

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE COOK COUNTY LOBBYIST REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Who is required to register as a lobbyist with the Clerk? In brief, anyone who, for compensation, attempts to influence a Cook County elected official or employee on any county matter (any executive, legislative or administrative action of Cook County) has lobbied the County and is required to register, unless one of the exceptions outlined on the back of this page applies. In addition, any person who employs or contracts with another person for the purpose of lobbying must register, unless the existence of the employer or contractor and all expenditures made by the employer or contractor are fully disclosed by another registered lobbyist.

Who is not required to register? Certain persons are exempt from the lobbyist registration and reporting requirements. A detailed list of exceptions is set out on the reverse side. Nothing in the law is intended to infringe in any way the right of a citizen to lawfully petition a Commissioner or any other county official as guaranteed by the constitutions of the United States and the State of Illinois.

When must persons register? If not exempt, they must register within 30 days of the first time they lobby, then again, every subsequent year, between January 1st and January 20th.

Is there a registration fee? Yes, there is a \$350.00 registration fee per entity and per exclusive lobbyist.

Who must file reports of expenditures? All registered lobbyists.

What information must be included on reports of expenditures? This information includes (but is not limited to): clients; persons lobbied; county matters involved; compensation; specific expenditures to county officials/employees such as gifts, meals and political contributions; and aggregate lobbying expenses such as publications, lodging and entertainment. Instructions are provided on the filing forms.

What if I made no expenditures? You still have to file, but indicate on your report that no expenditures were made.

When must reports of expenditures be filed? Semi-annually, between January 1st and January 20th, and between July 1st and July 20th, of each year.

Where should persons register and file reports of expenditure? With the **Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Department of the Office of the Cook County Clerk, 69 West Washington Street, Suite 500, Chicago, IL, 60602 (312-603-0907).**

How can lobbyist statements be amended? In the event any substantial change or addition occurs, an amendment to the statement must be filed with the Clerk's Office within 14 days.

What are the fines for failure to comply with these requirements? Timely filings must be received in the Clerk's Office by the close of business on the final day of the filing period. Any person filing a late registration or report is subject to a late filing fee of \$10.00 per day per late document. Any person filing a late registration after January 31st or a late report after January 31st or July 31st is subject to an additional penalty of \$100 per day if found guilty by a court. Any person convicted of any violation of any provisions of this Ordinance is also prohibited from lobbying for a period of three years.

What if I stop lobbying? A registered lobbyist can terminate registration by filing with the Clerk's Office a written notice to that effect. This notice must include a report of expenditures since the filing of the last report.

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EXEMPTIONS:

Persons in the following categories need not register under this Ordinance:

- The press and other media functioning in that capacity;
- Persons performing professional services in drafting legislation or advising clients regarding the construction and effects of legislation;
- Employees of the County and other units of government and County and other elected officials acting in that capacity;
- Expert witnesses appearing before the Board by request of a Commissioner or the President;
- Employees of churches or religious organizations acting to protect the right of members to practice their religious doctrines;
- Persons seeking to do business with the County whose activities are limited to occasional sales-related inquiries or solicitations, the submission of bids, or responses to Requests for Proposals or Requests for Qualifications, and who make no expenditures that would otherwise be reportable under this Ordinance;
- Persons lobbying on behalf of a neighborhood, community or civic organization who are not paid to do so, and who spend no money doing so;
- Persons representing clients before county agencies, courts or in disciplinary matters, or engaged in negotiating a collective bargaining agreement or other contract;
- Persons making job recommendations for others;
- Persons who are owners, directors, officers or full-time employees of a business, which person's lobbying activities are limited to fewer than two county matters per calendar year which would otherwise require registration and who make no expenditures which would otherwise be reportable under this Ordinance.

KEY DEFINITIONS

"Person" means any individual, entity, corporation, firm, partnership, association, membership association, union, trust or estate, as well as any parent or subsidiary of any of the foregoing, and whether or not operated for profit.

"Lobby" means to, for compensation attempt to influence a county official or county employee with respect to any county matter.

"Compensation" means money, thing of value or other pecuniary benefits received or to be received in return for, or as reimbursement for, or as a result of, services rendered or to be rendered for lobbying. This includes a contract, promise or agreement, whether or not legally enforceable, to provide or arrange for compensation for services rendered or to be rendered.

"Expenditure" means anything having a value of \$10.00 or more including, but not limited to, a payment, distribution, loan, advance, deposit, political contribution, honoraria, travel or entertainment expense, meal or beverage expense, or gift of money. This includes a contract, promise, or agreement, whether or not legally enforceable, to make an expenditure, for services rendered or to be rendered.

"County matter" means any executive action, legislative action or administrative action.

"Legislative action" means the development, drafting, introduction, consideration, modification, adoption, rejection, review, enactment, or passage or defeat of any ordinance, amendment, motion, resolution, report, nomination, administrative rule or other matter by any county official or county employee. Legislative action also means the action of the President in approving or vetoing any ordinance, resolution or motion or portion thereof, and the action of any county official or county employee in the development of a proposal for introduction before the Board.

"Executive action" means the proposal, drafting, development, consideration, amendment, adoption, approval, promulgation, issuance, modification, rejection or postponement by a county official or county employee of a rule, regulation, order, decision, determination, contractual agreement, purchasing agreement or other quasi-legislative or quasi-judicial action or proceeding.

"Administrative action" means the execution or rejection of any rule, regulation, legislative rule, standard, fee, rate, contractual agreement, purchasing agreement or other delegated legislative or quasi-legislative action to be taken or withheld by any county official or county employee.

The Cook County Lobbyist Registration Ordinance was approved by the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, Illinois. The information contained in this Questions and Answers sheet is for Convenience only. For a copy of the complete Ordinance, go to the County Clerk's Website at www.cookctyclerk.com