



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS About Your Association Dues

### How are my dues calculated?

Your dues amount reflects the consolidated billing of tripartite membership in your state, national and local society associations. Additional mandatory assessments include the Public Vision League-Litigation Fund and the Legislative Fund. Voluntary contributions may include the California Political Action Committee Fund and your Local Society Political Action Committee Fund.

### What if I don't want to contribute to the PACs?

The PAC funds go towards political support of state candidates and officeholders who share the goals of the Association. Participation is voluntary. If you are not interested in contributing, just drop us a line (we need it in writing) and indicate specifically which PAC-fund you do not wish to be billed for: Cal-OPAC and/or Local Society-PAC.

### My colleague is also a COA member. Why are her membership dues different than mine?

A member's level in the ascending dues scale (or year that they graduated from optometry school), their member category, the society they belong to, and their PAC contributions are all factors that contribute to why the COA member sitting next to you may have a different dues obligation than you do.

### How are dues billed?

For your convenience your dues invoice consolidates COA, AOA and local society dues into one payment including Legislative Fund Assessment, PVL and PAC dues. You should receive your first dues billing the month after your membership is confirmed.

### Do you have any other categories for membership?

Yes. Based on your eligibility, you may qualify for Partial Practice, Educator, Federal Service, Retired, Non-Resident, Student/Post-Graduate or Associate membership types. See *Membership Category Definitions for a full listing*.

### I'm experiencing some financial difficulty and I don't know if I can keep up with my membership dues. What should I do?

As a courtesy of membership, a Dues Adjustment Request for *COA dues* may be considered if you meet certain criteria (*please contact COA for more information*). Any adjustments for your *AOA dues* are considered separately by AOA; however, COA will submit a waiver request on your behalf if you are eligible for a COA dues adjustment. You will need to stay current on your dues payments until you receive notification from the COA Dues Adjustment Committee and the AOA about any temporary arrangements.

### I don't think it is fair that I have to pay mandatory assessments. Who decided that?

Proposed assessments must be passed by the House of Delegates—represented by members from your local society.

### How do I reinstate my membership?

If you resigned as a "member in good standing," just complete a membership application and submit it to COA.

If you have any questions regarding your membership status contact Member Services for more information.

### **What if members have specific questions about their dues invoices?**

For questions specifically related to your dues invoice, contact the COA Dues Accountant via e-mail at [billing@coavision.org](mailto:billing@coavision.org).

### **How come COA never offers any dues discounts, or dues reductions, or dues breaks?**

*We do!* Many times members *forget* that they may be currently benefiting from “dues discounts, dues reductions, or dues breaks.” They take advantage of it when they participate in:

- Ascending dues scale for new licentiates
- Opportunities to participate in Project Keep
- Eligibility for special member categories that only pay a percentage of full dues (example: Partial Practice members pay 60% of full dues).

These are all benefits of members. Please reinforce the message that they may currently be benefiting from it, or have benefited from it in the past (if they joined as new licentiates), or that opportunities are available through Project Keep. It is up to members to take advantage of these programs when they are eligible for it.

### **Do you ever hear the comment: “COA’s dues are SO high. Other associations’ dues cost much less.”**

Some questions to ask would be:

- What association(s) are you specifically referring to? (Are we comparing apples to apples? Is it fair to compare it to another profession’s membership organization?)
- How much less? What is that association paying? Are you only referring to COA dues or to the total of tripartite membership? Remember, COA does not have control over individual society dues, nor AOA dues.
- Did you know that the Iowa Optometric Association’s dues alone are \$1,200 compared to COA’s \$813 annual dues? Plus, Iowa has a market penetration of 92%