

# Duties of ACOG District and Section Treasurers

## Introduction

The district or section Treasurer is the principal financial officer for the district/section. In general, the Treasurer is responsible for processing all payments to be made from district/section funds, for review and analysis of periodic financial statements, and for preparation of the annual budget. We will refer to the Treasurer in this discussion, although it is recognized that in some sections that the Chair acts in that capacity.

Some Treasurer's activities are carried on annually, some are done monthly, and some are done on an occasional basis, as required. As Treasurer, you will be responsible for reporting to your advisory council on matters related to the district/section's financial status, and bringing matters requiring action to their attention. You will also be the principal contact with the Congress's Financial Service Center (FSC), which maintains the accounting records for districts and sections.

The amount of time that is needed to effectively act as the Treasurer varies greatly. District Treasurers typically devote far more time to those duties than section Treasurers, due to the greater volume of transactions and activities at the district level.

## Annual Activities

**Budget Preparation** – Each year, the Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of the annual budget for the district/section. What does this require?

1. Review the financial statements for the prior year. Particular attention should be paid to situations where the actual revenues or expenditures were substantially different from the amounts that were budgeted for that activity, or where the activity was not provided for in the budget.
2. Consider the budgetary needs for the upcoming year for new projects or activities which will no longer be carried out.
3. If your district or section has an annual meeting, a budget must be prepared for that meeting as well. Districts generally utilize a meeting planner from the College's meetings department. However, the Treasurer must be closely involved in the meeting planning process, and coordinate with the ACOG meeting planner and the scientific meeting chair in preparing the initial meeting budget and assessing the impact of changes in the meeting that will have budgetary implications.

4. The FSC will prepare annual budget worksheets and instructions, which provide more detail on budget preparation. These materials will be emailed to the Treasurer during the summer of each year. (The materials are also available by postal mail) The FSC will also assist the Treasurer to the extent needed with additional financial reports and analysis.

After approval for the proposed budget is received from the district or section advisory council, the budget is passed on to the FSC, for inclusion in the following year's monthly financial reports.

**Treasurers Conference** – Each year, the College holds a conference for district and section treasurers. The purpose of the conference is to inform Treasurers about changes in College policies that affect the financial status and activities of districts and sections, and provide basic training in the Treasurer's duties for new Treasurers. There is also a presentation by the College's investment managers that discusses the performance of the College's reserves during the previous year, and provides an overview of the investment strategies that the College employs. The College covers part of the cost of attendance for one attendee per district or section. The conference is always held in January of each year, with the location varying from year to year.

### **Monthly Activities**

**Financial Statement Review** - Each month, the FSC emails a set of financial statements to each district or section. These reports summarize the financial activity for that district or section for the year to date, and compare that activity to the corresponding budget categories. Each Treasurer's responsibility is to review these reports and satisfy themselves that the reports accurately reflect the transactions that he/she have processed to the FSC.

This may involve looking at the variances between the actual results compared to the budgeted amounts, or reviewing the check register to be sure that all check requests sent in have been paid. Significant actual/budget variances or revenue/expenses in categories for which there is no budget may indicate incorrect classification of revenue or expenses. If there are any questions about the reports, the FSC is available at any time to follow up on any aspect of the reports that raise questions.

## **Weekly/As Needed**

**Check Requests** – The most common activity for a district or section Treasurer is processing check requests/travel vouchers to pay for vendor invoices, travel reimbursements, meeting expenditures, or reimbursements to the College. Check requests must be handled promptly – delays can result in assessment of late fees by vendors, and complaints from district or section officers waiting on travel reimbursements. Ideally, check requests should be processed within two business days of receipt. The College requires that reimbursement requests for travel be submitted within 60 days to the Treasurer.

It is the Treasurer's responsibility to review requests for payment to ensure that College policies related to expense reimbursement are followed. In general, this means that when processing check requests, the Treasurer should confirm that:

1. An original invoice is attached that supports the amount of payment requested.
2. If an honorarium is involved, that the necessary Federal tax information is on file with the FSC, or that a W-9 has been completed. The FSC cannot process payments for compensation without current tax reporting information on file.
3. The check request is correctly totaled, the payment address is included, and the coding on the check request is accurate and consistent with the budget.
4. The Treasurer has signed and dated the check request, authorizing payment. The FSC cannot process any request for payment without a Treasurer's signature.
5. If special handling is required, (rush payment, mailing to different address, etc.) that those instructions are shown on the check request.

For travel reimbursements submitted on vouchers, the process is similar, with a few additional steps:

1. Every travel reimbursement must be signed by the traveler.
2. Original receipts for expenses of \$25 or more are attached to the travel voucher. If a receipt has been lost, or cannot be provided, write an explanation on the voucher or a supporting note as to the reason(s) for the omission. If the original receipt is not available, a copy of the receipt can be used.

3. If mileage expense is included, make sure the correct rate is used, as it changes at least once annually, and the new rate generally takes effect on January 1 of each year. Expenses for fuel are not allowable, if mileage is charged, and should be taken off.
4. The reimbursements requested are consistent with Congress travel policies. In some cases, districts or sections have additional limitations, such as maximum lodging/food/incidental amounts per day, which must be complied with.
5. Staple receipts and other supporting documentation to the back of the voucher form. (Sometimes, if paper clips are used, by the time the postal service has bounced the paperwork around for a few days, the receipts separate from the voucher and we have to match them up again).

