

CAMPAIGN FINANCE EXPENDITURES

Contributions received by a candidate or a committee may be expended for any lawful purpose, but shall not be used for any personal use of the candidate, or a member of his immediate family, unrelated to a political campaign or the holding of public office or party position. (R.S. 18:1505.2(I))



The following summary of prior opinions of the Board provide an illustrative list of expenditures deemed as an appropriate use of campaign funds:



Donations to Charitable Type Fundraising Events

Candidates and elected officials, who are invited to make donations to or buy raffle tickets for church fairs, school auctions, and civic organization fund-raising events, can use campaign funds provided the expenditures are reasonable and customary.

Purchase/Lease of Telephone Equipment

Candidates and elected officials can use campaign funds to purchase or lease answering machines, cell phones, or other types of telephone equipment provided the primary purpose of the equipment is to facilitate the campaign or the holding of public office.

Payment of Membership Dues in Organizations

Elected officials can use campaign funds to pay membership dues in groups or organizations necessary to stay in touch with their constituency and/or enhance their professional standing. Such organizations could include the National Conference of State Legislatures, Common Cause, Public Affairs Research Council, etc.

Expenses of Operating a District Office

Elected officials can use campaign funds for rental and operating expenses associated with the operation of a district office. However, campaign funds should not be used to compensate persons who would be considered "public employees."

Expenses for Attendance of Legislative Session

Legislators can use campaign funds for transportation, meal and lodging expenses associated with attending session or committee meetings, to the extent the expenses are not otherwise reimbursed through the Legislature. Also, legislators can use campaign funds to pay for meals with constituents to discuss district business.

Clothing

Clothing expenses, except for items of de minimis value that are used in a campaign, or specialized apparel necessary to attend a specific fundraising event or event related to holding of office, are presumed to be personal use of the candidate and shall be prohibited, unless the candidate shows by a preponderance of the evidence that the expenditure was not for personal use.

Flowers and Gifts to Constituents and Campaign Workers

Elected officials who feel obligated because of their position to extend courtesies of providing flowers for funerals of deceased constituents, graduation gifts to young people in their district, or gifts for campaign workers can use campaign funds for such items provided they are reasonable and customary.

Mileage

Elected officials and candidates can use campaign funds to pay for gas expenses for the use of a personal vehicle during the campaign or reimbursement for mileage. Elected officials and candidates should keep adequate records to support the reimbursement payments as related to the campaign or holding of public office.

Auction Items

Candidate could use campaign funds to purchase items at church and school fair auctions, if they are reasonable and customary. However, the items purchased could not be used for a personal use (for example, a candidate who wins a computer at an auction cannot give it to his daughter). Any items purchased with campaign funds belong to the campaign and would have to be disposed of subject to the restrictions on the use of funds. For example, an item purchased could be donated back to the entity having the auction or to another charity, or used by the candidate's campaign or his holding of public office.

Meals

Elected officials and candidates can use campaign funds to pay for meals at which campaign matters are discussed or at which governmental matters are discussed or to meet with constituents, which are not otherwise reimbursed by the governmental entity. Elected officials and candidates should keep adequate records to support the payment of the meal as related to the campaign or holding of public office.

Effective August 1, 2014, R.S. 18:1505.2(I) prohibits the use of campaign funds to purchase immovable property or a motor vehicle. [Motor vehicle does not include "trailer."](#)

Surplus funds may be maintained in a segregated fund for use in future political campaigns or for any lawful purpose related to the following: supporting or opposing a proposition; supporting or opposing a recall petition; contributing to a gubernatorial transition and inauguration; contributing to an independent expenditure only committee; donations to a nonprofit organization; lobbying; social and issue advocacy.

Credit card expenditures should be itemized to disclose the name of the business at which the credit card was used and the date of that transaction, not the name of the credit card company and the date of payment to the credit card company.

Expenditures equal to or greater than \$5,000 made on your behalf as a candidate by a public relations or advertising firm, or other agent, those expenditures should be itemized to disclose to whom payments were made, the amount of the expenditure, and the date of the expenditure. For example, if a firm purchases time to run an ad or pays a third party to develop a campaign flyer, that information should be provided to the candidate, so that the expenditure can specifically be reported by the candidate.

The following are examples of incomplete and complete reported expenditures:

Example Type	Expenditure To	Date	Description	Amount
	Incomplete: Dillard's Baton Rouge, LA	1/1/2013	Gift	\$143.00
	Complete: <i>Dillard's 222 First Street Baton Rouge, LA</i>	<i>1/1/2013</i>	<i>Wedding gift for constituent</i>	<i>\$143.00</i>
	Incomplete: Jane Sneaux 333 Second Street Baton Rouge, LA	1/2/2013	Reimbursement	\$45.65
	Complete: <i>Office Depot 123 Third Street Baton Rouge, LA</i>	<i>1/2/2013</i>	<i>Copy supplies for campaign office</i>	<i>\$45.65</i>
	Incomplete: Ruth's Chris 345 Second Street Baton Rouge, LA	11/24/2013	Meals	\$206.95
	Complete: <i>Ruth's Chris 345 Second Street Baton Rouge, LA</i>	<i>11/24/2013</i>	<i>Meeting with campaign manager</i>	<i>\$206.95</i>
	Incomplete: John Doe 555 Main Street Baton Rouge, LA	6/12/2013	Raffle Ticket	\$40.00
	Complete: <i>John Doe 555 Main Street Baton Rouge, LA</i>	<i>6/12/2013</i>	<i>Raffle Ticket for cancer patient fundraiser benefit</i>	<i>\$40.00</i>