



FISCAL POLICY MANUAL

POLICY T-1:	Submission of Claims for Excess Proceeds
APPROVED:	Board of Supervisors; Resolution
AUTHORITY:	Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector (ACTTC)
ISSUE/REVISED DATE:	October 9, 2024

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clearly define the process and requirements for claims for excess proceeds filed by parties of interest, as defined by California Revenue and Taxation Code section 4675, regarding a property that has been sold by the Sonoma County Auditor-Controller Treasurer-Tax Collector (ACTTC) at a sale of tax-defaulted property.

California Revenue and Taxation Code section 4675(d) provides that any claim for excess proceeds shall contain any information and proof deemed necessary by the Board of Supervisors to establish a claimant's rights to all or any portion of excess proceeds. Through this policy the Board of Supervisors establishes the necessary information and proof necessary to satisfactorily establish a claimant's right to all or any portion of excess proceeds.

Pursuant to California Revenue and Taxation Code section 4675.1, the Sonoma County ACTTC is authorized to establish a claimant's right to all or any portion of excess proceeds for those cases not covered by this policy.

II. NOTIFICATION

- A.** When excess proceeds from the sale of tax-defaulted property exceeds one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) the Sonoma County ACTTC shall provide notice of the right to claim the excess proceeds no later than ninety (90) days after the sale of the property.
- B.** Notice shall be mailed to the last known mailing address of the parties of interest. The Sonoma County ACTTC shall make a reasonable effort to obtain the name and last known mailing address of parties of interest by conducting an examination of the assessment of the property beginning with the year of delinquency to and including that of the last equalized roll. The Sonoma County ACTTC shall also mail a Sonoma County ACTTC Excess Proceeds Claim Form and Instructions (as further detailed in Section 3.1) with the notice. The claim form and instructions are also available for download on the Sonoma County ACTTC website.
- C.** If, after a reasonable effort has been made, the last known address of a party of interest cannot be found, the Sonoma County ACTTC shall publish notice of the right to claim excess proceeds in a newspaper of general circulation in the county. Publication is not required if the cost to publish is equal to or greater than the amount of the excess proceeds. Publication shall be made in the manner required by California Revenue and Taxation Code section 4676 (c).

- D.** Public records act Request for Holders of Unclaimed Funds. Please be advised that the Sonoma County Treasurer-Tax Collector may, from time to time, receive requests from members of the public for a list of individuals who are eligible to receive unclaimed funds from the County. This list may contain names and contact information. These lists are public records within the meaning of the Public Records Act and thus must be disclosed. The Sonoma County Treasurer-Tax Collector is not required to notify the individuals listed that it is releasing this information.

III. CLAIM REQUIREMENTS

California Revenue and Taxation Code section 4675(d) provides that any claim for excess proceeds shall contain all information and proof deemed necessary by the Board of Supervisors to establish a claimant's rights to all or any portion of excess proceeds. To this end the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors has determined that the following information and proof is required on the claim form and as supporting documentation in order to establish a claimant's rights to all or any portion of excess proceeds.

A. INFORMATION ON FORM

- a. Sonoma County ACTTC Excess Proceeds Claim Form. A claimant must use the Excess Proceeds Claim Form developed by the Sonoma County ACTTC office. The Excess Proceeds Claim Form is mailed to parties of interest, along with notice and instructions, and is also available for download on the Sonoma County ACTTC website.
- b. The Excess Proceeds Claim Form will also be provided upon request via standard USPS mail, email, or fax.
- c. Failure to provide any information required on the Excess Proceeds Claim Form will result in denial of the claim.
- d. The Excess Proceeds Claim Form must contain the following information:
 1. Assessor Parcel number;
 2. Last Assessee/Owner of Record;
 3. Property Address;
 4. Date of tax sale;
 5. Date tax deed recorded;
 6. Final date to submit claim;
 7. Amount or percentage of claim from available excess proceeds;
 8. Your filing status (e.g. Lienholder of Record; Owner of Record; Qualified Heir of Owner of Record; Assignee of a Party of Interest);
 9. Name, address, and telephone number; and
 10. Photo Identification.
 - i. Driver's license, State identity card, Military identification card, passport, or other government-issued identification.
 - ii. Legal entities must also include photo identification of authorized signer.
 - iii. If claimant's name is different from the lienholder or person with title of record, provide documentation that verifies claimant's name change, such as marriage license or court order.
 11. The claim form must be verified under penalty of perjury and notarized. Affirmation must be in accordance with Government Code Section 8202.

B. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Listed below is documentation required to prove a claim for excess proceeds. All documentation must be submitted with the valid claim form.

