

the total rents received or accrued under the lease.

(b) A corporation described in section 501(c)(2) cannot accumulate income and retain its exemption, but it must turn over the entire amount of such income, less expenses, to an organization which is itself exempt from tax under section 501(a).

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11737, Nov. 26, 1960, as amended by T.D. 7658, 45 FR 33972, May 21, 1980]

**§ 1.501(c)(3)-1 Organizations organized and operated for religious, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary, or educational purposes, or for the prevention of cruelty to children or animals.**

(a) *Organizational and operational tests.* (1) In order to be exempt as an organization described in section 501(c)(3), an organization must be both organized and operated exclusively for one or more of the purposes specified in such section. If an organization fails to meet either the organizational test or the operational test, it is not exempt.

(2) The term *exempt purpose or purposes*, as used in this section, means any purpose or purposes specified in section 501(c)(3), as defined and elaborated in paragraph (d) of this section.

(b) *Organizational test*—(1) *In general.* (i) An organization is organized exclusively for one or more exempt purposes only if its articles of organization (referred to in this section as its *articles*) as defined in subparagraph (2) of this paragraph:

(A) Limit the purposes of such organization to one or more exempt purposes; and

(B) Do not expressly empower the organization to engage, otherwise than as an insubstantial part of its activities, in activities which in themselves are not in furtherance of one or more exempt purposes.

(ii) In meeting the organizational test, the organization's purposes, as stated in its articles, may be as broad as, or more specific than, the purposes stated in section 501(c)(3). Therefore, an organization which, by the terms of its articles, is formed *for literary and scientific purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Code* shall, if it otherwise meets the requirements in

this paragraph, be considered to have met the organizational test. Similarly, articles stating that the organization is created solely *to receive contributions and pay them over to organizations which are described in section 501(c)(3) and exempt from taxation under section 501(a)* are sufficient for purposes of the organizational test. Moreover, it is sufficient if the articles set for the purpose of the organization to be the operation of a school for adult education and describe in detail the manner of the operation of such school. In addition, if the articles state that the organization is formed for *charitable purposes*, such articles ordinarily shall be sufficient for purposes of the organizational test (see subparagraph (5) of this paragraph for rules relating to construction of terms).

(iii) An organization is not organized exclusively for one or more exempt purposes if its articles expressly empower it to carry on, otherwise than as an insubstantial part of its activities, activities which are not in furtherance of one or more exempt purposes, even though such organization is, by the terms of such articles, created for a purpose that is no broader than the purposes specified in section 501(c)(3). Thus, an organization that is empowered by its articles *to engage in a manufacturing business, or to engage in the operation of a social club* does not meet the organizational test regardless of the fact that its articles may state that such organization is created *for charitable purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Code*.

(iv) In no case shall an organization be considered to be organized exclusively for one or more exempt purposes, if, by the terms of its articles, the purposes for which such organization is created are broader than the purposes specified in section 501(c)(3). The fact that the actual operations of such an organization have been exclusively in furtherance of one or more exempt purposes shall not be sufficient to permit the organization to meet the organizational test. Similarly, such an organization will not meet the organizational test as a result of statements or other evidence that the members

thereof intend to operate only in furtherance of one or more exempt purposes.

(v) Unless otherwise prescribed by applicable regulations or other guidance published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin, an organization must, in order to establish its exemption, submit a detailed statement of its proposed activities with and as a part of its application for exemption (see § 1.501(a)-1(b)).

(2) *Articles of organization.* For purposes of this section, the term *articles of organization* or *articles* includes the trust instrument, the corporate charter, the articles of association, or any other written instrument by which an organization is created.

(3) *Authorization of legislative or political activities.* An organization is not organized exclusively for one or more exempt purposes if its articles expressly empower it:

(i) To devote more than an insubstantial part of its activities to attempting to influence legislation by propaganda or otherwise; or

(ii) Directly or indirectly to participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office; or

(iii) To have objectives and to engage in activities which characterize it as an *action* organization as defined in paragraph (c)(3) of this section.

The terms used in subdivisions (i), (ii), and (iii) of this subparagraph shall have the meanings provided in paragraph (c)(3) of this section. An organization's articles will not violate the provisions of paragraph (b)(3)(i) of this section even though the organization's articles expressly empower it to make the election provided for in section 501(h) with respect to influencing legislation and, only if it so elects, to make lobbying or grass roots expenditures that do not normally exceed the ceiling amounts prescribed by section 501(h)(2) (B) and (D).

(4) *Distribution of assets on dissolution.* An organization is not organized exclusively for one or more exempt purposes unless its assets are dedicated to an exempt purpose. An organization's assets will be considered dedicated to an exempt purpose, for example, if, upon dis-

solution, such assets would, by reason of a provision in the organization's articles or by operation of law, be distributed for one or more exempt purposes, or to the Federal Government, or to a State or local government, for a public purpose, or would be distributed by a court to another organization to be used in such manner as in the judgment of the court will best accomplish the general purposes for which the dissolved organization was organized. However, an organization does not meet the organizational test if its articles or the law of the State in which it was created provide that its assets would, upon dissolution, be distributed to its members or shareholders.

