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## Volunteer activity

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An individual may volunteer personal services to a campaign without making a contribution as long as the individual is not compensated by anyone for the services. Volunteer activity is not reportable.

### Foreign national as campaign volunteer

Although he or she may not make contributions or expenditures (including advances of personal funds), an individual who is a foreign national may participate in campaign activities as an uncompensated volunteer. In doing so, the volunteer must be careful not to participate in the decision-making process of the campaign. The *Federal Election Campaign Act* (the Act) and Commission regulations specifically prohibit foreign nationals from participating in the decisions of any person involving election-related activity. For example, a foreign national volunteer may attend committee events and campaign strategy meetings, but may not be involved in the management of the committee.

### Volunteer activity at corporate or labor facilities

Generally, if an individual provides services to a campaign during paid working hours, the employer makes a contribution to the campaign. However, an employee, stockholder or member of a corporation or labor organization may make occasional, isolated or incidental use of corporate or labor organization facilities for his or her own individual volunteer activities on behalf of a campaign. Note that the Commission has said that the use of facilities for one hour per week or four hours per month is considered “incidental use.” For example, an employee may use an office phone to make calls that pertain to political volunteer work. If the volunteer activity is limited to “incidental use” of the facilities the volunteer does not have to reimburse the organization for use of the facilities (only for any increased overhead or operating costs).

When use of the facilities exceeds “incidental use,” the volunteer must reimburse the organization the usual and normal rental fee within a commercially reasonable time. Such reimbursement is considered an in-kind contribution from the volunteer and must be reported by the benefiting campaign committee. Or, if any person (including an employee,

stockholder or member) uses the facilities of a corporation or union to produce campaign materials, reimbursement is required regardless of how much time is spent on the activity.

### **Use of property: Activities in home, church, community room**

Individuals, in the course of volunteering personal services, may use their homes—or the recreation room of the residential complex where they live—for campaign-related activities without making a contribution. (A nominal fee paid by an individual volunteer for the use of a recreation room is not considered an in-kind contribution to the campaign and is not, therefore, reportable.) Volunteers may use a church or community room for campaign activities as long as the facility is regularly used for noncommercial purposes by members of the community, without regard to political affiliation. (Again, a nominal fee paid by an individual volunteer for the use of the room is not a contribution.)

### **Food, drink, invitations for home, church or community room event**

When holding a campaign-related activity in his or her home, church or community room, an individual may spend up to \$1,000 per candidate, per election, for food, beverage and invitations for the event without making a contribution. (For example, two individuals living together may spend up to \$2,000 per candidate, per election.) Any amount spent in excess of \$1,000, however, must be reported by the campaign as an in-kind contribution. Note that in [AO 1980-63](#), the Commission said that if an individual co-hosts an event held in someone else's home, any expenses paid by the nonresident cohost are considered contributions to the campaign benefiting from the event.

### **Internet volunteer activity**

An uncompensated individual or group of uncompensated individuals may engage in certain voluntary Internet activities for the purpose of influencing a federal election without restriction. These exempted Internet activities would not result in a contribution or an expenditure under the Act and would not trigger any registration or reporting requirements with the FEC. This exemption applies to individuals acting with or without the knowledge or consent of a campaign or a political party committee. Exempted internet activities include, but are not limited to, sending or forwarding electronic mail, providing a hyperlink to a website, creating, maintaining or hosting a website and paying a nominal fee for the use of a website.

### **Not exempt: Paid web communications**

If an individual or group of individuals pays a fee to place a communication on another person or entity's website, the communication is considered general public political advertising, and thus qualifies as a public communication. As such, it may require a disclaimer and/or reporting, and may count as a contribution and/or expenditure.

#### **FROM THE FEC RECORD**

[Volunteer activity \(2009\)](#)

[Foreign nationals](#)

[Internet activity conducted by federal political committees \(2016\)](#)

## NEED HELP?

[Get help from the FEC by phone or email](#)

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## Continue learning about this topic



### VIDEO

[Volunteer activity](#)

### LEGAL CITATIONS

#### Regulations

11 CFR [100.26](#)

*Public communication*

11 CFR [100.52\(d\)](#)

*Gift, subscription, loan, advance or deposit of money*

11 CFR [100.54](#)

*Compensation for personal services*

11 CFR [100.74](#)

*Uncompensated services by volunteers*

11 CFR [100.75](#)

*Use of a volunteer's real or personal property*

11 CFR 100.76

*Use of church or community room*

11 CFR 100.77

*Invitations, food, and beverages*

11 CFR 100.94

*Uncompensated internet activity by individuals that is not a contribution*

11 CFR 100.155

*Uncompensated internet activity by individuals that is not an expenditure*

11 CFR 110.20(i)

*Participation by foreign nationals in decisions involving election-related activities*

11 CFR 114.9

*Use of corporate or labor organization facilities*

### **Advisory opinions**

AO 2014-20

*Volunteer activity by foreign nationals*

AO 2007-22

*Volunteer activity by foreign nationals*

AO 2004-26

*Foreign national's participation in activities of political committees*

AO 1987-25

*Volunteer services conducted by foreign national*

AO 1980-63

*Costs of fundraiser*

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This information is not intended to replace the law or to change its meaning, nor does this information create or confer any rights for or on any person or bind the Federal Election Commission or the public.

The reader is encouraged also to consult the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (52 U.S.C. 30101 et seq.), Commission regulations (Title 11 of the Code of Federal Regulations), Commission advisory opinions and applicable court decisions.