



4.0 Guidelines for Treasurers – Refugee Accounts and Transactions

General

With the flurry of activity throughout the diocese in response to the Refugee crisis, there are a number of matters that all Treasurers need to be made aware of in order to comply with the Canada Revenue Agency policies and procedures. It is important that extreme care be taken in recording all transactions and the retention of supporting documentation.

This memorandum will be broken into two parts, one for Parish Treasurers, and the second for those who are acting as the Treasurers of the Refugee Sponsorship Groups.

Part 1 – Parish Treasurers

There are two circumstances Parish Treasurers will find themselves in: one, their own Parish has formed a Refugee Sponsorship Committee and have started collecting donations to fund a refugee, or a refugee family; the second instance is where the Parish has been linked to a group composed of members of the community who have asked to be covered under the diocese's Sponsorship Agreement with the Federal Government. In both cases, the Parish Council needs to approve the involvement of the Parish in the Refugee activity with a duly moved/seconded/approved motion to that effect.

In both circumstances, the Treasurer needs to open a dedicated account designated solely for Refugee Sponsorship activities and treated like any other special fund in the parish's accounting system. The account can be established through the TD Small Business department in Victoria, or at another financial institution.

1. Charitable Donations:

- a. **Parish Refugee Activities.** Any donation processed through the parish is eligible for a Charitable Donation Income tax receipt but the donation should be clearly identified as a donation for the Refugee Sponsorship Fund, and if in the form of a physical cheque, a copy of the cheque should be retained with the receipt in your files. If the donation is made through the diocesan Electronic Collection Plate, then the sum can be recorded as per usual practice but the funds transferred from the Parish Operating Account into the Refugee Fund Account weekly, or monthly.
- b. **Outside Groups.** If the funds are provided for a group being supported by your Parish, then the donation should be clearly identified as being destined for that group by naming the group on

the memo line of any cheque processed, and once again a copy of the cheque retained with your copy of the charitable donation receipt.

2. **Disbursement of Funds:** This section is of the utmost importance as failure to comply could jeopardize the charitable status of the parish, and may even implicate the diocese.
 - a. **Parish Refugee Committees.** When funds are needed by the committee to meet their obligations, they must formally request the funds stating the reason for the withdrawal from the account either in a memo, or on a Cheque Requisition Form (if your parish uses such a method of generating cheques). The cheque issued should be drawn on the Refugee Account and a record of the cheque retained. If the request was for payment of a third party invoice, then the cheque should be made payable to that third party, i.e. payment of monthly rent to a landlord should be payable to the landlord. Most committees provide a monthly allowance to the family, so in this case the cheque would be made payable to a member of the family so they are required to deposit it into their bank account thus providing an audit trail of the disbursement. It is strongly recommended that no bills, or invoices be paid in cash, nor should any committee member receive a cash payment from the Refugee Account as reimbursement for expenses they may incur.
 - b. **Non-Parish Refugee Committee.** A non-Parish Refugee Committee will be required to enter into a separate Service Contract with the diocese that will delineate the financial procedures, and the limits on the disbursement of funds. The principal thing here is that the funds will only be released from the Parish Refugee Account on a schedule detailed in that contract, and only for specific purposes.

Part 2 – Sponsoring Group Treasurers

Each Refugee Sponsoring Committee shall appoint a person to act as their Treasurer, whether their group is a Parish Sponsoring Group, or a Non-Parish Sponsoring Group. Normally the Parish Treasurer would assume the role of Treasurer for Parish Sponsoring Committees, and would maintain a detailed record of the financial activities of the Sponsoring Committee ensuring that everything is in compliance.

Each Non-Parish Sponsoring Committee shall open a bank account at a financial institute of their choice, in the name of the group, and there should be a minimum of three signing authorities, with a “any two to sign” designation on the account. Under the contractual agreement with the diocese, the Group Treasurer shall keep a detailed record of all financial activities of the committee and will be required to submit a financial report quarterly to the diocese through their affiliated parish liaison person, or through the diocesan Refugee Coordinator’s office.

Any funds received from fund raising activities, or donations that have no income tax receipt requirements, shall be deposited directly into the group bank account with a

record of each deposit recorded in a deposit book (normally provided by the financial institution when the account is established).

It is a requirement that all expenditures or funds withdrawn from the account be fully recorded, and receipts from suppliers, vendors, or landlords be part of the financial records. It is recommended that all payments be in the form of a cheque drawn on the Group's account, and that cash payments not be used unless there are no alternatives. Absolutely no cash should be given directly to any member of the newcomer's family.

If a Sponsoring Committee wishes to employ electronic bank transfers as the method of payment of recurring expenses (e.g. rent), they must first seek approval from the Finance Officer.

In all situations, it is the responsibility of the Refugee Sponsoring Committee Chair to ensure that every precaution is taken to maintain propriety and accuracy in all financial activities that are part of the sponsoring process from start to finish. Failure to do so could have dire consequences in the event of an audit by Revenue Canada staff.

Signed: _____
Gail Gauthier, Finance Officer, Anglican Diocese of BC