

**DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER  
CONTRACT ACCOUNTING AND ADMINISTRATION HANDBOOK**

*The purpose of the handbook is to establish accounting, internal control, financial reporting, and contract administration standards for organizations (contractors) that contract with the COUNTY.*

**Revision: March 2014**

## AUDITOR-CONTROLLER CONTRACT ACCOUNTING AND ADMINISTRATION HANDBOOK

The purpose of this Handbook is to establish required accounting, financial reporting, and internal control standards for entities (CONTRACTOR) which contract with Los Angeles County (COUNTY).

***The accounting, financial reporting and internal control standards described in this Handbook are fundamental. These standards are not intended to be all inclusive or replace acceptable existing procedures or preclude the use of more sophisticated methods. Instead, this Handbook represents the minimum required procedures and controls that must be incorporated into a CONTRACTOR'S accounting and financial reporting system. The internal control standards described apply to organizations with adequate staffing. Organizations with insufficient staff to implement the internal controls as described herein must adopt alternative controls (e.g., use of appropriate alternative staff or Board Officers, etc.) to comply with the intent of the standards to ensure effective internal control systems are in place within the organization. The CONTRACTOR'S subcontractors must also follow these standards unless otherwise stated in the Agreement.***

### A. ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL REPORTING

#### 1.0 Basis of Accounting

Unless otherwise specified by the funding source, CONTRACTORS may elect to use either the cash basis or accrual basis of accounting during the year for recording financial transactions. Monthly invoices must be prepared on the same basis that is used for recording financial transactions.

The COUNTY recommends the use of the accrual basis for recording financial transactions.

#### Accrual Basis

Under the accrual basis for recording financial transactions, revenues are recorded in the accounting period in which they are earned (rather than when cash is received). Expenditures are recorded in the accounting period in which they are incurred (rather than when cash is disbursed).

### Accruals

Accruals shall be recorded observing the following:

- Recorded accruals must be reversed in the subsequent accounting period.

#### 1.1 If a CONTRACTOR elects to use the cash basis for recording financial transactions during the year:

- Necessary adjustments must be made to record the accruals at the beginning and the end of each year of the contract and at the end of the contract.
- All computations, supporting records, and explanatory notes used in converting from the cash basis to the accrual basis must be retained.

#### 1.2 Prepaid Expenses

Prepaid expenses (e.g., insurance, service agreements, lease agreements, etc.) should only be expensed during a given Agreement year to the extent goods and services are received, or are applicable to that Agreement year.

#### 2.0 Accounting System

Each CONTRACTOR shall maintain a **double entry accounting system** (utilizing debits and credits) with a General Journal, a Cash Receipts Journal, a General Ledger, and a Cash Disbursements Journal. The COUNTY requires that a Payroll Register (see Section 2.6) also be maintained. Postings to the General Ledger and Journals shall be made at least on a monthly basis. The CONTRACTOR shall maintain a separate Cost Center(s), which clearly identifies funds received and expended on services provided under the attached Agreement.

#### 2.1 General Journal

A General Journal shall be maintained for recording adjusting entries, reversing entries, closing entries, and other financial transactions not normally recorded in the Cash Receipts Journal or Cash Disbursements Journal. Entries in the General Journal must be adequately documented, and entered in chronological order with sufficient explanatory notations.

Example:

	<u>Debit</u>	<u>Credit</u>
Rent Expense	100	
Rent Payable		100

To record accrued rent to March 31, 20XX

## 2.2 Cash Receipts Journal

A Cash Receipts Journal shall be maintained for recording all cash receipts (e.g., COUNTY warrants, contributions, interest income, etc.). The Cash Receipts Journal shall contain (minimum requirements) the following column headings:

- Date
- Receipt Number
- Cash Debit Columns
- Income Credit Columns (for the following accounts):
  - COUNTY payments (one per funding source)
  - Contributions
  - Other Income (Grants, sales of supplies/services, rental income, miscellaneous revenue, fees, etc.)
  - Description (entries in the description column must specify the source of cash receipts.)

## 2.3 Cash Disbursements Journal

A Cash Disbursements Journal shall be maintained for recording all cash disbursements (e.g., rent, utilities, maintenance, etc.)

The Cash Disbursements Journal shall contain (minimum requirements) the following column headings:

- Date
- Check Number
- Cash (Credit) Column
- Expense Account Name
- Description

Note (1) Separate cost columns are required for salary expense and other recurring cost classifications for each program.

Note (2) Entries in the description column must specify the nature of the cost and the corresponding cost classification if not included in the column heading.

Note (3) Checks should not be written to employees (other than payroll, mileage, travel, and petty cash custodian checks).

A **Check Register** may be substituted for the Cash Disbursements Journal, but this is not recommended. If used, the Check Register must contain the same cost classifications and description information required when a Cash Disbursements Journal is used.

Disbursements without supporting documentation will be disallowed upon audit. Cancelled checks and credit card statements (VISA, AMEX, department store, etc.) will not constitute acceptable support. See Sections A.3.2 and B.2.4 for additional guidance on expense documentation requirements.

#### 2.4 General Ledger

A General Ledger shall be maintained with accounts for all assets, liabilities, fund balances, expenditures, and revenues. Separate accounts must be maintained for the expenses and revenues of each of the CONTRACTOR'S programs (both COUNTY and non-COUNTY programs).

