

Student Life Procurement

This resource from University of Colorado Denver's Student Life and Campus Community office is an overview of department procurement. It does not include all campus or Procurement Services Center (PSC) policies which impact university purchasing, though it does share a comprehensive summary of the "Accounts Payable" services we can provide. Student Life generally asks for **1-2 weeks' notice** (5-10 business days) to fulfill requests once funds are known, though purchases can occur in a shorter timeframe & some require advanced planning. It is our intention to process procurement as requested with the means available to CU Denver and our staff.

A primary rule – It never hurts to ask; it always helps to plan early, communicate, and be flexible.

Readers may include student leaders organizing events with our office resources or campus partners learning how Student Life supports programming operations.

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Available Payment Methods

Purchase Orders & Checks (Marketplace POs)

CU's Marketplace eProcurement system is its preferred platform for all university purchasing and payment-processing (required over \$5,000). Marketplace allows businesses or individuals registered as suppliers to receive electronic *purchase orders*, which guarantee CU payment for goods or services under specific terms. Suppliers' payable invoices are submitted against POs' encumbered funds once goods/services are received or down payments are due. Checks are then mailed to

suppliers' remittance addresses via USPS when the CU Accounts Payable team moves Marketplace POs' invoices/vouchers from "Payable" to "Paid" status. Student Life cannot offer other payment options through CU Accounts Payable, though Marketplace suppliers can enroll in PSC's program for ACH electronic PO transactions.

Staff Procurement/Travel Cards (P-cards)

Some Student Life staff members may use CU credit cards as department *Travel* and/or *Procurement card* holders. Travel and P-cards are highly regulated by university systems/policies/administrators, so assumptions about the use of personal credit cards shouldn't apply. Cardholders are held personally & professionally liable for the transactions they organize, and this responsibility is shared with those who request a cardholder's expenses as a procurement delegate. Cards cannot be shared with others, and owners will authorize all transactions in their name. No single transaction may occur over \$5,000. All P-card transactions are submitted to Approving Officers within 30 days (60-day hard deadline) before they will post to university budgets – Stakeholders shall help cardholders with CU's expense-reporting process, and cohorts/organizations may be suspended or lose financial privileges with repeated issues. *Since cardholders are entitled to gas mileage reimbursements for off-campus errands which seldom are budgeted, in-person staff payments are not practiced.*

Intercampus Billing (speedtypes)

CU uses a *speedtype* accounting system where 8-digit account numbers are assigned to individual campus/system budgets. Student Life staff may provide details for the speedtypes we manage to campus partners with access to CU's finance systems (ie. academic departments, student-services offices, AHEC). This billing allows expenses to be directly posted to Student Life accounts without purchase reconciliation. Examples include room reservations, employee compensation, interdepartmental invoices, Journal Entries, or POs/P-cards of other purchasers. Student Life provides all authorizations for our speedtype billing (written consent, if not wet/digital signature), so account information shall not be used without pre-approval (ie. EMS).

Reimbursement Request (last resort!)

CU has a reimbursement process for individual student/staff payors to request refunds of personal expenses that were otherwise allowable under PSC or campus policies. As with CU cardholders, individual payors are financially liable for their purchases until reimbursements are fully approved through administrators and expenses post to Student Life accounts as university business. The reimbursement

process is dependent on employment status – all CU employees receive approved refunds by paycheck addition, while non-employees receive mailed checks. *Student Life cannot guarantee approval on reimbursement reports we prepare. We instead avoid reimbursements as a practice and ask for advanced notice to fulfill staff purchases (assuming payor burdens). Requests may be denied by approvers within or above Student Life for prohibited expenses or missing requirements listed below.*

Purchasing Requirements

Student Life purchasers must confirm the following details in all (or most) procurement requests before payments & orders can be organized and/or transactions will be fully approved into university speedtype accounts:

- **UCD Student Audience** – Student Life programs are funded by CU Denver student fees, and the auxiliary money we oversee (ie. club fundraiser revenue) is similarly usable only for university-specific business. CU Denver students shall be the primary audience for all department purchases.
- **Campus Funds** – Procurement can't occur when money isn't authorized within CU accounts (*MyLynx Finance*) to cover intended expenses. Purchase requests may be denied or remanded for a lack of funds. Students can be found liable for speedtypes pulled into deficit.
- **Mandatory Approvals** – Some requests require authorization from stakeholders in the procurement workflow. Examples include Student Organizations, Student Government Association (SGA), PSC, AHEC, Information Technology, campus Controller, or Risk Management.
- **Tax Exemption** – CU is a state non-profit organization exempt from all state/federal taxes with our business in or to Colorado. Taxes must be removed from most Student Life purchases, and students/staff must obtain business refunds or personally reimburse CU when taxes occur. Few exceptions for tax policies include purchases for direct resale (fundraiser), out-of-state travel expenses, or approved reimbursements' personal receipts.
- **Expense Itemization** – Purchases shall have documentation showing all descriptions, costs, quantities, and fees for their matching expense transactions. Purchasers cannot fulfill requests with generic budget totals, and payment slips without itemization don't suffice for expense reporting.

- **Proof of Payment** – Expenses shall have receipts with payment method matching the document to our Student Life transaction and a \$0 (or other) balance due. Quotes/estimates or “unpaid” invoices don’t demonstrate proof of payment for expense reporting.
- **“Student Functions”** – PSC’s expense code for *Student Functions* provides a university business purpose for most student-involvement purchases that don’t otherwise have an operating function. In addition to itemized receipts, Student Function expenses must be joined by two items after an event occurs:
 - Event attendance/check-in or overall headcount
 - Flyer or marketing materials/announcement

Student leaders are required to register cohorts/clubs’ campus events & track attendance in Student Life’s MyLynx platform, and purchaser follow-up will occur if records are not provided online.

Payments to Businesses

Student Life can generally organize procurement with any company that accepts our payment options and can provide Employer Identification Number (EIN) via W-9 form or business license for the state of Colorado. Business purchases can occur by both staff P-card and purchase order. PSC encourages university-wide support of local, small, minority- and women-owned businesses. Some goods must be procured from specific suppliers due to contracted price agreements, such as Staples for offices supplies or B&H Video for A/V equipment. Student Life staff can provide referrals (see *Common Purchases* below) based on existing tax-exempt accounts or past success.

Payments to Individuals

Student Life may pay an individual to provide goods or services to CU by hiring them as an *independent contractor*. Independent contractors are only payable through purchase orders & checks in the Marketplace system; P-cards can’t be used, so payments to individuals by Venmo/PayPal/Square are broadly prohibited. Independent contractors receive payment(s) as tax-deductible income under their Social Security number (not as licensed business revenue). Since contractors are hired for one-time or short-term work, they must complete a *Scope of Work* form with Human Resources (confirming employment eligibility) before a Marketplace supplier registration can be sent by PSC.

Student Life may also offer *honoraria* (token “thank-you” payments) to individuals for voluntary goods or services which don’t have a preset cost. Examples include visiting faculty lecturer, guest professional panelist, or student music performance. Accepted & approved non-employee honoraria are processed in Marketplace (requiring recipient’s registration but no invoice for mailed check), and student/system employee honoraria are added to university payroll. *\$100.00 is a standard request for an honorarium offer through Student Life, as higher amounts require upper-administration approval. Student Life does not offer honoraria to CU Denver staff or faculty because engagement with or instruction of student programs is an expectation of job duties.*

Common Purchases

Catering

Campus meals are frequently requested to draw students to programming events and recognize their personal needs. Student Life can fulfill procurement with restaurants/caterers who accept tax-exempt deliveries to Auraria locations or pickups at metro locations convenient for students. Requestors often coordinate with professional event planners or managers to prepare quotes/invoices for CU payment. Some businesses require more notice than Student Life. It should be communicated that the final order may change with approved funds and payment/contract completion is expected by CU.

- We suggest students consider Auraria food vendors for catering since owners have made a commitment to campus & rely on community traffic for success.
 - *Einstein’s Bagels*
 - *iPie*
 - *Los Molinos*
 - *s’ONO/Slurps/SnackShack*
 - *Subway*
 - *Qdoba*
 - *ZGO’s Café*
- AHEC requires that events in their tri-institutional spaces (ie. Tivoli Turnhalle) utilize one of eight approved caterers. These businesses have made a similar commitment to Auraria with diverse, sustainable options & student event-focused menus.
 - *Biscuits and Berries*
 - *E Hijole Tacos*
 - *Koko Street Food*
 - *Los Molinos*
 - *Pirate Chef*
 - *Serendipity Catering*
 - *Taste the Love Catering*
 - *Xatrucho Concepts*

Events using unapproved caterers face a penalty fee on top of AHEC's reservation costs, though exceptions can be made for recognized club events with under 50 attendees. No restrictions are in place for catering in CU Denver event spaces (ie. Student Commons).

- Student Life uses ezCater as a preferred online platform for catering orders. This system has enrolled hundreds of Denver metro restaurants that might offer Auraria deliveries or store pickups for staff/students. ezCater allows CU tax exemption, quick confirmations, and online receipts; it also often carries a restaurant-assigned order minimum. *Student Life similarly hopes to bring GrubHub options & procurement systems to CU Denver by the spring 2024 semester.*

Custom Branding

Cohorts and organizations may request custom-branded items with Student Life funds to support their promotion, recruitment, & retention efforts with current or potential members. Items might include tabling giveaways, apparel, tablecloths, banners, or other professional productions.

- Student Life often orders from the four suppliers below based on requests from students and their alignment with procurement systems. Each has an online design platform for user experimentation and sharing quotes by cart screenshot, download, or email to staff/student addresses.
 - 4Imprint
 - Geiger/Logostuff
 - CustomInk
 - StickerMule
- Base products and design images should reflect the group/event's mission and be effective in reaching its marketing audience. Order requests should also be appropriate for a known/projected audience and have reasonable costs for comparable options (ie. 30 shirts for 20-member club; basic vs. top brand).
- Student Life often receives artwork proofs by email which require purchasers' approval or edits before custom orders will move into production.
- Custom-print orders through Student Life which contain club or CU Denver marks must be approved by the Communications department's Branding team (via internal email or suppliers' standard procedures above). Branding specialists will confirm a design follows student-organization and campus policies before providing the university's licensing approval.

- Orders for custom branding are most likely to encounter delays outside CU Denver. Shipments are generally received within 2 weeks of order placement, but issues may occur with supply line, trademark licensing, or production & shipment.

Participation Incentives

Non-food item purchases that incentivize or reward participation in Student Life programs fall under two groups of expense language, depending on details like value, quantity, and recipients:

- *Swag (stuff-we-all-get)* or *giveaway* purchases are broadly distributed to all event or program participants as supplies last. They might include branded items or products that will draw students' attention. Giveaways are generally requested in bulk due to their small size and/or cheap costs.
- *Doorprizes* and *recognition awards* are items that are given to specific recipients among an audience group. Doorprizes are programming incentives where all attendees are included in an eligible pool by participating and winners are selected with a predetermined method (ie. headphones in tabling drawing). Recognition awards instead honor individuals for achieving certain merits or having notable participation (ie. plaque, regalia). Both requests require admin-approved Recognition Programs before purchases can occur if one recipient's doorprize/award is over \$100 in value or any incentive carries cash value (gift cards, see *Notable Exceptions*).

Language of *lotteries* or *raffles* shall be avoided in all instances. These terms imply students are fundraising with Colorado state *gambling licenses*, which is prohibited under campus policy.

Supplies

Student Life receives numerous requests for various program supplies that support snacks & drinks, activities, incentives, decorations, and operations. Most orders are fulfilled by shipment or delivery to Student Life's Tivoli Union 301/303 office suites (via AHEC Mail Services' daily campus routes); requestors are then notified of arrival and pickup availability. A requestor or their delegate's metro pickup may be possible with payment online or by phone. Unique supply requests may need the most flexibility in budget or fulfillment for:

- Contracted price agreements with preferred suppliers
- Suppliers' tax exemption procedures (or lack of)
- Cancelled or substituted items in pickups and deliveries

- Remote payments not being accepted (or funds/time for staff mileage)

Student Life has purchasing accounts with **Staples** (contracted - office supplies), **Amazon Business Prime**, **Target**, **Walmart**, and **Sam's Club**. These businesses are often requested for their name-recognition, selection, savings, and fulfillment options (shipping, delivery, and/or pickup). The list is not exhaustive for our current or possible tax-exempt accounts.

We note here that Costco orders are not feasible through Student Life staff despite frequent inclusion in student requests. As with Amazon and Sam's Club, Costco shopping requires paid membership. Student Government and Student Life researched Costco business options but chose not to proceed when 1) taxes automatically occur on all exempt transactions and 2) its request process for CU's mandatory tax refunds creates a liability & larger workload for staff purchasers. The Sam's Club membership was purchased in September 2023 with SGA's recommendation as a similar alternative that better meets university needs.

Notable Policies / Exceptions

Contracts

No student or Student Life staff member may confirm goods or services by signing contracts or agreeing to other legal, non-business terms (ie. *indemnity, liability*). Documents shall instead be shared with Student Life staff for submissions to CU's Procurement Services Center. PSC purchasing agents will review contract/legal terms for execution & approval as university signatories or next procurement steps. Students and staff members can be liable for contracts they execute as individual parties.

Gratuity

PSC policies place a 20.0% limit on all university tips (calculated from itemized balance due) where funding is available and gratuity is appropriate in business expenses. With SGA's recommendation, Student Life aims to add a 15% standard tip to service & catering purchases where budget allows.

- *We suggest students include similar amounts in cohort-, club-, or SGA-funded requests or specify if certain amounts (including none) are intended.*
- Suppliers might include gratuity automatically in service invoices or campus delivery orders as part of their business practices.

- Staff and students can be liable to reimburse CU for expense gratuities over the 20% policy cap. Examples include miscalculations, delivery/pickup delegate adding tip to cardholder's preauthorized amount, or tip beyond automatic gratuity.

Sensitive Expenses

PSC policy identifies several expense categories which are prohibited in most instances and only allowable with certain conditions or pre-approvals. Some requests cannot be fulfilled by Student Life with the payment options above or the time provided. Examples of Sensitive Expenses include alcohol, outgoing donations, flowers & greeting cards, gifts, and parking.

Gift cards, certificates, and vouchers

"Cash-like" purchases with monetary value are highly regulated as both Sensitive Expenses and Recognition Program awards. Gift cards were not allowed for Student Life before COVID-19 changes recognizing student needs and remote engagement, though their approval takes more preparation than programmers generally expect (context and multi-layer admin form signatures). We suggest requestors brainstorm gift-card initiatives weeks or months early and consider tangible alternatives (see *Participation Incentives* above). Please contact Student Life staff or review our office's *Gift Card Program Guide* for more information.

Information Technology & Subscriptions

Student Life receives varying requests for online subscriptions, memberships, technology, software & other services. These university purchases fall under the purview of Office of Information Technology in addition to Procurement Services Center.

Service Agreements or Terms of Use/Sales are important requirements in their oversight. PSC shall review files for normal contracting process to confirm who can or will act as purchase's CU signatory. OIT's initial review will determine if storage and liabilities of purchase's student/university data use requires formal assessment.

Student organizations can successfully obtain such OIT purchases. However, leaders have struggled to maintain services with CU payments often relying on routine fundraiser deposits or one-year sponsorships allowed by SGA bylaws. Officers and staff/faculty advisor share club ownership & custody of its online resources procured by Student Life, and owners may be advised to add personal (or Sponsored chapter's off-campus) payment methods in billing systems after approved CU expense. Owners can be liable for renewal or incidental charges (by officer action or default inaction) on previous staff P-cards or intercampus bills when Student Life funds aren't approved.