

**LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF NEW YORK**  
**GUIDE TO FINANCES**  
**VERSION JUNE 23, 2021**

**FINANCES IN GENERAL**

Money is key in any organization, but especially in political organizations. Money is needed to conduct business, hold events, and run campaigns. County Affiliates need to have a bank account and a means to collect donations in order to be effective. There are two aspects to finances in a County Affiliate covered in this guide:

- **Fundraising.** While the Treasurer can certainly be involved in fundraising, a County Affiliate may want to designate a person or committee for this role. Fundraising is the actual gathering of money in order to conduct business, hold events, and run campaigns.
- **Managing Finances.** This is the role of the Treasurer and includes getting an EIN, opening a bank account, filing campaign finance reports, and creating Treasurer's reports to present at monthly meetings. This may also include budgeting and recommending disbursements for the facilitation of business.

When a County Affiliate is small, typically the organizing members will bankroll the affiliate before any efforts to fundraise. These members may have their costs recouped if they request a reimbursement from the treasury. For example, the Chair may spend \$100 for an event fee out of his own pocket, and then later request full or partial reimbursement from the County Affiliate's treasury.

**LIST OF EXPENSES**

Below is a list of possible expenses a County Affiliate may have, based on the experience of previous county leaders.

- **Office supplies.** Unless you already have an office space, your home will become your office, and as such, you'll find yourself needing office supplies like printer toner and/or ink, paper (both printer paper and cardstock, if you choose to make your own postcards), pens, envelopes, a lockbox or small safe for donations, rubber bands, paper clips, file folders, notebooks, mailing labels, etc.
- **Stamps.** You may wish to get a bulk mailing permit for your County Affiliate, but you might prefer to go the route of just procuring your own stamps. A first-class letter costs \$0.55 / letter, while a postcard stamp costs \$0.36 / postcard. Many times, it takes upwards of seven letters before you get some of your more reticent contacts to respond, so budget accordingly.

## **LIST OF EXPENSES (continued)**

- **Printing services and promotional products.** Either through a local service or online service such as VistaPrint, you may want to purchase business cards, banners, literature, phone-tree services, apparel, promotion products, etc. You can also purchase branded Libertarian Party promotional items from lpstore.org
- **P.O. Box.** While you can use the LPNY's mailing address for your initial correspondence, you will want to invest in a P.O. Box for your county affiliate to 1) keep your home address private and 2) provide a mailing address for membership that can easily be turned over to your Secretary when the time permits. Both UPS and USPS offer mailboxes, but the USPS is less expensive.
- **Website.** While you may opt to just use your County Affiliate's subpage on the LPNY.org website, you may want to have your own website. Open-source software such as WordPress is popular and very customizable, but you will still need to pay for your domain and web hosting. Hiring someone to build a website for your County Affiliate would also add to the cost.
- **Event fees.** If you choose to participate in events, such as county fairs, local festivals, parades, etc., many of them require fees for you to have an exhibitor/vendor presence.
- **Event insurance.** In addition to the event fees, you may also be required to have insurance. The LPNY has typically had event insurance, so check with the Executive Committee first to see if that is an option.
- **Social media.** Most social media is free, but some social media sites are not, while other free sites have certain paid functions. If you choose to get a MeetUp account, you will have to pay to set up a page for your group, while other sites, like Facebook, will allow you to set up pages for free, but will charge you (based on what you're willing to spend), to run ads and boost specific posts. See *LPNY Guide to Social Media (coming soon)* for more information.

All of these are merely suggestions and what you choose to spend is entirely up to you. Before you do spend anything, check with the LPNY Local Affiliate Development Committee to learn more about resources that may be available to you. If it cannot be covered by the LPNY, but you choose to purchase it anyway, keep an itemized list of expenses to provide to your County Affiliate's Treasurer for record-keeping and possible reimbursement once your County Affiliate is established.

## **FUNDRAISING IN GENERAL**

If you're not asking for money, you're not getting any money. Asking for money sucks, but even a well-designed website with creative donation options only nets so much cash. Any time you collect donations, these funds should be immediately be entrusted to the Treasurer who will record the amount donated for the County Affiliate's records. You can collect funds in four different ways, and the easier you make it, the more people are likely to donate.

- **Pass the hat at meetings.** This is a quick and easy way to gather donations from those most interested in the success of your County Affiliate.
- **Fundraising at events.** This includes actual planned fundraising events or any event you hold in which you collect donations. Any event you hold, there should be a fundraising aspect to it.
- **Fundraising by mail.** This includes drafting a fundraising letter/newsletter/postcard/etc. you send to the enrolled Libertarians in your county to solicit donations for your County Affiliate.
- **Fundraising online.** This includes setting up a donation portal for your website and connecting it to your County Affiliate's bank account to get donations online, which can be promoted on social email and in email marketing campaigns.

