

# Virtual Campaign Finance Conference

February 8–9, 2022

## Campaign Terminology

**Act** – The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 as amended (52 U.S.C. §30101-§30146).

**ADRO** – Alternative Dispute Resolution Office. ADRO provides parties in enforcement actions with an alternative method for resolving complaints that have been filed against them and for addressing issues identified by the Reports Analysis Division or an FEC audit. The program is designed to promote compliance with the Act and Commission regulations and to reduce the cost of processing complaints by encouraging settlements outside the agency's normal enforcement track.

**Agent** – Any person who has actual authority, either express or implied, to engage in certain campaign activities on behalf of a federal candidate or officeholder.

**AO** – Advisory Opinion. A formal response from the Commission regarding the legality of a specific activity proposed in an advisory opinion request (AOR).

**Authorized Committee** – A political committee that has been authorized by a candidate to accept contributions and make expenditures on his or her behalf. Authorized committees are often called “candidate committees” or “campaign committees.”

**Bundled Contribution** – Under HLOGA, the term “bundled contribution” means a contribution (subject to the applicable threshold) which is - “(i) forwarded from the contributor or contributors to the recipient by a lobbyist/registrant; or (ii) received by the committee from a contributor or contributors, but credited by the committee or candidate involved (or, in the case of a leadership PAC, by the candidate associated with the PAC) to the person through records, designations, or other means of recognizing that a certain amount of money has been raised by the person.”

**Campaign Committee** – Popular term for an authorized committee.

**Campaign Traveler** – Any candidate traveling in connection with an election for federal office, or any individual traveling in connection with an election for federal office on behalf of a candidate or political committee; or any member of the news media traveling with a candidate.

**Candidate** – An individual seeking nomination for election, or reelection, to a federal office becomes a candidate when he or she (or persons working on his or her behalf) receives contributions or makes expenditures that exceed \$5,000.

**Carey Committee** (also known as a **Hybrid PAC**) – A political committee that maintains one bank account for making contributions in connection with federal elections and a separate “non-contribution account” for making independent expenditures. The first account is subject to all of the limits and prohibitions of the Act, but the non-contribution account may accept unlimited contributions from individuals, corporations, labor organizations and other political committees. The committee must register with the FEC and report all receipts and disbursements for both accounts.

**CFR** – Code of Federal Regulations. The annual collection of executive agency regulations published in the daily Federal Register, combined with the previously issued regulations that are still in effect. The sections of the CFR containing federal campaign finance regulations may be found in Title 11 and are available on the FEC’s website or as a free publication from the FEC.

**Contribution** – A gift, subscription, loan, advance or deposit of money or anything of value given to influence a federal election.

**Coordinated** – Made in cooperation, consultation or concert with, or at the request or suggestion of, a candidate, a candidate’s authorized committee, or their agents, or a political party committee or its agents.

**Coordinated Party Expenditure** – A special type of expenditure that can be made only by a national or state political party committee in connection with the general election of a candidate. These expenditures are subject to a separate set of limits and do not count against the party’s normal contribution limits with respect to each candidate.

**Date Made** – The date the contributor relinquishes control over a contribution. A contribution that is mailed is considered made on the date of the postmark. In the case of an in-kind contribution, a contribution is made on the date the goods or services are provided by the contributor. This date determines the election or calendar year limit against which a contribution counts.

**Date Received** – The date the committee (or committee agent) takes possession of the contribution. This date is used for FEC reporting. Contributions charged to credit cards are received on the date the committee receives the contributor’s signed authorization to charge the contribution.

**Disclaimer Notice** – A statement that identifies the person(s) who paid for a communication and whether the communication was authorized by one or more candidates.

**Earmarked Contribution** – A contribution that the contributor directs (either orally or in writing) to or on behalf of a clearly identified candidate or authorized committee through an intermediary or conduit. Earmarking may take the form of a designation, instruction or encumbrance, and it may be direct or indirect, express or implied.

**Election** – Any one of several processes by which an individual seeks nomination for election, or reelection, to federal office. They include: a primary election, including a caucus or convention that has authority to select a nominee; a general election; a runoff election; and a special election held to fill a vacant seat.

**Election Cycle** – The period beginning the day after the previous general election for a given federal office and ending on the day of the general election for that office.

**FEC Identification Number** – Number assigned to a committee upon registration with the FEC. Used for identification purposes with the FEC only, this number is not a taxpayer identification number.

**Federal Funds** – Funds that comply with the limits, prohibitions and reporting requirements of the Federal Election Campaign Act. Also called “permissible funds.”

**Federal Government Contractor** – A person who enters into a contract, or is bidding on such a contract, with any agency or department of the United States government and is paid, or is to be paid, for services, material, equipment, supplies, land or buildings with funds appropriated by Congress.

**Foreign National** – An individual who is not a citizen of the United States or a national of the United States and has not been lawfully admitted to the U.S. for permanent residence, as defined in 8 U.S.C. §1101(a)(20); or (2) a foreign principal, as defined in 22 U.S.C. §611(b).

