

Scotland County Candidates Campaign Finance FAQ

- **Who can be my treasurer?**

The law prevents a person that is not a North Carolina from serving as treasurer for a political committee and also, the spouse of a candidate is not allowed to serve as treasurer for a candidates committee.

- **What is a threshold?**

You should think of a threshold as a limit. When filing for office you were asked whether or not you planned on spending more or less than \$1,000 and/or if you were going to accept donations for your campaign. In North Carolina, the current threshold is \$1,000. Anyone who decides to not exceed the threshold and will not accept any donations for his/her campaign will not be required to complete financial reports to the county board. If the candidate initially decided to stay below the threshold and to not accept donations towards their campaign feels as if they are going to exceed that amount or has decided to accept donations from individuals, will need to contact the Scotland County Board of Elections to update your committee paperwork, prior to exceeding the threshold amount or accepting ANY donations. **It is critical that you keep all receipts of any purchases and/or donations for your campaign.**

- **What is a contribution?**

A contribution is money or anything of value given to a committee. This includes loans, pledges, out-of-pocket expenses, non-monetary gifts, fundraiser proceeds or any other obligation to make a contribution. The term contribution does not include an 'independent expenditure'. There are certain types of contributions that are prohibited in North Carolina. No contributions are allowed from corporations, business entities, labor unions, professional associations, and insurance companies, even if the candidate or candidate's spouse is the owner of any of the sources listed. **Rule of Thumb: If your opponent is unable to acquire the item or space that you have acquired for the same rate that you've been quoted, it's probably a prohibited contribution.**

- **Is there a limit on contributions?**

For most committees in North Carolina there is a \$5,200 maximum contribution limit per election from an individual or other registered committee to your committee. There are some exceptions to the \$5,200 contribution limit. Candidate committees are allowed to accept unlimited contributions from the candidate and the candidate's spouse. However, any contribution exceeding \$50 must not be in the form of cash. ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS ARE NOT ALLOWED!

- **What is an In-Kind Contribution?**

You are allowed to accept something of value from a contributor that is not a monetary contribution (for example: food for a fundraiser, pay for radio advertisement, employee working at the polls, etc.) This is considered to be an in-kind contribution to your committee and you should obtain receipts or a statement from the contributor indicating the fair market value of the items. In-kind contributions count towards the contribution limit per individual.

- **What are expenditures?**

Expenditures are a payment made by the committee or something of value given to another committee to support or oppose the nomination or election of a candidate, or a passage of a ballot measure. There are

restrictions on how a committee can spend its money and the treasurer is required to provide the name and address of each payee, the amount of the expenditure and must disclose an accurate and detailed purpose of the expenditure. Expenditures can only be made for campaign purposes, not for personal expenditures of the candidates.

- **Can I use Cash?**

Cash can be used as a form of payment, but keep in mind any expenses over \$50 must be paid with a verifiable form of payment. Cash is not considered a verifiable form of payment, but a check or debit/credit cards are allowed.

- **Are there any penalties for filing a late report?**

If you are late filing a report for your committee there are possible penalties involved. When a late report is filed by a committee, the State Board of Elections sends a Penalty Assessment letter to the treasurer. The committee will then have 30 days to appeal or request a waiver for the late filing penalty or pay the amount assessed. For non-statewide committees the penalty is \$50 per day not to exceed \$500 per report. For statewide committees the penalty is \$250 per day late not to exceed \$10,000 per report. If you do not file a required report you will be sent a notice of noncompliance letter by the State Board of Elections. In the event you do not respond and do not file the reports in question the Board can terminate the active status of your committee, therefore not allowing the committee to receive contributions or make expenditures.

- **When can I put signs out?**

G.S. 136-32 is the Statute that regulates political signs. According to the General Statute political signs may go up on at right of ways no earlier than 30 days prior to the start of One Stop Early Voting and should come down no later than 10 days following Election Day. This statute is a Department of Transportation statute and any placement complaints should be directed to that agency. Please keep in mind that neither the County Board of Elections nor the State Board of elections regulate placement of signs.

- **What is a legend and what media is required to have a legend?**

The legend is the “paid for by...” statement that tells the audience who paid for the advertising. An advertisement is required to have a legend if it is considered to be a contribution or expenditure. Legends are required for: newspaper ads, newspaper inserts, airplane streamers, fliers, sound-truck advertising, mass mailings, portable signs, periodicals, television ads, radio ads, cards, outdoor advertising facilities, magazines, billboards, and pamphlets. Legends are not required for: buttons, bumper stickers, yard signs, and window posters, barn posters, balloons, shopping bags, nail files, and most other campaign paraphernalia printed with a campaign message. Websites, emails, and social media do not require the ‘legend’.

- **How big should my legend be?**

In print ads, the “Paid for by...” statement must be at least five percent of the height of the ad’s printed space, or 12 pt. font, whichever is LARGER. For the larger as in a newspaper the maximum size required for the legend is 28 pt. font.