(5) *Construction of terms.* The law of the State in which an organization is created shall be controlling in construing the terms of its articles. However, any organization which contends that such terms have under State law a different meaning from their generally accepted meaning must establish such special meaning by clear and convincing reference to relevant court decisions, opinions of the State attorney-general, or other evidence of applicable State law.

(6) *Applicability of the organizational test.* A determination by the Commissioner that an organization is described in section 501(c)(3) and exempt under section 501(a) will not be granted after July 26, 1959, regardless of when the application is filed, unless such organization meets the organizational test prescribed by this paragraph (b). If, before July 27, 1959, an organization has been determined by the Commissioner or district director to be exempt as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) or in a corresponding provision of prior law and such determination has not been revoked before such date, the fact that such organization does not meet the organizational test prescribed by this paragraph (b) shall not be a basis for revoking such determination. Accordingly, an organization that has been determined to be exempt before July 27, 1959, and which does not seek a new determination of exemption is not required to amend its articles of organization to conform to the rules of this paragraph (b), but any organization

that seeks a determination of exemption after July 26, 1959, must have articles of organization that meet the rules of this paragraph (b). For the rules relating to whether an organization determined to be exempt before July 27, 1959, is organized exclusively for one or more exempt purposes, see 26 CFR (1939) 39.101(6)-1 (Regulations 118) as made applicable to the Code by Treasury Decision 6091, approved August 16, 1954 (19 FR 5167; 1954-2 CB 47).

(c) *Operational test*—(1) *Primary activities*. An organization will be regarded as *operated exclusively* for one or more exempt purposes only if it engages primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of such exempt purposes specified in section 501(c)(3). An organization will not be so regarded if more than an insubstantial part of its activities is not in furtherance of an exempt purpose.

(2) *Distribution of earnings*. An organization is not operated exclusively for one or more exempt purposes if its net earnings inure in whole or in part to the benefit of private shareholders or individuals. For the definition of the words *private shareholder or individual*, see paragraph (c) of § 1.501(a)-1.

(3) *Action organizations*. (i) An organization is not operated exclusively for one or more exempt purposes if it is an *action* organization as defined in subdivisions (ii), (iii), or (iv) of this subparagraph.

(ii) An organization is an *action* organization if a substantial part of its activities is attempting to influence legislation by propaganda or otherwise. For this purpose, an organization will be regarded as attempting to influence legislation if the organization:

(a) Contacts, or urges the public to contact, members of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation; or

(b) Advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation.

The term *legislation*, as used in this subdivision, includes action by the Congress, by any State legislature, by any local council or similar governing body, or by the public in a referendum, initiative, constitutional amendment, or similar procedure. An organization will not fail to meet the operational test merely because it advocates, as an

insubstantial part of its activities, the adoption or rejection of legislation. An organization for which the expenditure test election of section 501(h) is in effect for a taxable year will not be considered an *action* organization by reason of this paragraph (c)(3)(ii) for that year if it is not denied exemption from taxation under section 501(a) by reason of section 501(h).

(iii) An organization is an *action* organization if it participates or intervenes, directly or indirectly, in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

The term *candidate for public office* means an individual who offers himself, or is proposed by others, as a contestant for an elective public office, whether such office be national, State, or local. Activities which constitute participation or intervention in a political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate include, but are not limited to, the publication or distribution of written or printed statements or the making of oral statements on behalf of or in opposition to such a candidate.

(iv) An organization is an *action* organization if it has the following two characteristics: (a) Its main or primary objective or objectives (as distinguished from its incidental or secondary objectives) may be attained only by legislation or a defeat of proposed legislation; and (b) it advocates, or campaigns for, the attainment of such main or primary objective or objectives as distinguished from engaging in nonpartisan analysis, study, or research and making the results thereof available to the public. In determining whether an organization has such characteristics, all the surrounding facts and circumstances, including the articles and all activities of the organization, are to be considered.

(v) An *action* organization, described in subdivisions (ii) or (iv) of this subparagraph, though it cannot qualify under section 501(c)(3), may nevertheless qualify as a social welfare organization under section 501(c)(4) if it meets the requirements set out in paragraph (a) of § 1.501(c)(4)-1.

(d) *Exempt purposes*—(1) *In general*. (i) An organization may be exempt as an

organization described in section 501(c)(3) if it is organized and operated exclusively for one or more of the following purposes:

- (a) Religious,
- (b) Charitable,
- (c) Scientific,
- (d) Testing for public safety,
- (e) Literary,
- (f) Educational, or
- (g) Prevention of cruelty to children or animals.

(ii) An organization is not organized or operated exclusively for one or more of the purposes specified in subdivision (i) of this subparagraph unless it serves a public rather than a private interest. Thus, to meet the requirement of this subdivision, it is necessary for an organization to establish that it is not organized or operated for the benefit of private interests such as designated individuals, the creator or his family, shareholders of the organization, or persons controlled, directly or indirectly, by such private interests.

