



Program Resource Guide

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Introduction:

ACRE® (Action Committee for Rural Electrification®) was organized in 1966 to enable electric cooperative leaders to contribute funds to the campaigns of individuals running for the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. These current and future elected officials speak for and protect the interests of electric cooperative systems and the consumers they serve. Since its founding, ACRE® has contributed millions of dollars to worthy candidates.

ACRE® represents hardworking individuals with a voice, with a vote, and with a commitment to the quality of life provided to them by their electric cooperatives. The participation of electric cooperative consumer-owners is the next logical step in ensuring the voice of electric cooperatives remains strong and effective in these unpredictable times.

ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® is a way to give your residential consumer-owners the opportunity to become politically active by participating in ACRE®. With your help, these consumer-owners will strengthen the backbone of a cooperative grassroots network that can advance policies to secure the future of electric cooperatives and the communities they serve.

This guide gives a detailed look at implementing ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® at your co-op. Participation in ACRE® is fundamental to advancing the cooperative agenda. Electing political leaders who support co-ops and their mission to improve the quality of life for their communities is vital to the future of our program.

Before we get started, there is one important thing to remember: The official and legally registered name of the program is ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® not COPA:



Please keep that in mind as you begin to promote the program at your co-op.

I: Advance Planning/Program Logistics

Before you start publicizing ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action®, your co-op will need to take some steps to make sure the program is legal, desirable and possible. This section talks about the research and groundwork you need to do first for a successful program.

Check Your Bylaws

What is your Cooperative's Definition of a Member?

FEC Advisory Opinion 1999–40 states:

“An incorporated membership organization or cooperative may solicit voluntary contributions to the fund from its executive or administrative personnel, its members and the families thereof.”

The phrase “its members” in this Advisory Opinion means that consumer-owners can be solicited for ACRE contributions and are therefore eligible to contribute to ACRE through the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® program.

The FEC is very clear about its definition of a member. Before implementing ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action, please be certain that your bylaws include the following definition of a member:

Members Are:

- Anyone who is currently satisfying all requirements for membership in your organization.
- Anyone who has affirmatively accepted your organization's invitation to become a member.

They Must:

- Have a significant financial attachment to your cooperative (such as paying your cooperative to supply them with electricity).

OR

- Have significant “organizational attachment” to the cooperative, such as the right to vote for at least one member of the cooperative board of directors, the right to vote on policy issues, or the right to approve the cooperative's annual budget.

Involve Your Board—Get a Resolution

Once you have determined that your consumer-owners are eligible for participation in the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program, there is significant interest, and the Board of Directors has decided to implement the program, it should be formally endorsed.

A sample resolution follows:

Whereas the Board of _____ supports efforts to increase political participation among all rural electric cooperative consumers and; Whereas increased political participation amplifies the consumer's voice and encourages responsible legislation to ensure safe, reliable, affordable electricity and; Whereas political activism is the basic foundation of our democracy. Therefore, be it resolved that the Board strongly endorses implementing the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® program to increase political involvement and support ACRE®, the political action committee of electric cooperatives.

Contact Your PUC

The FEC allows consumer-owners to contribute to ACRE by adding a contribution to their monthly electric bill. However, in some states, the Public Utility Commission (PUC) regulates utility bills. Before implementing the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program at your cooperative, check with your PUC to ensure that your billing system may be used to solicit and collect contributions to a political action committee.

Consult Your Billing Staff

Contributions to ACRE through the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program may be combined with normal monthly bill payments. Contributions may also be made as a deduction from retired capital credits. This can be done either as a reduced credit or as a reduced payment in check form. Consumers may also make a one-time contribution.

Your cooperative may act as a collecting agent for ACRE contributions from your consumer-owners. In order to serve as a collecting agent, you must ensure that systems are in place to collect record and transmit all ACRE contributions efficiently.

Your billing department must be able to adjust the billing system to accommodate the addition of ACRE contributions made in conjunction with monthly bill payments if you choose to make this option available to your consumers.

