



**Fresno  
LAFCo  
Financial  
and  
Accounting  
Procedures**

(Adopted December 7, 2011)

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# Introduction

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Each year, following noticed public hearings, the Commission adopts proposed and final budgets. In accordance with the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, the proposed budget must be adopted by May 1<sup>st</sup> and the final budget by June 15<sup>th</sup>. The budget is based on a July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> fiscal year. In order to get an early start on the budget and allow for careful consideration of the budget options, the Executive Officer will present a preliminary budget to the Commission in March of each year in order to obtain advance direction from the Commission.

## A. Purpose

These Financial and Accounting Procedures are intended to serve as a guide to the fiscal procedures of LAFCo. These procedures are intended to provide good internal accounting and administrative controls and establish a uniform and systematic approach to LAFCo's financial and accounting process. This policy provides for alternating financial audits and reviews to be conducted year, when there is a change in Executive Officer, and upon the Commission's direction.

## B. LAFCo Funding

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 provides that the operational costs of LAFCo shall be shared one-half by the County and one-half by cities where only the County and cities are represented on the Commission. In the event that special districts choose to be represented on the Commission, LAFCo funding would then be shared one-third by the County, cities, and the special districts or by an alternative method approved pursuant to section 56381(b)(4) of the California Government Code.

The LAFCo budget is also augmented by fees established by the Commission in accordance with section 56383 of the California Government Code for services rendered to process applications for annexations, reorganizations, and detachments, as well as other LAFCo actions.

The County Auditor is responsible for apportioning the Commission's net operating costs to the County and the cities according to a formula established by Government Code Section 56381.

If the County or a city does not remit its required payment within 60 days, the Executive Officer shall request that the County Auditor collect an equivalent amount from the property tax, or any fee or eligible revenue owed to that county, city, or district, pursuant to Government Code Section 56381(4)(c).

## C. Organization of Accounting System

1. **General:** Financial records shall be maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and applicable state regulations.
2. **Basis of Accounting:** Financial transactions shall be accounted for by the use of a cash basis of accounting, whereby revenues are recognized when they become available to finance expenditures of the current fiscal period, and expenditures are generally recognized when the related fund liabilities are incurred.
3. **Records:** LAFCo uses financial software (such as Microsoft Access) to track deposits and expenses and reconciles the database to the bank and accountant records to create the monthly financial reports and the annual budget.
4. **Internal Controls:** LAFCo shall organize and assign work duties and responsibilities so that a system of checks and balances are in place. These include, but are not limited to, maintaining accounting and bank statements and monthly reports, updating the database and reconciling it with the statements, and requiring that proper authorizations be required for all budgetary actions taken.

## D. Accounts Receivable

All receipts shall be processed in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Checks received by mail shall immediately be dated and endorsed.
2. A LAFCo receipt shall be issued upon receipt of checks accepted in the office.
3. All checks shall be photocopied and logged into the receipt record and the Access database.

4. The Commission Clerk shall deposit all checks into the LAFCo bank account authorized by the Commission. In the interim, checks shall be kept in a locked place for safekeeping. At no time shall checks be left unattended in an unsecured location.
5. Once each month, LAFCo staff shall provide the Commission with a monthly financial report showing Commission income and expenses for the preceding month.

## **E. Expenditures**

1. ***Payroll:*** The Executive Officer shall be responsible for approving the time sheets for all staff. However, the Executive Officer may delegate certain responsibilities related thereto to the Commission Clerk (e.g. approval of LAFCo Technician's time sheets). When applicable, such time sheets shall be forwarded to the County's Payroll Department.
2. ***Travel Reimbursement:*** All Commissioners and LAFCo staff shall make reasonable efforts to minimize Commission-related travel costs. The Executive Officer or the Commission Clerk shall review, verify, and approve all expense claims for travel. The Executive Officer shall only approve those requests for travel that have been approved by the Commission as part of the regular budget approval process or by special action.
  - a. ***Lodging:*** Lodging expenses will be reimbursed at actual cost (single room rate), but not to exceed \$150.00 per night. In addition, when a room tax is charged, an amount equivalent to the room, tax will be reimbursed.

Specified maximum reimbursement rates may only be exceeded to allow actual cost when an employee or Commissioner lodges at a "hosting hotel" where meetings, conferences, or training sessions are held so long as such rate is the designated "conference rate."

