

e ELECTRONIC FILING

Registrations and quarterly reports must be filed online via the Ethics Commission's Lobbying Electronic Filing System (LEFS). A unique LEFS identification must first be obtained by filing Form 59, which is available at ethics.lacity.org/forms.

🎁 GIFTS & CONTRIBUTIONS

As part of the registration process, lobbyists and lobbying firms must identify the City agencies they may potentially contact on behalf of their clients. They are then prohibited from making campaign contributions to City candidates and elected City officials associated with the City agencies they are registered to lobby. They are also prohibited from making gifts to City officials in those agencies. Lobbyist employers are also limited in the making of gifts.

⋯ EXEMPTIONS

The following persons are not subject to the lobbying laws:

- A public official or government employee acting in an official capacity;
- A news outlet that is only publishing or broadcasting news, editorials, or paid advertising that attempts to influence City action;
- A person who is doing only the following in response to a competitively bid Request for Proposals (RFP):
 - Submitting a written response to the RFP;
 - Participating in an interview as part of the RFP evaluation process; or
 - Negotiating the terms of the resulting contract.
- An IRS § 501(c)(3) organization that receives funding to represent indigent persons free of charge, if the organization's primary purpose is to provide direct services to those persons.

This is a brief overview of the lobbying laws. Please contact us for more information about how the laws apply to you.

CONTACT US

ethics.lacity.org

(213) 978-1960

200 North Spring Street
City Hall 24th Floor
Los Angeles CA 90012

REPORT A VIOLATION

(800) 824-4825

ethics.lacity.org/enforcement/#reportaviolation

PENALTIES

Registration statements and quarterly reports that are not filed by their deadlines are subject to late filing penalties of \$25 per day, up to a maximum of \$500 per filing.

In addition, anyone who violates a provision of the lobbying laws—or aids and abets another person in a violation—is liable for administrative enforcement penalties of up to the greater of \$5,000 per violation or three times the amount of money at issue.

Los Angeles City
ETHICS COMMISSION

Lobbying



To help inform the public about who is attempting to influence City action, lobbying entities are required to register and file quarterly reports about their activities.

✓ QUALIFICATION

Under the Municipal Lobbying Ordinance (MLO), there are three types of lobbying entities.

A **lobbyist** is an individual who, in a consecutive three-month period, does the following:

1. Is compensated to engage in at least 30 hours of **lobbying activities** on behalf of another person; *and*
2. Has at least one **direct communication** with a City official or employee in an attempt to influence City action.

Any individual may qualify as a lobbyist, regardless of training, education, occupation, or professional title. CEOs, attorneys, consultants, government affairs personnel, land use professionals, expeditors, employees of nonprofit organizations, former City employees, and others may all be lobbyists. A lobbyist cannot be appointed to a City commission whose members must file Form 700.

A **lobbying firm** is an organization that is entitled to receive \$1,000 or more for lobbying activity in a consecutive three-month period and has a principal or employee who qualifies as a lobbyist. Lobbying firms can include law firms, expediting businesses, advocacy groups, and other organizations.

A **lobbyist employer** is an organization that employs a lobbyist in-house to lobby on the organization's own behalf. Lobbyist employers can include corporations, non-profits, unions, and other entities.

LOBBYING ACTIVITY

Lobbying activity includes the following when related to a direct communication to influence City action:

- Communicating with a City employee;
- Drafting ordinances, resolutions, or regulations;
- Providing advice or recommending strategy to a client or others;
- Conducting research or gathering information;
- Seeking to influence an outside party's position, through activities such as public relations or engaging with neighborhood councils;
- Attending, monitoring, or providing public comment at City meetings (including neighborhood council meetings), hearings, or other events;
- Similar events.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION

A direct communication is an interaction with a City employee in which an individual can urge the employee to take a particular action. A direct communication may occur in any setting, and an individual may engage in a direct communication either personally or through an agent.

Common direct communications include face-to-face conversations, telephone calls, letters, emails, text messages, and testimony at public meetings (which may include neighborhood council meetings when a City employee sits on the council).

Purely ministerial interaction with a City employee, such as scheduling a meeting, is not a direct communication. However, a direct communication can occur even in a process that a City agency calls ministerial or administrative. In addition, a purely ministerial interaction counts as lobbying activity (and toward the 30-hour threshold) if it is related to an attempt to influence a City employee.

REGISTRATION

Lobbying entities must register with the Ethics Commission. Registration is required within ten days after the end of the month in which a person qualifies as a lobbyist or lobbying firm. Registrations automatically terminate at the end of the calendar year. Annual registration fees are \$450 per lobbyist and \$75 for each client from whom a lobbyist is entitled to receive at least \$250 in a calendar quarter for lobbying activity. All registered lobbyists, lobbying firms, lobbyist employers, and clients are identified online on the following web page ethics.lacity.org/lobbying/lobbyists/#summaries.

QUARTERLY REPORTING

Lobbying entities must file quarterly disclosure reports by specific deadlines. These reports detail the money received from clients, the funds spent in connection with lobbying activities, fundraising activities performed on behalf of a City candidate or elected City official, and other data. Information reported through quarterly reports can be searched online at ethics.lacity.org/data/lobbying.

MAJOR FILERS

A major filer is an entity or individual who makes payments or incurs expenses totaling \$5,000 or more in a calendar quarter to influence one or more City matters but does not qualify as a lobbying entity. For example, a person might advertise through a billboard or other media to urge citizens to contact their elected officials about an issue.

Lobbying entities are not major filers, and the payments and expenses they report do not count toward the threshold. However, a client can qualify as a major filer if, separate from what it pays its lobbying firm, it reaches the \$5,000 threshold.

Major filers must file a disclosure report for every quarter in which they reach the threshold.