Train All Staff

It is imperative that all staff know that you are offering the program to your consumer-owners. Staff members who frequently communicate directly with consumers should be able to answer any questions that they may be asked about the program.

II: Collecting Agent/Cooperative Responsibilities

ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® is regulated by the Federal Election Commission (FEC). This means your co-op's actions must be within the boundaries of the law. This section details your responsibilities under federal election law.

These responsibilities fall into three categories: solicitation, collection, and transmittal.

Solicitation

Cooperatives must comply with all solicitation regulations.

- What is a solicitation?
 - Any request for support of the PAC
 - Any encouragement to participate in PAC activities
 - Providing information on how to contribute
- Commercial and industrial members may not participate in ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action.
- Excessive and prohibited contributions cannot be accepted.
 - Excessive: Contributions from individual consumer-owners that exceed \$5,000 per calendar year.
 - Prohibited: Corporate contributions; contributions from foreign nationals.
- All contributions must be voluntary and can be more or less than the suggested guidelines.
- Your cooperative may pay for all administrative costs associated with solicitations. These payments are not considered contributions and do not need to be reported to the FEC.
 - EXAMPLE: Your cooperative may pay for the cost of printing promotional materials and giveaways for the program.
 - EXAMPLE: Your cooperative may pay for the cost of producing a bill stuffer to solicit consumer-owners for contributions to ACRE.
- All solicitations , whether oral or written, must include the following disclaimer statement:

Contributions to the NRECA Action Committee for Rural Electrification® (ACRE®) are not tax deductible. Contributions to ACRE are voluntary and will be used for political purposes. You have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Any contribution guidelines presented are merely suggestions. You are free to contribute more or less than the suggested amounts, or not at all. NRECA will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount contributed or a decision not to contribute.

Collection

There are three ways that your consumer-owners may contribute to ACRE through the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program.

Addition to the Monthly Electric Bill

- Consumer-owners may make one payment for their monthly electric bill payment and their contribution to ACRE.
- Payments may be made by personal check, credit card, or electronic transfer.
- Membership cards must include a signed donor statement ensuring that the funds used to make the bill payment and contribution are personal.
- Contributions to ACRE through the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program must be shown as a separate line item on each monthly electric bill.
- Contributions made in conjunction with monthly electric bill payments can continue until the consumer notifies the cooperative otherwise.
- Yearly renewal cards are unnecessary.

Deduction from Retired Capital Credits

- Contributions made from retired capital credits must be explicitly solicited on your membership form.
- The membership form must also have a separate signature line ensuring that all past electric bill payments made to your cooperative have been made with personal funds.
- Consumer-owners have two different ways to use their retired capital credits to make a contribution to ACRE:
 - If capital credits are refunded in check form, a pre-authorized amount may be deducted from the check.
 - If capital credits appear on the electric bill as a credit toward the payment of the bill, a pre-authorized amount may be deducted from the credit.
- When a consumer-owner receives a statement (check or bill) stating the capital credit earned, there must be a line item stating the amount deducted for a contribution to ACRE.

One-Time Contribution

- One-time contributions can be made by personal check, credit card, or cash.
- Cash contributions may not exceed \$100.00.
- Memberships must be renewed yearly.

Transmittal

Once the contributions are collected, your cooperative may use two procedures to transmit ACRE contributions to NRECA or their state association.

Deposit Contributions into a Transmittal Account

- This account can be set up solely for the deposit and transmittal of contributions collected on behalf of ACRE through the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program.
- The only disbursements that may be made out of this account are those that cover the sum of the month's ACRE contributions.
- Any other expenditure made from this account turns the account into a depository of ACRE and all activities will have to be reported to the FEC.

Deposit Contributions into the Cooperative's Treasury Account

- Contributions to ACRE made through the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program may be temporarily deposited into the cooperative's treasury account.
- Your cooperative must keep separate records for every deposit containing ACRE contributions.
 - Records should include the amount of the contribution, the date of receipt, and the name and address of the source.
- All cash contributions (up to \$100.00 per individual) must be deposited separately so that separate deposit slips can be filed.

