

Advanced Treasury Functionality

Handling Vouchers

The CMS system does not provide a feature to inventory vouchers and gift cards - and thereby manage individual voucher IDs or their inventories - however this is a feature that will be implemented in the future. Vouchers and Gift Cards, like bags of food, can be a difficult item to properly track due to the effort involved in recording transactions and the unwillingness of volunteers to spend an inordinate amount of time recording the events.

In the interim, conferences have ways to handle vouchers. Many times a conference treasurer will purchase a number of gas cards with a single check to create a supply set aside for caseworkers to distribute as they see fit. Vouchers usually come in the form of grocery certificates, gasoline cards or thrift store redemption slips.

When caseworkers wish to record that a voucher or gift card was given to a client on a case, they will add an assistance request into the system. As there is no relationship between some balance of funds that had been set aside for these cards/vouchers, there is no double check against recorded discrete values of cards, or balances that were earmarked in a cost-accounting sort of way for thrift store voucher set-asides. The caseworker is handing out a gift card - and that gift card will have a recorded value - and there will NOT be a check request associated with it. Vouchers are tracked in CMS by selection of resource categories and resource types. As the CMS system does not inventory these resources or have a sub-balance of monies set aside for them etc - there is nothing preventing a caseworker from recording data incorrectly (as there are no inventories of discrete scrip/cards).



Note: Assistance Reporting can be used to capture these transactions by selecting the appropriate resource type and non-financial assistance flags. For more on this see the Assistance Reporting section later in the Reporting and Search section of the guide.

Using Single Checks for Multiple Assistance Items Across Clients

It is an uncommon practice for St Vincent conferences to provide a single payment to a local utility company that the company applies to several customer account balances. The efficiency of writing a single check like this is more than offset by the effort involved in tracking and managing the accounting. These sorts of aggregate checks can be recorded in the system - but using the same check number is problematic for many reasons - mostly having to do with the difference between the actual amount on the check vs the amount recorded multiple times for a single check across multiple assistance events. To allow for this to be tracked properly we altered the nature of the check number field to allow for the use of an added letter - as check numbers are unique on a per conference basis.

The suggested way to track an aggregate payment like this in the system would be to use a single check number followed by a letter denoting the subdivided nature of the check entry. These combined payments are often culprits in account adjustment scenarios - as it is not uncommon for client account numbers to be incorrectly captured - resulting in refunded amounts being returned from the utility in question. There is a process specific to capturing refunds given back to the conference by a vendor and recording them against the transaction in question.

If the treasurer inputs a check that is already recorded in the system, a box will be spawned that will show all check numbers for this conference that are essentially similar to that which was entered. So if, for example, a half dozen check #1111 were in the system as 1111a, b, c etc - and the treasurer entered a second 1111d by mistake - they would see all the 1111 checks that are currently recorded and could correct this. This transaction will be invalid until such time as it has a unique check number, so it is important to rectify this immediately.

Suggested Solidarity Contributions

The system calculates a suggested solidarity contribution based on a fairly simple formula. The national guideline makes it the responsibility of the Diocese to set the suggested amounts. We have installed a formula based on consultation with several diocese which may or may not work for you. This calculation reviews all receipts for a given month when the monthly financial report is complete - and records it in the 'expenses' section of the monthly financial report generation screen.

The system calculation runs as follows:

(Total Receipts - Overseas Contributions - Contributions from other conferences - Fundraising Expenses) *.075 (where Total Receipts excludes grants and any other excluded deposits).

This is merely a suggestion and no monies are recorded as set aside from the conference in solidarity until an actual solidarity payment transaction is recorded in the check register. To capture the actual amount paid in solidarity contribution create a transaction using the Solidarity Contribution transaction type.

Mapping Previously Written Assistance Checks to Assistance Events

There may be rare occasions where a check has been written in an emergency prior to a case advancing to a point of making a check request. Things happen in the real world and the system needs to be able to handle it when someone jumps completely out of the work-flow.

Hide Explanation

Cancel
Retry Approval
Deny

49064 is already in use by one or more existing transactions.

Please make requisite revisions below and try again, or cancel the approval and review the prior uses of the check number.