#### 2.5 Chart of Accounts

A Chart of Accounts shall be maintained:

- The COUNTY recommends that CONTRACTORS use the expense account titles on the monthly invoice submitted to the COUNTY.
- If the CONTRACTOR uses account titles which differ from the account titles on the monthly invoice, each account title must clearly identify the nature of the transaction(s) posted to the account.
- CONTRACTOR must consistently post transactions that are of a similar nature to the same account. For example, all expenses for travel shall be posted to the account titled "travel" or "travel expense" and not intermixed with other expense accounts.

#### 2.6 Payroll Register

The COUNTY recommends that a Payroll Register be maintained for recording all payroll transactions. The Register should contain the following:

- Name
- Position
- Social Security Number (at a minimum last four digits of the SSN)
- Salary (hourly wage)
- Payment Record including:
  - Accrual Period
  - Gross Pay
  - Itemized Payroll Deductions
  - Net Pay Amount
  - Check Number

If a Payroll Register is not used, the information discussed above must be recorded in the cash disbursements journal.

CONTRACTOR will ensure compliance with all applicable federal and State requirements for withholding payroll taxes (e.g., FIT, FICA, FUTA, SIT, SIU, etc.), reporting, filing (e.g., 941, DE-7, W-2, W-4 and 1099s), and all applicable tax deposits.

CONTRACTOR will ensure compliance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines in properly classifying employees and independent contractors.

## 2.7 CONTRACTOR Invoices

Each CONTRACTOR shall present an invoice to the COUNTY each calendar month to report the program(s) financial activity of the month. In addition, if advanced funding is involved, an invoice shall be presented at the beginning of the contract period. An invoice/billing submission shall be provided to the COUNTY as required in the applicable COUNTY contract.

## 3.0 Records

Adequate care shall be exercised to safeguard the accounting records and supporting documentation. Any destruction or theft of the CONTRACTOR'S accounting records or supporting documentation shall be immediately reported to the COUNTY. CONTRACTOR shall report, to the local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction, any act(s), which may reasonably be thought to constitute a crime, and/or which appear to have resulted in the destruction, damage or alteration of any record subject to the provisions of this Handbook. CONTRACTOR shall make their report to the local law enforcement agency not more than twenty-four hours after becoming aware of the acts which have resulted in the destruction, damage, or alteration of the record.

A copy of the resulting crime/incident report must be retained by the agency for a period of time under which the underlying records were

destroyed, or damaged were required to be retained plus an additional four years, and shall be retained for a longer period in the case of unresolved litigation, or audit.

To the extent automated accounting records contain confidential information including but not limited to the names and addresses of individuals, Social Security Numbers, etc. The computer files containing this information must be adequately encrypted using the most current encryption standards to prevent unauthorized access and use.

### 3.1 Retention

All accounting records (e.g., journals, ledgers, etc.), financial records and supporting documentation (e.g., invoices, receipts, checks, etc.) must be retained for a minimum of five years after the termination of the CONTRACTOR'S Agreement, unless a longer retention period is prescribed by the Agreement, or by applicable laws and regulations, in which case the CONTRACTOR shall comply with the longer retention period and all other retention requirements set forth in the Agreement or the applicable laws and regulations.

### 3.2 Supporting Documentation

All revenues and expenditures shall be supported by original vouchers, invoices, receipts, or other documentation and shall be maintained in the manner described herein.

Invoices, receipts, canceled checks and other documentation, including electronic documentation clearly establishing the nature of the expenditure and its relevance to the COUNTY program being contracted for shall be required to support an outlay of funds. Unsupported disbursements will be disallowed upon audit. CONTRACTOR will be required to repay COUNTY for all dollar for dollar disallowed costs. ***Photocopies (including scanned images) of invoices or receipts, any internally generated documents (e.g., vouchers, request for check forms, requisitions, canceled checks, etc.), and account statements do not constitute supporting documentation for purchases. To the extent the source for electronic documentation is an original hardcopy document (e.g., PDF scans of original vendor invoices) CONTRACTOR shall retain the original source document for inspection by COUNTY. County at its sole discretion may accept photocopies of supporting documentation in preference to the original documents.***

Supporting documentation is required for various types of expenditures. CONTRACTORS shall provide acceptable supporting documentation for all expenditures, and, with regard to the following categories of

expenditures, acceptable supporting documentation shall consist solely of the documentation listed for each expenditure type. Another form of documentation may be used, in lieu of the listed types of acceptable supporting documentation, provided the CONTRACTOR obtains the prior written approval of the COUNTY to use a specific type of alternative documentation.

Payroll – timecards and attendance records signed by the employee and approved in writing by the supervisor, time distribution records by program accounting for total work time on a daily basis for all employees, records showing actual expenditures for Social Security and unemployment insurance, State and federal quarterly tax returns, federal W-2 forms, and federal W-4 forms. Personnel records shall also be maintained documenting employee pay rates. Personnel records shall also contain documentation confirming that educational and practical experience requirements of an employee's position have been met. Where licensure is a requirement of an employee's position, CONTRACTOR'S personnel file shall contain proof that employees have the required licenses/certifications.

Consultant Services – contracts detailing the nature and scope of services to be provided, time and attendance records (where applicable, as determined by COUNTY), billing rates, travel vouchers detailing purpose, time and location of travel, purchase orders and invoices for supplies and invoices or other supporting documentation detailing the nature of services provided. CONTRACTOR shall also maintain copies of all completed federal form 1099s, establishing that all payments to all consultants were reported in a timely fashion to federal and State taxing agencies.