(iii) *Examples.* The following examples illustrate the requirement of paragraph (d)(1)(ii) of this section that an organization serve a public rather than a private interest:

*Example 1.* (i) O is an educational organization the purpose of which is to study history and immigration. O's educational activities include sponsoring lectures and publishing a journal. The focus of O's historical studies is the genealogy of one family, tracing the descent of its present members. O actively solicits for membership only individuals who are members of that one family. O's research is directed toward publishing a history of that family that will document the pedigrees of family members. A major objective of O's research is to identify and locate living descendants of that family to enable those descendants to become acquainted with each other.

(ii) O's educational activities primarily serve the private interests of members of a single family rather than a public interest. Therefore, O is operated for the benefit of private interests in violation of the restriction on private benefit in paragraph (d)(1)(ii) of this section. Based on these facts and circumstances, O is not operated exclusively for exempt purposes and, therefore, is not described in section 501(c)(3).

*Example 2.* (i) O is an art museum. O's principal activity is exhibiting art created by a group of unknown but promising local artists. O's activity, including organized tours of its art collection, promotes the arts. O is

governed by a board of trustees unrelated to the artists whose work O exhibits. All of the art exhibited is offered for sale at prices set by the artist. Each artist whose work is exhibited has a consignment arrangement with O. Under this arrangement, when art is sold, the museum retains 10 percent of the selling price to cover the costs of operating the museum and gives the artist 90 percent.

(ii) The artists in this situation directly benefit from the exhibition and sale of their art. As a result, the principal activity of O serves the private interests of these artists. Because O gives 90 percent of the proceeds from its sole activity to the individual artists, the direct benefits to the artists are substantial and O's provision of these benefits to the artists is more than incidental to its other purposes and activities. This arrangement causes O to be operated for the benefit of private interests in violation of the restriction on private benefit in paragraph (d)(1)(ii) of this section. Based on these facts and circumstances, O is not operated exclusively for exempt purposes and, therefore, is not described in section 501(c)(3).

*Example 3.* (i) O is an educational organization the purpose of which is to train individuals in a program developed by P, O's president. The program is of interest to academics and professionals, representatives of whom serve on an advisory panel to O. All of the rights to the program are owned by Company K, a for-profit corporation owned by P. Prior to the existence of O, the teaching of the program was conducted by Company K. O licenses, from Company K, the right to conduct seminars and lectures on the program and to use the name of the program as part of O's name, in exchange for specified royalty payments. Under the license agreement, Company K provides O with the services of trainers and with course materials on the program. O may develop and copyright new course materials on the program but all such materials must be assigned to Company K without consideration if and when the license agreement is terminated. Company K sets the tuition for the seminars and lectures on the program conducted by O. O has agreed not to become involved in any activity resembling the program or its implementation for 2 years after the termination of O's license agreement.

(ii) O's sole activity is conducting seminars and lectures on the program. This arrangement causes O to be operated for the benefit of P and Company K in violation of the restriction on private benefit in paragraph (d)(1)(ii) of this section, regardless of whether the royalty payments from O to Company K for the right to teach the program are reasonable. Based on these facts and circumstances, O is not operated exclusively for exempt purposes and, therefore, is not described in section 501(c)(3).

(iv) Since each of the purposes specified in subdivision (i) of this subparagraph is an exempt purpose in itself, an organization may be exempt if it is organized and operated exclusively for any one or more of such purposes. If, in fact, an organization is organized and operated exclusively for an exempt purpose or purposes, exemption will be granted to such an organization regardless of the purpose or purposes specified in its application for exemption. For example, if an organization claims exemption on the ground that it is *educational*, exemption will not be denied if, in fact, it is *charitable*.

(2) *Charitable defined.* The term *charitable* is used in section 501(c)(3) in its generally accepted legal sense and is, therefore, not to be construed as limited by the separate enumeration in section 501(c)(3) of other tax-exempt purposes which may fall within the broad outlines of *charity* as developed by judicial decisions. Such term includes: Relief of the poor and distressed or of the underprivileged; advancement of religion; advancement of education or science; erection or maintenance of public buildings, monuments, or works; lessening of the burdens of Government; and promotion of social welfare by organizations designed to accomplish any of the above purposes, or (i) to lessen neighborhood tensions; (ii) to eliminate prejudice and discrimination; (iii) to defend human and civil rights secured by law; or (iv) to combat community deterioration and juvenile delinquency. The fact that an organization which is organized and operated for the relief of indigent persons may receive voluntary contributions from the persons intended to be relieved will not necessarily prevent such organization from being exempt as an organization organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes. The fact that an organization, in carrying out its primary purpose, advocates social or civic changes or presents opinion on controversial issues with the intention of molding public opinion or creating public sentiment to an acceptance of its views does not preclude such organization from qualifying under section 501(c)(3) so long as it is not an *action* organization of any one of the types de-

scribed in paragraph (c)(3) of this section.

