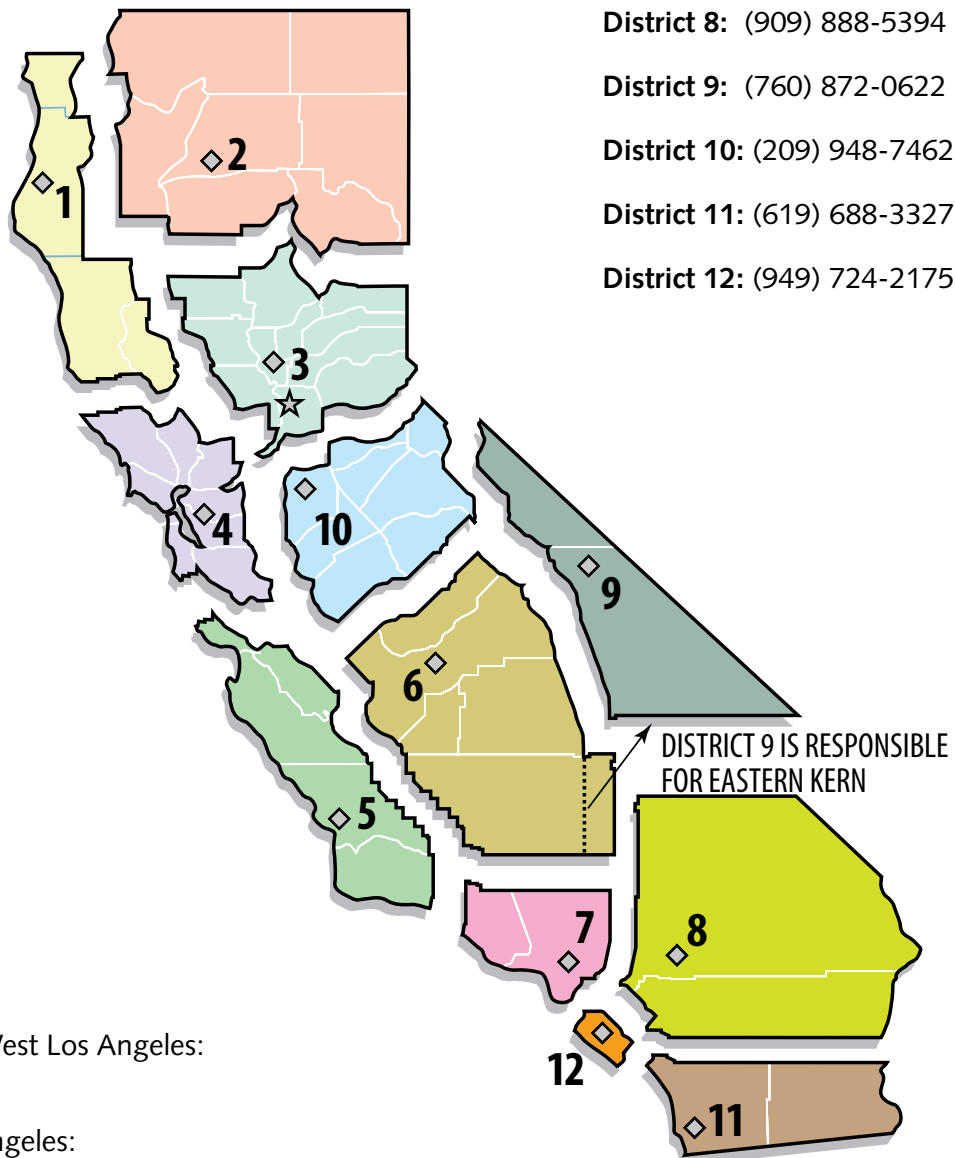
**District 8:** (909) 888-5394

**District 9:** (760) 872-0622

**District 10:** (209) 948-7462

**District 11:** (619) 688-3327

**District 12:** (949) 724-2175



# The Adopt-A-Highway Program



**Call Toll Free!**

**1-866-ADOPTAHWY**

**or 1-866-236-7824**

**[adopt-a-highway.dot.ca.gov](http://adopt-a-highway.dot.ca.gov)**

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in Braille, large print, on audiocassette, or computer disk.

To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to the:

California Department of Transportation  
Maintenance Program, MS-31  
1120 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814



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Voice: (916) 654-2926  
or  
TTY: CRS-711



The Adopt-A-Highway Program is not a forum for advertising or public discourse.