



Jeff Landry  
Attorney General

## State of Louisiana

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
CIVIL DIVISION  
P.O. BOX 94005  
BATON ROUGE  
70804-9005

March 21, 2022  
OPINION 22-0003

Honorable Gerald Boudreaux  
Senate District 24  
P.O. Box 91245  
Lafayette, LA 70509

61- LAWS- General

Lafayette Crime Stoppers may use funds received pursuant to La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4(L) for rent of office space, promotional materials, and expenses that directly relate to obtaining information of criminal activity or the operation of a hotline dedicated to receiving such information. However, using funds for an awards luncheon for law enforcement is a prohibited use of La. C. Cr. P. art. 895.4(L) funds.

Dear Senator Boudreaux:

You have requested an opinion from our office on behalf of Lafayette Crime Stoppers regarding the proper use of certain funds collected pursuant to La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4(L). Your request has been assigned to me for research and reply.

Under La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4, certified crime stoppers organizations statewide may utilize revenues collected in criminal or traffic proceedings for purposes directly related to the costs of administering the local criminal justice system. Louisiana Criminal Code of Procedure Section 895.4(L) was most recently amended by Act 50 of the 2004 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature and provides the following:

All funds received by a certified crime stoppers organization under this Article shall be used solely for the purposes of paying rewards to individuals who provide information on criminal activity to the certified crime stoppers organization, for the operation of a hot line [*sic.*] used for receiving that information, and for other purposes which are directly related to obtaining information on criminal activities.

Specifically, you have asked our office to opine on whether Lafayette Crime Stoppers may utilize funds received pursuant to La. C. Cr. P. art. 895.4(L) to pay for the following expenses: rent for office space, promotional expenses to inform the general public on how to provide tips helpful to law enforcement, an annual awards luncheon which honors the law enforcement professionals, and other relevant expenses which the Crime Stoppers Board of Directors may vote upon and certify as directly related to obtaining information on criminal activities.

**May Lafayette Crime Stoppers use La. C. Cr. P. art. 895.4(L) funds for promotional expenses related to providing helpful information to law enforcement agencies to fight crime and pay rent for office space?**

In order for Lafayette Crime Stoppers to use funds received pursuant to La. C. Cr. P. art. 895.4(L) to pay for rent of office space, Lafayette Crime Stoppers must use the office

space for obtaining information on criminal activities or operating a hotline for receipt of such information. Lafayette Crime Stoppers may use the same office space for other ancillary matters. Similarly, it may pay promotional expenses to inform the public on how to provide tips to volunteer vital information helpful to law enforcement agencies to fight against crime. These expenses appear to be directly related to obtaining information on criminal activities. However, whether the payment of rent and promotional expenses are related to obtaining information on criminal activities or operating a hotline are factual determinations to be made by Crime Stoppers (presumably by the Board of Directors).<sup>1</sup> If the Board of Directors determines that specific office space or promotional expenses directly relate to obtaining information on criminal activities, then paying rent for such office space or promotional expenses would be permissible under La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4(L).

**May Lafayette Crime Stoppers use La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4(L) funds to pay for an annual awards luncheon that honors the law enforcement professionals who uphold the law and respond to tips from Lafayette Crime Stoppers gathered from the general public?**

Our office recognizes and supports honoring law enforcement professionals who uphold the law and act on tips received by crime stopper organizations. Unfortunately, a plain reading of the applicable statute would prohibit the use of funds received under La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4(L) for an annual awards luncheon honoring law enforcement professionals. The use of funds received pursuant to La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4(L) is limited to the three categories: paying rewards to individuals who provide it with information on criminal activity, operating a hotline used for receiving that information, and for other purposes that directly relate to obtaining information on criminal activities. From the information provided to our office, it is clear that the annual luncheon does not relate to paying rewards to individuals who provide it with information on criminal activity or operating a hotline. There must be an articulable and direct nexus between the annual awards luncheon and obtaining information on criminal activity for it to be a proper use of funds received under La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4(L).

**Whether La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4(L) funds may be used for other relevant expenses that the Lafayette Crime Stoppers Board of Directors vote and certify as directly related to obtaining information on criminal activities?**

Based on the statutory language, it appears that Lafayette Crime Stoppers would not be prohibited from utilizing La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4(L) funds to pay for such expenses as long these expenses directly relate to obtaining information on criminal activities, operating a hotline to receive such information, or providing rewards to people who provide information on criminal activity to the Lafayette Crime Stoppers.

It is the opinion of our office that Lafayette Crime Stoppers may use funds received pursuant to La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4(L) for rent of office space and promotional materials

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<sup>1</sup> See La. Atty. Gen. Op. No. 05-0380.

that directly relate to obtaining information of criminal activity or the operation of a hotline dedicated to receiving such information. Additionally, Lafayette Crime Stoppers may use funds received pursuant to La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4(L) deemed directly related to obtaining information on criminal activities and is in fact directly related to obtaining such information. However, using funds for an awards luncheon for law enforcement is a prohibited use of La. C.Cr.P. art. 895.4(L) funds.

We trust that this adequately responds to your request and the issue that you have raised. If our office can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

With best regards,  
JEFF LANDRY  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brett A. Robinson", written over a horizontal line.

Brett A. Robinson  
Assistant Attorney General

JL/BAR