

Department of Finance and Administration – Policy 10 Organizational Dues, Subscriptions, and Sponsorships

(Revised November, 2012)

Introduction and Background

1. This policy statement revises the previous Policy 10 “Dues and Subscriptions” which was originally approved in January of 1990. This revision is based on the understanding that in order to effectively carry out their responsibilities, state agencies and departments may occasionally need to formally join an organization, have their employees join an organization, pay for a subscription to a mission-related publication, or through a sponsorship, underwrite a public event or activity of some type.

Applicability

2. This Policy Statement has been issued by the Department of Finance and Administration in accordance with the authority granted under T.C.A. 4-3-1007 and is effective immediately upon approval. It is applicable to Executive Branch agencies. Institutions of the University of Tennessee and the Tennessee Board of Regents are excluded from this policy statement.

Definitions

3. For purposes of this policy statement, membership dues and subscriptions are defined as follows:

Membership Dues: An expenditure by a state department or agency which entitles participation in the activities of an organization. If membership dues are included as part of the expense of a conference or seminar conducted by an organization, a portion of the conference expense is considered membership dues for the purposes of this policy statement.

Organization: An association or society separate from state government.

Subscriptions: expenditure by a state department, or agency for publications, or access to publications including Internet web sites and data.

Sponsorship: expenditure by a state department or agency for the support of an event, conference, or meeting, etc.

General Rule: Departmental Responsibility

4. It is the responsibility of the department head to ensure that only membership dues, subscriptions, and sponsorships are clearly related to the mission of the department. When approving such payments cost-effective alternatives, if available, should be considered. The decision to approve such expenses should reflect that there are clear benefits which will accrue to the state, that participation is necessary and appropriate within the department's budget plan, and that the expense contributes to more efficient and effective operations.

Organizational Memberships and Dues

5. A state agency or department may be a member of an organization if the membership is related to the goals and mission of the state, and if membership directly benefits the department. Departments should not pay for the membership of individuals unless an organization does not allow institutional membership, or in cases where individual membership is at a lower rate. Only one membership is permitted for each department.

6. Licenses or certifications may be required for certain state employees due to their job duties, and fees for these licenses or certifications are the responsibility of the employee. In certain circumstances licenses do not transfer with the employee when that employee leaves state employment. In these limited situations, the state will pay for such a license. Membership in professional societies or organizations and their associated fees shall be the responsibility of the employee. In the event a membership from this latter category is paid by the state as part of a conference registration fee, the employee should reimburse the state for the portion related to membership.

Subscriptions

7. State agencies and departments may pay for subscriptions if the published material, data base, etc., is directly related to the goals and mission of the department, and if the product or service directly benefits the department. No state agency shall subscribe to political publications, (defined as a material which espouses the point of view of one party or organization to the exclusion of other points of view.) Departments should consult with the Department of Finance and Administration, Office for Information Resources (OIR) regarding the procurement of data base services as to whether such services are otherwise available within the state.

Sponsorships

8. State agencies and departments may sponsor an event such as a conference, meeting, etc., if the activity is related to the goals and mission of the department, and it is determined that there is benefit to the state from the sponsorship. No state agency shall sponsor a political event, (defined as an event which expounds the point of view of one party or organization to the exclusion of other points of view).

Exceptions

9. Exceptions to this Policy Statement may be approved by the Chief of Accounts, Department of Finance and Administration.