Travel – travel policies of the CONTRACTOR (written); travel expense vouchers showing location, date and time of travel, purpose of trip, and rates claimed; vehicle mileage logs showing dates, destination and headquarters, purpose of trip, and beginning and ending odometer readings and the resulting mileage. Vehicle mileage logs must clearly identify business versus non-business, or personal travel. For travel related to conferences, CONTRACTOR shall at a minimum retain conference literature, including but not necessarily limited to agendas and handouts detailing the purpose of the conference, as part of the CONTRACTOR'S documentation of the propriety of the travel expenditure. Reimbursement rates for mileage shall not exceed applicable federal guidelines.

Reimbursement for actual receipts or per diem rates for meal expenses shall not exceed the maximum COUNTY'S reimbursement rate for employees.



Receipts shall be required for lodging for approved out-of-town travel. Maximum reimbursable lodging amount is the COUNTY'S maximum reimbursement rate for employees for a single occupancy hotel accommodation. Receipts shall also be required for airfare, car rentals, ground transportation and parking.

Operating Expenses (e.g., utilities, office supplies, equipment rentals, etc.) – bona fide contracts or lease agreements, if any, and invoices and receipts detailing the cost and items purchased will constitute the primary supporting documentation. For internal control purposes, the CONTRACTOR shall maintain vouchers, purchase orders, requisitions, stock received reports, bills of lading, etc. The contractor shall also maintain documentation acknowledging the receipt of the specific goods and services for the expenditure (e.g., stock received reports, packing slip signed by the receiving employee, etc.). For internal control purposes, the CONTRACTOR may also maintain vouchers, purchase orders, requisitions, etc.

Vehicle Expenses - A vehicle mileage log must be maintained which establishes the extent to which company owned vehicles are used for business, versus non-business purposes. For all business related trips, the log shall identify trip dates, the origin and destination of the trip along with beginning and ending odometer readings and the resulting mileage. For other vehicle expenses such as gasoline and maintenance, invoices/receipts must be maintained which reflect the vehicle license number, or vehicle identification number of the vehicle being serviced or fueled. The record maintenance requirements for company-owned vehicles, also applies to personal vehicles used for business purposes.

Outside Meals - receipts and/or invoices for all meals, a record of the nature and business purpose of each meal, and identification of the participants.

Loans from Employees/Related Parties – Loans to the CONTRACTOR by employees and/or related parties shall be supported by a written loan agreement and records documenting that the lent funds were deposited into a CONTRACTOR bank account. CONTRACTOR shall also maintain documentation showing that the loan proceeds were actually used for County programs. To the extent that the loan agreement provides for the payment of interest, the interest may not be an allowable expense under the Agreement. If the payment of interest is allowable, interest shall not be accrued at a rate which exceeds the most current available County Treasury Rate plus one percent.

### 3.3 Payments to Affiliated Organizations or Persons

Prior to making payments to affiliated organizations or persons (i.e., related party transactions), CONTRACTOR shall complete a disclosure statement identifying the nature of the affiliated, or related organization /persons.

CONTRACTOR shall not make payments to affiliated organizations or persons for program expenses (e.g., salaries, services, rent, etc.) that exceed the lesser of actual cost or the reasonable cost for such expenses. A reasonable cost shall be the price that would be paid by one party to another when the parties are dealing at arm's length (fair market price).

Organizations or persons (related parties) related to the CONTRACTOR or its members by blood, marriage, or through a legal organization (corporation, partnership, association, etc.) will be considered affiliated for purposes of this Agreement. COUNTY shall be solely responsible for determining affiliation unless otherwise allowed and approved by the State or federal agencies.

Payments to affiliated organizations or persons will be disallowed upon audit to the extent the payments exceed the lower of actual costs or the reasonable costs (fair market value) for such items.

### 3.4 Filing

All relevant supporting documentation for reported program expenditures and revenues shall be filed in a systematic and consistent manner. It is recommended that supporting documents be filed as follows:

- Checks – Numerically
- Invoices – Vendor name and date
- Vouchers – Numerically
- Receipts – Chronologically
- Timecards – Pay period and alphabetically

### 3.5 Referencing

Accounting transactions posted to the CONTRACTOR'S books shall be appropriately cross-referenced to supporting documentation. It is recommended that expenditure transactions on the CONTRACTOR'S books be cross-referenced to the supporting documentation as follows:

- Invoices – Vendor name and date
- Checks – Number
- Vouchers –Number
- Revenue – Receipt number

Supporting documentation for non-payroll expenditures (i.e., operating expenditures) should be cross-referenced to the corresponding check issued for payment. If multiple invoices are paid with one check, all related invoices should be bound together and cross-referenced to the check issued for payment.

#### 4.0 Donations and Other Sources of Revenue

Restricted donations and other sources of revenue, earmarked specifically for the Contract, must be utilized on allowable contract expenditures. Similarly, income from investments (e.g., interest or dividends), where the source of the amount invested is COUNTY program funds, shall be deemed restricted revenue that must be utilized on allowable expenditures, or returned to the COUNTY as specified under the attached Agreement.

#### 5.0 Audits

For routine audits and inspections, CONTRACTOR will make available to COUNTY representatives, upon request, during working hours, during the duration of the contract and for a period of five years thereafter (unless a longer period is specified under the Agreement, or by applicable laws and regulations), all of its books and records, including but not limited to those which relate to its operation of each project or business activity which is funded in whole or part with governmental monies, whether or not such monies are received through the COUNTY. All such books and records shall be maintained at a location within Los Angeles County.

In general, audits will normally be performed during normal business hours, Monday through Friday. However, COUNTY retains the right to inspect and conduct investigations of CONTRACTOR'S program/fiscal operations and contract compliance at any time, without prior notice to CONTRACTOR seven days a week, when the COUNTY has information which it, in its sole discretion, deems justifies such an unannounced visit, inspection, audit or investigations.

