

City of Forest Park

Accounts Payable Policy

1. Purpose

To establish clear guidelines for processing, approving, and paying vendor invoices to ensure timely and accurate payment of the City of Forest Park's liabilities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees involved in the accounts payable process, including finance, procurement, and relevant Department Head or designee.

3. Policy Statement

The City of Forest Park is committed to maintaining good relationships with its vendors by ensuring timely and accurate payments while safeguarding its own financial interests.

4. Vendor Management

- **Vendor Selection:** Vendors should be selected based on criteria such as quality, cost, reliability, and compliance with the City of Forest Park's standards as determined by Procurement Officer(s).
- **Vendor Information:** Procurement Officer(s) will maintain a master list of approved vendors, including contact information, payment terms, and banking details.

5. Invoice Processing

- **Receipt of Invoices:** All invoices must be:
 - Stamped with received date.
 - Attached to purchase order and forwarded to the Accounts Payable department within 5 business days.
 - Acceptable delivery methods include mail, interoffice mail, email (accountspayable@forestparkga.gov), or electronic data interchange (i.e. Asana, Microsoft Groups, etc.)
- **Invoice Verification:** Accounts Payable will verify invoices against purchase orders for accuracy. A purchase order number must be included on the invoice. Discrepancies must be resolved before approval.
- **Approval Process:** Invoices must be approved by the relevant Department Head or designated approver before payment.
- **Data Entry:** Enter approved invoices into the accounting system within 7 business days.

6. Payment Processing

- **Payment Terms:** The City of Forest Park operates on a net-30 pay schedule unless otherwise negotiated with between the vendor & Procurement.
- **Payment Methods:** Payments will be made via check, electronic funds transfer (EFT), wire transfer, or credit card.
- **Payment Schedule:** To maintain volume levels, payments will be processed weekly. Invoices delivered to Accounts Payable by noon on Friday will be paid within 7 business days pending no discrepancies.
- **Payment Approval:** Payments must be reviewed and approved by authorized personnel before disbursement.
- **Disbursement:** Payments will be dispersed to the vendor by agreed upon payment method.

7. Record Keeping

- **Documentation:** Payment records will be retained in an alphabetized vendor file, in dated order and archived on an annual basis.
- **Reconciliation:** Reconcile accounts payable records with vendor statements regularly to ensure accuracy.

8. Internal Controls

- **Segregation of Duties:** Maintain separate responsibilities for invoice approval, data entry, and payment processing to prevent fraud.
- **Access Controls:** Restrict access to the accounts payable system to authorized personnel only.
- **Audit:** Conduct regular audits of the accounts payable process to identify and address any discrepancies or inefficiencies.

9. Dispute Resolution

- **Discrepancies:** Address any discrepancies or disputes with vendors promptly and professionally.
- **Dispute Escalation:** Escalate unresolved disputes to higher management for resolution.

10. Compliance

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensure all accounts payable activities comply with relevant laws and regulations.
- **Policy Review:** Review and update the accounts payable policy annually or as needed to ensure continued effectiveness and compliance.

11. Training and Communication

- **Employee Training:** Provide training to employees involved in the accounts payable process to ensure they are aware of and comply with the policy.
- **Communication:** Communicate any changes to the accounts payable policy to all relevant stakeholders promptly.

12. Responsibility and Accountability

- **Department Heads:** Responsible for ensuring their departments adhere to the accounts payable policy.
- **Accounts Payable Team:** Responsible for the accurate and timely processing of invoices and payments.
- **Internal Audit:** Responsible for auditing the accounts payable process to ensure compliance with the policy.

By following this policy, the City of Forest Park can ensure a streamlined and efficient accounts payable process that supports strong vendor relationships and maintains financial integrity.