

Authorized Campaign Expenditures

There are eight (8) authorized categories for which candidate committee's campaign funds may be used. They are:

1 – Purchases Directly Related to a Candidate's Campaign – These are expenses that are predominantly and directly related to a candidate's campaign to influence the nomination or election of the candidate. Authorized campaign expenditures include the following:

- Office rent for campaign headquarters;
- Advertisements;
- Banners, signs, flyers, brochures;
- Food for volunteers;
- Office supplies;
- Postage and mailing;
- Surveys, polls, and voter lists;
- Airfare and hotel accommodations to campaign;
- Meal or food expenses or entertainment incurred at a fundraising event or other campaign activity;
- Employee services;
- Professional services that are necessary in a candidate's campaign to seek the nomination or election of the candidate;
- Durable assets (non-consumable supply or equipment such as a computer, software, printer, camera, or cell phone with a minimum purchase value of \$250 and a useful life of 12 months or more) used for the candidate's campaign;
- Attend state or county political conventions (i.e., travel, meals, and registration, but not clothing or entertainment expenses);
- Reasonable expenses for a "mahalo" party;
- Penalties, fines, judgments, or settlements imposed on a candidate or candidate committee by a court or regulatory agency that are related to a campaign to seek the nomination or election of the candidate; and
- Gifts for campaign volunteers/employees subject to monetary thresholds in an election period (i.e., \$500 aggregate for a 2-year office, \$1,000 aggregate for a 4-year non-statewide office, and \$1,500 aggregate for a 4-year statewide office).

2 – Charitable Donations – Donations to any community service, educational, youth, recreational, charitable, scientific, or literary organization of up to twice the contribution limit of your office in an election period (i.e., \$4,000 for a 2-year office, \$8,000 for a 4-year non-statewide office, and \$12,000 for a 4-year statewide office). **However, you cannot make a charitable donation between the filing of your nomination papers and the general election unless you are declared duly and legally elected to office prior to the general election or are unsuccessful in the primary or special primary election,** and a candidate or candidate committee shall not use campaign funds to donate to organizations or trust funds established by a candidate or the candidate's committee, or organizations whose beneficiaries include the candidate, the candidate's immediate family members, officers of the candidate's committee and their immediate families.

3 – Donations to Public Schools or Public Libraries – Donations to any public school or public library of up to twice the contribution limit of your office in an election period (i.e., \$4,000 for a 2-year office, \$8,000 for a 4-year non-statewide office, and \$12,000 for a 4-year statewide office). There is no prohibited period for making donations to public schools or public libraries.

4 – Full-time Student Scholarships Awards – Scholarships to full-time students attending an institution of higher education or a vocational education school leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential of up to twice the contribution limit of your office in an election period (i.e., \$4,000 for a 2-year office, \$8,000 for a 4-year non-statewide office, and \$12,000 for a 4-year statewide office). **However, you cannot make a scholarship award between the filing deadline for nomination papers and the general election unless you are declared duly and legally elected to office prior to the general election or are unsuccessful in the primary or special primary election,** and a candidate or candidate committee shall not use campaign funds for a scholarship for the candidate or candidate's immediate family.

5 – Two (2) Tickets to Fundraiser – The purchase of not more than two (2) tickets to an event held by another candidate or committee. The purchase of fundraiser tickets is considered a contribution to a candidate, subject to that candidate's contribution limit.

6 – Party Contributions – A contribution to your party not to exceed \$25,000 in any 2-year election period.

7 – Ordinary and Necessary Expenses as Elected Official – To pay for ordinary and necessary expenses incurred in connection with your duties as an office holder, including expenses incurred for membership fees in civic and community groups. Ordinary and necessary expenses means expenses incurred in connection with the candidate's duties as a holder of an elected state or county office. These expenses must be reasonable, usual, and directly related to the office. Examples include travel expenses to conduct State or county business, bonafide registration and travel expenses for conferences and workshops directly related to the elected official's duties and responsibilities, expenses to organize and host community meetings to disseminate information and gather public comment regarding issues relevant to the elected official, expenses for leis for official events or office events but not leis for other legislators, legislative opening day expenses and inaugural expenses for food and beverages to host constituents, and food and beverage for meeting constituents or office meetings that include others that are not staff members.

8 – Mixed Benefit – To purchase or lease goods or services that provide a mixed benefit to the candidate; provided that an amount attributed to a personal benefit for the candidate shall be determined and the candidate shall reimburse that amount to the committee unless the personal benefit to the candidate is de minimus. Examples include the following:

- Purchase or lease of a vehicle, including any operation and maintenance costs, where the title to the vehicle is in the name of the candidate committee;
- Reimbursement for the use of a personal vehicle at the federal optional standard mileage rate, not including operation and maintenance expenses, shall be authorized and documented for audit purposes at the time the vehicle

- is used (please contact the Commission to verify the mileage rate); and
- Lease of real property to a candidate or candidate committee for a renewable period not to exceed one year.

“De minimis” means that the personal use of the goods or services is 5% or less of the total use of the property or services in a calendar month and the expenditure for the personal use of the goods or services does not exceed a usual and normal charge of \$100 in any one calendar month.