Contributions must be forwarded to ACRE or your state association within the following time frames:

Contributions must be forwarded to ACRE within the following time frames:

AMOUNT OF CONTRIBUTION	MUST BE FORWARDED TO ACRE WITHIN...	WITH THE FOLLOWING RECORDS...
\$50.00 or Less	30 Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amount• Date of Receipt• Donor Name and Address
Over \$50.00	10 Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amount• Date of Receipt• Donor Name and Address
Over \$200.00	10 Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amount• Date of Receipt• Donor Name and Address• Donor Occupation and Employer

Your cooperative is responsible for keeping all records on file for three years.

Purpose

To help facilitate the gathering of the necessary data needed to support the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action effort, a required format has been determined. All participants must provide the necessary information in the format defined below. The file can be a fixed format, CSV (comma delimited) or Excel. You can contact the ACRE staff for the template.

FIELD	SIZE	REQUIRED	DESCRIPTION
Unique Identifier	20 char	Yes	A unique identifier for the individual. This is an identifier that should never change for the individual between file submissions.
Prefix	20 char	No	Name Prefix. (ex. Mr., Ms., Dr.)
First Name	30 char	Yes	First Name
Middle Name	30 char	No	Middle Name (or initial)
Last Name	30 char	Yes	Last Name
Suffix	20 char	No	Name Suffix (ex. II, III, Jr., Sr.)
Address Line 1	75 char	Yes	First Line of Address
Address Line 2	75 char	No	Second Line of Address
Address Line 3	75 char	No	Third Line of Address
City	40 char	Yes	Address City
State	2 char	Yes	Address State (two letter abbreviation)
Postal (Zip) Code	10 char	Yes	Address Zip Code (5 or 9 digit)
Contribution Amount	10 char	Yes	Dollar Amount without Dollar Symbol (ex. 2.08)
Date	10 char	Yes	Date of Contribution (In format MM/DD/YYYY, ex. 04/05/2004)
E-mail	80 char	No	E-mail Address
Frequency	2 char	No	Identifies the number of contributions in a year. (one-time or annual = 1, quarterly = 4, monthly = 12)

*Please note, for any new ACRE members, NRECA will assign a unique identifier for each individual, so you can leave that section blank.

III: Marketing the Program to Your Consumers

This section gives you ideas for publicizing ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® to your consumers.

No matter how you decide to unveil the program to your consumers, publicizing the program in advance is essential to your success.

Promote the Program

- **Co-op's Website**—If the website is accessible to commercial and industrial consumers, the content must remain educational, historical and statistical. In other words, you can tell them what ACRE is, the amount it has raised in the past, the candidates to whom it has contributed, the total number of contributors and that it is supported by electric cooperatives, but you cannot ask them for money or to join ACRE.
 - Avoid posting content with words like “join,” “contribute here” or “for more information, please contact...” - all of these are considered solicitations.
 - All solicitation content should be limited to a password-protected website available only to eligible consumer-owners
- **Speeches** – Your CEO's speech at your annual meeting is a great opportunity to discuss the availability and importance of the program. Use this speech as a way to get your consumers excited and direct them to your booth.
- **Newsletters/Bill Stuffers** – Feature stories or columns on how legislation at the state and federal level could affect the way your cooperative does business and serves its consumers. Use these newsletters in the months leading up to your annual meeting and get consumers excited about this new way to become politically involved in their co-op.
- **Paid Ads** – If you choose to introduce ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action at your cooperative's annual meeting, use your paid ads to highlight the availability of the program.
- **At Your Co-op Office** – Make materials such as brochures available to your consumers. Hang up a poster to advertise the program.
- **Free Giveaways** – Brochures and giveaway items are available by contacting your statewide association or ACRE Staff. Banners and a tablecloth for your annual meeting booth are also available on loan from NRECA.
- **\$5 Bill Credit** – You may offer a \$5 bill credit to consumers for first time sign-ups, as long as it fits within the 1/3 rule
 - Money raised needs to be 3 times as much as the value of the gift
 - Example:
 - Co-op purchases a TV as a raffle prize- \$300
 - In order to give away the \$300 TV, the co-op needs to raise \$900 or 3 times the value of the prize
 - For the \$5 bill credit, the consumer must contribute \$15 or more for the co-op to offer it as an incentive

Remember to provide all required disclaimers when soliciting!

