**SAMPLE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS LIST**

**FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions**

**FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

**What is a budget transfer?**

A budget transfer moves funds from one account to another and will affect the adjusted budget during that fiscal year.

**When do I use a budget transfer form vs. an expenditure transfer form?**

A budget transfer reallocates budget between organizations that share a common fund. Expenditure transfers are correcting entries and should not be used to resolve budget overdrafts. An expenditure transfer is used to move expense erroneously posted to a particular budget account into the correct budget account.

**How do I check my available funds?**

In order to purchase or pay for goods or services, funds must be available within the assigned account. Funds available can be checked or monitored by using the Online Budget tool.

**Why is it important to reconcile my procurement card (P-card) transactions in a timely manner?**

According to the travel and purchasing card policies, those responsible for reconciling P-Card transactions must do so within five working days of receiving the notification. By following this policy, it will allow all parties to view accurate funds available, which in turn will lead to fewer deficit funds.

**How does the City develop its budget each year?**

Decisions about allocations are based on projected available funding for the following fiscal year. The process is very inclusive, with input sought from different stakeholders. After decisions are made about allocations and the budget guidelines are adopted, each area begins work on completing its financial plans driven by strategic plans and initiatives. All budgets approved by the City Council and are implemented at the start of each fiscal year.

**What are indirect costs? What is an indirect cost rate?**

Indirect costs are city-wide, general management costs. General management costs consist of administrative activities necessary for the general operation of the City, such as accounting, budgeting, payroll preparation, personnel services, purchasing and centralized data processing.

General management costs are necessary for any program to exist. For instance, all programs will use the Finance Department at one time or another for services such as contracts, purchasing, payroll checks, and personnel management. Without the benefit of an indirect cost rate, there would be no standard way for each program to contribute its share of the general management costs without spending a lot of staff time having to account for each individual activity. Using an indirect cost rate is an efficient way to recover a share of general management costs from individual programs.

In general terms, an indirect cost rate is the percentage of an organization’s indirect costs to its direct costs and is a standardized method of charging individual programs for their share of indirect costs.

**What do I need to provide to establish a new/revised budget for a contract or grant?**

A signed copy of the grant or contract that shows the amount of the grant or contract. A copy of the proposal is not enough. Also, a signed copy of indirect overhead waiver if overhead is to be less than the institution requirement amount. Schedule an intake meeting, scheduled with the Finance Department.

**Where can I find the City’s written policies and procedures?**

All City policies are approved by the City Council and are available here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE].

**How do I order office supplies from Office Depot [OR OTHER SUPPLIES STORE]?**

There are two ways to place orders with Office Depot. If you do not have a P-Card, process a purchasing requisition. If you have a P-Card, e-mail the Accounts Payable Supervisor with your request. Include your extension, the last 4 digits of your P-Card and the expiration date of your card. You will be set up at the Office Depot secure website with a username, password and an online training document.

**What is a P-Card and how do I obtain one?**

The P-Card program is designed to allow City employees to purchase supplies/materials and equipment, valued under $1,000, through the use of a Visa credit card. Its purpose is to provide an alternative cost effective way to obtain low-value goods that would otherwise be purchased using purchase orders. The P-Card is issued for government entity use only and contains limitations and special features including: single purchase transaction limits, authorized merchant categories and approval procedures.

The P-Card is issued only to an employee who is a full-time personnel City employee having a business need for such. When determining and justifying who has significant business/operations need for the P-Card. Approving officials should consider the following criteria:

* The ability to satisfy the purchasing needs of several employees within the same department
* The projected dollar volume of P-Card purchases
* The projected frequency of P-Card usage
* Issuance of the P-Card should be needs based and not be solely for the convenience of the employee
* Number of existing cards in the department/area

The P-Card must only be used by the cardholder whose name appears on the card. Cardholders are delegated limited purchasing authority on behalf of the City. With this limited delegation of authority, the cardholder is fully responsible for the goods purchased, following City purchasing guidelines, and ensuring that sufficient funding is available to pay for purchases at all times. City purchasing guidelines can be found here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE].

