



## Local Government Debt Collection Business Rules

- **Account Certifications**
  - Made by automated FTP (File Transfer Protocol) or Manual Excel template by the client.
  - The client will need to have internet access to certify accounts to the AGO (Attorney General's Office) and to access the ClientView and Compass software to monitor their payments and accounts.
  - All debt must be final with a minimum principal amount of \$100.00.
  - The AGO reserves the right to decline accounts based on volume, monetary amount or debt type.
- **Examples of Categories of Debt to be certified:**
  - Statutory fees as assessed by a Political Subdivision;
  - Civil court costs; and
  - Criminal court costs so long as the defendant is not incarcerated on the date the debt is certified.
  - Debt must be declared final with no chance of appeal or no future changes to the amount of the debt sent to the Attorney General for collection purposes.
  - Debt from a school system must be as a result of a contractual agreement.
- **Examples of Categories of Debt NOT to be certified:**
  - Debt that is against a juvenile.
  - Debt against a presently incarcerated individual.
  - Debt that is involved in a bankruptcy, rental or foreclosure action.
  - Debt from any type of utility.
  - Debt resulting from code enforcement violations.

- **Life of a Debt**

- Debt will be worked by the AGO in-house local debt collectors up to 150 days or longer if a payment plan has been setup with the debtor and debtor remains in compliance. The AGO will confirm debtor contact information, send out a series of automated collection letters and make a series of collection calls to the debtor. Pursuant to O.R.C. §131.02, the AGO will assess a 10% fee to each account (AG collection fee) and the cost will be passed to the debtor. The 10% AGO fee will be taken from each payment made on an account by the debtor.
- Upon mutual agreement, accounts can be assigned to an external vendor (Third Party Vendor) for additional collection efforts lasting up to 180 days subsequent to the AGO collection efforts. The 180 days may be extended if debtor is on a payment plan and in compliance. In addition to the AGO collection fee, an additional fee would be added to the account for this service and the cost will be passed to the debtor.
- Upon mutual agreement, external private attorneys (Special Counsel) can be assigned the debt for up to two years. In addition to the AGO collection fee, an additional fee would be added to the account for this service and the cost passed to the debtor.
- On any accounts where the debtor's driver's license is being held by a court or there is an active warrant, the AGO will only accept sure funds (money order, certified check etc.) for payment of the debt. The AGO will then notify the client of the payment in full by the debtor.
- If social security numbers of the debtor are provided, the debt may also be subject to a possible state income tax refund capture and/or lottery offset for up to the full amount owed, including interest, subject to O.R.C. §§ 5747.12 and 3770.073. If the debtor owes money to the Ohio Department of Taxation or any state entity, any Ohio tax refund capture or Ohio lottery capture will be paid to those debts first.
- The client may choose on their Memorandum of Understanding to only use the AGO to attempt to intercept their debtors' state income tax refund but not engage in active collection of their accounts. In this case, it will be necessary for the AGO to send out one letter to the debtor upon the certification of the account explaining that we are attempting to take any state income tax refund due them. If the debtor contacts the AGO to make payment in full, the AGO will take the payment and notify the client.
- Local debt will not be combined with any state debt owed for collection purposes.
- The AGO collection process is driven by the AGO account number assigned to that debt. AGO collection letters and collection phone calls are made relative to that specific account number. If a debtor owes debt to multiple local jurisdictions, payment will be accepted according to the account number he/she is responding to as the result an AGO letter or an AGO phone call.
- Clients may request, and the Attorney General may consider, on a case by case basis, alternative collection strategies (i.e. timeframes) on how the client's debt portfolio is collected.
- The AGO will not file liens or judgments or release any previously filed liens or judgments on any debt certified for collections.

- **Archive or Write off of Debts**
  - Client may choose to write off debt by their indication on their Service Level Agreement.
  - Accounts can also be closed and returned to client upon request.
  
- **Payment Processing and Accounting Issues:**
  - Collections payments to the client will be remitted weekly, via ACH.
  - Clients can view the payment reports that correlate with their weekly ACH payment on the AGO's Compass website.
  - Collections paid with certified funds (i.e. cashier's check, money order) will be paid to the client the following week. Collections paid with a personal check are held eight business days and paid the week following the release of the eight day hold.
  
- **Direct Payments:**
  - Please make sure that you are referring any debtor wanting to make a payment on an account for which we are collecting to us. The debtors can be instructed to call us at 888-871-8838 or pay by internet at [www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/business/pay](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/business/pay). Their payment can also be mailed to: Ohio Attorney General P.O. Box 89471, Cleveland, Ohio 44101-6471. They will need to include their Attorney General Account number to ensure that the payment is being posted to their account.
  - If on the rare occasion you inadvertently accept a payment on an account we are collecting on, please send the payment the check or money order received from the debtor directly to our accounting section with the account number on it to:

Ohio Attorney General Collections Enforcement  
Accounting Section  
150 East Gay St., 20th Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

- Referring any debtor to us to make a payment helps us keep our records clean and auditable. It will also prevent us from intercepting someone's state income tax refund erroneously, such as when a payment taken by your office has not been noted on our system. If your staff does take a payment from a debtor, kindly let us know immediately and forward the payment to us for processing. If we intercept their state tax refund and issue payment to you causing an overpayment on the account, we will contact you and request that you refund the amount back to the debtor.

- **Reversals**

- Occasionally, there may be payments made to you by our office that need to be reversed. This happens because, after the payment was issued to you, it came to our attention that the debtor's check had non-sufficient funds, there was a posting error or an alleged fraudulent payment. We do hold personal checks for eight days before posting them to an account to allow for this but, occasionally, we are not informed by the bank until after the eight days have passed and you have been sent the payment.
- When a payment made to you needs to be reversed, our system subtracts the amount of the payment to be reversed from the next payment to be made to you. Because our system is automated there is no way to let you know that one of the payments made to you needs to be reversed.
- However, you are able to identify the accounts that have a reversal by viewing your Client View payment report. For example, a payment for an internet personal check will be indicated with the code IPC. A payment for an internet personal check that was reversed will be indicated with the code EIPC. (See Report Section below)

- **Reporting**

- Compass software provides access to electronic reports, documents and scanned images relative to your accounts both in PDF or TXT format.
- Full debt inventory is available at the request of a unit supervisor or manager.
- Monthly archive reports and bi-annual write-off reports are provided upon request.
- All clients will have access to ClientView software to view their account data and notes placed by the collectors.

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