

ACCPAC Frequently Asked Questions



Contributing to ACCPAC

Q: How is investing in ACCPAC an investment in my practice, my profession, and my future?

A: The 111th Congress will debate and potentially enact laws on many issues affecting cardiology including: health information technology; comparative effectiveness research; quality and appropriateness criteria; and potentially harmful cuts in Medicare reimbursement. It is imperative for the ACC to have a seat at the table during these debates. With our bipartisan political action committee, we are able to support members of Congress and candidates who are helpful to the cardiovascular community. This is why supporting ACCPAC is a direct investment in the future and preservation of our profession.

Q: How will ACCPAC use the funds given by contributors like me?

A: 100% of personal contributions to ACCPAC are used to support and elect pro-physician members of Congress. Donations from personal bank accounts are referred to as “hard dollars” and are limited to \$5,000 per person. The Federal Election Commission allows political action committees to use an unlimited amount of “hard dollars” to support the Federal election process. Each year, our PAC Board reviews and approves a slate of candidates to receive these funds. The disbursement list presented to the Board is comprised of members of key committees and subcommittees as well as congressional leadership. Consideration is also given to members of Congress who are physicians or particularly supportive of the physician community. If you have a particular federal candidate that you’d like the Board to review for consideration, please contact Nick Morse at nmorse@acc.org.

Q. Will ACCPAC support members of Congress who vote against our interests?

A. This sometimes happens. It is possible that a member who does not support us in one area will be our biggest champion in another. Also, it is important to continue dialogue with members of Congress in the hope that we can change their viewpoints when necessary, or at least be given the opportunity to explain our positions on issues.

Q: If 100% of our contributions are used in the federal election process, then how does ACCPAC pay for administrative costs?

A: It is true that 100% of your personal contributions are used in the federal election process. However, sometimes members opt to send checks from a corporate bank account. These contributions are flagged as “soft dollars.” The FEC mandates that PACs are unable to use corporate (“soft dollar”) funds to support members of Congress. In prior years nearly 40% of contributions to ACCPAC have been soft dollars. Though we highly encourage members to send personal funds, soft dollars may be used to pay for administrative costs.

Q: I already make political contributions to candidates for Federal office, why should I also contribute to ACCPAC?

A: ACCPAC understands that some members have personal relationships and ties to congressional candidates. However, we also urge you to consider making a contribution to the PAC. When ACCPAC makes a disbursement to a candidate's campaign, it reminds lawmakers that there is a large and growing constituency of cardiologists who are both politically aware and actively involved. The collective voice ensures lawmakers that we appreciate their support and role in ensuring the health of every American.

Q. Is my contribution tax deductible?

A. Contributions are voluntary and are not tax-deductible.

Q. How much can I give to ACCPAC?

A. An individual may give up \$5,000 per year to a political action committee. A husband and wife have separate \$5,000 contribution limits.

Q. Is there a minimum contribution level?

A. No contribution is too small to further ACCPAC's efforts.

Q. How can I contribute to ACCPAC?

A. ACCPAC offers you several options when deciding to contribute. You may (1) write a personal check, (2) contribute with your personal Visa, Mastercard, Discover, or American Express credit card, (3) make an online contribution by signing in at www.accpacweb.org, or (4) sign up for a periodic contribution from your credit card on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual basis.

Q. How do I find out more information about ACCPAC?

A. Our website, www.accpacweb.org, offers information on candidate disbursements, fundraising updates, and legislative issues. You may also contact a member of our staff: Nick Morse at nmorse@acc.org or Kaycee Smith at ksmith@acc.org. If you have questions you'd like to address over the phone, please feel free to call us at (202) 375-6665.

Participating in Fundraisers & Political Events

Q. Can I participate in a fundraiser with my member of Congress?

A. Absolutely. Getting ACCPAC members to events with their lawmakers is a top priority of ACCPAC. If you would like to attend a fundraiser, contact Nick Morse or Kaycee Smith.

Q. Can ACCPAC assist in sending me to a fundraiser for a state elected official?

A. No. According to our bylaws, ACCPAC is a federal political action committee and only supports candidates seeking federal office. If you would like to support a candidate for an elected position in your state, please contact your state's Chapter Governor or Chapter Administrator.

Q. Do I have to come to DC to attend a fundraiser?

A. No. Every member of Congress holds fundraising events in his/her own district on a regular basis. ACCPAC is happy to help members attend these events whenever possible.

Q. Can I bring someone to the event as my guest?

A. Typically, no. Fundraisers and political events are not like other meetings- it is not okay to bring additional attendees. In most cases, bringing more people requires writing a bigger check.

Q. Is it possible for me to host a fundraiser honoring my member of Congress?

A. Yes. If you are interested in hosting an event for your lawmaker, ACCPAC is happy to assist.

Q. Instead of attending a fundraiser, can I just drop off a contribution to my member of Congress at his/her congressional office?

A. NO! By law, a lawmaker's fundraising and campaign operation must be kept separate from his/her official congressional functions. You should NEVER deliver or even discuss a campaign contribution in a congressional office. You may drop off a check at a lawmaker's *campaign* office. For assistance in locating a campaign office, contact Nick Morse or Kaycee Smith.

Q. If I bring a check to the event, to whom should it be given?

A. Members of Congress typically have fundraising staff present to collect checks at political events. The lawmaker's chief of staff is also authorized to handle contributions. However, a lawmaker's legislative staff (health LA, etc.) may not accept checks.

Q. Is there anything I shouldn't say when attending an event or communicating with a lawmaker?

A. YES! When participating in meetings, political events, or any form of communication with a member of Congress, NEVER make a connection between the lawmaker's actions or votes and campaign contributions. Such *quid pro quo* conversations are extremely unethical and can have serious ramifications.

Q. Aside from writing a check, what are some of the ways for me to get involved?

A. There are many different ways to become involved and develop a relationship with your federal legislators. ACC staff encourages you to seek their assistance to facilitate any or all of the following

- Deliver an ACCPAC check in your home state
- Host a fundraiser for your member of Congress with your colleagues
- Schedule a tour of your practice and ACCPAC check presentation
- Attend your legislator's local town hall meetings and/or fundraisers
- Arrange meetings with your legislators during district work periods ("recess")
- Set up a fundraiser among your colleagues to benefit ACCPAC

Q. This all seems very complicated. How do I make sense of all this?

A. PAC staff are happy to assist you in all your advocacy efforts, especially in determining how to effectively foster relationships with Congress. Please don't hesitate to contact Nick Morse or Kaycee Smith with any questions.