

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF THE TREASURER

June 14, 2016

Treasurers of Local Spiritual Assemblies, Treasurers' Assistants and Registered Groups

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We greet you warmly and welcome you as the treasurer of your Local Spiritual Assembly or Registered Group. We wish you much joy on the path of service to the institution of the Fund, the "life-blood" of the Cause.

There are two sacred duties that each treasurer must strive to carry out: trustworthy stewardship of the Funds of the Faith and educating the community about the spiritual rewards and responsibilities related to contributing to the Funds. In relation to Fund education, the Universal House of Justice has written that,

"While the friends have the sacred obligation and privilege to contribute to the Fund, each Local and National Assembly also has the inescapable duty of educating itself and the believers in the spiritual principles related to Bahá'í contributions..."

The Office of the Treasurer is committed to helping you achieve each of these goals and has developed a variety of materials and resources. Below is an outline of steps you can take to fulfill these sacred duties.

Financial Stewardship

- 1) If you are a new treasurer make sure you secure the following information and materials:
 - a) Past financial records – make sure they are stored in a secure location
 - b) Bank account information – including signatories on file with the bank
 - c) Checkbook
 - d) Receipt book
 - e) Community fund box(es)
- 2) Please remind the friends, when they are sending in checks for the National Fund and other Funds, to include their Bahá'í ID number.
- 3) Review the Online Contribution System (OCS) account – as treasurer you have access to the 'My Locality' tab within the OCS system which allows you to contribute to the various Funds on behalf of your local institution.
 - a) If you would like information or assistance in accessing the system or if you have not previously used OCS please feel free to contact the Office of the Treasurer and/or visit bahai.us/fund.

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- b) If you have not yet enrolled in the Local Fund Online, so the friends in your community can contribute to the Local Fund using the Online Contribution System, please do so by visiting localocs.bahai.us
- c) The Office of the Treasurer cannot accept online contributions to Funds not listed in OCS or other earmarks through OCS. These contributions should be mailed to the Office of the Treasurer, 1233 Central St., Evanston, IL 60201 or contact the Office of the Treasurer for other ways to give by emailing finance@usbnc.org
- 4) Be sure your secretary records the officer election results in eMembership or mails the results to the Membership Office of the Bahá'í National Center. Once these results are recorded, you are automatically given the privilege of being an OCS treasurer. This means you can use the Online Contribution System to view the contributions your Local Assembly has given to the National Fund.
- 5) If you don't already have a Bahá'í Online Services password, please register at american.bahai.us. Then, when you sign in, go to the website bahai.us/fund to use OCS (contribute button.) You will have access to your own and your community's records. Remember, you only need to sign yourself in. Once in, there are two sets of records (yours and your locality.)
- 6) Check on the status of recent audits. Each audit is due by June 30th for the fiscal year just ended.
 - a) For an audit form, visit american.bahai.us->Forms & Manuals->Treasurer's Tools. Under "Accounting" you will find the various financial forms needed for your work.
 - b) Please make sure your Assembly or Registered Group keeps a copy of last year's audit report and uses it to implement any recommendations from the auditors.
 - c) If the audit was not done for the previous fiscal year, kindly start the process as soon as possible. Appoint two auditors and provide all of the records to the auditors.
- 7) Become an official check signer on your community's bank account. Usually this requires a trip to the bank with another check signer (including the former treasurer) to prove who you are and to add your name to the list of official check signers. There should be at least 2 people authorized to sign on all accounts.
- 8) Collect the records from the former treasurer. Until you get the records, begin keeping a cash journal of your own. A cash journal is a complete record of all transactions (both coming to your treasury and generated out of your treasury.) The cash journal can be kept on paper or on the computer. Some treasurers use Excel, Quicken, or QuickBooks.

- 9) Establish good accounting procedures. Balance the accounts every month. It is easier to catch an error now than later. We all forget a transaction occasionally.
- 10) For contributions made by cash or check, some treasurers give a receipt after each contribution, and some send them once a year. Receipts should be in the donor's hands as soon after the new year (January 1st) as possible, so working ahead of time is usually necessary. Online contributions through the Online Contribution System are receipted automatically
- 11) Fundraising information:
 - a) Please refer to the following link for a Fundraising Packet of information to assist you with fundraisers: american.bahai.us->Forms & Manuals->Treasurer's Tools->Fundraising Packet heading.
- 12) If your Assembly hasn't had a chance to develop a budget we would like to encourage you to do so at the Assembly's earliest convenience. If one has already been established, some Assemblies find it useful to review it with the new Assembly.
- 13) Please be aware that the corresponding secretary will receive all correspondence and receipts related to the treasury function. The National Spiritual Assembly established the policy of sending receipts to Assembly secretaries as a protection for both the Assembly and the treasurer. By sending receipts to the secretaries, the full Assembly has the opportunity to review the receipts to confirm that what is being sent agrees with the wishes of the Assembly.
- 14) For Registered Groups, please visit elections.bahai.us and look under "Registered Groups" at the bottom of the page for more guidance specifically for Registered Groups

Fund Education

- 1) Make sure you are receiving the Bahá'í Treasurers Bulletin (BTB), a Bahá'í monthly email communication from the Office of the Treasurer that includes the Treasurers Notes, a 1-page printable resource with news, updates, stories, and quotes. If you aren't receiving the BTB, visit bahaitreasurer.us to subscribe.
- 2) Become familiar with *Sacred Trust* and use it regularly as a resource for consultations with your Assembly and educating the believers in your community. This e-book can be found on american.bahai.us under 'Forms & Manuals->Treasurer's Tools'.
- 3) Encourage the friends to say the Fund prayer and use OCS, which is proven to both increase participation and encourage a direct relationship with each of the Funds of the Faith. Please ask the friends that when they use OCS to create In Memory cards for those who have passed to the Abhá Kingdom to select that option rather than In Honor cards. In Honor cards are for those

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individuals still with us on this earthly plane to have Funds contributed in their honor.

- 4) Fund education is essentially a process of helping the friends fall in love with Bahá'u'lláh, the Faith and His institutions. A good first step is to consult with the Assembly and reflect on where the community is at, what they need to know about the vision of the Assembly and what will inspire greater levels of love.

Training

- 1) Attend a Fund Empowerment Workshop in your area along with as many members of your Assembly or Group as can attend. These workshops are for new and veteran treasurers and their fellow Assembly or Group members. Watch for an invitation to a training in your area.
- 2) Stay tuned for webinars hosted by the Office of the Treasurer that cover topics ranging from where the money goes, to Planned Giving, to the Local Fund Online. 3 Welcome Webinars are scheduled to help you get oriented to your role as local treasurer. Go to this link to register for one of these webinar sessions: click [here](#) The following are the dates and times:
 - a) Wednesday, June 29, 2016 from 12:00pm-1:00pm Central Time
 - b) Tuesday, July 12, 2016 from 11:00am-12:00pm Central Time
 - c) Thursday, July 21, 2016 from 2:00pm-3:00pm Central Time

This fiscal year the National Spiritual Assembly has decided to increase the National Fund goal to \$35 million, which is to be reached by April 30, 2017. After the successes of the past year, where more people contributed and more was contributed than ever before, we are sure this goal can be achieved with your valued and capable support. We humbly request that each Local Assembly and Registered Group prayerfully considers increasing their gifts to the National Fund if it is appropriate within the goals of your community.

If you have any questions, feedback or concerns please contact us at finance@usbnc.org or 847-733-3472.

We wish you many confirmations in your service and assure you of our ready support.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Office of the Treasurer