- b. ***Meals:*** Employees/Commissioners will be reimbursed for meals when traveling on Commission business at a flat rate. The maximum daily meal reimbursement rates will be \$34.00. Per meal rates shall be \$9.00 for breakfast, \$12.00 for lunch, and \$21.00 for dinner. These rates include an allowance for gratuity.

The Executive Officer or Commissioners may host other persons' meals when doing so will facilitate the conduct of Commission business at the per diem amount.

No reimbursement will be made for alcoholic beverages.

- c. **Transportation:** Prudent judgment shall be exercised in the selections of mode of transportation. Actual costs shall be reimbursed, based upon the supporting documentation. Use of personal vehicles for Commission business shall be reimbursed at the annual mileage reimbursement rate as determined by the Internal Revenue Service (e.g. 55.5 cents per mile in 2011) based on miles calculated from the LAFCo Office.
- d. **Other:** Other incidental expenses including, but not limited to, business related long distance telephone calls, bridge tolls, parking fees, gratuities, and taxis, shall be provided via a credit card statement or receipts.
- e. Upon return from travel, LAFCo Commissioners and staff shall submit required supporting documentation for travel reimbursement to the LAFCo Commission Clerk. The LAFCo Clerk will complete a "Travel Reimbursement Request" form for the Executive Officer's approval and signature. The form will be retained at the LAFCo office and form the basis for payment. The Commission Chair or Vice Chair shall approve travel reimbursement for the Executive Officer.
- f. At the end of each month, LAFCo staff shall reconcile travel expenditures and include this information in the next month's financial report.

## **F. Contingency Fund**

LAFCo may establish a Contingency Reserve Fund to cover emergencies and other unforeseen costs not budgeted but deemed necessary for the continued operation of the Commission. Expenditure of Contingency Funds must receive prior approval of the Commission. An emergency expense can be authorized from the Contingency Fund with approval of the Executive Officer and at least one Commissioner for an amounts totaling less than \$5,000.00 during a monthly period. Funds not expended at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried over to the next fiscal year.

A legal Reserve Account shall be maintained by LAFCo staff for the purpose of funding non-budgeted legal expenses as may occur from time-to-time. Disbursement from this fund must be approved by LAFCo Commission action.

All Contingency Funds shall be held in bank accounts approved by the Commission and the balance of these accounts shall be reported in the mid-year budget review report and annual budget report.

## **G. Purchasing**

Once the Commission has adopted the annual budget, it shall be considered the controlling plan of expenditure. Purchases and acquisitions shall be processed within the limitations established by the amount of budgeted resources allocated.

The Executive Officer is authorized to approve purchases and shall be responsible for purchases of and contract execution for materials, supplies, furnishings, equipment and services required by LAFCo in the performance of daily operations up to \$5,000.00. The Executive Officer may, at his or her discretion, delegate purchasing authority to the Commission Clerk. Types of purchases the Executive Officer is authorized to approve include office supplies, copy machine leases, rental space, telephones, postage, incidental expenses directly related in support of CALAFCO, and computer services. Supporting documents for said expenses will consist of actual invoices received for services. The Commission will approve contracts for professional service such as LAFCo Counsel or consultants.

## **H. Authorizations**

1. LAFCo staff with the Commission authorization may contract with a third party for disbursement of funds relating to staff and LAFCo expenses. Such expenses will be included in each month's financial report.
2. The Commission authorizes the use of local banks for the purpose of depositing funds received by LAFCo and disbursal of funds as described above.
3. All checks issued by LAFCo for normal business expenses shall have two signatures which shall consist of the Executive Officer and one Commissioner or two Commissioners if the Executive Officer is not available to sign.

4. A Single signature account with a balance of not more than \$500.00 shall be maintained by the Executive Officer for small LAFCo related expenses.

## **I. Annual Work Plan**

Before July 1<sup>st</sup>, the LAFCo Executive Officer shall prepare for the Commission's review and approval an annual work plan. The work plan is prepared in conjunction with the law and annual budget. The work plan identifies the purposes and programs of State Law and local policy, including requirements for service reviews, sphere of influence updates, and other mandated functions. The work plan will correspond to the adopted fiscal year budget.

## **J. Preparation and Administration**

The LAFCo Executive Officer shall serve as the budget administrator, to prepare, present, transmit, review, execute, and maintain the LAFCo budget consistent with State Law. The Executive Officer shall provide the Commission with periodic budget updates comparing expenditures to the adopted budget.

