



**Society of Saint Vincent de Paul**

**Financial Handbook**

**for**

**Conference Treasurers**

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# Financial Handbook for Conference Treasurers

## 1.0 Introduction

The financial well-being of a conference is crucial for the fulfillment of the mission of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (“SSVP” or the “Society”) of assisting the poor and needy. The treasurer administers the revenues and expenditures as well as ensures that the rules of governance are followed so the conference works within the limits of its resources and remains solvent.

The purpose of this handbook is to assist the treasurer in understanding the various financial regulatory, legal, organizational and operational aspects of conference life. It is intended as a guide, with references to the detailed *Rule and Statutes of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul* (the “Rule”) and Canada Revenue Agency (“CRA”) regulations and procedures, governing charitable organizations.

## 2.0 Treasurer

### 2.1 Role

Rule 2.2.7 states that the treasurer is appointed by the president after consultation with the members. It is possible to appoint a treasurer who is not a member of the Society. However, in such cases, this person is appointed by the president because of his or her expertise and can take part in the deliberations in a meeting but does not have any voting rights

### 2.2 Qualifications

A treasurer does not need an accounting designation. The desired personal traits include:

- Understanding of basic accounting principles from a bookkeeping perspective;
- Ability to work with numbers and explain the conference finances in simple terms to its members;
- Ability to use a personal computer;
- Management of the conference bank account, term investments and reconciliation;
- Ability to keep a set of records.

### 2.3 Duties

The Rule governs how conference finances are to be administered. However, the treasurer has the latitude to establish working documents, procedures and reporting to suit the specific local conference while meeting the reporting requirements of the National Council of Canada and CRA.

The formal terms of reference for the conference treasurer are laid out in Rule 2.2.7.3:

<https://www.ssvp.ca/rule-statutes> - Rule and Statutes, page 35

## 3.0 Rule of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

Guidance for managing the finances of the conference is laid out in the Rule, in 2.2.10 and 2.2.11:

<https://www.ssvp.ca/rule-statutes> - Rule and Statutes, page 39 (2.2.10 Finance)

<https://www.ssvp.ca/rule-statutes> - Rule and Statutes, page 40 (2.2.11 Reporting and Accountability)

## 4.0 Legal Status of an SSVF conference

### 4.1 CRA Rules & Regulations

In addition to being established as part of the Society through an aggregation process, the conference needs to have legal status with the CRA as a registered charity. The CRA governs the operation of registered charitable organizations.

The process to register a new conference is managed by the National Council of Canada with information and required forms available in the Operational Manual on the National Council of Canada's website at:

<https://www.ssvp.ca/operations-manual>

#### Section 9 Official Forms.

##### 9.7 Charity number Application: <https://www.ssvp.ca/charity-number-canada-revenue-agency>

The forms below are to be completed and sent to the SSVF National Office for review.

- [Application to Register a Charity Under the Income Tax Act](#) (T2050)
- [Business number: Statement of Activities](#)
- [Business number: Resolution](#)
- [Financial Statement](#)

The CRA maintains a website for use by registered charities. It contains much useful information, including information booklets and forms:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities.html>

CRA website for charities. Use to apply for filing various returns and reports, downloading fillable .pdf forms, downloading CRA publications, etc.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/operating-a-registered-charity.html>

CRA website with helpful information on operating a registered charity.

Once the CRA has assigned a Business Number (BN) to the Conference, the latter can, as a registered charity:

- Issue charitable donation receipts;
- Apply for rebates for GST/HST paid for purchases.
- Use the BN for identification and for use in filing various returns and reports with the CRA;
- File an annual Registered Charity Information Return (CRA forms - T3010, T1235, T1236) together with prescribed financial statements within 6 months of the end of the fiscal year (legally required)

## 4.2 Online CRA User Access

The CRA provides online access to the conference account. This access allows the treasurer to view conference information, apply for GST/HST rebates and perform other administrative functions on line through the Service Canada Account access.

To apply for online access, the treasurer must register online in “My Account” or “My Business Account” and obtain his/her own CRA user ID and password. This can be done by accessing the CRA web page and following the instructions for registering:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/represent-a-client/about-represent-a-client.html#q3>

Once account registration has been completed, the treasurer must complete a CRA Business Consent form (RC59) to be registered as an authorized representative for access to the account. This form must be certified by the authorized person such as the Conference president or former treasurer, provided that they are also registered with the CRA as the primary contact or other registered people. Whenever the president or treasurer changes, this form needs to be resubmitted to the CRA, with deletions and additions to keep access current.

## 4.3 GST/HST Rebates

As a registered charity, the conference can apply for a partial rebate of the GST/HST it paid on all eligible purchases.