#### 6.0 Single Audit Requirements

OMB Circular 133, "Audits of State, Local Governments and Non Profit Organizations" requires that certain organizations receiving federal

awards, including pass-through awards, have annual audits. Details are contained in the Circular.

A copy of any Single Audit report shall be filed with the COUNTY within the timeframes prescribed by the Circular 133, or under the attached Agreement.

#### 7.0 Subcontracts

***CONTRACTOR shall not subcontract services without the prior written consent of the COUNTY.***

***CONTRACTOR shall provide COUNTY with copies of all executed subcontracts and shall be responsible for the performance of their subcontractors. At the sole discretion of COUNTY, CONTRACTOR may submit an electronic copy of executed subcontracts in preference to a hardcopy.***

### B. INTERNAL CONTROLS

Internal controls safeguard the CONTRACTOR'S assets from misappropriations, misstatements or misuse. Each CONTRACTOR shall prepare necessary written procedures establishing internal controls for its personnel's use. The CONTRACTOR shall instruct all of its personnel in these procedures and continuously monitor operations to ensure compliance with them.

#### 1.0 Cash Receipts

##### 1.1. Separate Fund or Cost Center

All contract revenues shall be maintained in a bank account. If revenues from other sources are maintained in the same bank account, revenues for each source must be clearly identifiable on the accounting records through the use of cost centers or separate accounts.

##### 1.2 Deposits

When collections are received by mail, two employees should be assigned to open the mail and list all collections received on a check remittance log.

All checks shall be restrictively endorsed upon receipt.

Cash received shall be recorded on pre-numbered receipts and the receipts/check remittance log shall be reconciled to the amount being deposited.

Voided receipts shall be retained and the sequence of receipts issued/voided shall be periodically accounted for.

Cash receipts (i.e., cash and checks) totaling \$500 or more shall be deposited within one day of receipt. Collections of less than \$500 may be held and secured and deposited weekly or when the total reaches \$500, whichever occurs first. If CONTRACTOR can establish that a larger limit is warranted, CONTRACTOR may request authorization from COUNTY to increase the limit to an amount greater than \$500.

Duplicate deposit slips shall be retained and filed chronologically, and shall contain sufficient reference information for comparison to the Cash Receipts Journal and individual receipts, if applicable. A recommended best practice is to retain photocopies of the COUNTY warrants reflected on each deposit slip, or record the individual warrant numbers onto the deposit slip.

### 1.3 Separation of Duties

An employee who does not handle cash shall record all cash or check receipts in the CONTRACTOR'S accounting records.

### 1.4 Bank Reconciliations

Bank statements should be received and reconciled by someone with no cash handling, or check writing responsibilities.

Monthly bank reconciliations should be prepared within 30 days of the bank statement date and reviewed by management for appropriateness and accuracy. The bank reconciliations should be signed and dated by both the preparer and the reviewer. Reconciling items should be resolved timely.

## 2.0 Disbursements

### 2.1 General

All disbursements (other than those made for petty cash purchases), shall be made using an Agency check, electronic funds transfer, or debit/credit card.

Blank check stock shall be secured and accounted for to preclude unauthorized use.

Checks shall not be payable to "cash" or signed in advance. Similarly, electronic debits to "cash" shall not be made. Checks written to employees

for reimbursement of out-of-pocket costs must be supported by receipts and invoices.

A second signature is recommended on all checks over \$500, unless otherwise specified in the contract. In instances where the payee is also a signor on the check, the disbursement shall be reviewed and approved by a higher level employee, or Board member who shall also sign the check.

If the bookkeeper signs checks, a second signature shall be required on the checks, regardless of limits specified in the contract.

Voided checks shall be marked void with the signature block cut out. The voided checks must be filed with the cancelled checks.

Unclaimed or undelivered checks shall be cancelled periodically.

All supporting documentation shall be referenced to check numbers and marked "paid" or otherwise canceled to prevent duplicate payments or reuse.

Disbursements without adequate supporting documentation will be disallowed upon audit.

## 2.2. Approvals and Separation of Duties

Employees responsible for approving cash disbursements and/or signing checks shall examine all supporting documentation at the time the checks are approved and signed.

All disbursements, excluding petty cash purchases, shall be approved by persons independent of check preparation and bookkeeping activities.

## 2.3 Petty Cash

A petty cash fund up to \$500 may be maintained for payment of small incidental expenses incurred by the CONTRACTOR (e.g., postage due, small purchases of office supply items, etc.). The CONTRACTOR must obtain written approval from the COUNTY to establish a petty cash fund greater than \$500.

Petty cash disbursements must be supported by original invoices, store receipts or other external authenticating documents indicating the item purchased and the employee making the purchase. In the event that outside (external) supporting documentation is not obtainable for minor disbursements (under \$10), such as parking meters, fees, etc., then some written documentation shall be maintained and approved by a supervisory employee not associated with the transaction. **Petty cash**

***disbursements should not be used as a substitute for normal purchasing and disbursement practices (i.e., payment by check).***

The petty cash fund shall be maintained on an imprest basis. A check should be drawn to set up the fund and to make periodic reimbursements. Receipts, vouchers, etc., supporting each fund replenishment must be bound together, filed chronologically and cross referenced to the reimbursement check.

## 2.4 Credit Cards

The use of credit cards, both CONTRACTOR-issued credit cards and an employee's personal credit card used on behalf of the CONTRACTOR, should be limited to purchases where established purchasing and disbursement practices are not suitable.

