

Opening a Group Bank Account



It can be convenient to have a group bank account allowing trusted home group members or the treasurer to keep the finances of the group separate from their personal finances. This would allow clear tracking of common transactions like paying rent, insurance, coffee and literature purchases.

When opening a group bank account, it is likely you will need a Tax ID Number / Employment Identification Number (EIN). The Cleveland District Office does not provide its Tax ID Number to local A.A. groups for the purposes of opening a bank account for their group since each entity is autonomous in financial matters, as in all other ways.

How to Obtain a Tax ID Number

Contact the IRS to request Form SS-4: "Application for Employer Identification Number." Beginning January 6, 2014, the IRS now refers all domestic EIN requests received by phone to the EIN Online Assistant.

1. Access the Online Assistant by going to www.irs.gov, entering "EIN" in the "Search" feature and following instructions for applying for an EIN online. Click on (what should be) the first result: "Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) Online."
2. After reading the page, click "APPLY ONLINE NOW" towards the bottom. You will be given the option to submit your request online or you may print the form to mail or fax (link underneath "Begin Application" button).
When submitting your request online:

- Click "Begin Application"
- Click "View Additional Types, Including Tax-Exempt and Governmental Organizations"
- Select "Community or Volunteer Group"
- Continue to complete the process

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In order for a group to open a bank account as a group entity (not under the name of the treasurer), the bank will usually require at least four things:

- A minimum balance
- A copy of the group minutes of your business meeting that includes the name of your organization
- A list of all officers of the organization and anyone else who may be a cosigner on the account, including some form of ID such as driver's license and Social Security Number on each person.
- A Tax ID Number for the organization.

Possible Alternatives to Getting a Tax ID Number for a Bank Account

- You may be able to use the social security number of a group member as the Tax ID for the group's bank account.
- You may be able to open a checking account (noninterest bearing) under the treasurer's social security number with a Doing Business As (DBA) name on the account (e.g. "24 Hours Group West").
- This could have tax implications for the treasurer – depends how much money is raised and spent.

Financial Legalities

Once you get your EIN, you are responsible for all legal and illegal use of the number. Following certain guidelines will help avoid problems:

- Number should not be "loaned" or otherwise used by any other group, or person.
- Maintain accurate records and paper trail. Examples may include minutes of business meetings, any changes in officers, and financial records including receipts.
- If you change your address after you receive your EIN you must notify the IRS of the new address — use Form 8822, "Change of Address."
- If the group should ever close, the group officers need to cancel their Tax ID Number/EIN with IRS by written notice when the bank account closes.

Resources

- [AA Guidelines – Finances \(.pdf\)](#)
- [The A.A. Group Treasurer \(.pdf\)](#)
- See more at: <http://www.aacleve.org/opening-a-group-bank-account/#sthash.KZemKZY4.dpuf>

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