

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

Financial Policies and Procedures

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See revisions in red.

ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

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The Financial Policies and Procedures Manual is a publication of the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (“SBCCOG”). The South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) is a Joint Powers Authority of the following sixteen member cities and unincorporated county area in the South Bay area of Los Angeles County:

Carson, El Segundo, Gardena, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Lawndale, Lomita, Manhattan Beach, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Redondo Beach, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, Torrance, the Harbor City/San Pedro communities of the City of Los Angeles and the unincorporated areas in the South Bay of County Districts 2 and 4.

The purpose of this document is to record the policies and procedures in practice for accounting, cash management, budgeting and reporting of financial information.

This manual has been developed to conform with GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) as applied to governmental agencies.

ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

I. Accounts Payable

Purpose:

To document the established process of internal controls and checks and balances in the expenditure process and to ensure all payments are reviewed, approved, and recorded in an accurate and timely manner.

Process 1 – Standard Cycle Expenditures:

Following are the steps involved in processing invoices for payment:

1. The Executive Director will designate a **Finance Manager** to assist the Treasurer in the performance of his or her duties.
2. Invoices or expense reports by the goods or service provider are submitted to the **Finance Manager** for review.
 - Wherever appropriate, invoices are reviewed and approved by the applicable project manager prior to being processed for payment by the **Finance Manager**.
3. The **Finance Manager** questions any total billing or detailed charge that they feel requires further explanation or supporting documentation.
4. The **Finance Manager** ensures that all supporting documentation is available. If the documentation is not complete, the Executive Director, Project Manager or the

- goods or services provider (depending on the situation and the provider) will be contacted for additional support or clarification.
5. Approved invoices are summarized as an agenda item and submitted for review and approval by the SBCCOG Steering Committee, which meets monthly on the second Monday.
 - Note: See Contract section VII for approval authorization
 6. A package is prepared for the Steering Committee's review which includes the following items: Agenda item Invoice Summary cover page; all of the invoices and expense receipts in support of payments to vendors; checks to be signed after approval of agenda item; bank register listing bank balance at time of check issuance.
 7. Once the invoice/expense agenda item is approved, the SBCCOG chairperson signs the agenda item as approved for payment processing.
 8. Any exceptional items that were included on the agenda that were not approved are noted on the face of the agenda document with instructions to not pay at all or to not pay until a certain event or action occurs.
 9. The authorized check signers sign the checks for approved invoice payments.
 10. The invoice/expense agenda item package is returned to the **Finance Manager** for release of signed checks. The **Finance Manager** distributes checks and files all documentation. The check stub is attached to the invoices and maintained as a complete package with the approved agenda item for that fiscal month.
 11. For each check the following is recorded in the check register: the date of check issuance, check number, payee, reference information such as invoice paid and dollar amount.
 12. The **Finance Manager** maintains the check register for all checks printed and voided.
 - This information is also recorded in a general ledger file that supports the financial statements.
 13. The **Finance Manager** maintains responsibility for control and security of the blank check stock and the check register. If a check is missing, the Executive **Finance Manager** will research the missing check and bring the issue to the attention of the Executive Director and the Treasurer immediately.
 14. The SBCCOG maintains a series of check signers at all times. The signature of each of the approved check signers is equally valid as either a first or a second signature. This list is updated annually to include:
 - Treasurer
 - Chairperson
 - The list also includes at least one of the following:
 1. First Vice Chair
 2. Second Vice Chair
 3. The immediate past Chairperson
 15. Checks are signed according to the following guidelines:
 - a. Check amounts of \$5,000.00 or less are signed by one approved check signer.
 - b. Check amounts greater than \$5,000.00 require a second signature.
 16. No checks will be approved for payment without the funds available to cover the payment.

Process 2 Urgent Checks Out of Cycle:

Following are the steps involved in processing URGENT invoices for payment outside of the monthly Steering Committee approval cycle and within budget:

1. The Executive Director has been given the authority to approve payments up to \$5,000.00 outside of the monthly Steering Committee cycle if the need is urgent to continue operations.
2. If such a need arises, the **Finance Manager** provides a written justification to the Executive Director requesting that an out of cycle urgent payment be processed.
3. If there is a need for an out of cycle check in excess of \$5,000.00, the Executive Director obtains and records the approval of the SBCCOG Chairperson via e-mail communication prior to sending to the **Finance Manager** for check issuance.
4. The **Finance Manager** issues the check, records the check in the check register and maintains a copy of the original request and approval along with all normal supporting documentation.
5. The check is routed for signature and mailed or hand delivered according to instructions from the Executive Director.
6. The **Finance Manager** includes this out of cycle check on the next Steering Committee agenda for approval after the fact with a notation communicating that the check has already been issued.

Process 3 Standard Payments

The Board acknowledges that there are standard payments such as rent that are the same every month at the beginning of each fiscal year.

1. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Steering Committee will approve payment for the year of invoices that are the same each month such as rent.