Credit cards issued in the CONTRACTOR'S name must be adequately safeguarded and usage monitored to ensure that only authorized and necessary items are purchased.

Credit card purchases should be pre-approved by CONTRACTOR management to ensure that they are reasonable and necessary.

All credit card disbursements must be supported by original invoices, store receipts or other external authenticating documents indicating the item purchased, the employee making the purchase, and the justification for the purchase. ***Credit card statements are not sufficient support for credit card purchases.***

## 3.0 Timekeeping

### 3.1 Timecards

Timecards or time reports must be prepared for each pay period. Timecards or time reports must indicate total hours worked each day by program and total hours charged to each of the CONTRACTOR'S programs. Time estimates do not qualify as support for payroll expenditures and will be disallowed upon audit.

All timecards and time reports must be signed in ink by the employee and the employee's supervisor to certify the accuracy of the reported time. To the extent CONTRACTOR utilizes electronic timecards and time reports, CONTRACTOR must ensure that both the employee and supervisor certify time reported using electronic signatures. Where electronic timecards and time reports are used, CONTRACTOR'S reporting system must be able to electronically record the date/time the timecard was prepared/reviewed. CONTRACTOR'S electronic time reporting system

must also have sufficient controls to prevent unauthorized alteration/changes to electronic time records and reports.

### 3.2 Personnel and Payroll Records

Adequate security must be maintained over personnel and payroll records with access restricted to authorized individuals. Any automated personnel and payroll records which contain confidential information such as employee addresses, medical condition information, etc. should be adequately encrypted to prevent unauthorized access and use using the latest encryption standards.

Personnel and payroll records shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Employee's authorized salary rate
- Employee information sheet (e.g., employee contact information, emergency contact information, etc.)
- Resume and/or application
- Proof of qualifications for the position, if required (e.g., notarized copy or original diploma, license(s), etc.)
- Performance evaluations
- Criminal record clearance (if required)
- Citizenship Status
- Benefit balances (e.g., sick time, vacation, etc.)
- Health Clearances (if required)

#### Benefit Balances

Employee benefit balances (e.g., sick time, vacation, personal time, etc.) should be maintained on at least a monthly basis. Benefit balances should be increased when benefit hours are earned and decreased as hours are used.

### 3.3 Limitations on Positions and Salaries

The CONTRACTOR shall not pay any salaries higher than those authorized in the contract, or the attachments thereto.

If an employee serves in the same, or dual capacities under more than one agreement or program, time charged to the contracts or programs taken as a whole may not exceed 100% of the employee's actual time worked.

Salaried employees shall be paid a salary that corresponds with the employee's work schedule. For example, a ½-time salaried employee



performing the same or similar work should be paid proportionately less than a full-time salaried employee.

The salary expense of salaried employees working on more than one agreement or program shall be allocated to each program based on the ratio of the number of hours worked on each program during the pay period to the total number hours worked during the pay period.

The CONTRACTOR shall not make retroactive salary adjustments for any employee without written approval from the COUNTY.

#### Separation of Duties

- Payroll checks should be distributed by persons not involved in timekeeping, preparing of payroll transactions, or reconciling bank accounts.
- All employee hires and terminations, or pay rate changes, shall be approved in writing by authorized persons independent of payroll responsibilities.

#### 4.0 Capital Assets

Capital assets are tangible assets of significant value having a useful life that extends beyond the current year and are broadly classified as land, buildings and improvements, and equipment.

Land cannot be depreciated. All other capital assets with an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more shall be capitalized.

Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item, including shipping costs and sales taxes, the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it was acquired.

Capital asset purchases shall be approved by the CONTRACTOR'S Board of Directors or their authorized representative.

Capital assets shall not be ordered, or purchased during the last three months of the term of the CONTRACTOR'S Agreement with the COUNTY, unless the acquisition is pre-approved by the COUNTY.

#### 4.1 Acquisition

As specified in the contract, CONTRACTOR shall submit a purchase versus lease analysis to COUNTY and obtain written authorization before

making any capital asset purchase where the acquisition cost is \$25,000 or more, and all, or a portion of the cost of the capital asset will be charged to the COUNTY's contract.

#### Non-Capital Asset Equipment

Non-capital asset equipment is defined as equipment with a unit cost less than \$5,000, a useful life over one year, and can generally be easily carried or moved; especially by hand (e.g., personal computers, related peripherals, typewriters, fax machines and other portable assets).

#### 4.2 Asset Identification and Inventory

All fixed assets including capital and non-capital asset equipment, purchased with Contract funds are to be used solely for the benefit of the Contract and should be appropriately tagged.

Each CONTRACTOR shall maintain a current listing of fixed assets, including the item description, serial number, date of purchase, acquisition cost and source(s) of funding.

An inventory of all fixed assets should be conducted at least once each year to ensure that all fixed assets are accounted for and maintained in proper working order.

#### 4.3 Depreciation and Use Allowance

Unless otherwise approved by the COUNTY, compensation for the use of buildings and other capital improvements may be made through depreciation, or a use allowance:

- The computation of depreciation/use allowance is based on the acquisition cost of the asset(s).
- The computation should exclude the cost of land, buildings, and equipment donated by federal, State or COUNTY governments and the cost of buildings and land contributed by the CONTRACTOR to satisfy funding matching requirements.
- For depreciation, an appropriate useful life must be established for the asset(s) which considers factors such as the nature of the asset used, susceptibility to technological obsolescence, etc.
- Appendix B to IRS Publication 946, "How to Depreciate Property", contains guidelines for establishing an asset's useful life.