### **1. PASS THE HAT AT MEETINGS**

Typically referred to as “passing the hat” - Libertarians who attend meetings, few as they are, tend to throw in a few bucks when they can and this is helpful.

### **2. FUNDRAISING AT EVENTS**

Never miss an opportunity to fundraise. Any event you hold, whether it is a regular meeting, special event, etc., make sure you are ready to take donations. Try this at business meetings and social events. Try hosting events (BBQ, social events), piggyback conventions on fun events, issue-driven sponsorships, speakers, sell tickets, partner with institutions, get corporate sponsors, YouTube Marketing, online merchandise store, piggyback on pre-existing conventions and events, email/phone campaigns. For more information on planning events, especially fundraisers, see *LPNY Guide to Events (coming soon)*.

### **3. FUNDRAISING ONLINE**

Always set up fundraising options wherever you can. If your County Affiliate has a website, set up a system in which they can donate online. Using services such as PayPal, Stripe, and Anedot can help you collect donations. You can also set up a payment processor to collect Bitcoin donations to increase the number of sources for collecting donations. Whenever you are asking for money, whether it is in the mail, an email, or talking to someone, you can tell them that they have the option of donating online, which is often quick and easy for most people.

#### **4. FUNDRAISING BY MAIL**

You may want to send out a letter/postcard/newsletter to your mailing list in order to provide information on your activities and collect donations. Here are some tips for writing a good fundraising letter:

- Use a letterhead with your County Affiliates's contact information, including logo, website, social media, e-mail, phone number, etc. This will help people to communicate with you and your County Affiliate and display professionalism.
- Tell potential donors what the money will be used for. People like to know what their money will be used for, otherwise, why would they give money in the first place?
- Invite them to meetings, events, etc. Some people receiving the letter may want to get involved even more.
- **Include a sign-up form.** If you have room, create a sign-up form that people can use to provide their contact information that you may not already have and indicate any volunteer activities they may be interested in participating. Giving people the chance to get more involved beyond just donating is a great way to grow the organization. Be sure to tell potential donors whom to make checks out to and where they can be sent.
- **Include instructions/link for online donations.** This may be easier for some people.

#### **MANAGING FINANCES**

The Treasurer is primarily responsible for managing the finances of the County Affiliate. Among the jobs of the Treasurer includes the following.

##### **1. REGISTER AN EIN WITH THE IRS**

An EIN is an **Employer Identification Number**. This is necessary for opening a bank account and taking online donations. You will not be able to do these things without it. Use this link to register an EIN:

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>

After you register, you will be given an EIN sent by mail. Make sure you **put this number somewhere safe and do not lose it. Make sure every other officer has a copy of this number so you don't lose it.**

## **2. OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT.**

Opening a bank account is essential to keeping your County Affiliates' finances organized, not only for storing your County Affiliate's funds but a bank account is required to transfer money from online donation platforms such as Anedot and PayPal.

There are some banking institutions that will allow you to open a free business account, so be sure to look out for such features when searching for a bank for your County Affiliate. You may also want to find an interest-free account so you won't have to report interest income as an organization. It is recommended, and sometimes banks require this, that you have at least two signatories attached to the account. This enhances security and improves access in case one individual is unable to access the account. One of the signatories should be the Treasurer.

## **3. FILE CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS**

One of the most important jobs of the Treasurer is to file campaign finance reports. This is done electronically through the New York State Board of Elections website (see: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/CampaignFinance.html>). NYSBOE also provides campaign finance training. See their website for more information.

You will first need to register your County Affiliate as a committee. You need to use the **CF-02 Type 3-7** form, which can be found on the **LPNY Resources Portal**. Once you mail the paperwork, you will be sent a filer ID and PIN#. You will use this to log in to file campaign finance reports.

For more information, see *LPNY Guide to Campaign Finance (coming soon)*.

## **4. SETTING UP ONLINE DONATIONS.**

Using services such as PayPal or Anedot, the Treasurer, if not technically inclined, should enlist the help of someone in the County Affiliate to set up a way to collect donations online. This should be attached to your County Affiliate's website and posted frequently to your social media page(s) and in any literature pertaining to your County Affiliate.

## **5. ORGANIZING FINANCES.**

It is important that you keep the County Affiliate's finances organized. Here are some tips:

- Don't mix personal finances with party finances.
- If you have cash, make sure you keep it in a safe until it can be deposited in the bank.
- Keep a spreadsheet of all transactions and use the data to develop monthly written Treasurer's reports.