(3) *Educational defined*—(i) *In general.* The term *educational*, as used in section 501(c)(3), relates to:

(a) The instruction or training of the individual for the purpose of improving or developing his capabilities; or

(b) The instruction of the public on subjects useful to the individual and beneficial to the community.

An organization may be educational even though it advocates a particular position or viewpoint so long as it presents a sufficiently full and fair exposition of the pertinent facts as to permit an individual or the public to form an independent opinion or conclusion. On the other hand, an organization is not educational if its principal function is the mere presentation of unsupported opinion.

(ii) *Examples of educational organizations.* The following are examples of organizations which, if they otherwise meet the requirements of this section, are educational:

*Example 1.* An organization, such as a primary or secondary school, a college, or a professional or trade school, which has a regularly scheduled curriculum, a regular faculty, and a regularly enrolled body of students in attendance at a place where the educational activities are regularly carried on.

*Example 2.* An organization whose activities consist of presenting public discussion groups, forums, panels, lectures, or other similar programs. Such programs may be on radio or television.

*Example 3.* An organization which presents a course of instruction by means of correspondence or through the utilization of television or radio.

*Example 4.* Museums, zoos, planetariums, symphony orchestras, and other similar organizations.

(4) *Testing for public safety defined.* The term *testing for public safety*, as used in section 501(c)(3), includes the testing of consumer products, such as electrical products, to determine whether they are safe for use by the general public.

(5) *Scientific defined.* (i) Since an organization may meet the requirements of section 501(c)(3) only if it serves a public rather than a private interest, a *scientific* organization must be organized and operated in the public interest (see subparagraph (1)(ii) of this paragraph).

Therefore, the term *scientific*, as used in section 501(c)(3), includes the carrying on of scientific research in the public interest. Research when taken alone is a word with various meanings; it is not synonymous with *scientific*; and the nature of particular research depends upon the purpose which it serves. For research to be *scientific*, within the meaning of section 501(c)(3), it must be carried on in furtherance of a *scientific* purpose. The determination as to whether research is *scientific* does not depend on whether such research is classified as *fundamental* or *basic* as contrasted with *applied* or *practical*. On the other hand, for purposes of the exclusion from unrelated business taxable income provided by section 512(b)(9), it is necessary to determine whether the organization is operated primarily for purposes of carrying on *fundamental*, as contrasted with *applied*, research.

(ii) Scientific research does not include activities of a type ordinarily carried on as an incident to commercial or industrial operations, as, for example, the ordinary testing or inspection of materials or products or the designing or construction of equipment, buildings, etc.

(iii) Scientific research will be regarded as carried on in the public interest:

(a) If the results of such research (including any patents, copyrights, processes, or formulae resulting from such research) are made available to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis;

(b) If such research is performed for the United States, or any of its agencies or instrumentalities, or for a State or political subdivision thereof; or

(c) If such research is directed toward benefiting the public. The following are examples of scientific research which will be considered as directed toward benefiting the public, and, therefore, which will be regarded as carried on in the public interest: (1) Scientific research carried on for the purpose of aiding in the scientific education of college or university students; (2) scientific research carried on for the purpose of obtaining scientific information, which is published in a treatise, thesis, trade publication, or in any other form that is available to the in-

terested public; (3) scientific research carried on for the purpose of discovering a cure for a disease; or (4) scientific research carried on for the purpose of aiding a community or geographical area by attracting new industry to the community or area or by encouraging the development of, or retention of, an industry in the community or area. Scientific research described in this subdivision will be regarded as carried on in the public interest even though such research is performed pursuant to a contract or agreement under which the sponsor or sponsors of the research have the right to obtain ownership or control of any patents, copyrights, processes, or formulae resulting from such research.

(iv) An organization will not be regarded as organized and operated for the purpose of carrying on scientific research in the public interest and, consequently, will not qualify under section 501(c)(3) as a *scientific* organization, if:

(a) Such organization will perform research only for persons which are (directly or indirectly) its creators and which are not described in section 501(c)(3), or

(b) Such organization retains (directly or indirectly) the ownership or control of more than an insubstantial portion of the patents, copyrights, processes, or formulae resulting from its research and does not make such patents, copyrights, processes, or formulae available to the public. For purposes of this subdivision, a patent, copyright, process, or formula shall be considered as made available to the public if such patent, copyright, process, or formula is made available to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis. In addition, although one person is granted the exclusive right to the use of a patent, copyright, process, or formula, such patent, copyright, process, or formula shall be considered as made available to the public if the granting of such exclusive right is the only practicable manner in which the patent, copyright, process, or formula can be utilized to benefit the public. In such a case, however, the research from which the patent, copyright, process, or formula resulted will be regarded as carried on in the public interest (within

the meaning of subdivision (iii) of this subparagraph) only if it is carried on for a person described in subdivision (iii)(b) of this subparagraph or if it is scientific research described in subdivision (iii)(c) of this subparagraph.

