



FMA-PAC 101

“What is the Federal Managers Association PAC?”

What does it do?

Political fundraising and campaign finance reform remains a contentious issue. Elected officials have understandably mixed views. Some measures of reform have been passed into law in the last few years concerning individual contributions, but there is no end in sight to the discussion of campaign finance reform, with the costs of political campaigns continuing to escalate at an unprecedented pace.

While many of these laws have been challenged in the courts, the Supreme Court has consistently maintained a strong position that an individual’s money is as good as his/her voice. Pooling those voices into one political action group is an effective way of increasing the influence of an individual’s interests. During the debate, the term “PAC” (Political Action Committee) has remained an integral piece of the puzzle. So what is a PAC and why does the Federal Managers Association have one?

WHAT IS A PAC?

Political action committees provide groups of people with similar interests and political goals the opportunity to pool their financial resources and voice their opinions. PACs allow everyday citizens to participate more effectively in the political process, and work to elect leaders that represent their interests.

The Federal Election Campaign Act prohibits organizations such as FMA from using general treasury funds to make contributions or expenditures in connection with federal elections. However, organizations may legally participate in federal election activities in many ways. The law permits them to set up a political committee that may make contributions to federal candidates. Federal election law refers to such a committee as a “separate segregated fund” (SSF), which is more commonly called a “political action committee” or PAC.

Federal campaign finance law requires that membership dues and PAC funds remain in separate accounts and dues cannot be transferred into PAC accounts. FMA relies solely on its members’ contributions to keep FMA-PAC alive.

An organization that sponsors a PAC is called a “connected organization.” The connected organization may use its general fund to pay for the costs of operating and raising money for the PAC or the SSF may pay its own expenses. The connected organization may also control the committee’s management, appoint its officers and decide how to raise and spend



the PAC's funds. All PACs must register with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and have a treasurer before it accepts contributions or makes expenditures.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO ONCE IT IS IN THE PAC?

The FMA-PAC money is most often used to attend fundraisers for Members of Congress who support and fight for FMA positions. These are generally Members who have sponsored or cosponsored legislation that supports our membership. Fundraisers are an opportunity to foster relations with lawmakers and to keep federal managers and their concerns at the forefront of legislators' minds. Attending local fundraisers allows FMA members more face time with a Member of Congress, and enables FMA to gain the attention of busy congressional staffers. Over time, this can create a strong relationship between FMA members and their congressional delegations. Low administrative costs mean that almost 100% of the money donated to FMA-PAC goes to congressional candidates.

HOW CAN YOU GIVE TO THE FMA-PAC?

Contributions to FMA-PAC may be made via payroll deduction, cash, check or credit/debit card. An individual may donate up to \$10,000 per election cycle to a PAC (\$5,000 in the primary and \$5,000 in the general election). Contributions must be voluntary and the amount given, or the refusal to give, may not result in any benefit or disadvantage to the person being solicited. Contributions to FMA-PAC may only be made by FMA Members. We strongly encourage members give to PAC via payroll deduction to allow FMA to proactively analyze planned giving strategies from year to year and cycle to cycle.

START GIVING TO FMA-PAC NOW!

In order to continue to be a player in the political arena, it is imperative that members contribute to the FMA-PAC. Naturally, the larger the contribution the better, but any contribution is helpful.

FMA highly recommends donating via payroll deduction, in which a small static contribution is automatically withdrawn from your paycheck each pay period. A small donation of even \$5 per pay check would guarantee a steady stream of revenue to the FMA-PAC and the ability to put our money where our mouth is.

Remember that membership dues are not used for the FMA-PAC, and the PAC's existence relies solely on member contributions.

Without the FMA-PAC, we will NOT be able to achieve the legislative successes that we have enjoyed.

If you have any questions, please contact FMA-PAC Treasurer Greg Stanford at gstanford@fedmanagers.org or (703) 683-8700.