Using Your Annual Meeting as a Venue to Involve Your Consumer-Owners in ACRE

You have generated curiosity and excitement in your annual meeting ads and educated your consumer-owners on the availability of the program through your newsletters. Now it is time to really get your consumer-owners involved.

Co-op annual meetings have proven to be a successful venue for introducing ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action to your membership. This yearly event tends to attract your most loyal and involved consumers—the consumers that will be most likely to participate politically on behalf of your cooperative.

Designing a colorful booth to sign up your consumers to ACRE through the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program keeps up the momentum that you have built. Here are some ideas for your booth:

- Have your CEO/GM speak to the consumers about the program and the importance of political action to the co-op during the regularly scheduled business meeting
- Make sure your booth is in a location that will be hard for your consumers to miss. Next to the food or the stage would be ideal!
- Use streamers, bunting, and balloons to make your booth stand out.
- Have materials like brochures, giveaways, and lapel pins on hand at the booth.
- Consider offering an upgraded giveaway to the consumers that sign up.
- Provide business reply envelopes for those consumers who would like to take information home to read.
- Staff the booth with cooperative employees and/or board members who can help answer any questions that your consumers may have about the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program. Booth staff should be informed of local and national legislative issues that could affect your community and consumer-owners.

Thank Contributors

It is very important to thank your consumer-owners for joining you in participating in ACRE through the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program. You might want to consider producing thank-you cards before implementing your program.

NRECA can assist you in the production of thank-you cards; however, a gesture of gratitude that comes from you and your cooperative will have a much greater impact.

A thank you note might also be the place to ask your consumers to take future action on behalf of your cooperative.

Follow Up

After the annual meeting is over, the effort to help your consumers contribute to ACRE must continue. Follow up with your consumers through articles in your newsletter or magazine and with bill stuffers. All consumer-owners who contribute to ACRE will also receive *The Co-op Owners for Political Action Report*, a newsletter which will keep them abreast of national legislative issues.

Ask your consumer-owners who have already joined to take their participation to the next level by sending e-mails or letters to their members of Congress on issues pertinent to your cooperative.

It is important to keep your consumers involved after they make a contribution to ACRE. They will become your strongest allies and will widen the grassroots network of electric cooperative employees and consumers.

The most politically effective organizations are those with the ability to make the strong political contributions through PAC participation, and that are also backed by a strong and educated active grassroots network. It is important to nurture your consumer-owners' interest in political participation and the issues facing their cooperative to involve them in your grassroots advocacy efforts.

The key to cultivating this interest is keeping your consumer-owners informed about what is going on with ACRE and what issues are affecting their cooperative.

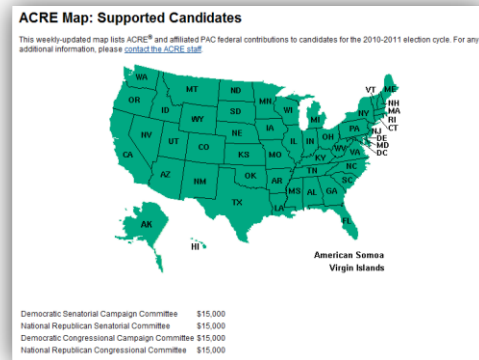
NRECA Has Resources You Can Use

Keep in mind that NRECA has many resources available for you, including an ACRE banner, informational brochures, sample bill stuffers and posters. If you think of something else that would help, give the ACRE office a call at 703-907-5826.

IV: Available Resources

Resources about ACRE can be found on Cooperative.com in the ACRE section under the Government Affairs tab. Available resources include:

- ACRE Videos Available for Download
<https://www.cooperative.com/library/video/Pages/ACRE2014.aspx>
<https://www.cooperative.com/library/video/Pages/ACRETestimonial.aspx>
- ACRE Annual Reports
- Map of ACRE Supported Candidates
- Monthly Reports
- Co-op Owners Starter Checklist, Logos & Sample Campaigns
- ACRE Governance
- PowerPoint Presentations
- Much more...