(v) The fact that any organization (including a college, university, or hospital) carries on research which is not in furtherance of an exempt purpose described in section 501(c)(3) will not preclude such organization from meeting the requirements of section 501(c)(3) so long as the organization meets the organizational test and is not operated for the primary purpose of carrying on such research (see paragraph (e) of this section, relating to organizations carrying on a trade or business). See paragraph (a)(5) of §1.513-2, with respect to research which constitutes an unrelated trade or business, and section 512(b) (7), (8), and (9), with respect to income derived from research which is excludable from the tax on unrelated business income.

(vi) The regulations in this subparagraph are applicable with respect to taxable years beginning after December 31, 1960.

(e) *Organizations carrying on trade or business*—(1) *In general.* An organization may meet the requirements of section 501(c)(3) although it operates a trade or business as a substantial part of its activities, if the operation of such trade or business is in furtherance of the organization's exempt purpose or purposes and if the organization is not organized or operated for the primary purpose of carrying on an unrelated trade or business, as defined in section 513. In determining the existence or nonexistence of such primary purpose, all the circumstances must be considered, including the size and extent of the trade or business and the size and extent of the activities which are in furtherance of one or more exempt purposes. An organization which is organized and operated for the primary purpose of carrying on an unrelated trade or business is not exempt under section 501(c)(3) even though it has certain religious purposes, its property is held in common, and its profits do not inure to the benefit of individual members of the organization. See, however, section

501(d) and §1.501(d)-1, relating to religious and apostolic organizations.

(2) *Taxation of unrelated business income.* For provisions relating to the taxation of unrelated business income of certain organizations described in section 501(c)(3), see sections 511 to 515, inclusive, and the regulations thereunder.

(f) *Interaction with section 4958*—(1) *Application process.* An organization that applies for recognition of exemption under section 501(a) as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) must establish its eligibility under this section. The Commissioner may deny an application for exemption for failure to establish any of section 501(c)(3)'s requirements for exemption. Section 4958 does not apply to transactions with an organization that has failed to establish that it satisfies all of the requirements for exemption under section 501(c)(3). See §53.4958-2.

(2) *Substantive requirements for exemption still apply to applicable tax-exempt organizations described in section 501(c)(3)*—(i) *In general.* Regardless of whether a particular transaction is subject to excise taxes under section 4958, the substantive requirements for tax exemption under section 501(c)(3) still apply to an applicable tax-exempt organization (as defined in section 4958(e) and §53.4958-2) described in section 501(c)(3) whose disqualified persons or organization managers are subject to excise taxes under section 4958. Accordingly, an organization will no longer meet the requirements for tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) if the organization fails to satisfy the requirements of paragraph (b), (c) or (d) of this section. See §53.4958-8(a).

(ii) *Determination of whether revocation of tax-exempt status is appropriate when section 4958 excise taxes also apply.* In determining whether to continue to recognize the tax-exempt status of an applicable tax-exempt organization (as defined in section 4958(e) and §53.4958-2) described in section 501(c)(3) that engages in one or more excess benefit transactions (as defined in section 4958(c) and §53.4958-4) that violate the prohibition on inurement under section

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501(c)(3), the Commissioner will consider all relevant facts and circumstances, including, but not limited to, the following—

(A) The size and scope of the organization's regular and ongoing activities that further exempt purposes before and after the excess benefit transaction or transactions occurred;

(B) The size and scope of the excess benefit transaction or transactions (collectively, if more than one) in relation to the size and scope of the organization's regular and ongoing activities that further exempt purposes;

(C) Whether the organization has been involved in multiple excess benefit transactions with one or more persons;

(D) Whether the organization has implemented safeguards that are reasonably calculated to prevent excess benefit transactions; and

(E) Whether the excess benefit transaction has been corrected (within the meaning of section 4958(f)(6) and § 53.4958-7), or the organization has made good faith efforts to seek correction from the disqualified person(s) who benefited from the excess benefit transaction.

(iii) All factors will be considered in combination with each other. Depending on the particular situation, the Commissioner may assign greater or lesser weight to some factors than to others. The factors listed in paragraphs (f)(2)(ii)(D) and (E) of this section will weigh more heavily in favor of continuing to recognize exemption where the organization discovers the excess benefit transaction or transactions and takes action before the Commissioner discovers the excess benefit transaction or transactions. Further, with respect to the factor listed in paragraph (f)(2)(ii)(E) of this section, correction after the excess benefit transaction or transactions are discovered by the Commissioner, by itself, is never a sufficient basis for continuing to recognize exemption.