Process 4 Special Accounts

The Board may establish a special homeless services account to meet implementation needs for this program. The following describes processes and restrictions:

1. SBCCOG Board of Directors will establish the special account allocation.
2. The special homeless services account will have debit cards, credit cards, and checks to access funds.
 - a. Debit cards will have prepaid balances of \$500 or less.
 - b. Credit cards will have a \$1,500 limit
3. Use of funds must follow the above *Standard and Out of Cycle Expenditures* procedures with the exception that the Executive Director or designee will have approval and check signing authority for transactions as follows:
 - a. Check amounts under \$5,000 to not exceed more than \$10,000 per day.

- b. In no event shall the checks or outstanding debit and credit card amounts exceed the authorized amount of the account balance.

Process 4 Annual 1099 Reporting:

Following are the steps involved in producing the IRS required annual 1099 reporting.

1. The **Finance Manager** shall issue 1099's to all parties according to IRS requirements.
2. Since 1099s are a cash basis report for payments made to each reportable payee during a calendar year and the SBCCOG has a June 30th ending fiscal calendar, issued check information from two SBCCOG fiscal years must be combined and then filtered by check issued date.
3. As a practice, vendor payments should only be made to individuals upon receipt of tax id number or social security number. **Finance Manager** shall mail, email or fax form W-4 as necessary to solicit the required information.

II. Payroll Processing

Purpose:

To document the established process of internal controls and checks and balances in the payroll process and to ensure all payment and benefit distributions are reviewed, approved and recorded in an accurate and timely manner.

Process:

All employees are paid in accordance with their written agreements. All employee benefits are disbursed in accordance with the policies designated in the SBCCOG's Employee Policy Manual.

For each pay period employees are required to complete an individual time activity report, which includes the following information: Name, date, time worked, corresponding project account number for time worked, description of activities performed. At the end of the pay period the employee submits their time activity report to both the Deputy Executive Director and the **Finance Manager** for review.

At the end of each month employee reimbursement requests for travel mileage and other expenses are submitted to the Deputy Executive Director and the **Finance Manager**. Approved expense reimbursements are included with the next payroll distribution.

The **Finance Manager** is responsible for submitting the appropriate pay rate and reimbursement amount for each employee to the SBCCOG's payroll processing firm. All employee rates of pay must be within Board approved pay tiers for the employee's classification. SBCCOG will meet all California and Federal Labor Law requirements. The **Finance Manager** is responsible for supplying the appropriate information to the Deputy Executive Director and Executive Director for payroll processing in his/her absence.

The **Finance Manager** is responsible for ensuring that employee benefits are distributed and/or accrued, as appropriate, to comply with the current SBCCOG's Employee Handbook. Employees will receive written notification with their payroll distribution as to their accrued benefit levels.

The **Finance Manager** records all payroll and benefit transactions including accrued liabilities to the SBCCOG's General Ledger.

III. Billing

Purpose:

To ensure guidelines are established to promote accurate and timely billing for all revenues earned by SBCCOG.

Process:

All billing is done in accordance with the contract terms related to each program. Upon the execution of a contract, an original signed contract is forwarded to the **Finance Manager**. The **Finance Manager** scans the contract documents and electronically delivers a copy to the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, project manager and contracting party representative. The **Finance Manager** reviews the contract and notes any financial related obligations, requirements, guidelines, etc. that will aid in accurate and timely billing for all programs.

Due to the potential variations in program contracts, it is beyond the scope of this manual to specifically address the procedure involved in billing each customer. However, in general, accounting follows the following steps during the billing process:

1. Information is sent to the **Finance Manager** for all billable payments made by SBCCOG during the billing period including employee time activity reports, which include billable labor.
2. The **Finance Manager** also retrieves the program related invoices as filed during the accounts payable process.
3. All data is compiled and formatted in conformance with the billing requirements as outlined in the program contract.
4. An invoice is created for the total amount due including, but not limited to: invoice date, invoice number, payment terms, remittance address, description of amount being billed and signature approval line.
5. The complete invoice packet is forwarded electronically to the Executive Director with supporting documentation for review and approval.
6. The **Finance Manager** submits the approved invoice and supporting documentation as appropriate for the contract.
7. The invoice is recorded as a receivable amount in the SBCCOG financial records.

In addition to invoicing, customers may require additional reporting requirements throughout the course of the program. . The project manager is responsible for preparation of all supplementary reports with assistance from the **Finance Manager**, as required by the customer contracts.

IV. Cash Management

Purpose:

The primary purpose of the cash management policy is to ensure safeguarding of all cash accounts. In addition, funds must be liquid and available for use in daily operations while minimizing expense and maximizing income.

Process:

All funds should be deposited with an FDIC insured institution. Note: SBCCOG's investment accounts are handled according to SBCCOG's Investment Policy (Resolution #00-03).

The **Finance Manager** should perform the following functions on a regular basis:

Bank Account Reconciliation:

Upon receipt of each monthly bank statement, a scanned copy of the bank statement is forwarded to the Executive Director for opening and review. The Executive Director reviews the bank statement for any unusual or unexpected activity. After review, the Executive Director forwards the statement to the **Finance Manager** for reconciling. **Finance Manager** reconciles the bank statement balance to the general ledger balance by clearing any checks/payments made and any deposits received. The **Finance Manager** forwards a copy of the bank reconciliation documents to the Treasurer for verification and review. Copies of the Treasurer's review for all reconciliations are maintained for auditor's annual review.