Sonoma County does not accept lost document affidavits in lieu of the original documents. Copies of any promissory note(s) and/or modifications of the promissory note(s) are unacceptable as such instruments are negotiable certificates that may be sold, assigned, transferred or pledged by indorsement to the original instrument itself without a separate assignment of the security. The only alternative to providing an original promissory note is a court order pursuant to California Civil Code section 3415 which establishes the existence and terms of a lost note.

Where original documents are submitted they will be returned to the claimant(s) upon request.

a. MORTGAGE LENDERS AND DEED OF TRUST BENEFICIARIES

1. The original promissory note and all modifications (if any) (or court order pursuant to California Civil Code section 3415);
2. The original or recorded copy of the Deed of Trust/Mortgage;
3. The original or recorded copy of assignments (if any);
4. A statement setting forth:
 - a. the original amount of the obligation;
 - b. any advances or modifications to the original obligation;
 - c. the total amount of payments received and date(s) received;
 - d. the amount still due and payable as of the date of the sale of the tax defaulted property;
 - e. if the note was in default according to its terms at the time of sale (other than for defaulted taxes) claimant must also submit documentation evidencing all collection efforts.

b. JUDGMENT CREDITORS

1. Proof that the judgment debtor is the person(s) who possessed record ownership of the property sold at the tax sale;
2. A recorded copy of the judgment(s);
3. Statement or Orders setting forth any modifications(s) to the Judgment;
4. Total amount of payments received and date(s) received; and
5. Amount still due and payable as of the date of the sale of the tax defaulted property.

c. **PERSON(S) WITH TITLE OF RECORD**

1. Submit original recorded documents (e.g., deed, death certificate, court order) to support the claim. Copies of these documents may be accepted only if accompanied by additional documentation sufficient to support the claim (e.g., utility bills for the property in the claimant(s)'s name such as power, television, internet subscriptions, and original tax bills). If copies are submitted, rather than original recorded documents, the supporting documentation must prove that the claimant was the person with title of record at the time of sale.
2. If title to the property was in a recorded trust, claimant must submit the original trust document indicating that the claimant(s) is/are the trustee(s) or successor trustee(s) of the trust authorized to file all claims on behalf of the trust. Should the claimant(s) be unable to produce a recorded grant deed, proof of title of record may be established through other recorded instruments, Assessor's records, or other information, in the sole discretion of the Sonoma County ACTTC.

d. **QUALIFIED HEIRS OF PERSON(S) WITH TITLE OF RECORD**

1. A qualified heir must submit all documentation required to prove his or her legal standing as an heir to the Person(s) with Title of Record
2. A notarized probate affidavit, verified under penalty of perjury and executed by all claimant(s), pursuant to California Probate Code sections 13100-13116. A form is available for download on the Sonoma County ACTTC website.
3. Last Will and Testament(s), if applicable.

e. **CLAIMS FILED ON BEHALF OF ANY BUSINESS**

1. All claim forms must be signed by an individual with corporate authority for the business, such as an officer, general partner, or sole proprietor. In the case of a corporation, the parent corporation is merely a shareholder of its subsidiary corporation; it does not own the corporate property of its subsidiary. Therefore, a parent corporation, regardless of the percentage of shares owned, is not a party of interest of its subsidiary's recorded lien or title of record.
2. All business entities must provide proof of their Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) assigned to the business. Suggested documents include:
 - i. "Letter of Confirmation" from the IRS showing assignment of the FEIN
 - ii. Copy of received tax statement, such as:
 - a. IRS Form 1098, statement of interest paid; or
 - b. IRS Form 1099-INT or 1099-DIV, statement of interest or dividends earned; or
 - iii. IRS assignment of FEIN internet confirmation page;
 - iv. Tax returns, IRS Form SS-4 application or W-9 will not be accepted to verify FEIN.

3. In addition to the foregoing, the following documentation is also required, as applicable:

- i. CORPORATION**

Provide proof that claimant is an officer of the corporation. Suggested documents include the following, but any documentation must demonstrate entitlement and authority to claim on behalf of a business:

- a. Corporate Resolution and/or The Articles of Incorporation;
 - b. The most recent Statement of Information (or equivalent from state in which business operates) filed with the Secretary of State. If the business e-filed the Statement of Information, provide a copy of the Statement of Information and a copy of the payment receipt provided by the Secretary of State;
 - c. Certificate of Dissolution; or
 - d. Other documents may be accepted if they prove claimant is a corporate officer.