- A use allowance is computed as an annual rate that may not exceed an annual rate of two-percent of the acquisition cost if the asset is a building or improvement. A use allowance in excess of the ceiling percentage must be justified by the CONTRACTOR.

#### 4.4 Rental Costs of Buildings and Equipment

- Allowable to the extent that the rates are reasonable considering rental costs of comparable property, market conditions in the area, condition of the property being leased, etc.
- Under a “sale and leaseback” arrangement, rental costs would be allowable up to the amount that would be allowed if the CONTRACTOR had continued to own the property.
- Under a “less than arms length” lease, costs are only allowable up to the amount that would be allowable had title to the property vested in the CONTRACTOR.

#### 4.5 Security

Physical security should be adequately maintained over fixed assets to prevent misuse or theft of COUNTY property.

#### 4.6 Property Management

The CONTRACTOR shall assume responsibility and accountability for the maintenance of all fixed assets purchased, leased, or rented with Contract funds.

The CONTRACTOR shall report promptly, in writing, to the COUNTY all cases of theft, loss, damage, or destruction of fixed assets purchased with COUNTY funds. The report shall contain at a minimum, item identification, recorded value, facts relating to loss, and, where appropriate, a copy of the law enforcement report. In cases where the loss resulted from suspected criminal activity (e.g., theft, vandalism, arson, etc.) the incident must be reported to the local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the location of the suspected crime. A copy of the resulting crime/incident report must be retained by the agency for a period of time under which the underlying records were destroyed, or damaged were required to be retained plus an additional four years, and shall be retained for a longer period in the case of unresolved litigation, or audit.

CONTRACTOR shall dispose of or return to the COUNTY all fixed assets in accordance with the Contract.

- 5.0 Bonding – All officers, employees, and contractors who handle cash or have access to the contractor's funds (e.g., prepare checks, etc.) shall be bonded.
- 6.0 Investments – COUNTY program funds may not be utilized for investments where there is a risk of loss.

## C. COST PRINCIPLES

### 1.0 Policy

It is the intent of the COUNTY to provide funds for the purpose of CONTRACTOR to provide the services required by the Agreement. CONTRACTOR shall use these funds on actual expenses in an economical and efficient manner and ensure they are reasonable, proper and necessary costs of providing services and are allowable in accordance with the applicable OMB Circular.

#### 1.1. Limitations on Expenditures of Program Funds

CONTRACTOR shall comply with the Agreement and applicable OMB Circular(s). The Circular defines direct and indirect costs, discusses allowable cost allocation procedures and the development of Indirect Cost Rates, and specifically addresses the allowability of a variety of different costs.

If a CONTRACTOR is unsure of the allowability of any particular type of cost or individual cost, the CONTRACTOR should request advance written approval from the COUNTY prior to incurring the cost.

#### 1.2 Expenses Incurred Outside the Agreement Period

Expenses charged against program funds may not be incurred prior to the effective date of the Agreement or subsequent to the Agreement termination, or expiration date. Similarly, current period expenses related to events or activities that occurred prior to the effective date of the Agreement may not be allowable. For example, legal costs incurred prosecuting or defending a lawsuit stemming from events which occurred during a period not covered by a valid Agreement between CONTRACTOR and COUNTY are not allowable.

#### 1.3 Budget Limitation

Expenses may not exceed the maximum limits shown on the contract budget.

**1.4 Unspent Funds**

CONTRACTOR shall return any unspent program funds to the COUNTY, unless otherwise permitted by the contract. In addition, the COUNTY will determine the disposition of unspent program funds upon termination of the Agreement.

**1.5 Necessary, Proper and Reasonable**

Only those expenditures that are necessary, proper and reasonable to carry out the purposes and activities of the Program are allowable.

**2.0 Allocable Expenses**

For CONTRACTORS that operate programs or provide services in addition to the services required under contract, the CONTRACTOR shall allocate expenditures that benefit programs or funding sources on an equitable basis.

In accordance with the applicable OMB Circular(s), agencies shall define their allocable expenses as either direct or indirect costs (as defined below) and allocate each cost using the basis most appropriate and feasible.

The CONTRACTOR shall maintain documentation for allocated expenses (e.g., timecards, time summaries, square footage measurements, number of employees, etc.).

Under no circumstances shall allocated expenses be charged to an extent greater than 100% of actual expenses or the same expense be charged both directly and indirectly.

**2.1 Direct Costs**

Unless otherwise set forth in this contract, or required by the funding source(s), direct costs are defined as those costs that can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective (e.g., a particular program, service, or other direct activity of an organization). Examples of direct costs include salaries and benefits of employees working on the program, supplies and other items purchased specifically for the program, costs related to space used by employees working on the program, etc.

For all employees, other than general and administrative, the hours spent on each program (activity) should be recorded on the employees' timecards and the payroll expenses should be treated as direct charges and distributed on the basis of recorded hours spent on each program.

Joint costs (i.e., costs that benefit more than one program or activity) which can be distributed in reasonable proportion to the benefits received may also be direct costs.

Examples of bases for allocating joint costs as direct costs:

- Number of direct hours spent on each program
- Number of employees in each program
- Square footage occupied by each program
- Other relevant and equitable methods of allocation

## 2.2 Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are those costs that have been incurred for common or joint purposes and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective. Examples of indirect costs include salaries, employee benefits, supplies, and other costs related to general administration of the organization, depreciation and use allowances, and the salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting.