(iv) *Examples.* The following examples illustrate the principles of paragraph (f)(2)(ii) of this section. For purposes of each example, assume that O is an applicable tax-exempt organization (as defined in section 4958(e) and § 53.4958-2)

described in section 501(c)(3). The examples read as follows:

*Example 1.* (i) O was created as a museum for the purpose of exhibiting art to the general public. In Years 1 and 2, O engages in fundraising and in selecting, leasing, and preparing an appropriate facility for a museum. In Year 3, a new board of trustees is elected. All of the new trustees are local art dealers. Beginning in Year 3 and continuing to the present, O uses a substantial portion of its revenues to purchase art solely from its trustees at prices that exceed fair market value. O exhibits and offers for sale all of the art it purchases. O's Form 1023, "Application for Recognition of Exemption," did not disclose the possibility that O would purchase art from its trustees.

(ii) O's purchases of art from its trustees at more than fair market value constitute excess benefit transactions between an applicable tax-exempt organization and disqualified persons under section 4958. Therefore, these transactions are subject to the applicable excise taxes provided in that section. In addition, O's purchases of art from its trustees at more than fair market value violate the proscription against inurement under section 501(c)(3) and paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(iii) The application of the factors in paragraph (f)(2)(ii) of this section to these facts is as follows. Beginning in Year 3, O does not engage primarily in regular and ongoing activities that further exempt purposes because a substantial portion of O's activities consists of purchasing art from its trustees and dealing in such art in a manner similar to a commercial art gallery. The size and scope of the excess benefit transactions collectively are significant in relation to the size and scope of any of O's ongoing activities that further exempt purposes. O has been involved in multiple excess benefit transactions, namely, purchases of art from its trustees at more than fair market value. O has not implemented safeguards that are reasonably calculated to prevent such improper purchases in the future. The excess benefit transactions have not been corrected, nor has O made good faith efforts to seek correction from the disqualified persons who benefited from the excess benefit transactions (the trustees). The trustees continue to control O's Board. Based on the application of the factors to these facts, O is no longer described in section 501(c)(3) effective in Year 3.

*Example 2.* (i) The facts are the same as in *Example 1*, except that in Year 4, O's entire board of trustees resigns, and O no longer offers all exhibited art for sale. The former board is replaced with members of the community who are not in the business of buying

or selling art and who have skills and experience running charitable and educational programs and institutions. O promptly discontinues the practice of purchasing art from current or former trustees, adopts a written conflicts of interest policy, adopts written art valuation guidelines, hires legal counsel to recover the excess amounts O had paid its former trustees, and implements a new program of activities to further the public's appreciation of the arts.

(ii) O's purchases of art from its former trustees at more than fair market value constitute excess benefit transactions between an applicable tax-exempt organization and disqualified persons under section 4958. Therefore, these transactions are subject to the applicable excise taxes provided in that section. In addition, O's purchases of art from its trustees at more than fair market value violate the proscription against inurement under section 501(c)(3) and paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(iii) The application of the factors in paragraph (f)(2)(ii) of this section to these facts is as follows. In Year 3, O does not engage primarily in regular and ongoing activities that further exempt purposes. However, in Year 4, O elects a new board of trustees comprised of individuals who have skills and experience running charitable and educational programs and implements a new program of activities to further the public's appreciation of the arts. As a result of these actions, beginning in Year 4, O engages in regular and ongoing activities that further exempt purposes. The size and scope of the excess benefit transactions that occurred in Year 3, taken collectively, are significant in relation to the size and scope of O's regular and ongoing exempt function activities that were conducted in Year 3. Beginning in Year 4, however, as O's exempt function activities grow, the size and scope of the excess benefit transactions that occurred in Year 3 become less and less significant as compared to the size and scope of O's regular and ongoing exempt function activities. O was involved in multiple excess benefit transactions in Year 3. However, by discontinuing its practice of purchasing art from its current and former trustees, by replacing its former board with independent members of the community, and by adopting a conflicts of interest policy and art valuation guidelines, O has implemented safeguards that are reasonably calculated to prevent future violations. In addition, O has made a good faith effort to seek correction from the disqualified persons who benefited from the excess benefit transactions (its former trustees). Based on the application of the factors to these facts, O continues to meet the requirements for tax exemption under section 501(c)(3).

*Example 3.* (i) O conducts educational programs for the benefit of the general public. Since its formation, O has employed its

founder, C, as its Chief Executive Officer. Beginning in Year 5 of O's operations and continuing to the present, C caused O to divert significant portions of O's funds to pay C's personal expenses. The diversions by C significantly reduced the funds available to conduct O's ongoing educational programs. The board of trustees never authorized C to cause O to pay C's personal expenses from O's funds. Certain members of the board were aware that O was paying C's personal expenses. However, the board did not terminate C's employment and did not take any action to seek repayment from C or to prevent C from continuing to divert O's funds to pay C's personal expenses. C claimed that O's payments of C's personal expenses represented loans from O to C. However, no contemporaneous loan documentation exists, and C never made any payments of principal or interest.