- ii. LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY**

Provide proof claimant is a manager or officer of the Limited Liability Company. Suggested documents include the following, but any documentation must demonstrate entitlement and authority to claim on behalf of a business:

- a. Company Resolution
 - b. Operating Agreement
 - c. Articles of Organization
 - d. The most recent Statement of Information filed with the Secretary of State. If the business e-filed the Statement of Information, provide a copy of the Statement of Information and a copy of the payment receipt provided by the Secretary of State
 - e. Certificate of Dissolution; or
 - f. Other documents may be accepted if they prove claimant is a manager or officer, in the sole discretion of the Sonoma County ACTTC.

- iii. LIMITED PARTNERSHIP**

Provide proof claimant is a general partner of the Limited Partnership. Suggested documents include the following, but any documentation must demonstrate entitlement and authority to claim on behalf of a business:

- a. Certificate of Limited Partnership filed with the Secretary of State. If the business e-filed, provide a copy of the document and a copy of the payment receipt provided by the Secretary of State
 - b. Partnership Agreement
 - c. Certificate of Dissolution; or
 - d. Other documents may be accepted if they prove that the claimant is a general partner, in the sole discretion of the Sonoma County ACTTC.

iv. GENERAL PARTNERSHIP

Provide proof claimant is a general partner of the General Partnership. Suggested documents include the following, but any documentation must demonstrate entitlement and authority to claim on behalf of a business:

- a. Statement of Partnership Authority;
- b. Partnership Agreement;
- c. Certificate of Dissolution; or
- d. Other documents may be accepted if they prove claimant is a general partner, in the sole discretion of the Sonoma County ACTTC.

v. SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP

Provide the following documentation:

- a. Current or final federal tax return, including Schedule C;
- b. Most current business license or facility permit; and
- c. Fictitious Business Name filing (filed with county), if applicable.

vi. MERGER BUSINESS

If the claim is for a business that has merged with or sold to another business, provide a copy of the merger or purchase agreement.

vii. SUSPENDED BUSINESS

If the claim is for a business that was previously suspended by either the Secretary of State or the Franchise Tax Board (FTB), provide proof that the business is no longer suspended, which may include:

- a. If the business was suspended by the Secretary of State, provide a Certificate of Good Standing. You can obtain the certificate by contacting the Secretary of State Information Services Office at (916) 657-5448, or by following the instructions located on the Secretary of State's website that links to their "Information Requests" page.
- b. If the business was suspended by the FTB, provide a copy of an Entity Status Letter. The letter can be obtained the letter by contacting the FTB.

f. ASSIGNEES OF A PARTY OF INTEREST

1. Claimant must provide all proof required of any qualified claimant as defined in Section 3.2(a), (b), (c), (d), or (e) of this policy, as it applies to the particular legal standing of the assigning party.
2. The notarized affidavit, required by the Claim Form must contain the following information:
 - a. Proof that the amount and source of excess proceeds was disclosed to the party of interest; and

- b. That the party of interest was advised of his or her right to file a claim for excess proceeds on his or her own behalf directly with the county at no cost; and
3. Contact information of the party of interest, including name, address, and phone number.

IV. SUBMISSION OF CLAIM

- A.** An individual claimant must file his or her own claim, unless he or she has chosen to assign his or her rights to another party. An individual has the right to file a claim for excess proceeds on his or her own behalf directly with the county at no cost.
- B.** Multiple claimants may submit their individual claims, together in one envelope, only if they are sharing supporting materials. However a separate claim processing fee will be charged for each individual claim submitted.
- C.** Multiple claimants (e.g. siblings, heirs, husband and wife) may file one joint claim with shared supporting materials only if they possess equal ownership rights (e.g. 50% each, 25% each, husband and wife as joint tenants, etc.). In this case there will be one claim processing fee charged, which will also cover one disbursement warrant. Each additional disbursement warrant will be charged an additional fee of thirty dollars (\$30).
- D.** Mail completed claims and all attachments to:
Sonoma County Auditor-Controller Treasurer-Tax Collector
RE: CLAIM FOR EXCESS PROCEEDS
585 Fiscal Drive, Suite 100
Santa Rosa, Ca 95403
- E.** Claims will be accepted from agents, attorneys in fact, and persons with valid powers of attorney. Disbursements will be sent to the address of the attorney, agent, or attorney in fact, but shall only be made payable to the principal.
- F.** Under no circumstances shall any claimant be given additional time to file a valid Sonoma County ACTTC Claim Form, beyond the one year filing deadline. It is the claimant's responsibility to submit a complete form, including all necessary supporting documentation. Please read and follow all instructions before submitting a claim. The Sonoma County ACTTC's office is not responsible for informing the claimant of missing attachments or incomplete claims.
- G.** Submission under Assignment. A party of interest in the property at the time of the sale may assign his or her right to claim the excess proceeds only by completing the "Assignment of Rights" section of the Sonoma County ACTTC Excess Proceeds Claim Form. This section of the form serves as a dated, written instrument that explicitly states that the right to claim the excess proceeds is being assigned; and that each party to the proposed assignment has disclosed to the other party all facts of which he or she is aware of relating to the value of the right that is being assigned. Any

attempted assignment that does not comply with these requirements shall have no effect and will be disallowed.

