

- 6) Installation of a Group Village Headman, Chief
- If you are invited to a ceremony of chieftaincy, you can give money/gifts, but you they should not announce.
- 7) A car branded in party colours or the symbols and colours of a candidate: when the car is used to transporting people, dead bodies and the ordinary voters in within the constituency. Are these handouts?
- If the car or ambulance has been given to the public as a community service initiative, it is not a handout. But take note that if you withdraw it after the campaign, people can take you to task and can argue that you provided it to entice voters. If you are providing free transportation to people around the constituency, again it may be a community service as a public project.
- 8) Meet the chiefs where they charge something like mbuzi which in most cases its money equivalent. Is this also part of hand out?
- This may depend on the context. If, according to tradition, you go to the chiefs with mbuzi, and if it's given in that context, it may not be considered a handout. But if the chief comes to your political rally, you are not supposed to give them anything, otherwise it may be considered as a handout.
- On this, context matters a lot.
- 9) Is painting schools, distributing cement and iron sheets to schools considered to be handouts?
- These are public goods aimed at benefiting the community. It's not a handout because the beneficiaries are the community at large. Just make sure that you avoid "campaigning" during these activities. What is important is that these should be strictly for public benefit.
- 10) Providing money to attendees at our political rally to buy food or water.
- This is a handout. People should voluntarily attend meetings; you should not entice them with money or any such inducements.
- 11) Giving gifts or money to newlyweds during their wedding ceremony. Giving gifts or money to an engaged couple during their engagement ceremony.
- You can give, but the advice is that you should not announce it.
- 12) Independent MPs that have no cloth with their face to share to the people. If they can have a cloth, e.g. a plain cloth, and share it in bulk, could that be a handout?
- Yes, this will be treated as a handout. If you want to have campaign materials, you may decide to use your symbols and/or face as it will appear on the ballot. If you put these on a cloth or t-shirt, it will not be considered as a handout.
- 13) How many people can one refund transport as indicated above (an entourage)
- There is no specific figure. It depends on the size of your entourage or campaign team. If somebody complains against you, you should be able to provide

- evidence, justification that the number is in indeed the size of your entourage and /or campaign team.
- 14) How many “people” can be considered for entertainment?
- The understanding of entertaining is like you hiring a band, or a cultural troupe, or dancers... those that are used to entertain people, as a way of mobilizing people to patronize your rally. So, when you hire those providing this entertainment, it's not a handout. For you to be safe, please avoid kufupa during the performances. Pay them when you are hiring.
- 15) Helping Village banks / Helping Farmers with farming initiatives
- The law is silent on provision of loans to and from politicians. The advice is that if you provide the loans to the village bank, as a revolving fund, and is not considered as direct incentives to the individual recipients, it may not be considered as a handout. Key is to ensure that you are giving this to the community, and that there should be a clear agreement on the repayment structure... and the length of the initiative. Please be aware that if the Registrar will receive a complaint in this regard, he will have to consider the merit of the complaint, and the justification that will be given on why the complainant believes that the transaction constitutes a handout. The same argument may apply in cases of farmers groups.
- 16) Helping Youth groups with transport when they are going for football matches.
- On the face of it, this is not a handout because it may be considered that the beneficiaries are not individuals, but rather the team, a community initiative.
- 17) Gathering chiefs together to discuss development priorities. Should this be considered a handout.
- The gathering of the chiefs itself is not prohibited. Rather it is what you do with them that may be a problem. Context in this case will be important. If you discuss development projects, and you produce evidence that you give them some money that can be justified as transport and for food, and you can prove that it is not a political or campaign rally, then this may not constitute a handout.
- NOTE:
- Anything that you give, that is for the benefit of the community, (public service like bridges, schools, ambulances) they are not handouts. As much as possible, avoid branding them. Anything that you give that benefits the person directly, soap, food, materials... those are handouts.
- Kizito Tenthani, PhD
- REGISTRAR OF POLITICAL PARTIES

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR OF POLITICAL PARTIES



A Guide on Handouts

Introduction

After the launch of the official campaign on Monday, 14th July 2025, the Registrar has been receiving a lot of enquiries regarding what constitute a handout or not. The Registrar has compiled all the inquiries, and the responses that were given to assist other people who may have similar questions. Please note that this is just a guide. Context matters a lot. Any complain received by the Registrar will be dealt with according to its merits and the context that will be provided. It is therefore important for anyone using this guide to familiarize themselves with the section 41 of the Political Parties Act and its Schedule.

