Adjutant Software Customer Support
Tech Notes

Document Title: Account balancing
Document Number: 014
Applies to: Campaign ToolBox

SUMMARY

At the end of a campaign, you may find that the amount taken in may not balance the amount spent. This document suggests some possible causes. There is no single answer or solution to correcting unbalanced accounts. Tech support does not include help with balancing an account (please see notes at end of this document).

PROCEDURE

Tools to help in balancing

1. Some of the internal staff reports are especially useful for tracking down problems. Note that these are unfiltered reports and are not processed the same way that the statutory reports are processed. Under normal circumstances, it is not at all unusual for an internal report to not show the same amount as a statutory report. You would need to factor in the rules affecting how statutory reports are processed to reconcile any differences. What ultimately counts is the statutory report.
2. When on the Contribution or Expense form, you can click on the menu item "Spreadsheet View" to get a sorted list of all transactions. You can change the sort order by using your left mouse button to drag and drop the column header to the far left. Columns are sorted from left to right. The spreadsheet view can be printed by clicking the "Print Report" button on the spreadsheet form. This is just a simple list and does not contain any totals.
3. If you prefer to use Microsoft Excel or another spreadsheet program, you can create an export file in tab-separated format that can be opened directly by that program. Click on the menu item "File > Export data". Be sure to click on the Help menu item to learn how to create an export file with the data you are looking for. Be sure to include the "Amend" field in your columns.
4. Create a statutory report using the entire date range of your campaign. Even though there is no official report with this date, Campaign ToolBox can still create it for your own use. This is the most accurate method since it includes all of the filtering for amended and special elections. Remember that internal staff reports, spreadsheets, etc., contain the raw data - not necessarily what gets reported.

Places to begin looking

1. Look for any transactions with the same dollar amount by which the account is out of balance.
2. Make sure that no transactions are outside the expected date range. Since records are displayed in date order, clicking the navigation arrows to take you to the first and the last record will verify this.
3. Make sure that no currency transactions were mistakenly entered as in-kind. Also look for loans or other transactions other than cash or check.
4. Transactions that are marked as being amended or special election should be closely examined. Amended reports are especially easy to make mistakes on if you are not careful.
5. Look for any transactions entered as a negative amount.
6. Make sure that you have the correct "Campaign Start Date" set. This is found in Initial Program Setup and also under the menu item Tools > Options. The program ignores all transactions prior to this date when calculating amounts.
7. Review records to make sure that nothing was entered in the date span for a report that has already been submitted (unless it was done as an amended report).

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Things to look for with amended records (for states using sequence numbers)

1. When a record is amended, it must have the same sequence number as the original record. There are certain circumstances which could cause a sequence number on an amended report to be different from the original sequence number. For example, deleting a record (as opposed to *marking* it as amend delete), and then adding it back in again could cause this if there is more than one record on that date. This is why you cannot create an amended report without going through the step of reviewing the sequence numbers and then changing them if needed. When an amended report is submitted, the system only looks at the sequence number and not the name.
2. The date on an amended record must be the date of the actual transaction and not the date the amended record was created.

Ways to avoid account balance problems

1. Only one person should use the program, write the checks, and make the deposits. This is the single most important way to avoid problems. If a candidate is writing checks, and a treasurer is writing checks and making deposits and using the program, the chances for problems increase dramatically.
2. Use the bank reconciliation feature of the program with each bank statement. This way, any problems are found at a time when they are more easily tracked down and corrected. Going through one month's worth of transactions is a lot easier than going through an entire campaign's worth of transactions.
3. If you maintain 2 sets of books (a manual check book or other accounting system and Campaign ToolBox), make sure that they are always compared when each bank statement is received; otherwise this only leads to confusion and a false sense of security.
4. Enter transactions on a regular basis rather than waiting until they begin to pile up. There are also specific legal requirements to maintain a current account.

NOTES

Tech support specifically **DOES NOT** include help in balancing an account.

Campaign ToolBox is a campaign finance reporting program. Although it includes some limited accounting functions, it is not an accounting program. It is not designed to be an accounting program and does not necessarily follow standard accounting practices.

Program results are entirely dependent upon the data entered. If data is entered incorrectly or incompletely, there is a high probability that the account will not balance until the situation is identified and corrected.