For information on applying for the P-Card, click here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE].

**How do I obtain certificates of insurance from outside agencies or companies?**

The Finance Department is responsible for preparing proper insurance solicitations for the City’s liability coverage. Contractors doing work on City premises must be required to file the following proofs of insurance with the City prior to receiving authorization to proceed on a contract.

* Certificate of Insurance confirming $1,000,000 combined single limit general liability coverage and automobile liability coverage, both naming the City as an additional insured and copies of the endorsements to the policies naming the City as an additional insured
* Proof of workers’ compensation coverage

Should any of the above-described policies be cancelled prior to their expiration dates, the issuing company shall mail 30 days written notice of cancellation to the City. The contractor shall maintain current insurance documents, for all of the above coverages, on file at the City during the term of any contract with the City.

**How do I obtain a City certificate of insurance required by an external business or organization?**

Use of facilities or other agreements often call for the City to submit proof of insurance. Please contact the Purchasing Staff Assistant at ext. 2122 with your request for a certificate of insurance.

**What business opportunities are available with the City?**

Vendors can review how to do business with the City here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE] and see current opportunities here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE].

**Who is responsible for contracts and agreements at the City?**

Finance provide contract services to the executive administration, faculty and staff. All construction contracts for public works projects by the City are let through the Purchasing Office, and contracts and City Council resolutions on a wide variety of topics are prepared. Please click here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE] for additional information.

**How do I have a contract/agreement prepared, reviewed and/or submitted for City Council authorization?**

All contracts/agreements must be submitted to the Finance Department with an attached review form [INCLUDE LINK TO APPLICABLE FORM TO DOWNLOAD]. Please contact them [LINK TO FINANCE DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFO] for any questions related to City contracts/agreements.

**How are public works projects (construction services) requests put out for competitive quote or bid?**

* $1,000 – $5,000: Depending on the nature of the given work project, comparison-shopping needs will be determined by the Finance Department.
* $5,0001 – $14,-999: The Finance Department will attempt to solicit at least 3 written competitive quotes
* $15,000 – Up: Formal bidding including advertising and City Council approval is required (California Public Contract Code).

Any “works of improvement” (work involving labor), the total cost of which exceeds $15,000 must be accompanied by a labor and materials (payment) bond prior to the commencement of work, or the contractor may not be paid.

Vendors are responsible for the accuracy of quoted prices submitted to the Finance Department. In the event of a discrepancy between a unit price and its extension, the unit price will govern. Quotes may be amended or withdrawn by the bidder up to the time of opening the bids.

It is the vendor’s responsibility to ensure that their quotations are received in the Finance Department no later than the designated hour and day of the bid opening time and date, as specified in the request for bid.

All bids/quotations become a part of the Finance Department’s records and may be reviewed upon request by interested parties after the bid is awarded. No bids or quotes may be removed from the Finance Department.

**Who is authorized to sign contracts/agreements?**

There are 3 individuals authorized to sign contracts/agreements for the City: City Manager, Assistant City Manager, and Finance Director. Contract management matters should be addressed to the Purchasing Manager at ext. 2697.

**Who do we contact for surplus pick-up?**

You must first fill out an Inventory Request Form [INCLUDE LINK TO APPLICABLE FORM TO DOWNLOAD] accessed through the intranet. The completed form (with all necessary signatures) should then be forwarded to Fiscal Services. They will notify the facilities personnel when the surplus is ready for pick-up.

The Information Technology Department must be contacted for computer related items. IT will fill out the surplus form. Furniture, chairs, etc. with no property tag will be picked up by facilities personnel as soon as possible.

**BUDGET DEPARTMENT**

**Where can I locate budget forms and instructions?**

Budget forms and instructions can be accessed here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE].

**How do I obtain travel approval?**

Complete a Request for Travel Approval/Claim for Travel Expense form, obtain approving signature(s). To obtain forms and additional travel information, click here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE].

**How am I reimbursed for travel?**

Fill out the same Request for Travel Approval/Claim for Travel Expense Form [INCLUDE LINK TO APPLICABLE FORM TO DOWNLOAD]. requesting reimbursement by completing the right side of the form, attaching receipts and obtaining authorized signatures. To obtain forms and instructions, click here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE].

**How am I reimbursed for business mileage?**

For employees who travel frequently and routinely, fill out a Business Mileage Claim Form. You must also complete a Blanket Travel Approval Form for the entire fiscal year. To obtain forms and instructions, click here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE].

**How do I make arrangements and pay for airfare?**

Airfare can be obtained by one of a few methods. Click here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE] to obtain the procedures.

**How long does it take for a reimbursement check to be issued?**

Advance travel registration and lodging payment requests, reimbursement claims and business mileage claims must be received in the Finance Department on Tuesday by noon, in order to make the weekly check run on Thursdays. Employee checks are disbursed on Fridays and sent through interoffice mail. Checks issued to hotel and registration vendors are mailed directly to the vendors.

**PAYROLL DEPARTMENT**

**How can I cancel any of my voluntary deductions?**

Please complete Cancellation Notice of Voluntary Payroll Deduction available here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE]. Submit the form to Payroll Services for processing.

**I would like to buy back PERS service credit. How do I get paperwork?**

Call PERS at 1-800-123-4567 [CHANGE TO NUMBER OF APPROPRIATE DEPARTMENT].

**How many hours of sick time do I get each year and when do they get advanced?**

96 hours are advanced to 12 month, full-time classified employees. Anyone with less than 12 month and/or less than 100% assignment receives a proportionate number of hours, e.g. a 10 month, 80% employee  will be credited with 64 hours of sick leave. A full-pay sick leave is advanced on July 1st.

**What happens when I run out of sick leave?**

You will automatically be put on 1/2 pay for any sick hours reported.

**I need more vacation than my check stub shows that I have?**

If you need more than one day, you must request advanced vacation (form in Payroll or your manager here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE]).

**When can I use my sick leave?**

As stated in the Adjunct handbook, “Sick leave may be used when the instructor is ill or in cases of personal necessity including any of the following: death or serious illness of a member of immediate family; accident involving person or property, or property of a member of immediate family; appearance in court as a litigant or as a witness under an official order.” Jury duty is not compensated for missed adjunct or overload classes.

**When is pay day?**

Pay day is the last day of each month. If it falls on a weekend, pay day will be the Friday prior. If it falls on a Holiday, it will be on the previous business day.

**When are time reports due?**

Time reports are due in the Payroll Department the first business day following the 15th of each month.

**Where can I get a time report?**

Time reports are available on the Payroll webpage or in the Payroll Department.

**How do I get my pay check?**

Pay checks are mailed on pay day. Direct deposit is available and recommended.

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

**Who do I call if I have a computer or printer problem?**

Information Technology Helpdesk at ext. 2140.

**Where would I find information about buying a computer or software?**

For work or home use, you can obtain the information here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE].

**How can I change my password on my computer?**

Hold down CTRL/ALT/DELETE keys on the keyboard. The bottom, left-hand side button should say “Change Password.” Click on that button and follow the steps. If you have any problems, please call ext. 2140 for help.

**How do I set up for computer use and email?**

Have the Department ADA, Chair, Supervisor, Manager, Director or VP fill out the Access Request Form that can be found here [LINK TO APPROPRIATE SECTION ON YOUR WEBSITE].

**Who do I contact if an employee is no longer working for the City and their computer accounts need to be removed?**

Use the Access Request Form, fill out the “remove” part of the form.

**Who can help me with PeopleSoft questions?**

Call the Helpdesk at ext. 2140 and they will either answer your question or create a work order for either a tech or programmer to help you.

**Who do I contact if I have questions or problem with a phone?**

Call the Helpdesk at ext. 2140 or the Switchboard at ext. “0.”

**Who would I contact if I cannot remember my PIN number for the telephone?**

Call the Helpdesk at ext. 2140 or the Switchboard at ext. “0” and they can reset it.