(ii) The diversions of O's funds to pay C's personal expenses constitute excess benefit transactions between an applicable tax-exempt organization and a disqualified person under section 4958. Therefore, these transactions are subject to the applicable excise taxes provided in that section. In addition, these transactions violate the proscription against inurement under section 501(c)(3) and paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(iii) The application of the factors in paragraph (f)(2)(ii) of this section to these facts is as follows. O has engaged in regular and ongoing activities that further exempt purposes both before and after the excess benefit transactions occurred. However, the size and scope of the excess benefit transactions engaged in by O beginning in Year 5, collectively, are significant in relation to the size and scope of O's activities that further exempt purposes. Moreover, O has been involved in multiple excess benefit transactions. O has not implemented any safeguards that are reasonably calculated to prevent future diversions. The excess benefit transactions have not been corrected, nor has O made good faith efforts to seek correction from C, the disqualified person who benefited from the excess benefit transactions. Based on the application of the factors to these facts, O is no longer described in section 501(c)(3) effective in Year 5.

*Example 4.* (i) O conducts activities that further exempt purposes. O uses several buildings in the conduct of its exempt activities. In Year 1, O sold one of the buildings to Company K for an amount that was substantially below fair market value. The sale was a significant event in relation to O's other activities. C, O's Chief Executive Officer, owns all of the voting stock of Company K. When O's board of trustees approved the transaction with Company K, the board did not perform due diligence that could have made it aware that the price paid by Company K to acquire the building was below

fair market value. Subsequently, but before the IRS commences an examination of O, O's board of trustees determines that Company K paid less than the fair market value for the building. Thus, O concludes that an excess benefit transaction occurred. After the board makes this determination, it promptly removes C as Chief Executive Officer, terminates C's employment with O, and hires legal counsel to recover the excess benefit from Company K. In addition, O promptly adopts a conflicts of interest policy and new contract review procedures designed to prevent future recurrences of this problem.

(ii) The sale of the building by O to Company K at less than fair market value constitutes an excess benefit transaction between an applicable tax-exempt organization and a disqualified person under section 4958 in Year 1. Therefore, this transaction is subject to the applicable excise taxes provided in that section. In addition, this transaction violates the proscription against inurement under section 501(c)(3) and paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(iii) The application of the factors in paragraph (f)(2)(ii) of this section to these facts is as follows. O has engaged in regular and ongoing activities that further exempt purposes both before and after the excess benefit transaction occurred. Although the size and scope of the excess benefit transaction were significant in relation to the size and scope of O's activities that further exempt purposes, the transaction with Company K was a one-time occurrence. By adopting a conflicts of interest policy and new contract review procedures and by terminating C, O has implemented safeguards that are reasonably calculated to prevent future violations. Moreover, O took corrective actions before the IRS commenced an examination of O. In addition, O has made a good faith effort to seek correction from Company K, the disqualified person who benefited from the excess benefit transaction. Based on the application of the factors to these facts, O continues to be described in section 501(c)(3).

*Example 5.* (i) O is a large organization with substantial assets and revenues. O conducts activities that further its exempt purposes. O employs C as its Chief Financial Officer. During Year 1, O pays \$2,500 of C's personal expenses. O does not make these payments pursuant to an accountable plan, as described in § 53.4958-4(a)(4)(ii). In addition, O does not report any of these payments on C's Form W-2, "Wage and Tax Statement," or on a Form 1099-MISC, "Miscellaneous Income," for C for Year 1, and O does not report these payments as compensation on its Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," for Year 1. Moreover, none of these payments can be disregarded as non-taxable fringe benefits under § 53.4958-4(c)(2) and none consisted of fixed payments under an initial contract under § 53.4958-4(a)(3). C

does not report the \$2,500 of payments as income on his individual Federal income tax return for Year 1. O does not repeat this reporting omission in subsequent years and, instead, reports all payments of C's personal expenses not made under an accountable plan as income to C.

(ii) O's payment in Year 1 of \$2,500 of C's personal expenses constitutes an excess benefit transaction between an applicable tax-exempt organization and a disqualified person under section 4958. Therefore, this transaction is subject to the applicable excise taxes provided in that section. In addition, this transaction violates the proscription against inurement in section 501(c)(3) and paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(iii) The application of the factors in paragraph (f)(2)(ii) of this section to these facts is as follows. O engages in regular and ongoing activities that further exempt purposes. The payment of \$2,500 of C's personal expenses represented only a de minimis portion of O's assets and revenues; thus, the size and scope of the excess benefit transaction were not significant in relation to the size and scope of O's activities that further exempt purposes. The reporting omission that resulted in the excess benefit transaction in Year 1 occurred only once and is not repeated in subsequent years. Based on the application of the factors to these facts, O continues to be described in section 501(c)(3).

