

AGO TECHNOLOGY SPOTLIGHT

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the National Collection of Dues Program

By James Thomashower, Executive Director & John Polo, CIO of Technology & Communications

Join us online at <http://dues.agohq.org/FAQ.pdf> as we continue to provide answers to commonly asked questions by Chapter Leadership on this Spring 2011 AGO-wide initiative. The National Collection of Dues Program allows members to enter and maintain their profile and contact information online, pay annual dues and contribute to local and national programs, search for fellow AGO members throughout the national organization, and much more. Communications for this program started in December 2010 and can all be found at <http://dues.agohq.org>

The entries are shown by category to make them easy to find:

- I. General Information Regarding the National Collection of Dues Program
- II. Chapter Administrators – these individuals, will usually be a Chapter Treasurer or Membership Registrar and handle the initial setup of the National Collection of Dues for their Chapter. <hyperlink to the Chap Admin communication for e-copy>
- III. Technology Mentors – these individuals will be the 1st line of technology support for their peer chapter members at any time using the National Collection of Dues <same as above for e-copy>.
- IV. Treasurers, Registrars and Membership Coordinators – new/changed/enhanced processes with the National Collection of Dues Project.

The following is an excerpt of Questions & Answers by category. Join us online at <http://dues.agohq.org/FAQ.pdf> for the complete list. Submit new questions to James.Thomashower@agohq.org or John.Polo@agohq.org.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

- Q.1 What is the timeline for implementation?
A.1 Chapter Administration setup is April 1 to May 15. Members can change their member profiles and renew dues after May 15 using chapter-specific and customized membership form.
- Q.2 Is there provisions for Chapters to opt-out of the National Collection of Dues Program?

- A.2 The program has been designed to allow a paper-based membership form for those members without computer access or uncomfortable with online payments. This seems to be the issue of concern and can be accommodated.
- Q.3 Is there a provision to customize my Chapter online form?
- A.3 Yes. In addition to the base information that seems to appear on 99% of all our chapter membership forms, chapters can add 10 user fields, and 10 contribution \$ fields for their specific use.
- Q.4 What communication tools will be provided to help introduce the program to members?
- A.4 A "Chapter Recommendation for National Collection of Dues" document will include standard narrative that can be used in newsletters, emails, in addition to how the new system can be utilized for many member and administration benefits.

I. CHAPTER ADMINISTRATORS

- Q.1 How much time is the one-time setup for each Chapter?
- A.1 We anticipate that the Chapter Administrator will have collected all information necessary to speed this process so it can be handled in 1-2 hours. The information collected supports the virtual printing of an online directory in addition to online renewals and the ability to collect monies for chapter special projects.
- Q.2 What training is available to help with the Chapter setup?
- A.2 There will be 3 key documents – a) Chapter Recommendations for the National Collection of Dues. This includes how to customize your "virtual membership form, how to handle members without computer access or those that will use paper forms as in the past. It will also include narrative that can be added to local newsletters on this year's new renewal process b) Step-by-step – Chapter Admin Setup Instructions, c) Step-by-step – Member Entry and Renewal Instructions. These documents will be available in e-form for chapter web sites and/or emails too.

II. TECHNOLOGY MENTORS

- Q.1 Why are there both Chapter Administrators and Technology Mentors?
- A.1 Many chapters will make the Chapter Administrator the Treasurer to do the one-time chapter setup including providing bank routing information. The Technology Mentors are listed on the online system so that members that want to ask questions about technology can do so with members they know. Small chapters may just have one person that does both.
- Q.2 Can Chapter Administrators and Technology Mentors be changed?

A.2 Chapter Administrators can change any information regarding the chapter including Officers, Technology Mentors, including initial setup information.

III. TREASURERS, REGISTRARS and MEMBERSHIP COORDINATORS

Q.1 Will the Treasurers, Registrars or Membership Coordinators need to rekey membership data?

A.1 No & Yes. No if the member completes the chapter renewal online, there is no additional data entry necessary. Once data is in the national database, it can be changed at any time by the member. Yes if the member does not have computer access or is uncomfortable with online payment processing. In these cases Chapters would send the paper membership form (a printed copy of the online form) to these individuals. Upon receipt to the local chapter, the paper form would be processed by the Treasurer, Registrar or Membership Coordinator and the membership data would be entered on behalf of the chapter member to complete the online payment cycle.

Q.2 When a renewing or new member pays by credit card, who bears the cost of the credit card transaction fee?

A.2 National Headquarters.

Q.3 How does the money get from national headquarters to the chapter?

A.3 Once a week, money will be transmitted by electronic wire transfer from the AGO account into the bank account of chapters for whom funds were collected.

Q.4 What if a chapter doesn't have a bank account?

A.4 The chapter should open one promptly, it can be a checking or savings account.

Q.5 Will chapters have to pay service fees for the wire transfers? If so, how much will there be?

A.5 The chapters will incur service fees for the ACH transactions. The amounts vary with each banking institution and with the nature of the chapter's account, but chapters may still save money as they will not have transaction fees associated with individually deposited checks or checks withdrawn from the chapter's account.

Q.6 Does the Chapter leadership receive any type of automated report on who has renewed?

A.6 Chapter leaders will be able to review all information about the status of their members renewals, and on cash being deposited into their bank on demand by accessing the database system which will be available online 24-7.

Q.7 How will members receive renewal notifications?

- A.7 Local chapters will be encouraged to seek renewal of members through Sept 1, 2011 after which AGO National Headquarters will start a marketing campaign to continue to remind lapsed members about the benefits of renewing by e-mail to all members for whom we have an e-mail address on file.
- Q.8 What other benefits are there for Chapter leadership teams?
- A.8 Those authorized can aid members in their chapters by entering/updating information online. They can add and modify contribution or special project amounts and use the cash payment options of Dues system even when dues are not owed. Numerous online reports. Ability to extract email lists.
- Q.9 Will members be able to use the online database system to find contact information about other chapter members in lieu of having the chapter publish and distribute a printed membership directory?
- A.9 Limited contact information will be available to any member of the AGO to promote communications between members. Each Chapter can decide if it will allow its members and/or other chapters in the same state or Region to view or print its virtual Chapter Directory. This is an option set by the Chapter Administrator based on the local Chapter's leadership team.>That decision will be left to each chapter's leadership team. The chapter may choose to allow its members to access contact information about the chapter's members and/or about other Guild members as well.
- Q.10 Can a church pay a member's dues?
- A.10 Yes. The church can pay the member's dues with a credit card or write a check that can be sent to the AGO National Headquarters lockbox along with the AGO renewal remittance form. Alternatively, the member can pay the dues and the church can reimburse the member.
- Q. 11 How do members renew if they don't have a computer or prefer not to use one?
- A. 11 The chapter can send the member a renewal form which the member can then complete and return to the chapter Treasurer, Registrar or Membership Coordinator that enters the information on the behalf of their member. The rest is as if the member did this online themselves; send remittance and check to the AGO National lockbox.

Have more questions? Please send submit new questions to James.Thomashower@agohq.org or John.Polo@agohq.org, or call us at 212.870.2310