Section 41 of the Political Parties Act states:

- 1. A Candidate or political party or body or any person contesting or intending to contest in an election under this Act shall not at any time issue a handout.
[This means handouts are prohibited at any time, not only during campaign]
- 2. A person shall not solicit or procure another person to issue handouts.
[the prohibition also includes those who ask to be given or those who are sent to give on behalf of others]
- 3. A person who contravenes this section commits an offence, and shall, upon conviction, be liable to a fine of K10,000.000 and to imprisonment for five years.
- 4. Notwithstanding any fine or imprisonment annexed to contravention of this section, the court may, upon convicting a person guilty of an offence under this section, make any other order which the court considers just and appropriate for the purpose of remedying the effect of the offence.

The Minister shall, in consultation with the Electoral Commission, political parties represented in the National Assembly and other relevant stakeholders in election matters, make regulations to govern the prohibition of handouts under this Act in addition to exemptions specified in the Schedule.

The Schedule

The following matters and transactions shall not constitute handouts:

[This means that according to the Political Parties Act, everything else that is not mentioned is a handout.]

- 1. Campaign materials.
e.g. Posters, t-shirts, party cloth etc
- 2. Facilitation of Political Party meetings or activities such as transport refunds for candidate’s entourage, transport refunds for entourage, meals for entourage or entertainment

Facilitation here means the help a party or candidate get to organize a party meeting, like what the campaign team does, or those people who accompany a candidate, that help in the organization of the political meeting. those who are helping the party or candidate to hold the political meeting.
- 3. Unpublicised religious obligations and offerings

This could be events like paper Sundays etc or offerings that candidate give to religious gathers. These should not be announced.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers on What Constitutes a Handout

- 1) **Assisting a community with the transportation of building materials (e.g. sand, bricks) for a school / health centre construction project**

A school/clinic is a public good aimed at benefiting the community. It’s not a handout because the beneficiaries are the community at large. Just make sure that you avoid “campaigning” during these activities because much as it is not a handout under the Political Parties Act, it might be construed as “influence peddling” under the Corrupt Practices Act if you start campaigning around the initiative.

- 2) **Distributing fertilizer and seeds to farmers as an emergency response to a dry spell affecting the constituency.**

This is a handout, because the beneficiary recipients are individuals and what you are giving will not benefit the community, but the recipient.

- 3) **Provision of construction materials for the repair or construction of community bridges, drilling and repairing boreholes**

These are public goods aimed at benefiting the community. It’s not a handout because the beneficiaries are the community at large. Just make sure that you avoid “campaigning” during these activities because much as it is not a handout under the Political Parties Act.

- 4) **Sponsoring and managing a local football league and organizing choir festivals, including the provision of cash and equipment prizes**

Whatever prize money you give, should be for the benefit of the team/choir, not individuals... that way, you may consider it as a public benefit. Avoid campaigning and wearing party regalia during games, festivals or prize giving ceremonies. It is important to ensure that you are avoiding using these as spaces for campaign as they may be construed to be attempts to entice and influence the vote.

We may have problems if you give out branded jerseys with campaign messages.

- 5) **Paper Sundays, other religious festivals, Funerals**

If you give something to the Church/Prayer House during paper Sunday etc, do not announce it. Same with funerals, tell the people and keep evidence that you told them not to announce. Tell them by announcing, they are jeopardizing your candidature.