- H.** For each claim filed on a Claim for Excess Proceeds form and received by the Deadline, the Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office will send the claimant an Excess Proceeds Acknowledgment Letter.

V. Preliminary Claim Review

- A.** Pursuant to California Revenue and Taxation Code section 4675, claims will be processed after one (1) year following the date of the recording of the deed to the purchaser.
- B.** In order to receive consideration by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, completed claims must be postmarked before the expiration of one (1) year following the date of the recording of the deed to the purchaser.
- C.** The Sonoma County ACTTC does not guarantee any preliminary review of claims received throughout the one (1) year period, however as time permits, ACTTC staff will attempt to review those claims that are filed during the first eleven (11) months following the recording of the deed to the purchaser in an effort to better serve the public. Therefore, as of the effective date of this policy, completed claims filed with the office of the Sonoma County ACTTC, within the first eleven (11) months following the recording of the deed to the purchaser, may undergo a preliminary review by staff. That preliminary review is intended as an opportunity to inform the claimant(s) of any necessary documentation that might not have been submitted before the claim is forwarded to the legal department for final review and processing. If a preliminary review is performed, staff will make only one (1) written attempt to notify the claimant(s) of their preliminary findings in a Preliminary Claim Review letter, at the claimant's address shown on the Sonoma County ACTTC Excess Proceeds Claim Form, and provide them with information regarding what appears to be incomplete. The claimant(s) will have an opportunity to submit any additional documentation necessary to complete their original claim process up to the original deadline date for filing said claim. Missing documents or information will not be accepted after the original deadline for filing said claim. Again, the Sonoma County ACTTC does not guarantee any preliminary review of claims.
- D.** Claims received during the final thirty (30) days of the one (1) year filing period will not undergo a preliminary review by staff. Claims received during that timeframe will only be reviewed and processed by the legal department following the deadline to file a claim for excess proceeds, which is one (1) year from the date of the recording of the deed to the purchaser. Therefore, it is the claimant's best interest to file claims as early as possible.
- E.** The Sonoma County ACTTC does not accept unsolicited supporting documentation after the final date to submit claims. The only supporting documentation that will be accepted separate from the original claim packet will be: (1) solicited documentation that has been specifically requested by ACTTC staff in a Preliminary Claim Review process, and/or (2) unsolicited documentation. The specific documentation must be accompanied by a copy of the Preliminary Claim Review letter from the Sonoma

County ACTTC office, if it was solicited in a Preliminary Claim Review process, or with a copy of the original Claim Form if unsolicited, and must be received by the ACTTC's office, postmarked on or before the final date to file a claim for excess proceeds.

VI. Final Claim Review

- A.** After the Deadline, the Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office or designee will perform a final review of the claim.
- B.** The Treasurer-Tax Collector, or designee, will decide, in his/her sole discretion, whether the claim and supporting documentation provides sufficient evidence of the existence of a recorded document supporting claimant's right to excess proceeds.
- C.** Once review has been completed and a recommendation has been made for each claim, the Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office will send the documents to County Counsel. County Counsel will prepare a letter reflecting their decision of either approval, denial, or interpleader of the recommendation for each claim. The letter will then be sent to notify the claimant of the decision.
- D.** For each claim approved by the County Counsel, the Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office will determine the order of the claimant's priority to the excess proceeds. First, Lienholders of record prior to the recordation of the tax deed to the purchaser in the order of their priority and then Second, any person with the title of record to all or any portion of the property prior to the recordation of the tax deed to the purchaser.

VII. Dispute of Claim/Distribution of Excess Proceeds

- A.** Once a determination has been made and all claimants have been notified, any claimant wishing to dispute the award decision would have to do so in writing and it must be commenced within ninety (90) days of the decision (date on the award/denial letter).
- B.** In the event of a dispute, should the Sonoma County Treasurer and Tax Collector and/or Sonoma County Counsel be unable to resolve the dispute, the County will file legal action in the form of an interpleader with Sonoma County Superior Court and allow the court to make the final determination.
- C.** At the close of the ninety (90) day window of the award decision and barring any dispute(s) received/pending, the Sonoma County Treasurer and Tax Collector will distribute the funds as outlined in the award letters provided to claimants.
- D.** The Sonoma County Treasurer and Tax Collector's Office will transfer any remaining excess proceeds that are not claimed by the deadline pursuant to California Revenue and Taxation Code §4674 to the Sonoma County Tax Loss Reserve Fund (TLRF).