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From: Audit Administration
To: All IPA Firms
Subject: Updated IPA Portal
Date: October 22, 2015

In our continuing effort to provide additional functionality through the Auditor of State's (AOS) Independent Public Accountant (IPA) Portal, we have updated the functionality to include **Firm Personnel Access/Profiles and the Automated Electronic Invoicing System**. In addition, we have made some slight changes to the other applications within the IPA Portal.

IPA Firms registered with the AOS with Active or Suspended status will have access to the enhanced IPA Portal. Firms with Suspended status will have limited access to certain applications in the IPA Portal, including access to the automated electronic invoicing system.

IMPORTANT

When accessing the enhanced IPA Portal, the username for existing firm contacts will remain the same; however, all passwords have been reset to the default password: **temppassword**. A new password will be required to be created immediately upon logging in. The new password must be at least six (6) characters in length.

Firm Personnel Access/Profiles

With the increasing functionality of the IPA Portal, we have expanded access to additional IPA firm's personnel by establishing "Roles" which control access to performing certain functions within the IPA Portal.

The three roles established are: 1) Partner Role, 2) Processing Role and 3) View Only Role. Roles will be assigned to each IPA firm contact added to the IPA Portal as determined by the firm's partners. Partners should consider the necessity for personnel to create invoices, express interest in contracts and/or access information such as client contact information, client annual financial report filings, firm scores, etc. when determining which staff should be provided access and the role assigned.

Partner Role

We have eliminated the restriction of a firm's 'primary contact' as the only person able to perform functions on the IPA Portal. Multiple partners can be added for each IPA firm office and have the ability to perform all functions listed below:

- Access to all applications on the IPA Portal
- Must add firm offices
- May add firm contacts and update staff profiles
- Must upload modified documents, if applicable (GAGAS Peer Review Report, Equal Employment Policy, Policy on Auditor Independence, MBE/EDGE Certificate)
- May express interest in contracts; Must submit requests for expressing interest in contracts
- May prepare invoices; Must submit invoices for approval
- Must assign roles to staff
- Must assign additional offices to staff

Processing Role (managers and/or administrative staff)

- Access to all applications on the IPA Portal
- May express interest in contracts, pending Partner Role final approval and submission
- May prepare invoices, pending Partner Role final approval and submission
- May add firm contacts and updates staff profiles; however, roles for staff must be assigned by Partner Role.

View Only Role

- View only access to most applications on the IPA Portal (view firm scores, view client annual financial report filings, etc.)
- May update own profile

As we move toward a forms-driven approach for firms to create proposals, quotes and bids via the IPA Portal, firms will be able to utilize repetitive firm data, (personnel profiles, training/CPE, previous audit experience, etc.) in preparing their submission. **It is; therefore, advisable for firms to begin building personnel profiles, which will be utilized in the future.**

Since the AOS plans to provide continual updates to the functionality of the IPA Portal and will communicate directly to all registered IPA firm staff via the provided email addresses, it is important your firm's personnel contact information is updated as changes occur.

Automated Electronic Invoicing

For remaining June 30, 2015 period end project invoices and all invoices for projects with subsequent period ends, the Auditor of State will require the Automated Electronic Invoicing system via the IPA Portal be utilized to obtain Auditor of State approval prior to payment by the Public Office. Firm personnel designated in a Partner Role or Processing Role may prepare invoices; however, only those designated with the Partner Role can submit the invoices for automated AOS approval.

The automated invoicing system includes edit checks to ensure invoices do not exceed contract amounts, do not exceed 80% of the contract amount without AOS' Center for Audit Excellence's (CFAE) certification of the report, include the portion due to the MBE/EDGE firm, if applicable, etc. When all requirements are met and the invoice is submitted by the firm's Partner Role, the submitting partner and the client's contact person on file with the AOS will receive a Notification of Approved Invoice email. The IPA firm may include the AOS email approval with an invoice to the client or the client can utilize the Notification of Approved Invoice email as the official invoice to pay the IPA firm. **For clients without email access, the IPA firm must provide the invoice and the AOS approval email to the client to request payment.**

The Invoicing System maintains an Invoice History for each project in order for the IPA firm to easily identify what has been billed and approved, etc.

Unlike with the manual process for billing a client, the automated electronic invoicing system will not permit an IPA firm to submit a final invoice until the report has been certified by CFAE. CFAE's certification will be denoted in the Invoicing System by the date in the "Date to COB" column. Additionally, after the "Date to COB" is completed, the invoicing system will only allow one **FINAL** invoice to be submitted. The final invoice **MUST** include total contract project hours incurred and the portion of the fees due to the MBE/EDGE firm, if the period's contracted hours exceed 800 hours.

Per the contract requirements, the final invoice for each project must be submitted within 90 days after the report is released by the AOS's Clerk of the Bureau (COB). This date is denoted in the system as "Date Released by COB."

NOTE:

- All invoices for June 30, 2015 projects previously submitted and approved by the AOS have been uploaded into the invoicing system. Any remaining invoices for these projects will be required to be submitted via the IPA Portal's Automated Electronic Invoicing System. All invoices for projects with periods ending subsequent to June 30, 2015 must be approved via the IPA Portal.

- Please review your June 30, 2015 projects in the Automated Electronic Invoicing System to ensure all submitted and approved invoices are accurately reflected. If any discrepancies are identified, please notify us immediately.
- For any outstanding projects with periods ended prior to June 30, 2015 (e.g. March 31, 2015, December 31, 2014, etc.), invoices will continue to be approved manually via submission to the designated invoice email account of the appropriate regional office.

Expressing Interest in Contracts

We have slightly expanded the Express Interest in Contracts function in the IPA Portal. Firm personnel designated with a Partner Role or Processing Role may express interest in contracts; however, only those with a Partner Role may submit the interest in the contract on behalf of the firm to the AOS.

Guidance and Questions

An updated *Guide to the IPA Portal* has been created for the additional functionality and is available on the AOS website at: [Guide to the IPA Portal](#).

We appreciate your firm's continued support, cooperation, and patience as we enhance the IPA contracting process. If you have any questions or concerns, please email IPACorrespondence@ohioauditor.gov.