

LacCore Invoicing System

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LacCore's invoicing system changed in 2009 from in-house recordkeeping and billing to participation in a centralized University of Minnesota structure. So that our customers can understand the process, and plan for the time required for the entire sequence of events, we explain each step below.

Terminology: "Customer" is the scientist or financial administrator from an institution or agency other than the U of MN; "LacCore" is the lab providing the goods or services; "Central AR" is U of MN Central Accounts Receivable, through which several stages of the process are handled.

Steps in U of MN invoicing system:

1. Customer contacts LacCore requesting goods or services.
2. LacCore requests customer setup information from customer.
3. Customer returns setup information to LacCore.
4. LacCore submits setup information to Central AR.
5. Central AR sets up the customer by assigning customer numbers and registering the customer's institutional information in the U of MN financial system. This process can take 3-4 weeks at peak times.
6. Central AR sends new customer setup information numbers to LacCore.
7. LacCore generates an invoice request with customer numbers keyed to the goods and services requested by/provided to the customer. At times invoice request generation must wait for project completion, receipt of a purchase order, or quote approval.
8. LacCore submits the invoice request to Central AR.
9. Central AR generates an invoice and mails a paper copy to the financial administrator associated with the customer. This process can take 3-4 weeks, plus time in the post, at peak times.
10. Customer pays the invoice according to instructions provided on the invoice. Payment can be made by check, credit card, or wire transfer.

Notes:

- Once a customer is set up in the system, the process skips steps 1-6 above and an invoice can be generated as soon as LacCore's work is completed.
- Central AR considers each *department* to be a customer. Therefore if one scientist in a department (e.g., Macalester College Geology) is set up, other scientists from that department are also set up. However, a scientist from another department at the same institution (e.g., Macalester College Environmental Studies) requires a separate setup.
- If you are in a hurry (e.g., because of grant funds expiring), please inform LacCore staff of your deadlines at the time you request goods or services. We will do our best to accommodate your needs, but the parts of the process handled by Central AR are outside our control and are not subject to rush requests.

- LacCore can generate a quote (estimate) for goods or services at any time. In many cases a quote will be sufficient for your financial administrator to "encumber" the funds and prevent that portion from expiring (at least for another ~30 days) on a deadline.
- A purchase order (PO) is essentially a promise by the customer to pay for the goods or services specified in the PO. Many financial administrators prefer to generate a PO, in response to a quote, well in advance of receiving an invoice. (The quote and PO processes would probably begin at the time of step 4 above.) This is especially true for purchases of several hundred dollars or more. Use of an institutional credit card or purchasing card can make the PO process unnecessary, but credit limits for individual purchases may be less than the invoice amount. Please check with your financial administrator for preferences, institutional rules, and recent changes early in the process.
- Some institutions require that the PO number, institutional financial ID number, or project number appear on the invoice. Although we make every attempt to keep track of these requirements for each customer, *please remind us each time you request a service or an invoice*. The process of generating a revised invoice (even just to add one of these numbers) through Central AR is arduous, and causes additional delays. It is also tallied as an error in LacCore's record with Central AR.
- LacCore invoices not only for goods and services provided by the facility itself, but also for coring equipment and drive rods sold by Herb Wright and Dan Engstrom. These charges can be combined in one invoice; the funds are split after payment into the separate U of MN accounts.
- Customers from the U of MN (all campuses), i.e., those paying by U of MN EFS strings, are invoiced by an entirely different system.

For more information or clarification of any related financial matters, please contact Amy Myrbo (amyrb@umn.edu) or Ryan O'Grady (ogra0014@umn.edu), both at 612-626-7889.