Cash analysis:

The **Finance Manager** keeps a record of all cash-related transactions on a daily basis to ensure adequate funds are on hand for daily operations. The analysis should include cash disbursements related to accounts payable as well as cash receipts.

If it is determined there will be a need for additional cash resources to be obtained beyond that provided by current operations, the **Finance Manager** must present this need to the Treasurer and Executive Director immediately for resolution.

Petty Cash:

SBCCOG does not currently have a petty cash account. In the event a determination is made that a petty cash account is required, a policy and procedure will be developed.

V. Financial Reporting

Purpose:

The financial statements, reports and supporting schedules of SBCCOG are to be prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (“GAAP”) as applied to governmental agencies. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (“GASB”) is the accepted standard setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial reporting principles.

Conforming to the guidelines set forth by the principles of GAAP and GASB will ensure all financial reports utilized by SBCCOG Steering Committee and the Board of Directors are consistent and accurate.

Process:

Financial Period Close:

In order to ensure accurate financial reporting, the following activities will be completed at the end of each financial period (year-end close of fiscal year):

1. Reconciliation of all asset and liability accounts.
2. Revenue accrual for all governmental fund revenues earned during the reporting period and received within ninety (90) days of the end of the current fiscal year.
3. Expense accrual for all expenses incurred during the reporting period but not yet paid.
4. Review and adjustment of all prepaid expenses, that is, expenses paid in the current period for the benefit of a future period.
5. Comparison of all revenue and expense accounts to budget and prior periods for significant variances that may be an indication of an error or misclassification.

Annual Reporting:

SBCCOG will prepare an annual financial statement and reporting package in conformity with GASB standards. The statements should include:

1. A statement of net assets.
2. A statement of revenues, expenses and changes in net assets.
3. A statement of cash flows.

An independent CPA firm will perform an audit of the annual financial statements and related financial records in accordance with generally accepted audit standards. The audit field work is to begin no later than ninety (90) days after the end of the fiscal period and the audit is to be completed no later than one-hundred-eighty (180) days after the end of the fiscal period in order to ensure complete, accurate and timely reporting of all financial data. The independent CPA firm will present the audited financial statements to the Board of Directors for approval.

Interim Reporting:

Financial statements and other key financial data will be prepared on a quarterly basis. The financial reports will be provided to the Steering Committee and the Board of Directors as an aid in evaluating the operations of SBCCOG.

The quarterly reporting package should include:

1. A comparative statement of revenues and expenses versus budget including variance analysis for all significant variances.
2. Any other material items, as determined by the Executive Director.

VI. Budgeting

Purpose:

The purpose of a budget is to provide a plan of financial operations for a given period utilizing estimates of revenues and expenditures based on expected operations. A well-developed budget provides the necessary information for management to assess potential future financial and organizational needs as well as a benchmark for evaluating actual performance against expectations.

Process:

SBCCOG will prepare an annual budget that accurately reflects goals and operating expectations for the upcoming year and the resources necessary to meet those goals and expectations. Per the bylaws, the Board of Directors shall adopt a Budget annually prior to July 1 of each calendar year. The Executive Director will be responsible for coordinating the budget process, involving the Treasurer, **Finance Manager**, consultants, and the Board, where appropriate.

The Budget will:

1. Be prepared in conformity with financial statements produced by SBCCOG.
2. Include the following items:
 1. Revenue and expenses

2. Capital expenditure requirements
 3. Changes in fund balance
 4. Cash requirements
 5. A summary of all major assumptions used
 6. Any other material items, as determined by the Executive Director.
3. Be presented in comparison to the previous year's actual results including an analysis of any significant variances.

VII. Contracts

Purpose:

Establish the framework within which contracts are approved.

Process:

Any contract for an item which is not in the budget would be approved by the Board of Directors and include a budget amendment.

Contracts included in the budget are approved as follows:

- The Board of Directors unless the amount is under \$7,500
- Steering Committee has authority to approve contracts up to \$7,500
- The Executive Director has authority to approve:
 - Contracts up to \$2,500, or \$5,000 if urgent need, with the requirement that they are reported to the Steering Committee at the next meeting
 - Contracts that are no cost and with no fiscal impacts
 - Contract amendments that bring revenue to the SBCCOG for funding increases in the amount of \$25,000 or less

VIII. History

- Revised June 2026 to reflect updated SBCCOG job classifications that replaced the Administrative Officer with a Finance Manager position
- Revised February 2024 to establish the use of credit cards for the homeless services account
- Revised May 25, 2023 to establish a 90-day limit for accounting revenues for inclusion at end of the current fiscal year
- Revised March 2023 to incorporate existing approved policies
- Revised February 2022 to add Homeless Services Innovation Funds (Client Aid)
- Revised October 2015 to add Payroll Processing
- Established Oct. 2008