Examples of bases for allocating indirect costs:

- Total direct salaries and wages
- Total direct costs (excluding capital expenditures and other distorting items such as significant one-time expenses, or subcontractor payments)

## 2.3 Acceptable Indirect Cost Allocation Methods

OMB Circulars (i.e., A-87 and A-122) describe the following allowable methods for allocating indirect costs:

- Simplified allocation method
- Direct allocation method
- Multiple allocation base method
- Negotiated indirect cost rate

### Simplified Allocation Method

This method can be used when an organization's major functions benefit from its indirect costs to approximately the same degree. Using this method, all allocable costs are considered indirect costs and an indirect cost rate is determined by dividing total allowable indirect costs by an equitable distribution base.

Example:

Agency-wide indirect costs	\$250,000
Less: Capital Expenditures	<u>10,000</u>
Allocable indirect costs	240,000
Total Agency-wide direct salaries	\$1,000,000
Indirect cost rate (\$240,000/\$1,000,000)	24%
Program direct salaries	\$100,000
Program indirect costs (24% x \$100,000)	<u>\$24,000</u>

Direct Allocation Method

This method can also be used when an organization's major functions benefit from its indirect costs to approximately the same degree. Using this method, all costs except general administration and general expenses are treated as direct costs. Joint costs for depreciation, rentals, facilities maintenance, telephone, and other similar expenses are prorated individually to each direct activity on a basis appropriate for that type of cost.

The remaining costs, which consist exclusively of general administration and general expenses, are then allocated using the simplified allocation method previously discussed.

Multiple Base Allocation Method

This method can be used when an organization's major functions benefit from its indirect costs in varying degrees. Using this method, indirect costs are grouped to permit allocation of each grouping on the basis of the benefits provided to the major functions. Each grouping is then allocated individually using the basis most appropriate for the grouping being allocated.

2.4 Cost Allocation Plan

If the CONTRACTOR has a negotiated indirect cost rate approved by a federal agency, it shall submit a copy of the approval letter when requested by COUNTY.

If the CONTRACTOR does not have a negotiated indirect cost rate, CONTRACTOR shall submit an annual Agency-wide Cost Allocation Plan when requested by COUNTY. The Cost Allocation Plan shall be prepared in accordance with COUNTY instructions and the applicable OMB Circular and include the following information:

1. CONTRACTOR general accounting policies:
  - Basis of accounting
  - Fiscal year
  - Method for allocating indirect costs (simplified, direct, multiple, negotiated rate)
  - indirect cost rate allocation base
2. Identify the CONTRACTOR'S direct and indirect costs (by category) and describe the cost allocation methodology for each category.
3. Signature of CONTRACTOR management certifying the accuracy of the plan.

#### Negotiated Indirect Cost Rates

Agencies have the option of negotiating an indirect cost rate or rates for use on all their federal programs. The CONTRACTOR must submit a cost allocation plan to the federal agency providing the most funds to the organization. The approved indirect cost rate is then applied to the total approved direct cost base.

If CONTRACTOR has a federally approved indirect cost rate, CONTRACTOR shall submit a copy of the approval letter to COUNTY upon request.

#### D. UNALLOWABLE COSTS

OMB Circulars address the allowability of a variety of different costs. For all costs, there are certain restrictions and limitations; however, the following costs are not allowable under any circumstances:

- Bad debts
- Contingency provisions
- Contributions and donations
- Fines and penalties (e.g., Including but not limited to NSF Check Fees, Traffic Citation Fees)
- Fundraising activities
- Interest expense (unless expressly allowed by federal guidelines)
- Losses on other awards



## E. OVERPAYMENTS

If upon audit, or at any time during the Agreement year, it is determined that invoices submitted to the COUNTY which were used as a basis for payments to the CONTRACTOR were inaccurate, COUNTY shall determine the total overpayment and require the CONTRACTOR to repay COUNTY. The COUNTY may withhold payments from CONTRACTOR'S future payments for any amounts not returned to the COUNTY or credited to the Contract unless otherwise prohibited by State or federal regulations.

## F. GOVERNANCE

### OVERVIEW

Large numbers of nonprofit corporations, organized for public benefit, receive public funds through contracts with Los Angeles County. Many County service contracts support key public initiatives, including protecting children, providing health care and foster employment, and reducing the effects of mental impairments and substance abuse.

Nonprofit organizations doing business with Los Angeles County must conduct their work in a manner consistent with their charitable mission and the public purposes embodied in County contracts. This demands that nonprofit agency governing boards be conscious of their fiduciary responsibilities in providing oversight and making decisions.

Directors, officers, and employees of nonprofit corporations with which Los Angeles County contracts shall not:

- permit or benefit from self-dealing transactions (unless permitted by law), or unreasonable compensation
- misuse or dissipate scarce public resources

#### 1.0 Independence

It is recommend that Nonprofit agencies doing business with the County of Los Angeles have a governing board of at least 5 directors (however, under no circumstances shall a governing board have less than 3 directors), a majority of whom (1) have not been employed by it within 5 years before their election, (2) have no direct or indirect material financial interest in the organization, or any other relationship that could create a conflict of interest on the part of the director(s). A financial interest may exist for reasons of business, investment, or family relationship (including a director's brother, sister, ancestor, descendant, spouse, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, or father-in-law).

"Financial interest" means an actual or potential ownership, investment, or compensation arrangement in or with any entity or individual with which the organization has, or is negotiating, a transaction or arrangement. The term "independent", when used to describe Directors who serve on the oversight committees described in paragraph 3.0 refers to persons meeting the requirements of this paragraph.