Co-op Owners Starter Checklist:



The ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® Program Checklist

Thanks for your interest in ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action! To really make the program work at your co-op, you need to take your time and seriously consider what you're doing at every step of the process. Co-op Owners involves a long-term commitment from you and your co-op, and the steps listed here will take about six months to complete. Remember, NRECA staff can help you every step of the way. Good luck and thank you for your support of ACRE!

Start the process

- Assign an employee to Co-op Owners (NOT a volunteer position, should be a part of employee's job description and everyday responsibilities)
- Your co-op will be the collecting agent for ACRE contributions from your consumer-owners
- Ensure system is in place to collect, record and transmit all ACRE contributions efficiently

Make sure the program will work at your cooperative

- Get a Board resolution encouraging people to join Co-op Owners
- Check PUC regulations (call PUC or statewide) to be sure you can add Co-op Owners to the bill
- Work with billing department to make sure they can add an item to the bill

Get ready to introduce Co-op Owners to your members

- Talk with all ACRE members so they know what the program is - staff members who frequently communicate directly with consumers should be able to answer questions about the program
- Read the FEC solicitation rules
- Find an event (such as the annual meeting) to focus your efforts

Promote Co-op Owners to target audience before asking people to join

- Bill staffer
- Information in meeting announcement
- Newsletter article
- Magazine article
- Issue-specific communications (i.e. EPA campaign)

Have a Co-op Owners rollout

- Give out brochures
- Describe program to audience
- Ask people to sign up right then
- Collect brochures so members don't have to do anything other than sign up

After the rollout...

- Collect money from bill additions or checks
- Send money to ACRE Lockbox: PO Box 758778 Baltimore, MD 21275
- Follow up with new members, say thank you and let them know that their contribution makes a difference
- Ask new members to ask their eligible friends to join
- Ask your consumer-owners to take their participation to the next level by getting involved with grassroots advocacy (letters or emails to legislators on issues important to the co-op)

For more information, call Alden Knowlton at (703) 907-5886.

Solicitation Guidelines Two-Pager:



Action Committee for Rural Electrification® Legal Guidelines on Solicitations and Collecting Contributions

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) limits who we can and cannot ask to join ACRE. This short primer is intended to be a refresher on FEC rules. It is not a full recitation of the law. If you have specific questions or would like to receive a copy of the ACRE procedures manual, please contact the ACRE staff.

ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS (RESTRICTED CLASS)

You can solicit or invite the following people to join ACRE:

- Directors.
- Salaried employees with policymaking, managerial, professional, or supervisory responsibilities.
- Any consumer-owner of an electric co-op that belongs to NRECA
 - This is an important distinction that trumps other restrictions on solicitations. If an employee receives electricity from an electric co-op that belongs to NRECA, he or she may be solicited and is eligible to join ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action®.
- Spouses and families of eligible individuals.
 - While there is no minimum age, minors (under age 18) must knowingly make the decision to contribute and have some ownership or control over the money they use.

Rules

- Any legal method of solicitation.
- Unlimited number of solicitations.
- Any legal method of contribution, including payroll deduction or personal checks.
 - Directors may contribute using their per diem.
 - Consumer-owners may contribute through their electric bill.

INELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS (NON-RESTRICTED CLASS) *

You cannot solicit or invite the following people to join ACRE:

- Non-exempt hourly employees who are not consumer-owners of an electric co-op.
- Salaried foremen with direct supervision over hourly employees (unless they are consumer-owners of an electric co-op that belongs to NRECA or have other managerial duties).
- **EXAMPLE: manager of fast food establishment has "other" duties besides management of people such as preparing payroll or ordering food. This class can be solicited.**
- Individuals, such as consultants or outside attorneys, who are not salaried employees (unless they are consumer-owners of an electric co-op that belongs to NRECA).
- Consumers of a public power district.
- Individuals who are not citizens of the United States and don't possess a "green card"
- The general public.