The Treasurer should retain a copy of at least the front page of the check request or travel voucher. These can be compared to the monthly check register received with the monthly financial reports to ensure that all payment requests have been paid. Where the review reveals problems with the request for payment, such as missing receipts or signatures, the Treasurer should contact the person requesting payment to resolve them, prior to submitting them for payment.

**Payments to ACOG** – ACOG’s national office frequently makes payments to vendors and staff on behalf of the districts and sections. These generally relate to consolidated printing bills, staff travel or situations where there is insufficient time to process a payment through the normal process. These are provided to Treasurers on a monthly, consolidated statement, with the supporting detail attached. The Treasurer will need to review, code, and approve these transactions, as with any other payable. Most of these transactions are for districts.

**Deposit Processing** – Treasurers of some sections may receive personal/corporate checks for registration at a section annual meeting, vendor checks for exhibit booths or educational grants, or grant funds from ACOG for various programs. These should be processed promptly to the FSC, using the “Cash Receipts Submittal Form”. Checks should not be held. Holding checks reduces the investment revenue received, and some checks are only valid for a specific time period.

It is recommended that if a significant number of checks are being sent to the FSC, that FedEx/UPS/etc., be used to mail them, to avoid the possibility of them being lost in the US Mail.

**Reporting to the Advisory Council** – As principal financial officer for the district or section, one of the duties of the Treasurer is to keep the advisory council informed about the financial status of the district/section. A report from the Treasurer typically contains certain critical information:

1. The total reserves of the district/section. This is frequently presented with comparative prior year information, so that the advisory council can understand the long term trend.
2. A concise summary of the financial activities for the year to date. Emphasis should be placed on the results of activities that are completed, comparing them to the budget. For example: At the district fall ADM, a discussion of the actual versus budget expenses for the interim advisory council meeting might be helpful, since that activity is complete.
3. A brief review of the investment results for the district/section for the year to date. The investment results are available at the end of each quarter, and can be compared to the prior year at the same time.
4. Annual Meeting – because this can represent a significant commitment of the district or section’s resources, a progress report can be helpful.

### **Other Resources for Treasurers**

**Best Practices Manual** - The best practices manual is a compendium of financial information related to both districts and sections, although it is generally targeted more at districts. It is updated annually about mid-year.

### **Other Recommendations**

**Honoraria Payments to Speakers at Annual Meetings** - The FSC recommends that where speakers are to receive honoraria at the district/section annual meeting, those payments should be requested at least 60 days prior to the meeting. This allows time for the check requests to be processed and checks generated prior to the meeting. It also allows time for W-9 information to be requested and received, if not already on file. The actual checks can be delivered to the Treasurer, meeting planner, or other officer, to be given out at the annual meeting at the time of the presentation.

**Dues Adjustments** – As part of the budget process, the dues charged by the district or section should be reviewed, to make sure that those dues are consistent with the operating requirements for the district/section. Where the district/section consistently has large annual surpluses resulting from its general operations, consideration should be given to adjusting those dues to a level more consistent with the level of expenditures.

**Travel Reimbursements** - In order to process travel reimbursements for officers, speakers and others as efficiently as possible, there are a number of things that can be done to eliminate delay-causing problems. Prior to meetings or activities by districts or sections, (or when a voucher form is sent out) send a letter to the attendees so that they understand what the requirements for reimbursement are (see attachment for sample letter).

1. Spell out the general ACOG policies for filing for reimbursements, such as the 60 day maximum period for requesting reimbursement, the \$25 receipt requirement, signatures that are required, the *current* mileage reimbursement rate, and 14 day advance airline ticket purchase requirement. (These are normally listed on the back of the travel voucher forms, but if both sides of the form have not been copied, that information may not be present) Make sure they have the right form (each district and section has its own unique form).
2. If there are specific district or section restrictions on reimbursements, make sure those are clearly spelled out. These restrictions can be for a maximum amount per day for lodging, food, and incidentals, or a maximum reimbursement amount for the entire trip. Other restrictions may include restricting the number of days qualifying for reimbursement, or number of days for which rental cars may be used.
3. If there is a large reimbursement for a meal, which includes other attendees, be sure that the other participants in the meal are recorded on the receipt. Specify that spousal meals are not reimbursable. If a receipt includes both the traveler and spouse, divide the amount by  $\frac{1}{2}$  or indicate the amount that applies to the traveler.
4. Make sure that attendees know whether they will be reimbursed by their district or their section. For example, in some cases, the district will cover two section attendees at an advisory council meeting, but a third attendee from the same section may be reimbursed from section funds, and would need to submit expenses to the section treasurer. This is particularly true with regard to Junior Fellows or medical students, who may not be familiar with the process.
5. Include contact information for the district or section treasurer in the letter, in case there are questions about a particular expense, or if an unusual situation requiring an exception to a district policy occurs. (For example, are internet charges reimbursable?)