



Connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities

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New York State and New York City Offer Amnesty to Organizations That Advocate for Their Communities But Have Never Registered as Lobbyists

Organizations that spend at least \$5,000 in a calendar year on employee salaries and other expenses associated with lobbying must register and report as a lobbyist and client. Financial penalties for failure to register and report can be substantial. However, in 2016, the State's Joint Commission on Public Ethics ("JCOPE") and City's Lobbying Bureau will offer amnesty to first-time registrants.

Your organization may be required to register and report if it tries to influence:

- the inclusion of funding for themselves or a government program in the state or city budget,
- proposed legislation in the state legislature or City Council, or
- a government agency's generally applicable policies.

How to seek amnesty:

- **New York City:** Applications for amnesty can be filed Jan. 1 to June 30, 2016, and must describe the organization's lobbying since Jan. 1, 2015. Organizations may, but are not required to, file a [notice of intent to seek amnesty](#) now.
- **New York State:** Applications for amnesty may be filed Jan. 1 to June 30, 2016. An organization seeking amnesty must file all JCOPE reports that it should have filed, and all filing fees it would have been required to pay, back to Jan. 1, 2013.

Resources to help nonprofits determine whether and how to seek amnesty

- Read [Nonprofit Organizations and Lobbying FAQs](#)
- Consult with Laura Abel, Senior Policy Counsel, at (212) 219-1800 x283, label@lawyersalliance.org, about whether you should have registered and reported in the past and are eligible for amnesty now, and the risks and benefits of seeking amnesty.

This alert is meant to provide general information only, not legal advice. Please contact Laura Abel or visit www.lawyersalliance.org for further information.

Lawyers Alliance for New York is the leading provider of business and transactional legal services for nonprofit organizations that are improving the quality of life in New York City neighborhoods. Our network of pro bono lawyers from law firms and corporations and staff of experienced attorneys collaborate to deliver expert corporate, tax, real estate, employment, intellectual property, and other legal services to community organizations. By connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities, we help nonprofits to develop affordable housing, stimulate economic development, promote community arts, strengthen urban health, and operate and advocate for vital programs for children and young people, the elderly, and other low-income New Yorkers.