## 2.0 Oversight Mechanisms

An organization's governing board shall provide for its governance in accordance with the following:

- Adopt and disclose the organization's governance standards including director qualifications, responsibilities, and compensation.
- Adopt and disclose a code of business conduct and ethics for directors, officers, and employees, and promptly disclose to the County any waivers of the code affecting organization directors, officers, or employees.
- Be familiar with the terms and conditions of all the Organization's County contracts. No less than annually, the board should review the Organization's compliance with contract provisions, particularly including insurance, internal control, federal and State reporting and payment requirements for payroll withholding, and report deviations to the County oversight department.

An organization's governance guidelines and code of ethics shall provide means to annually distribute to and obtain from directors, officers and employees written acknowledgments of their adherence to the organization's governing standards. They must incorporate a mechanism for disclosing and addressing possible conflicts of interest. They must provide for appropriate record-keeping, particularly of transactions and arrangements required to be reviewed by the governing board and where significant organization resources are expended by or for officers, directors and employees.

An organization's governance guidelines and code of ethics shall provide for "just and reasonable" compensation and benefits consistent with the compensation amount or guidelines established in the Organization's contract(s) with the County. Compensation and benefits should be determined in light of that paid to executives of agencies of comparable size and function (See Section B.3.3, "Limitations on Positions and Salaries"). No employee may receive compensation or benefits for more than one Organization job. For example, the CEO cannot receive

compensation or benefits for the job of CEO and another job such as program manager, etc.

### 3.0 Oversight Committees

An organization's governing board shall establish committees having the following characteristics, compensation, and duties.

#### **Nominating Committee**

The Board shall establish a nominating committee composed entirely of independent directors to consider new appointments to the Board.

#### **Compensation and Benefits Committee**

The Board shall establish a compensation and employee benefits committee composed entirely of independent directors to establish compensation and benefits for the Organization Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or President and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), or Treasurer.

#### **Audit Committee**

The Board shall establish an Audit Committee of no fewer than three directors, all of whom must be independent, and one of whom shall have financial experience. In no event shall employees, including, but not limited to the president, chief executive officer, the treasurer, or chief financial officer serve on the Audit Committee.

#### **Annual Audit Duties:**

- If the Organization expends federal awards in excess of \$500,000 in a year (\$750,000 for fiscal years beginning on or after December 26, 2014), the Audit Committee will recommend an independent auditor to perform the annual single audit (under the provisions of OMB Circular A-133, Audits for States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations) of the Organization's financial records to the Agency's Board of Directors. The audit shall be performed in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards and comply with the Single Audit Act.
- The Audit Committee must negotiate the independent auditor's compensation on behalf of the governing Board, oversee its work, and resolve disagreements between management and auditors regarding financial reporting.
- The Audit Committee must confer with the auditor to review the audit and decide whether to accept it, satisfy itself that the financial affairs of

the nonprofit organization are in order, and ensure that the County receives a copy of the annual audit report and all other audits, reviews, and other third party reports.

### **Additional Audit Committee Duties**

The Audit Committee must:

- Establish procedures for receiving and addressing complaints regarding accounting, internal controls, and auditing matters.
- Monitor and take steps to ensure proper management response to major performance or fiscal deficits, such as the expressed concerns or claims of major creditors.
- Pre-approve all audit and non-audit services provided by the auditor. Non-audit services are defined as any professional services provided other than those provided in connection with an audit or review of the financial statements of the Organization. Following is a list of non-audit services for which the independent auditor cannot perform unless the firm follows the independence standard in the Yellow Book issued by the U.S. Comptroller General:
  - ✓ Bookkeeping or other services related to the accounting records, or financial statement of the audit client;
  - ✓ Financial information systems design and implementation;
  - ✓ Internal audit outsourcing services;
  - ✓ Management functions or human resources;
  - ✓ Investment adviser, or investment banking services;
  - ✓ Legal services and expert services unrelated to the audit.

## **G. MISCELLANEOUS REQUIREMENTS**

### **1.0 Insurance**

CONTRACTOR is responsible for securing and maintaining insurance coverage as required by the Agreement. CONTRACTOR must notify COUNTY when insurance is revoked, reduced to a level or coverage less than required, or otherwise made ineffective.

Insurance shall include an endorsement naming the COUNTY as an additional insured.

2.0 Activity

No funds, materials, property, or services contributed to the COUNTY or the CONTRACTOR under this Agreement shall be used in the performance of any political activity, the election of any candidate, or the defeat of any candidate for public office.

3.0 Reporting Fraud/Misconduct

CONTRACTORS are expected and required to report suspected fraud, waste, or misuse of public monies, and misconduct of County personnel to the Los Angeles County Fraud Hotline (Hotline). CONTRACTORS are also expected and required to report suspected fraud committed by their employees and subcontractors when that fraud affects their contract with the COUNTY. Reportable conditions include, but are not limited to:

- Requests for bribes/kickbacks/gratuities by County personnel.
- Favoritism/nepotism in the awarding of County contracts, or selection of vendors.
- Theft or misuse of any funds, resources or equipment.

Reportable conditions shall be reported to the Hotline upon their discovery by CONTRACTOR. Failure to report the types of fraud/misconduct discussed above may be grounds for contract termination.

The reporting party may remain anonymous. Reports can be made via telephone, mail or by internet to:

Online: [www.lacountyfraud.org](http://www.lacountyfraud.org)

Email: [hotline@auditor.lacounty.gov](mailto:hotline@auditor.lacounty.gov)

Toll Free: (800) 544-6861

U.S. Mail: Los Angeles County Fraud Hotline  
Office of County Investigations  
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 W. Temple Street, Room 515  
Los Angeles, CA 90012