

Coppin State University

Accounts Payables Frequently Asked Questions (AP FAQ)

What is Accounts Payable?

The Accounts Payable (AP) Department is the unit in the Controller's Office responsible for processing payments for goods, services, and other non-salary expenses incurred by the University.

Contact the Accounts Payable Department: (410) 951- 3675/ 3685/ 3696

What information/ documents are needed for AP to process an invoice?

- Purchase order with all the required approvals and entered in the PeopleSoft (PS) system
- Vendor's tax ID or social security number, and complete remittance address
- *Original, itemized* invoice
- Verification of receipt of good/ services

What about sales tax?

As an agency of the State of Maryland, Coppin State University is exempt from paying Maryland sales tax. The sales tax exempt number is printed on the face of our purchase orders. To obtain the College's sales tax exempt number or a copy of the certificate, contact the Accounts Payable Department at (410) 951- 3675/ 3685/ 3696.

Who is authorized to approve payment of invoices and vouchers?

The department head and other department employees designated by the department head have the authority to approve an invoice for payment.

I just received an invoice in the mail. What do I do?

Vendors should mail their invoices directly to the AP Department. If you have received an invoice in error, please do the following:

- First, verify that invoice belongs to your department.
- If it is not yours, *mail the original* to the Accounts Payable Department.
- If the invoice is yours, date-stamp the invoice.
- Verify that you have received the goods/services for which you are being billed and that the charges are correct. Call the vendor for resolution if you note any discrepancies.
- Sign *and* date the original invoice indicating that the invoice is "ok to pay". If your purchase order number is not listed on the invoice, please write it in the upper right corner of the invoice.
- *Mail* the original and one copy of the invoice to Accounts Payable within three calendar days after you received it
- Keep a copy for your records. Retain records for three years to comply with audit requirements.

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My invoice total includes a prior balance. Will AP pay the entire amount?

No. Only the amount listed as the “current charges” will be paid. AP cannot pay the “old” or “past due” balances on any invoice. This State requirement helps to avoid overpayment to a vendor. You must submit *both* the current and prior bill(s) to AP for payment.

Our department is having a catered event or an event where food will be served. Is there additional information required?

Yes. The State requires AP to send, with the invoice, a list of attendees (LOA) or invitees for all food/ catering invoices. A sign-in sheet will serve as an LOA. Your LOA should have:

- The date and purpose of the event
- List of invitees or attendees and their affiliation
- Purchase order number referenced

How can I assure that my invoice will be paid properly and in a timely manner?

Verify that your purchase order has been encumbered in the PS system. You may check the status of your purchase order in PS by using the navigation:

Purchasing> Purchase Orders> Review PO information> Purchase Orders>
Type in the PO number *or* part of the vendor name and Search

The purchase order Budget Status and Document Tolerance Status must read: “*Valid*”. The PO Status must read: “*Dispatched*” for payment processing.

If all is well, write the purchase order number on the invoice, sign your name, date, note that the invoice is “ok to pay” and forward to AP.

Submit any invoice that you receive to AP within three calendar days after you receive it. We must have the original for payment processing.

If all is not well, review your budget in PS and prepare the paperwork to make the necessary budget transfer/ adjustments for submission to the Budget Office.

Why is it important to return my invoice to the AP Department within 3 days of receipt?

This tight timeframe of three days is necessary to ensure compliance with the State Comptroller's Office requirement that invoices be processed and transmitted to the State for payment within 25 calendar days after the invoice is received on the University's campus (i.e. the *first* departmental date-stamp date).

Timely payment of vendors is a high priority of the State Comptroller's Office. Delayed payments are being closely reviewed and agencies are being held accountable for late payments exceeding 1% of total volume processed.

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What happens once the Accounts Payable department receives an invoice or voucher?

Each document is reviewed by an Accounts Payable Representative to assure that the appropriate signatures are in place and that all the required supporting documentation is attached. Invoices are batched together and entered into PeopleSoft, the University's accounting system.

An electronic file with payment data and the original copy of each invoice is forwarded to the State's General Accounting Division (GAD) of the Comptroller's Office. A photocopy of each document is kept on file in the AP Department. GAD audits the invoices and then payment data is transmitted to the State's Treasurers Office. A check is processed and mailed to the address listed on the vendor's invoice.

How is an invoice charged to my budget?

The invoice is charged to the 7-digit PS department or project and the 6-digit PS account designated on your purchase order.

How do I pay for something if I don't have an invoice?

It is the vendor's responsibility to mail an original invoice to the AP Department for payment. The invoice must reference a valid, CSU purchase order. A department head, or designee, however, may submit an invoice on a small vendor's (e.g. a DJ or student stipend) behalf. *Facsimiled invoices will not be processed for payment.* The invoice must be an original and have the information below:

- Billed to COPPIN STATE UNIVERSITY
- Vendor's Federal Identification (FEIN) *or* Social Security (SSN) Number
- Invoice date
- Vendor's (payee) name
- Vendor's *complete* remittance address
- Type of service/ merchandise provided
- Date(s) the service/ merchandise was provided
- Total amount due
- CSU purchase order number

Most vendors routinely provide this information on their invoices. For the smaller businessperson, consultant, or lecturer a typed or legibly handwritten memo, with the above information, is suitable. Please see sample invoice on k:\accts_pay\invoice.

If you need assistance, contact the Accounts Payable Department at (410) 951- 3685/ 3696/ 3675.

What if my purchase order is labeled as a "VISA" purchase order?

Vendor payments on VISA purchase orders are processed by the Procurement Office.

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My purchase order has been “Dispatched” in PS for more than two months yet the vendor claims that he has not received a payment.

Please refer vendors, inquiring about payment status, directly to the AP Department.

The most common reasons are that AP has not received an invoice or that the invoice is either a copy or actually a statement (an invoice lists what was purchased by item and amount; a statement lists only the amount due).

How do I get reimbursed for a purchase that I made?

Prepare a purchase order and the State of Maryland expense account form (GADX-5) with your *original, itemized receipt(s)* attached. As always, your purchase order must have a PO Status of “Dispatched” in PS. *It is not advisable to purchase items without prior approval.*

How do I get reimbursed for travel expenses?

Please see the Word document on K:\ Accts_Pay\ titled “Travel2008”.

Will AP prepay for goods and/ or services?

Rarely. AP will prepay such items as magazine subscriptions and registration fees if the original invoice and purchase order are received in time. For other items we must have verification that the good or services were received before we will process a payment.

Are there items for which the State will not pay?

Certainly. Such items include but are not limited to:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Parking fines
- Appliances (e.g. purchase of refrigerators, microwave ovens) for employee convenience and used with no ongoing business purposes.
- Flowers purchased for illnesses, funerals, retirements, or gifts.
- Expenses incurred at employee social functions, such as food or decorations for office holiday parties.

How do I hire and pay for consultant services?

First make sure the individual can be hired as a consultant as defined by the IRS. Contact the Procurement Department for factors determining employee status/ relationship.

The APFAQ is a Word document on K:\ Accts_Pay\ titled “APFAQIII”.