

Updated AAUW Membership Payment Program Briefing

Voluntary Dues Processing and Collections Options for 2011

AAUW Current Topics Briefing #26

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The AAUW Board of Directors has now accepted the Membership Payment Program (MPP) as a standard payment option for AAUW, reflecting the success of the pilot program. Please note the briefing includes some additions and modifications to the original program.

If your state/branch participated in the Membership Pilot Program, it is automatically included in the Membership Payment Program. It is important that all states participate in the MPP so that their branches are provided the option to make a decision about whether to participate.

MPP Frequently Asked Questions

The MPP is a voluntary pilot program that assists members and branches with dues payment, collection, and processing. This program has been developed in response to members' expressed desire for more online financial management options, and it provides a mechanism to resolve discrepancies between branch, state, and national membership records.

Participation in the MPP is entirely voluntary

Branches may continue to collect and pay dues in the traditional way,* or they may participate in the MPP;** either way, transactions may be conducted by mail or electronically.

Concept

The MPP is a **VOLUNTARY** program that offers electronic options to simplify and provide convenience, efficiency, and cost savings to our dues payment and processing. These options offer an easier way to (a) manage branch, state, and national dues payment, collection, and processing and to (b) track current membership status throughout the year.

Why is the MPP offered?

The MPP has been developed in response to numerous requests from branch leaders who wanted computer-based options to help branches and individual members monitor member status and manage the membership dues collection and distribution process. A particular convenience of the MPP is the invoicing capability it provides to branches. Most nonprofit organizations already manage membership online, and we are working to optimize the technology for branches/states that want to use these tools.

What makes the MPP different?

This optional program offers branches and states the benefit of tracking the status of branch members online 24/7. It provides transparent, real-time, up-to-date membership dues payment, invoicing, collection, and tracking information specifically tailored to AAUW branch/state year-round needs; i.e., payments, member count summary, payments remitted to branch/state, current branch rosters, individual invoicing capability, and electronic payment confirmations.

While members may continue to pay all dues to their branch finance officer, **if individual members of participating branches pay all their dues (branch, state, and national) ONLINE, then, immediately, they** (and their designated branch finance officers) **will receive electronic payment confirmation and will be able to see their dues payment and current membership status in their individual member profiles.**

Why does MPP participation depend on paying all branch, state, and national dues at once?

The benefit of the MPP is that it is a simplified and accurate real-time tool that helps branches manage membership and dues payments. In order to create an MPP screen that accurately reflects the payment status of each participating branch member 24/7, it is necessary to process those payments through the AAUW national accounting system. Without such processing, there could be no verification of dues payments.

Who can use the MPP?

All states are strongly encouraged to participate in the program so that branches in their states will have the option to participate. If a state does NOT opt-in, then all branches in that state will be ineligible to participate. (Branches and states continue to be linked for membership purposes.) Thirty-two states participated in the pilot program, and it is hoped that all states will make it possible for their branches to choose to participate in this convenient membership management opportunity.

Branches may **CHOOSE** to participate in the MPP once their states have opted in to the MPP. Branches that wish to continue paying dues as they have in the past may do so.

What are the new options?

The following is a description of MPP dues payment options and the process that is triggered by the payment/s.

Option #1

Participating branches collect national, state, and branch dues. Then, the designated officers goes to the AAUW website Member Services Database (MSD) to submit dues payments to the national office in one of three ways:

- (a) Group payment by branch business credit card, which is secure and transmits immediately;
- (b) Group payment by a single branch business check for current dues payments; or
- (c) Member individual payment collection of member's dues payment checks to be sent altogether in one envelope. (While it is preferable for all payments to be sent at once, the branch may forward these payments in several batches.)

Option #2

Individuals who are members of a participating branch may go to the MSD and pay their own national, state, and branch dues online with a personal credit card. (Alternatively, members of MPP branches may pay all three dues to their branch, just as they have in the past, and the branch officers will manage their dues payments to the national office.)