Rules

- These people may not be solicited for contributions to ACRE.
- These people may not be members of ACRE.
- Any event that includes ineligible individuals may only provide information about ACRE that is educational, historical or statistical.

RULES ON SOLICITATIONS

- All solicitations, written or oral, **must** contain the following legal notice:

Contributions to the NRECA Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) are not tax deductible for federal income tax purposes. Contributions to ACRE are voluntary and will be used for political purposes. You have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Any contribution guidelines presented are merely suggestions. You are free to contribute more or less than the suggested amount, or not at all. NRECA will not fear or discriminate anyone by reason of the amount contributed or a decision not to contribute.

Raffles & Auctions

- Check your state laws pertaining to raffles and auctions.
- Individuals may donate a prize (fair market value must be determined for reporting to the FEC as an in-kind contribution if the item is worth over \$200).
- If entry purchases item for raffle or auction, the "1/3 rule" applies. See example below.

Auction or Raffle Item - Purchase price	\$100.00
Amount raised from raffle/auction	\$600.00
1/3 of the amount raised	(\$200.00)
The difference between 1/3 of the amount raised and the value of the raffle prize which needs to be reimbursed to entry	\$100.00

- In order to give away the \$300.00 item, you need to raise \$900.00 or **2 times** the value of the item.
- The audience that may participate in a raffle or auction is the **restricted class only**.

RULES ON COLLECTING CONTRIBUTIONS

- The eligible individuals may use payroll deduction, personal check, credit card or cash.
- Cash contributions cannot exceed \$500.00.
- Contributions over \$50.00 must be forwarded to ACRE within 10 days.
- Contributions of \$50.00 or less must be forwarded to ACRE within 30 days.
- Contribution records forwarded to ACRE must include:
 - The amount of the individual's contribution
 - The date of receipt
 - The donor's name and address
 - The donor's occupation and employer (when the amount is over \$200)
 - For donations that aggregate over \$200 in a calendar year, either the home or work address must be provided, will be reported to the FEC and are publicly available.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions on solicitations or contributions, please do not hesitate to contact your state association or the ACRE staff.

Alisa Whelan
703.907.5826
alisa.whelan@nreca.com

Ann Lewis
703.907.6917
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Alden Knowlton
703.907.5886
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Legally, the FEC allows hourly employees to volunteer to join ACRE, but due to strict contribution collection requirements and the FEC's prohibition on acknowledging their employees for their contribution, ACRE is unable to accept their membership under no circumstances may contributions from non-U.S. citizens be solicited or accepted. If the nationality of the contributor (in blood, foreign address or bank account), an inquiry must be made to ensure that the contributor is indeed a U.S. citizen.

V: Graphic Standards

The following is important information about your rights and obligations in using the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® registered trademark. Please review this information carefully.

ACRE® and ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® are federally registered trademarks of NRECA. ACRE represents a varied and geographically diverse membership with a single voice. The ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action name and logo are clear symbols of one common goal: to elect public officials to federal office who understand the unique issues affecting electric cooperatives. All communications regarding ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action represent not only one cooperative; they represent the goals and principles of the entire ACRE program.

To protect the rights and ability of all ACRE members to use these trademarks, it is vitally important that the entire ACRE membership is communicating clearly and consistently. There are both legal and public image consequences for inappropriate or inconsistent trademark use. Therefore proper and consistent use is essential.

Only NRECA Voting Members are authorized to use the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action trademark. Any proposed alteration of the trademark must first be approved by NRECA. Your participation in the ACRE program constitutes your agreement to follow these standards. You also agree to provide, if NRECA requests, samples showing your use of the trademarks so that NRECA can determine conformity to these standards and specifications.

For more detailed information on the size and shape of the logo, typography, color, or using the logo with other trademarks or co-op names, please visit the ACRE page on Cooperative.com.