## **K. Capital Asset Management**

1. ***Capitalization Policy:*** Capital assets include furniture, fixtures, and equipment with a useful life of three or more years and a value of \$5,000 or more. Capital assets owned by LAFCo are accounted for at their historical cost, or estimated historical cost, if actual cost is not available and are subject to depreciation over their estimated useful lives.
2. ***Inventory of Capital Assets:*** LAFCo will maintain an inventory of capital assets, including equipment and furniture. The inventory will be maintained by staff. New assets will be added to the inventory as acquired and subtracted from the inventory as disposed.
3. ***Depreciation of Useful Life:*** Capital assets are depreciated using the straight line method over the estimated useful life. Estimated useful lives of fixed assets shall be determined by the Executive Officer. Furniture and fixtures will typically be assigned a useful life of up to 10 years, most office equipment (including computers) will be assigned a useful life of 3-5 years; and leased assets will be designated "life of lease".

4. ***Repair of Fixed Assets:*** Repair of equipment should not exceed the cost of a new piece of equipment.
  
5. ***Disposition of Fixed Assets:*** In the event a capital asset is sold, scrapped, donated, or stolen; adjustments will be made to the capital asset inventory. Disposal of capital assets with a remaining value of \$1,000 or more shall take place upon Commission approval by the following process:
  - a. The Executive Officer shall advise the county and its cities of the availability of the item and each may place a sealed bid on the form provided by LAFCo with the minimum price being the depreciated value of the item on the LAFCo records.
  - b. For items with a remaining value of between \$500 and \$1,000 the Executive officer is authorized to use the process above without Commission authorization.
  - c. If no bids or offers are received from the county or its cities within 10 days of the mailing of a notice that such item(s) are available, the Executive Officer shall attempt to sell such items at auction (such as Ebay) and deposit the funds in the LAFCo general checking account.
  - d. Donation of a surplus item from LAFCo's may be made after Commission action at a regularly scheduled Commission meeting.
  - e. Smaller items without residual value, that are obsolete or non-functioning may be disposed of with the authorization of the Executive Officer and a list of such items shall be maintained for one year after the disposal at the LAFCo office.

## **L. Reports to the Commission**

At each monthly commission meets the Executive Officer shall submit a report of Fresno LAFCo financial standing to the Commission, based on the most current information including information from the last available bank balance. Such information will show the expenses, the balance in the general operating account and balances in reserve and legal reserve accounts in addition to Account Receivable (AR) and Accounts Payable.

## **M. Bank Reconciliation**

Reconciliation of bank statements will be performed on a monthly basis. The LAFCo staff person responsible for reconciliations will not be the same person who enters expenditure request in to the system for the purpose of obtaining checks to pay bill and obligations.

The Executive Officer will review all reconciliation and financial reports and shall present such to the Fresno LAFCo Commission.

All checks outstanding for over 180 days shall be investigated and reissued, where possible, or voided.

All financial reports including balances of bank account(s) expenses and balances held in reserve accounts will be retained by LAFCo as a permanent Record.

## **N. LAFCo Bank Accounts**

The Executive Office shall upon specific authorization of Fresno LAFCo Commission and by resolution open on behalf of Fresno LAFCo a general checking account and a smaller single signature account in addition to bank accounts to hold general reserve fund sand legal reserve funds. The General checking account shall require at least two signatures on each check. Signatures will be either LAFCo Commissioners or one Commissioner and the Executive Officer. The single signature account is intended for minor day to day expenses such a county filings smaller office expense etc. and funds will be dispersed by check with Executive Office's signature. The smaller one signature account for the Executive Officer will not have more than \$500 in an account balance at any one time.

## **O. Cash and Credit Cards**

Unless specifically approved by the Commission the Fresno LAFCo office will not have credit cards issued to Fresno LAFCo. Fresno LAFCo Office will discourage the use of cash as a payment for application, fees and charges and when cash is used for a payment, fees or charges a receipt will be issued to the person making the payment and a copy will be retained by Fresno LAFCo and reflected as income in the monthly report. Any cash received by Fresno LAFCo shall be deposited in the General Business account at the close of the business day in which it was received or not later than 24 hours after it received.

## **P. Third Party Check Issuance**

To insure additional transparency in LAFCo financial matters Fresno LAFCo will contract with a qualified third party firm to prepare checks from the main Fresno LAFCo bank account and perform needed deductions and payments associated with any employee salary checks.