What happens when an option is selected

- a. Once the payment is received by the national office – whether by credit card or by check/s, a confirmation e-mail will be sent to the branch and state president and finance officers. Branch credit card payments will be acknowledged immediately upon submission. Likewise, individual members who pay online with a personal credit card will also receive an immediate confirmation e-mail.
- b. Whether the payment is by check or by credit card, every participating branch member's FY 2011 payment status will be visible to the designated branch and state officers on the MPP branch screen in the Member Center of the AAUW website. This will provide online membership and payment status transparency 24/7. Electronic transactions will be viewable immediately, and check payments will be viewable as soon as the payment is received and processed through the MPP system.
- c. All MPP participants (members) have 24/7 online access via the MSD to their own personal membership and payment status. (Only the designated branch officers (president and finance officer) can view branch members' information collectively.)

d. Member dues payments will be remitted to the branches and states in no less than 30 days from receipt of their payment. Payment remittances will be executed (at AAUW's expense) via monthly ACH transfers; online tracking will be available to the designated finance officer through the MPP branch screen. (Automated Clearing House is a nationwide electronic funds transfer (EFT) system that facilitates the interbank clearing of credit and debit transactions and information exchanges among participating financial institutions. Your bank uses the secure ACH and EFT systems all the time.) During the pilot phase of this program, no remittances took more than 30 days, most were made more quickly, and all were transacted accurately.

How does it work?

a. All participating branches access the MPP through the MSD. The MPP displays the current participating branch members' names and their membership status, as well as dues payment status, membership category, member's contact information, and individual membership renewal invoice.

b. MPP branch designees can choose to print out individual dues invoices to facilitate dues collection. These invoices show the specific member's reported member status and the actual amounts owed for branch, state, and national dues. These may be e-mailed or hard copy mailed to members and have proven to be one of the most popular features of the MPP.

c. Participating branches will provide the national office with dues payments for all three levels – national, state, and branch. (Payments can be made electronically or through traditional payment methods; see Options #1 and #2.)

d. Immediately upon receipt and processing, the MPP online membership status screen will display the full, current payment status of each member in the participating branch. The national office will process all payments and remit the proper dues amounts to branches and states one time a month. Thus, depending on when dues are received, remittances are sent to branch and state bank accounts within 30 days, often more quickly. There were no complaints or difficulties with funds transactions during the pilot phase.

e. Because the amounts of each remittance will be displayed on the branch MPP screen, participating branch and state presidents and finance officers will also know exactly how much money the branch and state can expect to receive, for which members, when they will receive it, when it was sent, how it was transmitted, and who still owes dues.

f. Individual members of participating branches who choose to pay online will be required to pay all dues appropriate to their membership status. Their branch/state/national member payment status will be displayed online on their own individual member screens, and their dues will be remitted to their branch and state within a month of the electronic transaction.

Specific details and step-by-step instructions about how members, branches, and states may participate is distributed electronically and posted online.

Summary

Throughout our history, the vitality of AAUW has been a reflection of the strength of our branches and our members' commitment to the AAUW community at all levels – national, state, and branch. The relationships we develop in our branches and the impact that we have in our communities is the foundation for our effectiveness in achieving the AAUW mission nationwide. It is, therefore, imperative that we always strive to provide branches, members, and leaders the support and tools they need and want within a 21st-century organization to help them break through barriers for women and girls.

Answers to **Frequently Asked Questions** are posted online. In addition, please don't hesitate to direct questions to connect@aauw.org.

*Traditional method: Collect dues at the branch level, forward state dues to state AAUW and national dues to AAUW national office.

**MPP method: Collect dues at the branch; forward all dues to the AAUW national office, branch and state dues will be remitted to the branch and state.

This updated briefing is #26 in our **AAUW Current Topics Briefing Series** issued by Linda Hallman, CAE, Executive Director.