**HLOGA** – Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007. Includes two major provisions for political committees: restrictions on the use of campaign funds for noncommercial air travel and disclosure of bundled contributions.

**Hybrid PAC** – See “*Carey Committee*” on page 1.

**IEOPC – Independent Expenditure-Only Political Committee** (also known as a **Super PAC**). A political committee that makes only independent expenditures that may solicit contributions from individuals, corporations, labor organizations and other political committees. They may not accept contributions from foreign nationals, federal contractors, national banks or federally chartered corporations. Such committees, popularly known as Super PACs, must register with the Commission and comply with all applicable reporting requirements of the Act.

**In-Kind Contribution** – A contribution of goods, services or property offered free or at less than the usual and normal charge. The term also includes payments made on behalf of, but not directly to, candidates and political committees.

**Joint Contribution** – A contribution made by more than one person on a single check or other written instrument.

**Joint Fundraising** – Fundraising conducted jointly by a political committee and one or more other committees or unregistered organizations.

**Leadership PAC** – A political committee that is directly or indirectly established, financed, maintained or controlled by a candidate or an individual holding federal office, but is not an authorized committee of the candidate or officeholder and is not affiliated with an authorized committee of a candidate or officeholder.

**Lobbyist/Registrant** – A person who is a current registrant under the Lobbyist Disclosure Act, or who is named on a current registration or report filed under the Lobbying Disclosure Act.

**Lobbyist/Registrant PAC** – Any political committee established or controlled by a person who is a current registrant under the Lobbying Disclosure Act or an individual who is named on a current registration or report filed under the Lobbying Disclosure Act.

**Local or District Party Committee** – A political committee that, by virtue of the bylaws of a political party, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of a political party at a level lower than the state level (e.g., city, county, ward).

**Local Party Organization** – A local party organization is an organization that is responsible for a political party's activities below the state level but is not registered with the Federal Election Commission as a district or local party committee.

**Memo Entry** – Supplemental or explanatory information on a reporting schedule. The dollar amount in a memo entry is not incorporated into the total figure for the schedule.

**Multicandidate Committee** – A political committee that has been registered with the FEC for at least 6 months, has more than 50 contributors and, with the exception of state party committees, has made contributions to at least 5 candidates for federal office.

**MUR** – Matter Under Review. MURs are FEC enforcement cases that concern potential violations of the Act (FECA) which come to the attention of the Commission through complaints originating outside the Commission or through internal monitoring.

**Net Debts Outstanding** – The total of a campaign's unpaid debts incurred with respect to an election plus estimated costs to liquidate the debts plus costs of terminating political activity (if appropriate) minus cash on hand and receivables.

**Nonconnected Committee** – Any committee that conducts activities in connection with an election, but that is not a party committee, an authorized committee of any candidate for federal election, or a separate segregated fund.

**Nonfederal Funds** – Funds that are not subject to the limitations or prohibitions of the Act.

**OGC** – Office of General Counsel. The Office of General Counsel consists of five organizational units: (1) the Policy Division; (2) the Enforcement Division; (3) the Litigation Division; (4) the Law Division; and (5) the Administration Division.

**PAC** – Political Action Committee. Popular term for a political committee that is neither a party committee nor an authorized committee of a candidate. PACs directly or financially supported by a corporation or labor organization are called separate segregated funds. PACs without such corporate or labor sponsor are called nonconnected PACs.

**Personal Use** – Any use of funds in a campaign account of a candidate (or former candidate) to pay for a commitment, obligation or expense (of any person) that would exist irrespective of the candidate's campaign or duties as a federal officeholder.

**Principal Campaign Committee** – An authorized committee designated by a candidate as the principal committee to raise contributions and make expenditures for his or her campaign for a federal office.

**Prohibited Sources** – Those entities that are banned from making contributions or, in some cases, expenditures, in connection with, or for the purpose of influencing, a federal election.

**Public Communication** – A communication by means of any broadcast, cable or satellite communication, newspaper, magazine, outdoor advertising facility, mass mailing or telephone bank to the general public, or any other form of general public political advertising. The term general public political advertising does not include communications made over the internet, except for communications placed for a fee on another person’s website.

**RAD** – Reports Analysis Division. The FEC division that reviews campaign finance reports.

**Reattributed Contribution** – The portion of an excessive contribution that has been attributed in writing to another contributor and signed by both contributors.

**Redesignated Contribution** – With regard to contributions made to candidates, the portion of a contribution that has been designated by the contributor, in writing, to an election other than the one for which the funds were originally given.

**RFAI** – Request for Additional Information. Sent by RAD to committees when reports contain apparent discrepancies, errors or surface violations.

**Solicit** – To ask, request or recommend, explicitly or implicitly, that another person make a contribution, donation, transfer of funds or otherwise provide anything of value.

**SSF** – Separate Segregated Fund. A political committee established and/or financially supported by a corporation or labor organization; popularly called a Corporate or Labor Political Action Committee.

**State Party Committee** – A political committee which, by the bylaws of a political party, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the party at the state level, as determined by the Commission

**Super PAC** – See “**IEOPC – Independent Expenditure Only Political Committee**” on page 3.