Check Number *

These are the prior uses of this check number:

C	Type	Number	Date	Debit	Payee	Client	Case
	Utilities	49064	06/13/2017	\$45.00	Drinkwater Propane		

Under certain circumstances, it may be possible to use one of these transactions to fulfill the check request. The transaction must not have been used for another check request. The transaction must be for the same amount, the same financial type, and the same payee (exact spelling). Also, if the version of the CMS it was created with was too old, it can't be used. If there are any such transactions, they will be listed below

Click on any of the transactions below, if any, to use that one to fulfill this check request:

C	Type	Number	Date	Debit	Payee	Client	Case
	Utilities	49064	06/13/2017	\$45.00	Drinkwater Propane		

When this happens, and the check request has finally been submitted for the case in question, entering a conflicting check number will return 2 grids of data. The first shows details related to the conflict - the details associated with the check number that the treasurer is attempting to use a second time.

The second grid is the result of a query of the system for outstanding transactions of an identical type that have not been associated with an existing check request. In other words, if a check was cut for funeral expenses at the beginning of a month, and in mid month the caseworker submitted the case with the check request, the treasurer will see any transactions of the type 'funeral/burial expense' that has not been associated with a request. If the treasurer kept good notes related to the check, they can connect the check to the check request at this time.



Note: the matching criteria will only display checks of the exact amount - if a check was written for \$52.11 and the request is NOT for \$52.11 then the option of matching it to the outstanding check will never appear.

Recording a Refund

When reviewing cleared transactions in the check register, a [Refund] button is presented along the top allowing treasurers to map an adjustment to the transaction in question and have it display as a line item in the check register. There are times a conference receives a refund check from a vendor related to a payment made for assistance on behalf of a client. As these transactions are actual, they are recorded as items in the check register itself. However - to record them the treasurer should navigate to the transaction against which the refund is to be applied - and press the [Refund] button. This will only work against cleared transactions - and will make an appropriate credit to the conference accounts.

Record Refund		Cancel	Submit
Refund Amount *	<input type="text"/>	Date *	<input type="text"/>
Type	Utilities		
Payee	Louisiana Gas and Electric		
Transaction Date	02/18/2017	Check Number	47052
Credit	<input type="text"/>	Debit	\$100.00

There are some limitations to refunds relative to originating transactions but these common sense constraints should never occur (for example, the treasurer cannot void a transaction that's had a refund applied to it). If refunds are issued, treasurers are encouraged to communicate with caseworker associated with the transaction that this has transpired. In reviewing the casework, the amount of the refund is automatically deducted from the amount of the assistance in the assistance request (even if the case has been closed).

Using Debit-Card Transactions

Sometimes debit-card transactions are used in lieu of checks for assistance. However, due to the way banks process debit transactions, often not supplying transaction ids until much later, these can represent a difficult tracking burden on treasurers. In an effort to help provide some relief for this scenario, CMS allows the use of the specific phrase "Debit Transaction" inside the check number field - which will skip the unique constraint applied to check numbers.

If the transaction clears before the end of the month, it is strongly recommended that this provisional check number description be replaced with the actual electronic transaction ID. However, it may be that the transaction is not cleared by the bank at month end at which point this electronic transaction record will go through as a carried forward debit just like a check. This, just like a check, will also lock the transaction for editing.

This should be a very rare event, but we will provide a facility for correcting the transaction ID for these closed month non-cleared transactions in a later release.

Initializing the Check Register

The first time you login to the system as a conference treasurer a button will be available to you to allow you to set a beginning bank balance for the conference accounts. This number should match the number on the bank statement. It may be configured for you during training or during configuration, but if not then pressing this button allows the treasurer to set the baseline balance themselves.

The initial treasurer visit to the check register for a conference requires initialization and the recording of a beginning balance. The system recognizes it has not been initialized - and so the first time a treasurer visits the check register they will be given the option to set the beginning bank balance. If there are no outstanding transactions for the month where CMS is to be instantiated then the treasurer can set the bank statement balance as the monthly financial report balance without issue. However, if this is not the case then any outstanding transactions should be added to the first month as if they occurred in that month.

Treasurer Only Search Functions

There are several powerful search tools in the CMS system to be found by pressing [Search] at the top of the screen. Some of these are restricted based on role - and one is specific to the treasurer role. The 'Search for Check Requests' is a search in the system that can be used by treasurers to track down transactions associated with assistance requests.



Note: a detailed explanation of the search options is available under the heading Understanding Search within the Non-Workflow Functionality section near the start of this guide.
