

ETHICS COMMISSION IMPOSES FINES TOTALING \$91,250

The Ethics Commission approved five stipulated orders at its meeting today, imposing fines totaling \$91,250 for lobbying and governmental ethics violations.

Four of the cases involved violations of the registration and reporting requirements in the Municipal Lobbying Ordinance. Lobbyists and lobbying firms are required to register with the Ethics Commission and report their lobbying activity on a quarterly basis, to help the public identify who is attempting to influence City action.

Urban Strategy Group, Inc. (USG) and its employee Arturo Gonzalez (Gonzalez) each admitted that they failed to register as lobbying entities in 2017 and 2018 and that they failed to file disclosure reports for the third and fourth quarters of 2017. USG and Gonzalez were each fined \$15,000.

FE Design & Consulting (FE Design) and its employee Manuel Diaz (Diaz) also admitted that they failed to register as lobbying entities in 2017 and 2018 and that they failed to file disclosure reports from the first quarter of 2017 through the third quarter of 2018. FE Design was fined \$22,500, and Diaz was fined \$20,000.

The final case involved violations of the Governmental Ethics Ordinance. Courtenay Durham (Durham), an employee of the Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department, admitted to accepting payment for outside (non-City) employment without obtaining prior written approval from his department head in fiscal years 2014-15 through 2016-17. Durham was fined \$18,750.

“The enforcement orders approved today underscore the importance of transparency in City government,” said Melinda Murray, President of the Ethics Commission. “The public has a right to know who is spending money to influence City decisions, and the public is best served when potential conflicts of interests by City officials are vetted and avoided before they occur.”

All fines levied by the Ethics Commission are paid to the City’s general fund. Enforcement orders can be viewed and searched through the Ethics Commission’s [Public Data Portal](#).

The [Ethics Commission](#) was created by Los Angeles voters in 1990 to impartially administer and enforce the City’s governmental ethics, campaign financing, and lobbying laws.