It is your commitment that makes ACRE one of the most successful and reputable political action committees in the nation. Please continue to support ACRE by following these standards consistently. If you have any questions about using the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action trademark, or are seeking NRECA's approval to use an ACRE trademark in a way other than as described, please contact the ACRE staff at (703) 907-5826 or ACRE@nreca.coop.

Proper Use of the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® Trademarks

- The logo must remain a separate trademark and should not be altered or incorporated within your own state organization or co-op logo or any other word marks, logos, designs, or slogans.
- The logo should only be used to identify services promoting the interests of rural electrification and associated promotional items such as mugs and T-shirts.

Use of the Registration Symbol

The registration symbol ® must be used every time the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action logo appears. It should appear to the right of the logo after the word “Action.” When using the word marks “ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action” the registration symbol must be used at least the first time the word mark appears in the text. A more conservative approach is to use the registration symbol every time a word mark appears in a document—this is appropriate use of the registration symbol, but it is not necessary.

Use of the registration symbol serves an important function: it alerts the public to NRECA’s ownership rights in the trademark.

How the Logo Should Look

The ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action logo has two components—the ACRE logo and the Co-op Owners for Political Action logo. Both components must always be used when referring to the program.

Together they serve as a consistent, recognizable image representing the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program.

Incorporating the existing ACRE logo clearly establishes the fact that this new consumer-owner program is associated with NRECA’s ACRE program. The following figures depict the acceptable forms of the logo. Any other proposed form must receive prior authorization from NRECA.



VI: Frequently Asked Questions

Can consumers pay their electric bills and contribute to ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action in a single payment, no matter what type of payment?

Yes. As long as funds are drawn from the consumer-owner's personal account, the electric bill and ACRE contribution may be combined into a single payment. To ensure that personal funds are being used, each combined payment should include a donor statement verifying that the payment was made with personal funds.

What if the contribution is made by a deduction from the consumer-owner's retired capital credits?

Again, consumer-owners must provide a statement ensuring that ALL previous bill payments leading up to the capital credit refund were made with personal funds. Your co-op must show, on the check for the amount of the returned capital credit or on the bill that denotes the credit, how much was deducted as a contribution to ACRE.

What records must my cooperative keep and for how long?

All records must be kept on file for three years. The records include copies of receipts from individual contributions including the amount received, the date of receipt, and the name and address of the source. For credit card receipts, a copy of the credit card authorization form should be kept on file. For cash contributions, keep a copy of the deposit slips, as well.

Can consumer-owners decide to stop their contribution to ACRE through the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program at any time?

Yes. Contributions may be stopped at any time by contacting the billing department of your cooperative in writing.

What is our responsibility if we receive an excessive or prohibited contribution?

An excessive contribution would be anything over \$5,000 per consumer-owner. A prohibited contribution would be any corporate contribution or contribution from a foreign national. If one of these situations arises, the cooperative (acting as the collecting agent) must either return or deposit the questionable payment within 10 days of receipt while its legality is researched. After the check is deposited, excessive funds must be returned within 60 days. If a contribution is deemed prohibited, it must be returned within 30 days. It is also advisable to keep a written record of the questionable contribution including why it may be illegal.

As a collecting agent, are we responsible for reporting anything to the FEC?

No. Your cooperative is only responsible for collecting, recording, and transmitting contributions to ACRE within the time limits set forth by the FEC. The cooperative can act in this capacity without actually becoming a political committee or incurring the public reporting responsibilities for PACs.

Are administrative costs associated with ACRE paid by my cooperative considered contributions that must be reported to the FEC?

No. As a collecting agent, your cooperative may pay for all expenses associated with soliciting and transmitting contributions to ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action. These payments are not considered contributions and need not be reported.

We are considering only making a onetime payment option available to our consumers. Is this advisable?

ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action is not a one-size-fits- all program. One-time contributions are a very viable option for many cooperatives. However, offering your consumer-owners the ability to make a one-time contribution necessitates that you solicit these consumers on a yearly basis. When consumer-owners combine their monthly electric bill payment with their contribution to ACRE, membership renewal is not necessary. The contribution continues until the consumer-owner advises your cooperative that he or she wishes to stop donating.