*Example 6.* (i) O is a large organization with substantial assets and revenues. O furthers its exempt purposes by providing social services to the population of a specific geographic area. O has a sizeable workforce of employees and volunteers to conduct its work. In Year 1, O's board of directors adopted written procedures for setting executive compensation at O. O's executive compensation procedures were modeled on the procedures for establishing a rebuttable presumption of reasonableness under § 53.4958-6. In accordance with these procedures, the board appointed a compensation committee to gather data on compensation levels paid by similarly situated organizations for functionally comparable positions. The members of the compensation committee were disinterested within the meaning of § 53.4958-6(c)(1)(iii). Based on its research, the compensation committee recommended a range of reasonable compensation for several of O's existing top executives (the Top Executives). On the basis of the committee's recommendations, the board approved new compensation packages for the Top Executives and timely documented the basis for its decision in board minutes. The board members were all disinterested within the meaning of § 53.4958-6(c)(1)(iii). The Top Executives were not involved in setting their own compensation. In Year 1, even though payroll expenses represented a significant portion of O's total operating expenses, the total compensation

paid to O's Top Executives represented only an insubstantial portion of O's total payroll expenses. During a subsequent examination, the IRS found that the compensation committee relied exclusively on compensation data from organizations that perform similar social services to O. The IRS concluded, however, that the organizations were not similarly situated because they served substantially larger geographic regions with more diverse populations and were larger than O in terms of annual revenues, total operating budget, number of employees, and number of beneficiaries served. Accordingly, the IRS concluded that the compensation committee did not rely on "appropriate data as to comparability" within the meaning of § 53.4958-6(c)(2) and, thus, failed to establish the rebuttable presumption of reasonableness under § 53.4958-6. Taking O's size and the nature of the geographic area and population it serves into account, the IRS concluded that the Top Executives' compensation packages for Year 1 were excessive. As a result of the examination, O's board added new members to the compensation committee who have expertise in compensation matters and also amended its written procedures to require the compensation committee to evaluate a number of specific factors, including size, geographic area, and population covered by the organization, in assessing the comparability of compensation data. O's board renegotiated the Top Executives' contracts in accordance with the recommendations of the newly constituted compensation committee on a going forward basis. To avoid potential liability for damages under state contract law, O did not seek to void the Top Executives' employment contracts retroactively to Year 1 and did not seek correction of the excess benefit amounts from the Top Executives. O did not terminate any of the Top Executives.

(i) O's payments of excessive compensation to the Top Executives in Year 1 constituted excess benefit transactions between an applicable tax-exempt organization and disqualified persons under section 4958. Therefore, these payments are subject to the applicable excise taxes provided under that section, including second-tier taxes if there is no correction by the disqualified persons. In addition, these payments violate the proscription against inurement under section 501(c)(3) and paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(iii) The application of the factors in paragraph (f)(2)(ii) of this section to these facts is as follows. O has engaged in regular and ongoing activities that further exempt purposes both before and after the excess benefit transactions occurred. The size and scope of the excess benefit transactions, in the aggregate, were not significant in relation to the size and scope of O's activities that further exempt purposes. O engaged in multiple excess benefit transactions. Nevertheless, prior to entering into these excess benefit trans-

actions, O had implemented written procedures for setting the compensation of its top management that were reasonably calculated to prevent the occurrence of excess benefit transactions. O followed these written procedures in setting the compensation of the Top Executives for Year 1. Despite the board's failure to rely on appropriate comparability data, the fact that O implemented and followed these written procedures in setting the compensation of the Top Executives for Year 1 is a factor favoring continued exemption. The fact that O amended its written procedures to ensure the use of appropriate comparability data and renegotiated the Top Executives' compensation packages on a going-forward basis are also factors favoring continued exemption, even though O did not void the Top Executives' existing contracts and did not seek correction from the Top Executives. Based on the application of the factors to these facts, O continues to be described in section 501(c)(3).

(3) *Applicability.* The rules in paragraph (f) of this section will apply with respect to excess benefit transactions occurring after March 28, 2008.

(g) *Applicability of regulations in this section.* The regulations in this section are, except as otherwise expressly provided, applicable with respect to taxable years beginning after July 26, 1959. For the rules applicable with respect to taxable years beginning before July 27, 1959, see 26 CFR (1939) 39.101(6)-1 (Regulations 118) as made applicable to the Code by Treasury Decision 6091, approved August 16, 1954 (19 FR 5167; C.B. 1954-2, 47).

(h) *Effective/applicability date.* Paragraphs (b)(1)(v) and (b)(6) of this section apply on and after July 1, 2014.

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11737, Nov. 26, 1960, as amended by T.D. 6525, 26 FR 189, Jan. 11, 1961; T.D. 6939, 32 FR 17661, Dec. 12, 1967; T.D. 7428, 41 FR 34620, Aug. 16, 1976; T.D. 8308, 55 FR 35587, Aug. 31, 1990; T.D. 9390, 73 FR 16521, Mar. 28, 2008; T.D. 9390, 73 FR 23069, Apr. 29, 2008; T.D. 9674, 79 FR 37631, July 2, 2014; T.D. 9819, 82 FR 29732, June 30, 2017]

#### § 1.501(c)(4)-1 Civic organizations and local associations of employees.

(a) *Civic organizations*—(1) *In general.* A civic league or organization may be exempt as an organization described in section 501(c)(4) if—

- (i) It is not organized or operated for profit; and
- (ii) It is operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare.