

Frédéric's E-Gazette

Q&A 9-21-2017

Q: Are members allowed to use any of the Society's resources (food, clothing, etc.) for their own personal use?

A: In every set of nationally approved bylaws, the following paragraph exists:

Compensation: "No part of the property belonging to this entity, nor its net earnings or income shall ever inure to the benefit of any member or individual, or any person having a personal or private interest in the activities of the entity. There shall be no fee or honorarium for Conference service beyond reimbursement of expenses." One example of the above is that members cannot receive a financial benefit from their involvement in the works of the Society. Some people think this refers to money only, but it does not. It refers to any resources that belong to the Society. Whether it is food, clothing, furniture, medications, or money, the members of the Society are not to take any for their personal use. The fact is that the members are not to benefit from the availability of any resources purchased or received as donations for the poor. For example, a member or volunteer may not take merchandise donated to a store for their own personal use. Another example, a member cannot go to the Conference food pantry and simply take food for their own use or use Conference gift vouchers to get things for their personal use. This also refers to using the Society's name or accounts in order to acquire something that will benefit an individual member. For example, a member cannot go to a food bank and under the name of St. Vincent de Paul purchase food for their own use.

Q: Can you provide your advice and guidance regarding a Conference's desire to open a credit card account? The Conferences share the same taxpayer ID as the Council, we are NOT using the National office's EIN.

A: This falls under the realm of a Council decision. With the Conference using the Council's EIN, the Council is in a "doing business as..." relationship with the Conference. Technically, the Council is the legal entity; so use of the credit card places an ultimate obligation on the Council.