For conferences with the same business number as that of the National Council of Canada, form GST10 must be completed by the national treasurer and filed with CRA. If the 9-digit BN Reference Number is the same as the National Council of Canada, ask for the form GST10 to the National Council treasurer: [treasurer@ssvp.ca](mailto:treasurer@ssvp.ca)

**It is important that the conference does NOT register for GST/HST purposes as it provides only exempt property and services and is not a small supplier.**

For more information, download booklets, *GST/HST Information for Charities (RC4082)* and the *Basic GST/HST Guidelines for Charities (GI-067)*, from the CRA website.

The rebate has federal and provincial components. The federal portion of the rebate is 50% of the GST paid. There also exists a public service body rebate for the provincial portion of HST for certain provinces as follows:

- 35% for Prince Edward Island
- 50% for New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia
- 82% for Ontario
- 50% for Québec

## 4.4 Charitable Donation Receipts

The conference can issue receipts for charitable donations. Donations are in the form of cash, cheque, PayPal, shares or in kind. It is very important that the format of the receipt is in compliance with the CRA guidelines that follow. More information is available on the CRA website. There are other types of donations that will require reference to the applicable CRA guidelines, to determine what is acceptable and how to determine the proper value of any gift. Refer to the appendix for a sample form using the SSVP online Excel template.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/guidance-videos-forms.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/policies-guidance/alphabetical-index-policies-guidance.html#r-tpcs>

### **Template for Official Donation Receipt for Income Tax Purposes**

**Receipt # XXX**

**Charity name**

**Charity address**

**Charity BN/Registration # \_\_\_\_\_ RR \_\_\_\_\_**

Date donation received: \_\_\_\_\_

Donated by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(first name, initial, last name)

Donor address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Eligible amount of gift for tax purposes:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date receipt issued: \_\_\_\_\_

Location receipt issued: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**For information on all registered charities in Canada under the Income Tax Act please visit:  
Canada Revenue Agency <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/sample-official-donation-receipts.html>**

## 5.0 Conference Finances

### 5.1 Retention and Archiving of Records

The retention life of conference records is identified in Rule 3.15. Note that the CRA has very specific retention criteria that must be adhered to for financial records. It is six years after the end of the year to which they relate. The CRA can require to audit the financial records at any time during the retention period.

A secure location must be maintained to store current and archived records until they can be disposed of. Typically, financial records for the current and past fiscal years should be kept by the treasurer for easy access to facilitate his/her duties. Older records can be archived and stored in banker's boxes at a suitable secure location. In all cases, the confidentiality of the records must be maintained. The proper method of disposing of all records is to shred them.

<b>Non-incorporated conferences or councils</b>	
<b>Documents</b>	<b>Time Kept</b>
Aggregation, Institution, Twinning forms	Perpetuity
Membership Application forms	Perpetuity
Canada Revenue Agency: Charitable Registration forms	Perpetuity
Minutes of meetings	Perpetuity
Financial Records	6 tax years per CRA
Lists of members of the boards of directors	Perpetuity
General correspondence during the mandate of any president	3 years past the end of the term of that president
Case records	3 years
Annual Reports	Perpetuity
Proxies during the mandate of any president	3 years past the end of the term of that president

### 5.2 Chart of Accounts

A suitable Chart of Accounts must be set up to identify and track the various revenue and expense categories that apply to the conference operations. The categories identified in the SSVP annual financial report are a good baseline. Others can be added as separate new categories or new subcategories to the recommended ones. The key is to keep things as simple as possible. The categories from the annual financial report are shown below. The bracketed numbers correspond to line numbers on the CRA T3010 Registered Charity Information Return.

<https://www.ssvp.ca/annual-reports> - 9.3 Sections E1 or E2

## **6.0 Appendices**

Examples and completed samples of various forms and reports are shown in the following appendices.  
<https://www.ssvp.ca/forms>

### **6.1 Charitable Donation Receipt Sample**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/sample-official-donation-receipts.html>

### **6.2 Expense reimbursement form for conference members**

[https://www.ssvp.ca/operations-manual#anchor\\_forms](https://www.ssvp.ca/operations-manual#anchor_forms) - 9.8 Expense Reimbursement Form

### **6.3 Monthly financial report**

<https://www.ssvp.ca/annual-reports> – Monthly Report Table (conferences and councils)

### **6.4 Annual SSVP financial report**

<https://www.ssvp.ca/annual-reports> – Summary of annual reports (councils)

## 6.5 Annual Conference Activity Report to Parish

Annual Conference Activity Report to Parish – Page 1 **Example**

### **Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Conference Treasurer Handbook Example**



#### **Financial Report Overview for the Year 20 :**

Parishioners' generosity continues to provide the funds to accomplish the Society's objectives: servicing the needs of the less fortunate within our Parish Boundaries. The 2014 year-end financial report reflects your donations of \$48,232. received through our monthly church collections and other donations. During the year our expenditures amounted to \$43,877. including:

- Grocery vouchers given through home visits and at the drop-in centre - \$22,361.
- Food pantry replenishment at the drop-in centre - \$8,000.
- Food purchase support at the Christian life centre - \$800.
- Bus tickets - \$480.
- Clothing and furniture vouchers - \$7,133.
- Youth camp fees - \$1,593.
- Twinning SSVP Conference in xxxxx - \$2,000.
- Administrative expenses - \$1,510.

#### **Activity Report for 20 :**

Our conference made 397 calls, between home visits and drop-in visits, serving 347 adults and 137 children. We belong to the CORE (Downtown Churches Outreach Program), give regular donations to help with purchases of food for the Drop-In Centre pantry and the Christian Life Centre evening suppers program and are twinned with the xxxxx SSVP Conference in xxxxx with whom we correspond regularly.

Thank you to all who help us with monthly parish collections for the SSVP. The offering of your time by holding the SSVP boxes at the doors of our church is greatly appreciated as is the help given to us by the ushers on those collection weekends.

#### **Funding:**

Our major source of funding is the monthly donations from many parishioners. Other special donations and bequests also form part of the society's income. This conference receives no government or United Way funding. It relies solely on the generosity of parishioners wanting to help others. All donations received benefit those in need with the majority of funds distributed within the church parish boundaries.

***Thank You!***

**For 20\_\_ , in addition to your financial support, we need your help to continue serving those in need within our parish boundaries:**

We ask you to join us in providing home visits and other services to those who depend on us for help. Once the diocesan screening process is done, full training and orientation are given to support you in extending our services to the needy.

We wish to add more teams for home visits. Home visits are always done in pairs. Your team would be on call for one week approximately every two months. This amounts to about 3 to 6 hours of time spread throughout your week on duty. This opportunity may interest couples looking for ways to volunteer together.

We would like to add another team for noon time visits every other Friday, at the Drop-In Centre, to help those in temporary accommodations sponsored by the Drop In.

Please listen to what our volunteers have to say at the masses this weekend. And, please give serious consideration to joining us in our work to help alleviate the needs of those who call us for help.

If you wish more details on the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, its formation and history in our parish, and more details on our conference activities, please pick up a copy of the pamphlet available at the Tower entrance and also in the parish office.

We welcome your enquiries at any time and hope that the spirit of giving back will encourage you to consider volunteering with our conference.

Yours in Vincentian service,

Conference president's name

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Fill in this form, detach and drop in the collection basket, or drop it off at the parish office.

----- You may also phone or email me at the number or email address given below -----

**Society of Saint Vincent de Paul – Membership Application – 20\_\_\_\_ year!**

Please complete this form and return it to the Rectory or place in the collection basket. A member of the Society will contact you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions, please call or email xxxxx, president of our conference at xxx-xxx-xxxx or email xxxxx.

## 7.0 Frequently Asked Questions

**1. We are a new conference, and we don't as yet have a CRA registration #, how can we collect donations?**

You should collect your donations through your church, who will issue the donation receipts, until you get your own CRA registration #.

**2. If we are CRA registered, can parishioners donate to the church instead of SSVP for SSVP needs?**

Yes, while parishioners should be encouraged to donate directly to your conference, they may sometimes want to make a cheque to the church for more than one church program.

If they make an SSVP donation through the church, the church must issue the tax receipt, and remit the SSVP contribution to the SSVP conference.

Amounts remitted by the church should be reported in the accounting system as "Funds received from other charities".

**3. How much can a conference spend on administration?**

Each conference executive should determine what is the appropriate budget for administrative purposes.

Every conference will have office expenditures relating to stationary, printing, stamps, etc. In addition, they will probably incur insurance costs, remit tithes to the particular / central council, they may even find it useful to send a member to the national AGA.

These are all legitimate expenditures that should be budgeted for, to ensure they are within the expenditure limit approved by the conference executive.

**4. How much do conferences need to contribute to their particular / central council?**

National requires that conferences contribute money to their particular / central council for local administrative and national needs. The annual amount that should be contributed will depend on the annual budget of national and particular / central councils.

Particular / central councils should inform each conference of their contribution expectations by March each year.

**5. What happens when a conference receives more funds than needed during a given fiscal year?**

The surplus funds should be remitted to its particular / central council for distribution to conferences in need. Surplus funds should NOT be carried forward to the next financial year. The objective should be the equivalent of 12 months of operations plus a buffer of 3 months, i.e. 15 months of operations.

Conferences can always contact their particular / central council for reimbursement if there are changes in the financial situation.

**6. Do conferences need to use a recognized accounting system for their accounting needs?**

All conferences should use a recognized accounting system to meet its accounting obligations. Manual systems are not designed to meet SSVP accounting requirements:

- a) National has developed an Excel program that conferences may use;
- b) Alternatively, conferences can purchase QuickBooks through Tech Soup, at a very reasonable price (approximately \$40 rather than \$220). We understand the price includes ongoing technical support.

**7. Do we need to set up a specific accounting structure for our financial reporting?**

Yes, the accounting structure should be in line with the National Council's annual reporting requirements.

**8. How long should a conference keep financial records?**

This topic is covered in detail in the SSVP Financial Handbook for conference treasurers. In addition, conferences need to consider their provincial requirements on the confidentiality of information.

All conferences should have policies and procedures that comply with their provincial legislation.

**9. Why are fiscal controls, especially segregation of duties, important?**

Fiscal controls, if properly applied, should protect the conference from potential misuse of funds, ensure transparency of its actions to conference members and parishioners, and help it comply with the CRA requirements.

As a general rule:

- a) Donation envelopes should be opened in the presence of two individuals. One person should record the receipts, then bank the deposits, then give the receipt listing to the treasurer to record in the accounting records.
- b) The treasurer should avoid being involved in the opening of envelopes and banking of funds. He/she should deal with all donation receipts inquiries.
- c) Conferences should develop appropriate expenditure approval procedures, which should be based on the level of expenditure.
- d) No one should approve their own expenditures.
- e) All expenditures should have proper supporting documentation.
- f) Treasurers should provide a monthly financial report to the conference members for review and approval.
- g) Conference presidents should give their particular / central council certain specific information each month as requested by their councils. This may include:
  - Value of donations;
  - Bank balance;
  - Number of home visits.

- h) Conferences should provide an annual report to their parishioners to help them understand how the conference used its donation money.

#### **10. What do conferences need to know about donation receipts?**

CRA has very specific rules on donation receipts. These requirements can be viewed on the CRA website.

When reading the requirements, conferences should pay attention to:

- a) Donation receipt format;
- b) Timeline for issuing receipts;
- c) Gifts not eligible for receipts;
- d) Rules on donation of services.

SSVP National has developed a spreadsheet to help conferences account for donation receipts.

For conferences dealing with a large number of donors, they may also want to consider the Parish Friendly software. The Parish Friendly system is designed to comply with the CRA requirements, track individual donation history, facilitate response to donation enquiries, etc.

#### **11. How can conferences recognize the value of services that are not receipted for tax purposes?**

SSVP National has set up a reporting line in its annual report to do this. Important things to remember are:

- a) This value is for information purposes only; it may not be properly substantiated.
- b) The value should not be included in the annual CRA report. Form T3010

#### **12. What do conferences need to know about gift cards?**

We understand that more and more conferences are now dealing with gift cards. Therefore, it is important for conferences to understand that:

- a) CRA has very specific rules with regards to when gift cards can be tax receipted. Please refer to the CRA website for specific details.
- b) If you do give donors tax receipts for a gift card donation, treat the donations as gift-in-kind.
- c) When you use gift cards to help clients, treat each client use as charitable work.
- d) Any gift card not used at year-end should be carried forward as inventory.
- e) Use an Excel Spreadsheet to account for the receipt and disbursement of gift cards.

#### **13. What do conferences need to know about the annual SSVP report forms?**

The forms are available on the national website, in the Members section, under Forms. If you need help completing a form, please call your particular / central council, who will assign someone to help you:

- a) There are two components – Financial and Activities
- b) Report forms should be completed by Jan 31st of each year, and submitted to your particular council for review.
- c) They must be accurate. National uses the data to promote SSVP nationally. When certain data in one section does not correlate with other corresponding data in other sections, it questions the integrity of the entire report.

**14. Do conferences need to submit to an annual audit?**

Not usually, since conferences are not incorporated. However, the National Council does encourage conference executives to conduct an independent review of their financial data.

The above has been prepared to help conference treasurers with their duties. If you have any questions on the above, or on any other matter, please contact your particular / central council, who will determine how best to help you.

Other source of information: Blumbergs Receipting Kit

[https://www.globalphilanthropy.ca/images/uploads/Blumbergs\\_Receipting\\_Kit\\_2018\\_by\\_Mark\\_Blumberg.pdf](https://www.globalphilanthropy.ca/images/uploads/Blumbergs_Receipting_Kit_2018_by_Mark_Blumberg.pdf)