

## **e** ELECTRONIC FILING

Lobbying registrations and reports must be filed online through the Ethics Commission's Lobbying Electronic Filing System (LEFS). An LEFS account must first be obtained by filing Form 59, which is available at [ethics.lacity.org/forms](https://ethics.lacity.org/forms).

## **🎁** GIFTS & CONTRIBUTIONS

Lobbyists and lobbying firms are prohibited from making campaign contributions to City candidates and officeholders associated with the City agencies they are registered (or required to register) to lobby. Lobbyists and lobbying firms are also prohibited from making gifts to City officials in the agencies they are registered or required to register to lobby. Gift limits apply to qualifying lobbyist employers and major filers.

## **⋯** 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 whose only activity is responding to a competitively bid RFP process by submitting a written response, participating in an interview, or negotiating the terms of the resulting contract. This exemption does not apply if the person attempts to influence the Mayor's office, a City Council office, or a board or commission.
- A 501(c)(3) organization that receives government funding to represent the interests of indigent persons free of charge and whose primary purpose is to provide direct services to those persons. This exemption does not apply to activities other than representing an indigent client's personal interests, including but not limited to attempts to influence decisions on funding (unless at a publicly noticed meeting); decisions on ordinances, resolutions, policies, or programs; decisions involving a license, permit, or entitlement for use (unless directly for an indigent client); or any other City matters.

**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](https://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](https://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, either personally or through an agent, in an attempt to influence City action.

Any individual may qualify as a lobbyist, regardless of training, education, occupation, or professional title. CEOs, attorneys, architects, 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.

\*The three-month period can span two calendar years (e.g. November 2022-January 2023.)

## 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 interactions 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 receives or 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 and may be viewed at [ethics.lacity.org/lobbying/lobbyists/#summaries](https://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](https://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.